Gregory Nazianzen’s Poems on Scripture
Introduction, Translation, and Commentary

Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree
of the Weston Jesuit Faculty of the
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

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14 December 2009
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Introduction

Gregory of Nazianzus (c.326-389), preacher, poet, ecclesiastic, and saint, was born and spent much of his life on the country estate of Karbala, near the center of the Roman province of Cappadocia, in modern-day Turkey. Renowned as the “Theologian” – a title he shares with John the Evangelist in the Orthodox Church – Gregory has had a profound and lasting influence on the history of Christian doctrine and spirituality. His preaching, a model of rhetorical skill and theological subtlety, treats themes central to the articulation of pro-Nicene orthodoxy in the late fourth century; in particular, his Five Theological orations, which he delivered while Bishop of Constantinople, clarified Christian thought on the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the relations within the Triune Godhead. His letters, which detail the political and ecclesiastical background to the theological disputes of his time, have likewise drawn steady interest from scholars looking to understand the era’s social dynamics.

His poems, by contrast, are less widely known, although they have recently become the subject of closer study. More than 17,000 lines of Gregory’s verse survive,

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1 John McGuckin, St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 2001), is the definitive English biography; also valuable are Paul Gallay, La vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze (Paris: E. Vitte, 1943); Jean Bernardi, Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: le Théologien et son temps, 330-390. Initiations aux Pères de l'Eglise (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995) and Francesco Trisoglio, Gregorio di Nazianzo il Teologo, Studia patristica Mediolanensia 20 (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1996); with special attention to Gregory’s poetry, see Francis Gautier, La Retraite et le Sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002). The year of his birth is disputed; see Brian Daley, SJ, Gregory of Nazianzus, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2006), 190 n.5; Daley also offers an excellent and brief introduction to the Theologian’s life.

2 For John Damascene, to speak “theologically” was to cite Gregory’s writings; e.g. On the Divine Images, Treatise 1.8.

including poems that summarize and explain his theology, as well as verse epistles, laments, numerous epitaphs, and personal reflections, which are some of the earliest examples of autobiography.⁴

Gregory’s poetic corpus also includes the few instances where Gregory explicitly presents a reading of the biblical narrative. These seventeen scriptural poems, numbered I.1.12 to I.1.28 in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca*, constitute the subject of this thesis.⁵ They have otherwise hardly been noted in the scholarship, except to be dismissed as “tedious” and “mnemonic verse.”⁶ To my knowledge, no modern translation of the set exists in publication. After a brief overview of Gregory’s family background and formation in pagan and Christian culture, I introduce the poems, focusing on their major themes, their catechetical motives, and their literary and theological merit. Then follows the heart of the thesis, an English translation of the poems along with a commentary.

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⁴ Indeed, very few examples of Greek Christian poetry and hymnography antedate Gregory; for a list, see Simelidis, *Selected Poems*, 29.
⁵ In 1842 the Maurist Dom Caillau organized Gregory’s poems in vol. 37 and vol. 38 of the *PG* in two books: I. *The theologica*, comprising the *dogmatica* and the *moralia* and II. *The historica*, comprising the *poemata de seipso* (the poems “on himself”) and the *poemata quae spectant ad alios* (those that “look to others”). In addition, he includes the epigrams and the *Christus païens*, a drama in cento form whose authenticity is disputed; see H. Werhahn “Dubia und Spuria bei Gregor von Nazianz,” *Studia Patristica* 7 (Berlin, 1966). Caillau’s ordering only very loosely corresponds to any presentation found in the manuscript tradition; for a recent discussion, see Guillaume Bady, “Ordre et desordre des poèmes de Grégoire le Theologien,” in Incontro di studiosi dell’antichità cristiana. *Motivi e forme della poesia cristiana antica tra scrittura e tradizione classica: XXXVI Incontro Di Studiosi dell’antichità cristiana, Roma, 3-5 Maggio 2007* (Studia ephemeridis “Augustinianum” 108; Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 2008), 337-348.
CHAPTER I. Gregory’s Life and Formation

Gregory’s family and background

Some familiarity with Gregory’s family background is needed before examining his theological project, both because Gregory frequently wrote about his upbringing, including paeans to his parents and siblings, and because family affairs otherwise dominated much of his career. Gregory was born into a thoroughly Christian household. His mother Nonna descended from a noble Christian lineage and distinguished herself by her piety and good works. His father, Gregory the Elder, converted to Christianity from the sect of the Hypsistarians, that is, those devoted to the hypsistos, the “Most High One,” before Gregory’s birth, and later became a prominent politician and bishop. Through their influence, Gregory, his sister Gorgonia, and his younger brother Caesarius received a Christian formation from childhood.

Gregory’s father was instrumental in most of the major decisions of his life, including his ordination as a priest and then as a bishop (of Sasima in Asia Minor, a seat in which he was never formally installed), and his appointment to the see of Constantinople in 380. Although Gregory seems to have clashed with his father on certain theological and political decisions, including his own ordination, he expresses a
warm fondness for his parents, even dedicating thirty-six epitaphs to his mother.\textsuperscript{12} Indeed, his frequent attempts to break family ties in order to embrace monastic life never took him very far; he secluded himself in a region not far from his family estate, where he was easily, perhaps intentionally, located by Church officials.\textsuperscript{13}

Moreover, familiarity with Gregory’s background helps one understand the particularly personal nature of his theological project. Because of the many autobiographical references in his writings, Gregory’s work is frequently the subject of psychological readings, which find him a sensitive, even self-obsessive, case.\textsuperscript{14} Much of his thought has a degree of introspection that goes beyond the standard self-reflection characteristic of his age, presenting him, in the words of Bernardi, as “une âme tourmentée.”\textsuperscript{15} Especially in his poems, Gregory investigates his struggles and accomplishments in light of his relationship to Christ and the Church. While recent scholarship has questioned the sincerity and accuracy of Gregory’s self-presentation, most agree that Gregory distinguishes himself from his contemporaries in his level of introspection and reflection on the symbolic meaning of his struggles and accomplishments. At the same time, he often offers his life as a model for his readers to imitate.

**Gregory’s Education**

and, most extensively, Athens.\textsuperscript{16} During his stay in Greece Gregory studied letters with leading figures in the Empire, perhaps among them Julian, who would become the famous “Apostate” emperor in 361. Prominent grammar teachers, sophists, prepared their students in the \textit{enkyklios paideia}, the comprehensive formation that comprised grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and, often, music.\textsuperscript{17}

Various studies have revealed the extent of Gregory’s knowledge of classical literature.\textsuperscript{18} He was intimately familiar with Homer and the ancient poets, including Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. He also knew the classical orators, especially Demosthenes, enough to imitate and adapt their language and rhetorical periods in his own speeches.

At Athens Gregory’s passion for composing literature also matured. In the autobiographical poem “On his own life” (II.1.11), he records his initial infatuation with writing:

\begin{quote}
While my cheek was still beardless, a passionate love of letters possessed me. Indeed I sought to make bastard letters serve as assistants to the genuine ones.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Words, both written and spoken, became Gregory’s main preoccupation. More importantly, the quest to employ classical learning in order to articulate Christian thought would occupy the rest of his career.\textsuperscript{20} In his letters, poems, and speeches, Gregory sought to put his classical training at the service of Christian revelation.

\textsuperscript{16} For a succinct account of his formation see Wyß, “Gregor von Nazianz,” 794-798.
\textsuperscript{17} Wyß, “Gregor von Nazianz,” 797.
\textsuperscript{20} For more on Gregory’s pursuit of the reconciliation, see Gautier, \textit{Le Retraite et le Sacerdoce}, 169-175 and 268-280.
During his studies, Gregory not only mastered the content of classical learning, but he also acquired classical ways of reading. Gregory learned to engage literature by interpreting it through close attention to the language of the author within the unity of his corpus. A well-trained student deciphered any problematic word, phrase, or passage by locating parallels in the text. Once the student could establish what the author meant in a broader context, he would be better equipped to resolve the ambiguity in the puzzling portion. Gregory’s fastidious attention to words emerges from this early training.

Gregory’s particular reception of Hellenistic, especially Alexandrian, philological techniques has been the subject of recent study. While earlier scholarship conjectured that Gregory most likely knew classical literature indirectly, through anthologies, recent studies show his first-hand familiarity with, among others, Callimachus, Apollonius, and Theocritus. Gregory’s poems are full of words and phrases culled from these authors, which he often reconfigures in inventive and suggestive ways. Gregory not only refers to important classical and Hellenistic writers, but he also retrieves and adapts their method of allusion and reference. In this way Gregory resembled many of his late antique contemporaries, who prized a finely wrought system that reworked this Hellenistic heritage.

Even as he appropriated the classical Greek tradition into his writings, Gregory the Christian drew from the Bible as the ultimate source for his rhetoric. He was among the first generation to be formed in a Christian culture that was beginning to supplant the

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22 Simelidis, Selected Poems, 31, calls Gregory’s engagement with Callimachus an “obsession”; for an inventory of references to these authors, see Demoen, Pagan and Biblical Exempla.
23 Indeed, it is this culture of reference that led, in part, to Gregory’s unpopularity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when an educated audience generally prized originality; see Edwards, “Christian Alexandrianism,” 5-13.
dominant pagan worldview. As Frances Young has documented, despite real ambivalence toward classical authors, Christians did not simply reject Greek *paideia*, but rather transformed it in order to promote learning based on the Bible. Christian readers applied and taught the same techniques to reading scripture that they had employed when reading Homer or Demosthenes; the Bible was seen as a unity, which could furnish the attentive reader with all the tools necessary for its own interpretation. Thus, even as he was alluding to Callimachus, Gregory could communicate Christian content in his writings.

It is surprising, then, that despite his thorough engagement with the Bible Gregory has left us virtually no extended scriptural exegesis or commentary. Moreover, scholars, both ancient and modern, agree that Gregory made profound contributions to the history of biblical interpretation; Jerome, the Father of Western biblical exegesis, names Gregory “my master in the Sacred Scripture,” while Brian Daley, in a recent study on Gregory’s use of Scripture, affirms that the Theologian is “a quintessentially Biblical thinker and writer.” Yet few have attempted to examine Gregory’s use of the Bible in real depth.

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25 The only extended treatment of a biblical passage appears in *Or*. 37 on Mt. 19:1-12, which is, in fact, more a reflection on Christian marriage than on scripture itself; see Frederick Norris, “Gregory Nazianzen: Constructing and Constructed by Scripture,” in *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity*, edited by Paul Blowers (Notre Dame: NDU Press, 1997) 149; Norris notes that the twelfth-century Elias of Crete attributes to Gregory a treatise called *The History of Ezechiel the Prophet*, which does not survive.


Such a study must engage Gregory’s poems on Scripture. Although these verses lack any sustained, penetrating exegesis, they do reveal some of Gregory’s basic assumptions in his approach to the sacred text. For their part, these attitudes are informed by Gregory’s broader account of his reasons for composing verse in order to do theology. Thus, some background on Gregory the poet will help us understand the motives and techniques that guide his particular contribution to early Christian biblical theology.
CHAPTER II. Gregory’s Biblical Poems

Gregory’s poetry and fourth-century Christian culture

Gregory explains his decision to compose verse in his poem II.1.39, “On Matters of Measure.” After describing how his enemies often mock his versifying, Gregory claims that writing poetry brings him four distinct advantages: first, it allows him some relief from the pressures of daily life; second, it shows the pagans that Christians can compose verse that is as accomplished as the ancient classics; third, poetry makes complicated theology more accessible and attractive to young audiences; fourth, it offers Gregory a certain consolation in his old age. To be sure, this list is not exhaustive and may be intentionally selective: scholars have detected a rather transparent apologetic motive for Gregory’s verse and for this “programmatic” poem in particular. Still, the third motive deserves special attention: Gregory uses verse in order to render abstract theology available and appealing to a broad, uneducated audience.

Here Gregory seems inspired by at least two models. The first is a standard trope in classical pedagogy. Pagan authors often defended didactic verse as a way to “sweeten” unpleasant ideas with entertaining and attractive literary ornament. Lucretius, for instance, defends his De Rerum Natura, a first-century BC exposition of Epicureanism, by appealing to the practice of sweetening medicine for a sick child: just as the child will not accept the pill unless it has been dipped in honey, so the unlettered...

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29 McGuckin, “Gregory: The Rhetorician as Poet,” 210 includes a fifth reason, based on ll.58-59: an invitation to the wise to enter Gregory’s mind.
audience will not embrace a philosophy that seems “bitter” unless it has first been sweetened by pleasant language and verse.31 The poetic form, then, offered clear rhetorical advantages in the transmission of Christian doctrine.

Second, Gregory’s poetic project resides in a wider Christian cultural program that emphasized the catechetical end of all literature. By the second half of the fourth century, Christian authors show a pressing concern to compile and communicate a coherent body of teaching both to their children, who were to be raised in a Christian milieu, and to catechumens, who were encountering the faith for the first time.32 The great mystagogies mark one attempt to create this corpus for large groups of initiates into the Christian faith, when eminent preachers such as Ambrose and Theodore of Mopsuestia introduced catechumens to the mysteries of the liturgy.33

Theologians were thus offering more systematic and unified accounts of Christian doctrine, including simple versions and summaries, often in verse, of the Church consensus on Christ’s divinity and belief in the Trinity. Such summaries were necessary not only for mass dissemination, but also to respond to rival teachings promoted by heretics. Ephrem the Syrian, for instance, saw his liturgical hymns as an orthodox alternative to the heretical doctrines of Bardaisan, the Marcionites, the Manicheans, and his contemporaries, the Arians.34 Gregory, then, was composing his verse just as the Church was generating a coherent body of paideia that was intended to supplement, if not

31 De Rerum Natura, 1.933 ff.; some form of the trope dates at least to Plato, Laws, 2.659e.
32 For an overview, see Antonio Quacquarelli, Reazione pagana e trasformazione della cultura (fine IV secolo. d.C.) (Bari: Edipuglia, 1986), esp. 125-142.
34 Indeed, the heretic Bardaisan, in order to promote his own doctrines, composed hymns, which appear to have been popular among those living in Mesopotamia and help account for the rapid spread of his peculiar brand of Christianity in the region during the third and fourth century.
replace, classical Greek learning and to render orthodox teaching in accessible form, in response to heretical threats.  

Some of these efforts, including Gregory’s didactic poems, may have also had a more proximate inspiration. In 362 Emperor Julian (“the Apostate”) issued his famous “School Law,” which forbade Christian educators to teach the pagan classics. According to contemporary sources, Julian passed the edict with the claim that Christians could not honestly teach pagan learning if they did not believe that it was true; since they rejected the pagan divinities, they would fail to communicate the central “faith” of pagan literature. In theory, at least, the law threatened Christians who were intent on political advancement and who were living in a culture where fluency in the classics was still essential social capital.

While the legislation was soon overturned after Julian’s early death in 363, the move seems to have aroused a Christian response that persisted for decades. The fifth-century historians Sozomen and Socrates report that Christian authors began to compose literature that rivaled classical texts in technique and artistry, while eliminating the pagan philosophy and mythology that those texts communicated. The most famous attempt came from a father and son, both named Apollinaris. The two, it seems, translated the

36 Julian’s law is recorded in *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.5; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus *Res Gestae*, 22.10.
38 See Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla*, 23 on Gregory’s response to Julian in *Or.* 4
39 It was the younger of the two would later gain notoriety for the eponymous heresy that denied the existence of a human soul in the Incarnate Christ.
entire Bible into the standard classical literary genres.\footnote{On the background, see Gianfranco Agosti, “L’epica biblica nella tarda antichità greca: autori e lettori nel IV e V secolo,” 67-101, in Francesco Stella, \textit{La Scrittura infinita: Bibbia e poesia in età medievale e umanistica} (Firenze: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001); P. Sneck, “A More Charitable Verdict: Review of N. G. Wilson, \textit{Scholars of Byzantium},” in id. \textit{Understanding Byzantium} (London: Ashgate, 2003), 163-178, argues that the account of the Apollinaris project is legendary.} Thus, they paraphrased the Old Testament according to the model of Homer and the tragedians, and made the New Testament into a Platonic dialogue.\footnote{Their paraphrases do not even seem to have survived into the fifth-century; later historians claim to have no first-hand experience of their verse. Indeed, John Zonaras in the twelfth century linked the Gregorian and Apollonarian efforts together; \textit{Epitome Historion} (61.13-62.4); see Simelidis, \textit{Selected Poems}, 26-27, who maintains that Gregory’s attempt comes in response to Apollonaris’ effort, as is stated by Gregory’s 6th/7th-century biographer, Gregory the Presbyter.} While the final product does not survive – perhaps because its authors were later linked to a Christological heresy – their effort provides an intriguing parallel with Gregory’s theological and scriptural poetry.\footnote{For a recent study, see David Meconi, S.J., “The Christian Cento and the Evangelization of Classical Culture,” \textit{Logos} 7:4 (2004): 109-131; Agosti, “L’epica biblica,” 74-77.} Other authors before Gregory had attempted biblical verse and paraphrases. The Latin author Juvenecus had already composed a gospel paraphrase early in the fourth century, but most biblical Christian verse appears after Julian’s School Law was overturned. For instance, the Latin cento of Proba, composed around 370, reworked phrases from Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid} to compose a Christian poem on the transcendence of God.\footnote{See Roger Green, \textit{Latin epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143-148.} Paulinus may have likewise intended his psalm paraphrases to respond to the threat and the indirect insult posed by Julian’s edict.\footnote{See Roger Green, \textit{Latin epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143-148.} Christians began to recognize that a common, aesthetically accomplished body of literature could communicate their faith to future generations while remaining unspoiled by pagan influence.
The poems on Scripture

Gregory’s poems on Scripture should be seen as part of this broader cultural project. To introduce neophytes and children to Christian culture, Church educators needed to present the basics of the scriptural narrative. Thus, while Gregory has left us very few examples of sophisticated exegesis and commentary – the kind of sophisticated engagement with Scripture that generally attracts scholarly attention – his scriptural poems show that he was concerned with the elementary steps in this pedagogical program.45

Scholars have long dismissed these poems not only because they seem elementary and easy, but also because Gregory’s scriptural verse, often little more than biblical paraphrase for quick memorization, can be dull. As Sykes puts it, they “show how tedious mnemonic verse can be.”46 Indeed, the metrical Latin translation of Gregory in the PG ends abruptly while Gregory is merely rendering the Matthaean and Lucan genealogies – name by name – in verse form; Billius, the sixteenth-century translator, decides to stop, “Because anyone can look for [these names] in the Gospels, and because they consist entirely of Hebrew names, from which you can hardly say how far the Latin Muses recoil.”47 The bland and monotonous verse utterly fails to match Gregory’s rhetorical skill in his greatest orations and letters.


46 Sykes, Poemata Arcana, 58.

47 Nobis eamdem, carminibus exprimere minime placuit, tum qui cuivos ab evangelisit petere licet, tum quia tota Hebraicis nominibus constat, a quibus vix dici potest, quantum Latinae musae abhorreant [my translation]; PG 37.485, n.60.
Yet they deserve closer attention. While the final version may seem disappointing, the process of composition must have been rigorous and demanding. This rigor is precisely one of the reasons that Gregory gives for writing verse in the first place, as he notes in his programmatic poem “On Matters of Measure”: choosing his words carefully helps him control his language in general (II.1.39, 35-37). These scriptural poems, like much of his verse, are models of verbal asceticism.  

A **“helpful plaything for children”**  

Moreover, Gregory’s precision and control aim at a simplicity that fosters memorization and understanding. Lengthy gospel pericopes are rendered in one or two lines of hexameter or elegiacs so that they might be retained more easily as discrete moments in a catalogue. Gregory often repeats vocabulary, including simple words and phrases such as μέγας and Χριστός ἀναξ, poetic formulae that would help a student commit the verse to memory. He will place similar phrases in the same metrical position, which thus become easy for the student to organize in parallel with identical patterns.  

There is some hint that Gregory’s meter itself is more easily memorized. Gregory’s hexameters are especially dactylic, that is, each foot is very often resolved into dactyls, rather than left as long spondees. Homer’s verse, for instance, usually pairs two dactyls with every spondee, while in Gregory the ratio is more like 5 to 1. In the poems on Scripture, the ratio is even higher, around 6 resolved dactyls for every

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49 Basil (*Greater Rule* 15.2; *PG* 31.953) and Jerome (ep. 107.4) both encourage committing the miracles and genealogies to memory; see Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 175.  
50 On “concision” as the main feature of Gregory’s poetry, see Trisoglio, *Gregorio il Teologo*, 185.  
51 Simelidis, *Selected Poems*, 56. gives some statistics on the patterns and frequencies of dactyls in the corpus.  
Gregory’s preference for resolved dactyls in these poems appears at least to help students recite or even sing the verses more readily.

Gregory is not simply content to make his didactic verse easily accessible and committed to memory. Following the established method of didactic verse, these poems incorporate certain ornaments to make them more pleasant. In this way, Gregory sprinkles his verse with delicate linguistic markers that encourage some familiarity with classical learning, so central to Gregory’s own formation. He introduces his audience not only to the outlines of Scripture, but also to certain arcane elements of classical literature. Although they may not suit every grown-up’s taste, his poems are, as he puts it, “a helpful plaything for children.”

**The pedagogical order of the poems on Scripture**

Further evidence for this pedagogical end appears in the probable original order of these poems. Borrowing from a suggestion of Roberto Palla, I present them in my translation organized as a sequence that would help a student memorize the central scriptural narrative. This order, I propose, would teach the student that exegesis should end in a personal engagement with the word of God as the source of salvation. Moreover, this strategy appears elsewhere in Gregory’s poetry, revealing something of Gregory’s approach to Scripture in general: God’s self-revelation must not remain

53 To be sure, the recitation of ancient quantitative verse cannot be immediately conflated with modern experience of poetry, with its stress accents that tend to have an effect of impression through repetition. See Milovanovic-Barham, “Gregory of Nazianzus: Ars Poetica,” 497-510.

54 ἐσθλὸν ἄθυρμα νέοις, 1.2.31. Cf. 2.1.39, 39 ff.: Gregory also says that poetry is a τερπνὸν . . . φάρμακον (“a pleasant medicine”) for himself.
propositional, historical, and remote, but must be appropriated personally by each believer.  

Manuscript and stylistic evidence suggests that the scriptural poems were originally intended as a set for students. All but three of the poems are preserved together, as a set known by consensus as Group III. To this Group, a paraphrase important for understanding the manuscript history, Paraphrase A, has been transmitted. The addition of the paraphrase suggests that while later generations valued this set of poems, they could not always understand vocabulary that was obsolete by the eighth or ninth century. As further evidence for this catechetical motivation for the manuscript transmission, the Antiochos manuscript at Keio University contains paraphrases of four poems of this Group, suggesting that they were seen as a unit by later generations.

Lexica were often appended to these paraphrases, apparently to help the student grasp the sophisticated language of the scriptural poems, while he used the paraphrase to follow its outlines.

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55 This parallels his well-known autobiographical style and tendency to apply scriptural morals to himself, especially in his biblical interpretation; see Daley, “Walking through the Word,” 519-520; for a somewhat skeptical view of that persona, see McLynn, “A Self-Made Holy Man,” 463-483.


57 According to the system developed by H. Werhahn, who gives the standard manuscript reconstruction in preparation for the critical edition. Werhahn organized the manuscript Groups in preparation for the critical edition, which has yet to be completed; doctoral students under his direction have periodically published their editions of individual poems as dissertations.

58 I.1.12, I.1.13, I.1.19, I.1.14; see Simelidis, Selected Poems, 78; their pedagogical use is supported by the claim of Demetrios Chalcondyles (1423-1511) that Gregory’s poems replaced Greek erotic poetry; see Simelidis, Select Poems, 78, on the veracity of this Renaissance account.

59 That is, the Lexicon Casinense, in D. Kalamakis, Λεξικά τῶν ἐπών Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου μετὰ γενικῆς θεωρήσεως τῆς πατερικῆς λεξικογραφίας (Athens: Papadakis, 1992) and In sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni carmina lexicon Casinense, in Athena 81 (1990-6), 256-299; Simelidis, Selected Poems, 79.
The manuscripts that transmit the poems of Group III, then, probably indicate an older order of the poems, which does not match that found in the *PG*. Palla shows that in the earliest manuscripts, both Greek and Syriac, a unit of thirteen biblical poems appears in a consistent sequence that differs from three other biblical poems printed with them in the *PG*.\(^{60}\) According to Palla’s reconstruction, we have the poem on the genuine books of Scripture, followed by three poems listing major moments of the Pentateuch, that is, the Ten Commandments, the ten plagues of Egypt, and the twelve patriarchs. Next we find a lengthier treatment of the events of the New Testament, beginning with two poems on the genealogy of Christ. Then follows a poem on the miracles in Matthew (I.1.20) and the parables in Matthew (I.1.24), the miracles in Mark (I.1.21, 1-16) and the parables in Mark (I.1.25, 1/2.4), the miracles in Luke (I.1.25, 5/6 + I.1.22, 3-20) and the parables in Luke (I.1.26), and the miracles in John (I.1.23).\(^{61}\) No poem on the parables in John survives, and instead, in eighth place, we have a longer, more sophisticated poem on the parables of all four Gospels. This last poem, discussed below, departs in style and content from the paraphrases of the first seven. Moreover, the New Testament poems take distinct forms: the poems on miracles are introduced with a couplet, while those on parables are introduced with a single line, suggesting a sequential pairing of the poems in the set.

\(^{60}\) Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 176, assures us that the details of his research were in the course of publication as monograph when his article on the biblical poems was written; I can find no record of the published volume.

\(^{61}\) Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 182 remains uncertain whether Mark preceded Luke in this ordering, but concludes that it is not especially pertinent to the basic claim.
Style and themes of the poems on Scripture

The carefully chosen language of these poems would prepare students not only to remember the outlines of Scripture, but also to introduce them to vocabulary and constructions that would help them grasp classical learning, namely, the Hellenistic paideia in which Gregory himself was formed.\textsuperscript{62} Employing Homeric and Callimachean words, even when metrically equivalent, biblical alternatives were available, Gregory was preparing his students to engage the pagan classics, but from a Christian point of view. Indeed, in literature, especially in late antiquity, where a single word could signal a myriad of allusions, Gregory was introducing his audience to the very strategies of textual reference. Drawing especially from searches in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, I note such references and allusions in the commentary.

While I offer closer analysis in the commentary of all the scriptural poems, in this introduction I present the longest in the series on miracles, which treats the material from Matthew (I.1.20), as an adequate sample of the sort of verse that appears throughout the first seven in the series. In I.1.20 Gregory systematically lists each miracle that appears in the text. While he sometimes misses passages that report miracles and elsewhere seems to conflate the Matthaean accounts with those of Luke and Mark, he is otherwise thorough in organizing the material.

The opening five lines reveal Gregory’s approach:

The marvels of the book of Matthew, just so many as Christ the king performed, mixed, in a mortal body.  
First he relieved the piercing sickness of the leper (Mt 8:1-4).  
Next he bound the limbs of the centurion’s slave (Mt 8:5-13).  
Then third he quenched the fever of Peter’s mother-in-law by hand (Mt 8:14-15).

\textsuperscript{62} On Gregory’s language in general, see Simelidis, Selected Poems, 47-54.
Gregory presents a concise summary of the miracles following the order they take in Matthew. He leads us through until the twentieth miracle, when he moves to the cursing of the fig tree (Mt 21:18-20) and the Passion and Resurrection. In thirty-eight highly wrought verses, Gregory gives us the gospel, or, at least, its greatest hits, in its simplest form.

Like the other poems in this collection, the poem on the miracles in Matthew could be easily memorized. Gregory compresses the biblical account of each event by selecting only the most essential details and the most resonant vocabulary. The reading remains entirely literal; Gregory uses no allegories and finds no typologies in the passages. He employs precise language that communicates the scriptural referent in metrical form. One instance from many: the eighth miracle in his list is the healing of the leader’s daughter (“Jairus” in Mark): “Eight, the ruler’s daughter found the light” (l.10; cf. Mt 9:25). The six-line Gospel account is rendered in four words, as the pentameter in an elegiac couplet. Gregory subtly alludes to the peculiar context of the miracle by referring to the daughter “finding the light,” rather than, perhaps, “being raised from the dead.” The ruler’s daughter, we remember, was not accounted dead by Jesus, but merely sleeping. Scriptural vocabulary likewise fixes the citation. Thus he cites a form of the verb σεληνιάζεται directly from Matthew 17:15 to refer to epilepsy (or, more literally, “lunacy”), a word that only occurs in Matthew.63 The unusual word will signal an entire passage for more sophisticated listeners.

As in all the poems on Scripture, Gregory’s careful use of meter would help a student retain the verses. In citing Matthew’s account of the epileptic, Gregory knows

63 Also at Mt 4:24.
that the original form of the word for the disease will never fit the hexameter; Gregory changes the verb “being a lunatic” to the adjectival “having the lunatic sickness” and can thereby use the adjectival form σεληναίης. His shifts in meter – from dactylic hexameter to elegiac couplets to iambic trimeter, sometimes in the same poem – again foster the memorization of these outlines of the Gospels.\(^{64}\)

At the same time, even in this rather dull, didactic verse, Gregory exposes his audience to classical vocabulary. Gregory intentionally archaizes his verse, employing epic language when he has adequate contemporary equivalents at hand. Rather than the standard late Greek verbs for creating or doing, Gregory often employs the Homeric πόρω.\(^{65}\) He likewise uses epic spellings; the second word of the poem, βιβλοίο, is a variant genitive for the standard βιβλίου.\(^{66}\) To be sure, his choice may respond to metrical exigencies, but the approach also allows the verse to teach the young reader classical forms.

We find the same approach in the other six poems on the gospels miracles and parables. Like the poem on the miracles in Matthew, these poems reveal the basics of Gregory’s catechetical strategy.

**“The Parables of Christ According to All the Evangelists” (I.1.27)**

The final poem in the gospel series departs from the previous seven. Here Gregory no longer paraphrases Scripture, but rather presents a personal encounter with the Gospel parables. Writing in the first person, Gregory rereads twenty-nine of the

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\(^{64}\) To be sure, Gregory’s writings include many “false quantities,” especially by treating accented short syllables as long and unaccented longs as short; see Simelidis, *Selected Poems*, 54-57; Carmelo Crimi, “Il problema delle ‘false quantities’ de Gregorio Nazianzeno alla luce della tradizione manoscritta di un carmen I, 2, 10 De Virtute,” *Siculorum Gymnasium* 25 (1972) 1-26.

\(^{65}\) E.g. I.1.20, l.11.

\(^{66}\) I.1.20, l.1; spellings throughout the poems show frequent poetic variations.
parables that he has just presented in the previous scriptural verses. By concluding the collection with this “final prayer,” as Palla calls it, Gregory offers a clue to his approach to Scripture in general: he teaches his audience that Scripture must be personally appropriated to be learned at all.

In I.1.27, Gregory offers a series of petitions, praises, and laments that relate himself immediately to the Gospel parables. He opens the poem by using the language of parables to ask God for support: he worries that his foundation might be placed on sand (Mt 7:24-27); he could be the seed sown among the thorns or under the direct heat of the sun (Mt 13:3-6). He then praises the mustard seed for the marvelous symbolism it contains (Mt 13:31-32). He adds another petition for help, to be fished from the sea of troubles, and not to be thrown overboard with the useless catch (Mt 13:47-50). He includes some exegesis, such as his own clarification of the parable of the two sons who were asked to work in the vineyard (Mt 21:28-32): the one who works in the garden after saying he would not is obviously greater than the one who says he would and does not do so. “But,” Gregory adds, “greater in my eyes, and more pleasing than both to the father is the one who receives the command, and carries out the wish” (ll. 36-41). He places himself at the heart of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14), repeating the phrase, “May I take part in this!” He adds for his readers: “As well as whoever is my friend!” Gregory’s passion for God’s word draws him to the heart of the Scripture, where he invites the audience to join him. The parables recorded by the evangelists are not mere accounts of

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67 With a section reprised in another poem (“Exhortation to virgins,” I.2.2); see Demoen, Biblical and Pagan Exempla, 188, who argues that the reprised portion is original to I.1.27.
69 Κρείσσων μὲν ἐμοὶ, γλυκίων δὲ τοιῇ Ἀμφοτέρον, ὃς ἔδεκτο, καὶ ἐξέτέλεσεν ἐέλδωρ (ll.40-42; PG 37.501).
70 τοῦτο δ’ ἀντιάσαμι ἔγογς (l.44; PG 37.501).
71 καὶ ὃς φίλος ἐστίν ἐμοῖν! (1.45; PG 37.502).
Christ’s teaching on earth. They are “about” Gregory and those who read Scripture as Gregory does.

Moreover, the very structure of the poem introduces the reader to the project of personalizing Scripture. There is a regular, reliable pattern: the first half of each unit summarizes the argument of the parable, including any salient details and vocabulary; the second half applies the moral to the author of the poem and, by implication, to the reader.

For instance, Gregory presents the parable of the fishermen and the catch:

I know as well the world that falls within the net, which, on command from Christ the king, while sailing, the fishers of men surround by casting out the net, so as to drag them from ocean depths, and then to bid those swimming on the bitter waves of this life to come to Christ. But when you judge the catch, dividing it in half may you not cast me far away, as though I were a useless fish, but place me safe in baskets, guarded by the king. (ll. 24-31)

Gregory shifts from presenting the literal or historical reading of the passage to the moral interpretation. His student, arriving at poem I.1.27 after the series of poems on Scripture, would be prepared to receive this method of reading Scripture as he received the content of the Gospels. Not only would the student learn a catalogue of stories, but he would also absorb a way of reading them.

The pedagogy of this concluding poem corresponds to the exhortation that probably served as a preface to the collection, Gregory’s poem on the genuine books on Scripture. Gregory opens the poem by reminding his audience to devote their lives to Scripture:

Let your mind and your tongue always dwell among the divine words. For God has given this prize for your struggles, a little light to see even some hidden thing, or what is best, to be spurred on by the pure God’s great commands,
or third, by these concerns you draw your heart from earthly things.\textsuperscript{72}

God’s words are not abstract laws or norms of conduct, but rather they “spur on” Gregory and the Christian who reads them rightly.

**Personal reading of Scripture in other poems**

This practice appears throughout Gregory’s poetic corpus, whenever he encourages a robust and personal appropriation of Scripture.\textsuperscript{73} Examples abound, some more sophisticated than others. Often Gregory merely applies biblical exempla to himself. In his poem on the Silence during Lent (II.1.34), for instance, Gregory refers to the sons of Aaron and Uzzah, who were punished for impurity in offering sacrifice; Gregory prays, “I tremble dreadfully at these things and fear that I will suffer/ for not being pure when touching upon the pure Trinity” (ll. 103-104).\textsuperscript{74} Here Gregory takes the Old Testament exempla as a warning against allowing the impure to approach anything holy, thereby extending the rules for ritual purity to the object of theology itself, that is, the divine Trinity. Moreover, the object of the warning is not “priests” in general, but Gregory in particular.

In other cases, Gregory actually identifies with a personality in Scripture, making himself the object of the narrative. Writing on the soul, Gregory refers to the Word’s creation of the human being in Genesis 2, yet applies the story to the creation of his own soul: “Then he took up a portion of new-formed earth/ and with immortal hands set up

\textsuperscript{72} I.1.14, l.1-4
\textsuperscript{73} Daley, “Walking through the Word of God,” 519-520; see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 248 who discusses the “characteristic of the Antiochene” to expect that every tale had a moral ordered to the improvement of the reader; also Ackermann, *Die didaktische poesie*, 66-82.
\textsuperscript{74} Trans. White, *Autobiographical Poems*, 173.
my shape, to which he then imparted his own life.”

God not only created Adam in Genesis; He made Gregory, and, by extension, the reader reciting the poem who identifies with the first person. In concluding his poem on the Two Covenants (I.1.9), he refers the theological reason for the double covenant to his own condition: if he were capable of fulfilling the Old Law, he would have had no need for the New;

But now, since God did not make me a god, but fashioned me inclinable both ways, and slanted, he therefore supports me, along with many others, who possess one grace of the baptism given to men.

The New Law is more than an abstract instruction; God sent the Church and sacraments to help sinners, and to help Gregory above all.

Recognizing the presence of this exegetical strategy elsewhere in Gregory’s verse helps us better understand his poetry as a whole. The pervasive interiority of the poems can occasionally suggest a certain self-absorption and narcissism. As Gregory himself puts it in Oration 26: “I have a habit of relating everything to my own situation.”

Scholars have argued convincingly that Gregory deployed this strategy in his autobiographical verse to impress potential allies with his personal sanctity and thereby to defend his theological positions against his rivals’ attacks; by emphasizing his spiritual and saintly credentials, Gregory indirectly justifies the doctrine he champions. Gregory makes a point of presenting his own life in terms of the life of Christ in the Gospels: like

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75 I.1.8, ll. 70-72; Ὄς ἀρ’ ἐφη, καὶ μοίραν ἐλὸν νεοπηγέος αἰής, Χεῖρος ἀθανάτησαν ἐμὴν ἑσφήσατο μοισφήν; Τῇ δ’ ἀρ’ ἐν ἐδορίς μοισφήσατο; trans. Gilbert, On God and Man, 65.
76 I.1.9, ll. 85-88; Νῦν δ’, οὖ γὰρ μὲ θεόν τευχὲν Θεός, ἀλλὰ μ’ ἐπηξὲν Ἀμφιμηπῖ, χαίτον τε, το καὶ πλεόνεσσιν ἐρείδει, Ὡν ἐν καὶ λοιπών θροομέοις χάρις; trans. Gilbert, On God and Man, 74.
77 This approach, I believe, informs the orations as well, where series of biblical exempla are readily organized to apply to Gregory’s particular audience. It would be helpful to examine the effect that the shift from the first-person emphasis of the poems to the second person in the orations and letters has on Gregory’s technique. All this is beyond the present thesis.
78 Cited by Demoen, Pagan and Biblical Exempla, 289.
Jesus, Gregory suffers persecution; like Jesus, Gregory sails on a turbulent sea; like Jesus, he goes into the desert; the list of parallels is extensive. Gregory may well contrive to present himself as a holy man, that is, an unimpeachable authority in matters of the faith and, indeed, in matters of politics as well.

Yet we should not go on to assume that Gregory is somehow in bad faith when he speaks of his own life in terms of the life of Christ. The personal appropriation of Scripture in his poems (and, likewise, in his orations and letters) is not necessarily some disingenuous construction aimed to shore up his personal power. The presence of this strategy in the scriptural verse, aimed at educating children, shows the extent of his commitment to this sort of exegesis. Close study of the structure of corpus presented in my study suggests that Gregory believed everyone, from the youngest child to his learned audiences to Gregory himself, the advanced Christian, should read the Gospels in this personal way. The culmination of individual study of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ must be the personal embrace of that life.

**Date and Place of Composition**

Scholars generally date the bulk of Gregory’s didactic poetry to the later portion of his career, after his departure from Constantinople and his return to his native Arianzus in 382.\(^\text{80}\) This general consensus emerges from consideration both of Gregory’s references to his advanced age in some of the poems and of the historical circumstances that would have allowed Gregory the leisure to compose verse; in other words, Gregory had to be away from public life for an extended period of time to accomplish this task. While some of the theological verse probably dates from earlier periods and even

\(^{80}\) Sykes, *Poemata Arcana*, 60 ff., argues convincingly for this date and setting.
immediately following Julian’s School Edict in 362, Gregory seems to have engaged the pursuit more intentionally only in his later career.

Little internal evidence appears in the scriptural poems to help us fix the date of their composition. As noted earlier, they may have been partly inspired by Julian’s School Edict, but Christians continued to respond directly or indirectly to that infamous legislation well into the fifth century. One clue may help fix the place of composition of at least one of the poems. In poem I.1.27, the summarizing poem on all the miracles, Gregory writes of himself “walking from Christopolis.” This reference (literally, “the city of Christ”) may render the name for Gregory’s home estate, Karbala, where he retired after returning from Constantinople.\(^{81}\) If we may presume that he wrote this poem around the time he composed the others that survive in Group III, it seems safe to place Gregory in the region for the composition of this verse.

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\(^{81}\) *Orbis Latinus* online, [http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/Graesse/orblate.html](http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/Graesse/orblate.html), accessed 9 September 2009. However, the name may also refer more generically to his monastery.
CHAPTER III. Conclusion

Close study of these biblical poems shows Gregory at his most deliberate and elementary. As such, they witness to what Gregory viewed as most essential to his broader cultural project. These are the ABCs of his theology, or, at least, of his approach to teaching scripture. At the same time, they are, to some extent, the ABCs of his poetry as well. When viewed within Gregory’s broader theological project, the poems on Scripture are not simply occasional or frivolous entertainments. Linguistic and metrical markers show that they were meant to be accessible and easily put to memory, with some light stylistic touches enlivening the project for young learners. Yet a more serious hermeneutical claim undergirds Gregory’s efforts: meditation on the Scriptures applies the teachings of revelation to the individual’s condition. Amidst the debates over Gregory’s preference for Alexandrian allegory or Antiochene “plain” reading,82 close attention to these poems reveals that, irrespective of his exegetical preference, Gregory the Theologian was trained to turn the words of Scripture on himself, and looked to share his training with a new students of the Bible.

Of course, one may dismiss didactic verse out of hand as somehow substandard, vulgarizing propaganda. Yet Gregory’s poems were remarkably effective, both pedagogically and aesthetically. For the Byzantines their value in the classroom was never questioned. Since their composition, these poems were recognized as a ready source for instructive and edifying material, and used to teach Christian students. Not only were they transmitted continuously among the Byzantines and appeared frequently in the schools, they were extremely popular among the Renaissance humanists, edited

82 For some background to this debate, see Demoen, The Bible and Greek Classics, 237-267.
and translated even more thoroughly than the pagan classics. Indeed, Aldus, the first editor of the poems, esteems them for their capacity for educating young people in Christian virtue and theological discourse, “useful for living blessedly and well.”

At a time when theological literacy and familiarity with Scripture is at an unprecedented low, we might do well to retrieve some of Gregory’s zeal for composing a program of Christian formation that transmits the essentials of the faith while incorporating elements of our Western cultural heritage, just as Gregory incorporated Homer and Callimachus into his scriptural poems. We might look to fashion a method of communicating the truths of the faith that is somehow “a sweet plaything,” yet which does not however compromise theological rigor.

Alternatively, Gregory’s approach shows the importance of a holistic approach to scripture. In an age when biblical scholarship tends to fragment the sacred text into sources and forms, we do well to follow the Theologian’s model. Reading the Bible as a broad and coherent narrative, we come closer to the attitude that the ancients maintained, the Bible as a unified book.

Text and commentary

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83 The first edition of Gregory’s poems was from Aldus Manutius in 1504; see Edwards, “Christian Alexandrianism,” 24-27.
84 Edwards, “Christian Alexandrianism,” 25
85 The Internet provides one venue for such a project; various “rhyming Bible” projects have emerged. See, for instance, http://www.kyleholt.com/the-bible-in-rhyme (accessed 13 November 2009).
Producing the critical edition of Gregory’s poems has proven a very slow and cumbersome project, first begun in Poland in 1905. Since 1981, a group of scholars at the University of Münster under the direction of Dr. Martin Sicherl has been laboring to produce the stemmata of the various Groups of the poems in preparation for publishing a comprehensive edition. While some of their conclusions have been published, much work remains. By a certain irony, especially concerning the lack of attention to Gregory’s poems in the past century, much of the difficulty in producing the critical edition arises from Gregory’s unparalleled popularity in the Byzantine era: so many manuscripts exist and appear to have mutually influenced subsequent copies that it is difficult to establish priority in order to generate an accurate and comprehensive stemma of the poems’ manuscripts.

For this reason, I must rely on Migne’s text from the *Patrologia Graeca*, based on the edition of the Maurists under the direction of Dom Caillau. I print this below my English translation. In a few instances I mention alternative readings in order to suggest changes in the translation. Still, the essential element of this project is the translation; closer manuscript study is impossible.

Except for I.1.12, “On the genuine books of Scripture,” none of these poems, to my knowledge, has been translated into any modern language. The *PG*, however, prints two Latin translations below the Greek. The first is a line-by-line literal rendering of the original, made by the Maurist editors. I occasionally refer to their suggestions where the Greek is ambiguous or inscrutable. The second version is a verse translation from Billius

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88 For a summary of the history of research on the editions, including the relevance of Syriac translations, see Simelidis, *Select Poems*, 88-99; for the stemma for Group, see Höllger, *Die handschriftliche überlieferung*, vol. 2, 180.
(Jacques de Billy), an aristocrat, humanist, and monk (1535-1581), who translated Gregory within the broader cultural project of the Counter-Reformation.\textsuperscript{89} This text is both learned and loose, and therefore less useful to me as I attempt a literal and accurate rendition.

The translations here will be the poems from Group III, along with the three additional biblical poems that the \textit{PG} inserts. From the \textit{PG} these are poems I.1.12-15 and I.1.18-27. I follow the general order of the Group, beginning the series with I.1.12, “On the Genuinely Inspired Books of Scripture,” and then printing I.1.14 (the plagues of Egypt), I.1.15 (the Decalogue), I.1.13 (the twelve Patriarchs), followed by the poems of the NT, that is, I.1.19 (the twelve Apostles), I.1.18 (on the genealogies of Christ), and then the poems on the miracles and the parables, which I print in gospel order, that is Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.\textsuperscript{90} One poem in this group has been previously translated into English and received special scholarly attention for its value as a witness to the canon of scripture in the late fourth century.\textsuperscript{91}

In most of the poems, I have attempted to be as faithful to the Greek as possible.\textsuperscript{92} This of course results in an English version that is not especially poetic and even, at times, stilted. Still, I decided that close attention to the specifics of Gregory’s vocabulary would be more helpful for scholars interested in his influences and theological intentions. At the same time, I have kept the meter loosely iambic to communicate something of the

\textsuperscript{89} On Billius, see Edwards, “Christian Alexandrianism,” 33-43.
\textsuperscript{90} The order in the most reliable manuscripts (e.g. \textit{Laurentianus pluteus VII}), see Bady “Ordre et desordre,” 343.
\textsuperscript{91} In Gilbert, \textit{On God and Man}, 85-86.
flow of the verses that Gregory suggests by his rather “bouncy” hexameters. I am rather free in translating certain particles and conjunctions. In particular, I will ignore καί for my own metrical reasons when Gregory seems to use the conjunction metri causa. In one instance, the miracles of Mark, I have offered a version that rhymes, in an attempt to evoke the didactic effect that Gregory intended for these verses. Whether the poetry is appealing or even bearable I leave for the reader to decide. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to match Gregory’s literary competence in English verse.

In the commentary that follows the translation, I pay special attention to the themes discussed in this introduction. After introducing each poem, I note Gregory’s classical and scriptural vocabulary, metrical oddities and their relationship to the pedagogical end of the poems, and distinctive interpretations that Gregory offers for the scriptural citation. In particular, I indicate the ways that Gregory: 1. uses biblical terms to signal the original text that he is paraphrasing or referring to; 2. employs classical, especially epic and Hellenistic, vocabulary to enliven his verse and to expose his students’ to new words; 3. modifies spellings and meter to achieve a further classicizing effect; 4. orders his poems to culminate in a personal reading. Biblical citations are inserted directly in the poems for ease of reference.
CHAPTER IV. The Poems

1.1.12. On the genuine books of divinely inspired Scripture (*PG 37.472-474*)

O let your mind and tongue dwell among divine phrases. For God has given this reward for the effort, a little light even to see some hidden thing, or, best, to be spurred on by the pure God’s awesome commands, or third, by these concerns you draw your heart from earthly things. and that your mind might not be stolen by strange books (for they are all full of interpolated evils) receive, my friend, this list of mine of the approved number. For there are together twelve books of history that treat the more ancient Hebrew wisdom. The first is Genesis, then Exodus, then Leviticus, then Numbers, then Deuteronomy then Joshua, Judges, and Ruth is eighth, the ninth and tenth books are the acts of the Kings. And Chronicles. Then last you have Ezra. And then five books of verse of which the first is Job; then the book of David; then the three books of Solomon: Ecclesiastes, the Canticle, and Proverbs. Likewise there are five books of the prophetic spirit, twelve together are in a single text: Hosea, Amos, and Micah is third,
then Joel, then Jonah, then Obadiah,
then Nahum, then Habakkuk, then Zephaniah,
then Haggai, then Zachariah, then Malachi
25 these are all one. The second is Isaiah.
Jeremiah, then, called from the womb,
then Ezekiel, and then the grace of Daniel.
I have set down twenty-two Old books,
equal in number to the Hebrews’ alphabet,
30 Come then and number [the books] of the new mystery,
Matthew wrote the marvels of Jesus for the Jews.
Mark for Italy, Luke for Greece,
John, the great herald, heaven-haunting, wrote for all.
Next the Acts of the wise apostles,
35 and then the letters, fourteen of Paul,
then seven catholic, with one from James,
two from Peter, three from John again;
Jude’s is seventh. You have them all.
If it’s anything else, then it’s not genuine.

Περί τῶν γνησίων βιβλίων τῆς θεοπνεύστου Γραφῆς.
Θείος ἐν λογίσαιν ἄει γλώσσην τε νόῳ τε
Στριφάσθ’, ἢ γὰρ ἔδωκε Θεὸς καμάτων τόδ’ ἄεθλον,
Καὶ τι χρυστόν ἰδεῖν ἐλέγον φασό, ἢ τόδ’ ἀφινόν,
Νύπτεοθα καθαρότα Θεοῦ μεγάλην ἐφετειάς.
5. Ἡ τρίτατον, χθονίων ἀπάγειν φρένα ταῖαθει μερίμναις.
Ὡφρα δὲ μὴ ἔξενησί νόον κλέπτου βιβλίουι
(Πολλά γὰρ τελέσθαι παρέγγυσι παχότητες),
Δέχνουσι τοῦτον ἐμείο τὸν ἐγκριτον, ὦ φιλ’ ἀφινόμον.
Ἰστορικαί μὲν ἦσει βιβλίαι δυοκαϊδεκα πάσαι
10 Τῆς ἄρχαισατος Ἑβραϊκῆς σοφίας.
Πρώτη, Γένεσις, εἶτ’ Ἐξόδος, Λευιτικόν.
Always number the plagues of evil-hearted Egypt,
so that you might tremble before [God’s] great might.
First the water of the land became red with blood (Ex 7:20).
Second [Egypt] poured forth ruinous frogs (Ex 8:6).
5 Then, third, the earth and the sky were hidden by gnats (Ex 8:16)
and fourth of a sudden the dog-fly appeared (Ex 8:24).
Fifth, a murderous plague struck four-legged creatures (Ex 9:5).
Boils on the bodies of men is the sixth distress (Ex 9:10).
The seventh, hail fell amidst the fire, an untempered downpour (Ex 9:23).
10 The eighth, everything green was killed by locusts (Ex 10:15).
Ninth, night veiled the Egyptian plain (Ex 10:22).

And the tenth trial was the death of the first-born (Ex 11:29-30).

**Ἡ τοῦ Μωϋσέως Δεκάλογος.**
Τοὺς δὲ νόμους ἐγγράφει Θεὸς δέκα ἐν ποτε πλαξὶ Λαΐναν: οὐ δὲ μοι ἔγγραφε τῇ κραδίᾳ.
Οὐ γνώσῃ Θεὸν ἄλλον, ἐπεὶ σέβας οἶον ἑνός γε. Οὐ στήσεις ἱνδαλμα κενόν, καὶ ἀπνοον εἰκὼ.

I.1.15. **The Decalogue of Moses (PG 37.476-477)**

God once inscribed these Ten Commandments in marble tablets

but You, write [them] on my heart.

You shall not know another God, since you honor only one (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7).

You shall not erect a useless facade and a lifeless image (Ex 20:4-6; Dt 5:8-10)

5 You shall never recall the lofty God in vain (Ex 20:7; Dt 5:11).

Observe every Sabbath, it rises and then fades (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15).

Blessed are you if you do homage to your parents, as is right (Ex 20:12; Dt:16).

To flee the guilt of a murderous hand (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17), and of another’s marriage bed (Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18), evil-minded theft (Ex 20:15; Dt 5:19), and false

10 witness (Ex 20:16; Dt 5:20), and desire for what belongs to others (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21)
is the spark of death.
I.1.13. The Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob (PG 37.475)

Twelve are the forefathers, born of Jacob, the great father:

Ruben and Simeon and Levi, and, in addition to them, Judas (Gn 29:31-35);
and then after them the bastards, Dan, Naphtali (Gn 30:4-8), Gad and Asher (Gn 30:9-12).

And, again, the noble ones born of the betrothed spouses, were Issachar,

Zaboulon (Gn 30:17-20), and Joseph (Gn 30:23) and last Benjamin (Gn 35:18).

I.1.19. The Disciples of Christ (PG 37.487)

Twelve were the disciples of Christ the great God

Peter and Andrew and John and James.

Fifth was Philip. Sixth, Bartholomew,

Matthew, and Thomas. Then James son of Alphaeus.

And Jude, and Simon. Then the other Judas not to be mentioned.
I.1.18. On the genealogy of Christ (PG 37.480-487)

Tell me, how did the great Matthew insert one version of the lineage
in the Scriptures and the noble Luke another,
which trace Christ from a first parent’s blood?
How did the former count in many ancestors, while the latter in few?
5 Until King David the lineage’s flow in both cases
is unbroken. Afterwards its flow splits, but then comes together in the end,
so that it leads to Christ, the boundless sea.
Thus take heed, and be convinced by my account:
the sons of David were Solomon and Nathan, the first who drew
10 the royal blood as though a stream from a great river,
the latter was one of the holy and most brilliant priests.
But Christ had both, a great king, and a high priest.
But therefore Matthew inspired by God the Spirit wrote of the sons of
Solomon, while Luke rushed up to Nathan.
15 From the two lineages, the one a grander, the other
smaller, we come upon the flowing stream. No great wonder.
For it’s not smaller; rather, unequal is the number of the generations.
Thus the first generations split, but then they are gathered into one.
But tell me this as well, how can Joseph be the son of two fathers?
20 There was a law of Moses that when a Hebrew died
sonless, some brother of the dead man or one
near to him in kinship, straightway taking his dear wife and his property,
begat a child for the dead and added to his house,
so that his name might not perish among humanity.
25 Thus I uncovered this, hidden above, within the Mortal God.
Matthan coming from the lineage of Solomon, married Estha.
But when he died, a son of Nathan named Melchi did marry,
she bore a son Jacob to Matthan, and a son Heli to Melchi.
But when Heli died, since he left no offspring,
Jacob, even though of a different father
30 immediately took his home and begot a prized son Joseph for his brother.
In this way Joseph would be his [i.e., Jacob’s], but the law would assign him to the other
[i.e., Heli].

So of the evangelists Matthew spoke about nature
but Luke spoke about the law.

35 Stop dissecting the lovely harmony.
How did God bring him to King David, since
the immortal God appeared from the mortal mother? And from Joseph,
how does this work? For he was the son of a virgin, from Mary,
a Levite. For Mary was from the blood of Aaron.
40 An angel is a witness for us, when, proclaiming the birth of the Forerunner,
at lofty light, to the Godlike mother (Lk 1:36),
he traced both mothers back to great Aaron.
The kings’ tribe might seem unmixed, so too the priests’,
but that’s not true. For though the tribes divided, they often
45 mixed again. Once Nahshon, who was sixth in descent from Judah
took the daughter of great Aaron into his lofty home.

But later when the sword of the Assyrians
destroyed the city, and Babylon overturned all her laws,
no blood distinction of the tribes was thence observed.

50 Thus indeed one went up to the kingship through the mother.

I bid you tell how this might lead from the apparent father.

Since when Augustus was king, the census inscribed all,
but some were inscribed in others’ paternal cities.

So they reached of a sudden the land dear to David,

55 Bethlehem, who received the great Christ in her bosom,
both the lovely wedded one and the cherished Joseph
were inscribed. But hers was the tribe. In this way a virgin mother
bore in a crib the ruler of all the world.

Thus he also ascended to the kingship through his father.

[1.1.18B] 60 In reverse the great Luke traced the genealogy in his account
up to Adam from Christ; Adam came to me through Christ.

Adam was first created by the hand of God. And from Adam
Seth was born. His son was Enosh. His fourth son was Kenan.
His was Mahalelel. His was Jared, who begot that son
65 Enoch, who, while alive, went raised up into heaven.

He had Methuselah, who begot the son Lamech.
He was the father of Noah. Then Shem, the son of that Noah.

Arphaxad was his, and Cainan, and Shelah. They say his son was Eber.

Peleg was the son of Eber. But from Peleg, came Ragab [Reu].

70 That one begot Serug, who begot Nahor.

Again, Abraham came from these, the son Terah Nachorides.

Isaac son of Abraham begot Jacob, who begot Judah.

He then begot Perez from Thamares. And he begot Esrom.


75 Nasson again, Salmon, Salmon, Booz.

From Booz, Obed. From Obed, Jesse. Of whom the great David was begotten.

David begot Nathan, who begot a son Matthan.


From him Joreim. From him Eliezer. From him Josaph.

From him Er. From him Elmod. In turn from him a son Cosam was begotten.

Addi was from Kosam. From him Melchi. From him Neri.

From him Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Rhesa, Joanan,

85 Joda, Josech, then Semein, Mattathias,

And Maath, Naggai, and Esli. From him Nahum,

Amos, Mattathias, and Joseph, and then Jannai.


And so Luke. But how did great Matthew do it?
90 From Abraham until David, so he spoke.

While in Luke you find the priestly
strain, he established the genealogy of kings.

However many and who they were, will now be told:


95 was the father of Jehoshaphat. But the seventh was Jehoram.

Uzziah, then Jotham, then Ahaz, then Hezekiah,
then Mannaseh, then Amon, and Josiah. But then

Jeconiah, whom they led captive into Babylon.

Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud, and Eliakim.

100 Azor, whose was Zadok, whose was Akim, whose was Eliud
whose was Eleazar. Whose was Matthan. Whose was Jacob.

And last, the apparent father of Christ, Joseph.

Περί τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαλογίας.
Ματθαῖος πόθεν, εἰπέ, μέγας, Λουκᾶς τε φέρετος,
Τήν μὲν ὅγε, αὐτάρ ὁ τείνει βιβλίος ἐνέθηκε γενέθλιον,
Αἱ Χριστὸς κατάγοναι ἀφ’ αἰμάτος ἀρχεγόνοιον;
Πῶς δ’ ὁ μὲν ἐν πλεονεσσᾶ, ὢδ’ ἐν παιροσσαν ἐλήξεν;
5. Ἐξ Δαυίδ μὲν ἄνακτα γένους ὡς ἀμφοτέροιον
Ἀτμίτος- μετέπειτα ὤει δῆχα, ὑστάτον δὲ
Συμφρέθεθ’ ὡς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀπείρονα Χριστὸν ὀδεύον.
Ωδὲ κεν αὐθρόρειας, ἐμῷ δ’ ἐπείπεθος μύθῳ
Δαυίδα, Σολομῶν τε, Νάθαν τ’ ἔσαν, ὅν ὁ μὲν εἰλέκεν
10. Ὦς τε ὀδὸν μεγάλου ποταμοῦ, βασιλῆιον αἶμα·
Αὐτάρ ὅγ’ εὐναγέν τε φαεινοτάτων ὀ δεήθην.
Χριστός δ’ ἀμφότεροι ἐσαν, ἀναξ μέγας, ἀρχιερεὺς τε.
Τούνεξια Ματθαῖος μὲν ἐγχρίσματο πνεύματι θείῳ
Τούς Σολομωντάδας, Λουκᾶς δ’ ἐς Νάθαν ὄρουσεν.
15. Ἐκ δὲ δύο γενεῶν, τῆς μὲν πλέον, ἐξ ἐπείθης δὲ
Παραστέρον τὸ φέεθρον ἐπελθέμεν· ὦ μέγα δαίμονα.
Ὠν μὲν παράτερον γενεῶν δ’ οὐκ ἴσον ἀμβήκον.
Ὡς τὰ πρώτα κατασθῆνεν, ἑπείτα δὲ εἰς ἐν ἄγαθεν.
Φράξε δὲ καὶ τόδε μοι, πατέροιν δύο ποις ποτ’ Ἰωσήφ.
20. Τέθηκον ἦν Μωσής, ἐπὶν ἀσπερμος ὀληταὶ
Ἐβραῖος, κασὶν ἢ τ’ ὀλωλότος, ἢ τινα παῖν
Ἐγγύθεν, αἶφα δάμαρτα φίλην καὶ κτίσαν ἔγοντα,
Σπερμαίνειν φθιμένον τε γόνων καὶ οἴκων ἀέξειν,
Ὅφρα κε μὴ νόνυμος ἐν ἀνθρώποιον ὀληται.
25. Τούνεκα χρυστόν ὑπερῆς Θεοῦ βροτέου τόδε ἀνεύρον. Μαθών εἰς Σαλομώνος ἀγὸν γένος, ἠγέρετ' Ἑσθάν. Τοῦ δ' ἄρ' ἀποθημένου, Ναθείδης σύνομα Μελη. Καὶ τὸ μὲν Ἰακώβ, τῷ δ' Ἡλεῖ γείνατο παίδας. Ἡλεὶ δὲ φθυμένου, ἐπεὶ γόνων οὐτ' ἔλειπεν,

30. Ἀύσ δόμον τε λέγοι τε Ἰακώβ οὐχ ὀμόπατρος Δέξατο, καὶ τέκεν υἱὸν ἀδελφοῖς ἐσθλὸν ᾽Ισσήφ. Οὕτω τοῦ μὲν ἔρχεται, τῷ δ' ἐγεραθεὶς θεσμὸς ᾽Ισσήφ.

Εὐαγγελιστῶν δ' οὗ μὲν εἶπε τὴν φύσιν, Μαθάιος, ὃς δ' ἐγεραθεὶς Λουκᾶς τὸν νόμον. 35. Παύσαυ διαχλόν τὴν καλὴν συμφωνίαν. 

Πῶς Δαυὶδ ἐς ἀνακτάτα φέρει Θεός, εἰσε φαίνη
Μητέρος ἐκ βροτῆς Θεός ἀμβροτος; ἐκ μὲν Ἰσσήφ, 
Πῶς ὣς; παρθενικῇ γὰρ ἔρη πάις, εἰς Μαρίας δὲ, 
Λευίδης- Μαριὰμ γὰρ ἀφ' αἵματος ἦν Ἀκρόν. 40. Μαρτύς δ' ἀγγέλος ἄμμων, ἐπεὶ Προδρόμου γενέθηλην Ἀγγέλους μεγάλοιο φάσως θεοειδεὶ μητρὶ,
Μητέρας ἀμβροτάρας ὅ' ἀνήγαγεν εἰς μέγαν Ἀκρόν.
Φησίδαι δ' αὐτ' βασιλῆς ἀμφέτες, ἡ' ἐρήμον.
Οὖν ἐτυμον. Φησίδαι μὲν ἔσαν δῆμα, πολλάκι αὐτ' αὔτε

45. Μέγυντο. Πρόοδευν μὲν Ἀρόν μεγάλοιο θέγατορα Ἡγέσεν ὑπὲρ μέγα δόμα Νασσαίων, ὃς δ' αὐτ' Ἰουδα Ἐκτὸς έρην. Μετέπειται δ' ἐπεὶ πόλιν ὤλεσεν αἰχή 
Ἀσσοφήλων, Βαβυλῶν τε τὰ τέθμα πάντα τίναξεν. 
Οὐδεὶ φυλὸν τιμόσε υδαρχίδον αἴμα φυλάχθη 
50. Οὔτω μὲν διὰ μητρὸς ἀνήρχεται εἰς βασιλῆς. 
Ἐκ δὲ πατρὸς δοκεόντως ὅπως, φράζοθαι ἄνωγα. 
Αἰγώνιου βασιλῆς ἐπεὶ φόρος ἐγεραθεί πάντας 
Ἀλλοι μὲν τ' ἄλλην ἐν πολλέσι γράφοντο 
Πατρίδας, Δαυὶδ δ' φύλον πέδον αἴρα κήρανον.
55. Βιβλεῖμη, ἢ κόλπουι μέγαν ὑπεδέξατο Χριστὸν, 
Αμφότεροι, μνημή τε φύλιν. καὶ κεδνός Ἰσσήφ 
Γραφόμενοι. Φησίθης γὰρ ἒς ἔσαν. ᾽Ωδ' ἐνί φάτνῃ 
Μήτηρ παρθενικῇ, χόσμου τέκε παντὸς ἀνακτα. 
Οὔτω καὶ διὰ πατρός ἀνήρχεται εἰς βασιλῆς. 
60. Ἐμπολι μὲν γενεῖν Λουκάης μέγας ἦγαγε μύθο 
Εἰς Ἀδὰμ ἐκ Χριστοῦ. Ἕμοι δ' Ἀδὰμ ἦλθ' ἐπὶ Χριστὸν 
Χειμὶ Θεοῦ πρώτωτος Ἀδὰμ γένετ'. Ἐκ δ' Ἀδάμ 
Σή τέλε. Τοῦ δ' ἄρ' Ἐνώς. Τοῦ, τέτρατος ἐκ Καῦναν. 
Τοῦ δ' ἐκ Μαλελείμη. Τοῦ δ' Ἰαρηδ', ὃς τέκε πάϊδα 
65. Κεῖνον Ἐνώς, ὃς ζωὸς ὑπὸ οὐρανοῦ ἠθλεῖσε. 
Τοῦδε, Μαθουσάλα ἔσχεν, ὃς τέκε γενεὰ Λάμεχ. 
Αὐτὰρ δ', Νώς πατήρ. Σήμα, Νώιας υἱὸς ἔκεινον. 
Ἐκ τοῦ δ' Ἀραβαζᾶ, Καίναν, Σαλὼ τοῦ ἑνέποιου 
Ὑὸν Ἐβρ. Ἐβρος δ' Φάλεξ πάϊς. Ἐκ δ' ἄρα Φάλεξ 
70. Ἐσωτ' Ῥαγῆ. Κεῖνος δ' Ἀρσοῦν τέκεν, ὃς τέκε Ναχώρ. 
Αβρααίμ αὐτ' ἐπὶ τοίοῦ, πάις Θάρα Ναχορίδαο. 
Αβρααίδης δ' Ἰσαὰκ Ἰακώβ τέκεν, ὃς δ' ἄρ' Ἰουδαν 
Αὐτὰρ δ' ἐκ Θαμαρῆς Φαρές τέκεν. Αὐτὰρ δ', Ἐσοφῖμ. 
Ἐσοφί, τὸν Ἀράμ, ὃς τὸν Ἀμαναδίμ. Ὁς δ' Νασσαίων 
75. Νασσαίων δ' αὐ', Σαλίμων. Σαλίμων, Θάρ. Ἐκ Θαρ', Ὁμῆρ. 
Ὡβδίδ δ' Ἰεσαῖα- τοῦ δ' ἐκ μέγας ἐπέλεξε Δαυίδ.
Δαυίδης δ' δ' νάθαν, ὃς Ματθάιον νόμον ἔπικεν, 
Ὀς Μαϊνάν. Μαϊνάν, Μελείναν τέκε. Ὁς δ' Ἐλακειμ. 
Ὀς τὸν Ιουδαν. Ὁς τὸν Ἰσσήφ. Ὁς, τὸν Ιουδαν 
80. Γείνατο. Τοῦ, Συμεών. Τοῦ, Λευ. Τοῦ ἄπο. Ματθάιν.
I.1.20 The miracles of Christ according to Matthew (PG 37.488-491)

The marvels of the book of Matthew, just so many as Christ the king performed, mixed, in a mortal body.

First he shook off the painful illness of the leper (8:1-4).

Next he bound the limbs of the centurion’s slave (8:5-13).

5 Third, then, he quenched the fever of Peter’s mother-in-law by hand (8:14-15).

Fourth he calmed the great swell and the winds (8:23-26).

Fifth he cast the demons into swine, in Gergesenes (8:28-34).

Sixth, the man with withered limbs took up his litter (9:1-8).

Seventh, he stopped the bleeding woman’s flow when touched (9:20-22).

10 Eighth, the ruler’s daughter found the light (9:23-26).

And ninth, he gave light to the blind (9:27-30). When his demon was driven out, a dumb man spoke a word, the tenth (9:32-33).
Eleven, on the Sabbath, he freed a dry hand from chains (12:9-13).
Twelfth, he freed the eyes and ears of a man possessed (12:22).
15 The thirteenth, he filled twelve baskets,
as well as five thousand men, from five bits [of bread] (14:13-21).
Fourteenth, he reached the ship by foot,
the great and stormy sea withdrew from them (14:22-32).
Fifteenth, he drove the spirit out of the Canaanite girl,
20 pleasing her mother who begged him persistently (15:21-28).
Sixteenth, four thousand men left seven baskets full
from seven loaves, and they were satisfied (15:32-38).
And seventeenth he transfigured in divine form,
shining to friends more brightly than the sun (17:1-3).
25 Eighteenth, just as a father was imploring,
he freed his precious son from epilepsy (17:15-18).
Nineteenth, headed from Jericho he gave light to
the eyes of blind men traveling on the road (20:29-34).
Twentieth he gave sunlight to eyes, he freed
30 paralyzed knees (21:14), he drove all filth from the Temple (21:12).
Leaving Bethany he did his greatest miracle,
the fig tree suddenly is sterile when he found it fruitless (21:18-20).
From the Cross a deep darkness flowed out, the light
departing and the wide veil of the Temple was rent (27:45-51).
35 And the earth quivered, and above the rocks of earth, it split (27:51)
and the dead, aroused, abandoned their own tombs (27:52-53).

But for himself he opened the tomb on the third day (28:1-7),

and then appeared to his friends in Galilee (28:16).

**Tά τοῦ Χριστοῦ θαύματα κατὰ Ματθαίον.**

Ματθαίων 37:1-496

I.1.24. The parables and puzzles according to Matthew (PG 37.495-496)

Come then, and view the puzzles of the darkened words:

the house built on unstable sand (7:24-27),
the seed, though cast the same upon the earth, unequal grows (13:1-8).

And the seed, to which, though good, bad seeds were mixed (13:24-30).

5 The shrub, a little seed of mustard (13:31-32). Then the yeast

hidden in dough (13:33). A field purchased

for the sake of its treasure (13:44). And the pearl of great price,

which the merchant bought for all he owned (13:45-46);

dragging the net from the sea with all kinds of fish (13:47-48).

10 Taking the lost sheep on his shoulders (18:10-14).

And the king who was harsh to his servant, petty about his debts (18:21-35).

The last who have pay equal to those who were first (20:1-16).

The sons, who were nothing alike, sent into the vineyard (21:28-32).

And those who threw the heir out to his death (21:33-43).

15. And the last-minute guests who filled the feast beloved by the groom (22:1-13)

And then the virgins making vigil with the torches (25:1-13).

And the master who gave his slaves unequal talents (25:14-30).

And the sheep and the goats set up opposite each other (25:31-46)

Τοῦ αὐτοῦ παραβολαὶ καὶ αἰνίγματα.
Εἰ δὲ ἄγε, καὶ σκοτίων αἰνίγματα δέχεο μέθων.
Οὐκ ἐπὶ ψάμμου κείμενον ἁδρανεός,
Καὶ σπόρον, ὡς ἐπὶ γαίᾳ ὁμοίος, ἤλθεν ἁνίσσος.
Καὶ σπόρον, ω φυτών σπέρματα ἐχθραί μίην
5. Καὶ δένδρον, ὁλίγον νάπυος σπόρον· εἰτ’ ἐν ἁλεύρῳ
Ζὺμην κρυπτομένην· ὁνῖν ἀγρόν ἐπὶ
Θησαυροῖς στραταίς· καὶ μαργαρίτην πολύτιμον,
"Εμπορος ὁν πάντων ἐπιφάνεια χτεάνων.
Καὶ νεπόδων ἔλθουσαν ἄπαν γένος ἀλός ἄρχειν.
10. Αἱρόμενον τ’ ὁμίοις πλαζόμενον πρόβατον.
Καὶ παροχοὶ θεράποντι περὶ, παρῴ πολυτιμοῦ.
Καὶ πρῶτοι ποιμάτους μισθόν ἔχοντας ἴπον.
Πεποιμέμους θ’ νήμας ἐς ὀμπέλους ἔσων ὁμοίους,
Καὶ τοὺς χληθονόμοις ὀσιμένους θανάτῳ.
15. Καὶ σχεδίους νυμφών φύλην πλήσαντας εὐρήν.

48
I.1.21. The Miracles of Christ according to Mark (PG 37.491)

Mark wrote these miracles of God for the Ausonians,

this brave man and Peter (Christ’s great aide) were companions.

The demon possessed, fever, leprosy, and paralysis
are healed upon the word of Christ (1:21-2:12). And then a man has dried
5 hands restored (3:1-5). He calmed the wrath of storms and sea (4:35-41),
Legion is crushed (5:1-5:10); a woman’s flow no longer bleeds
when touched (5:24-34), then he gives life to Jairus’ girl who sleeps (5:35-42).
Five loaves to feed a mob (6:30-44); then he subdued the sea
by treading on it (6:45-49). And he drives a spirit,
10. from a Phoenician girl (7:24-30), so that Tyre and Sidon fear it
he makes the dumb to speak (7:31-37). He fed thousands of men
from seven bits of bread (8:1-8). The blind man saw (8:22-26). And then
his bright form shone out (9:2-8). And then he loosed the chain
that bound the tongue, a spirit gone (9:26-27). Bartimaeus sees
15 the light, from Jericho (10:46-52). When hungry and on the tree
he found no figs, he spoke and none more came (11:12-14).

In Temple precincts, he heals the blind and lame.
Πηγὴν, καὶ θυγατρὶ τοῦ πόρον Ἰαείροιον.
Pέντε δ᾿ ἀρ’ ε’ ἀρτον πολλοὶ τράφεν. Ἐνθὲν ἐδημεὶς
Πόντον ἐπιστείβης. Μετέπειτα δὲ, πνεῦμ’ ἐδωξέ
10. Φανίσσῃς, Τυρίσσης τέρας καὶ Σιδονίσσῃς,
Κωφόν τ’ οὐ λαλέον. Θρέψει καὶ δεσμόν ἐλισσε
Γλώσσῃς, πνεὺμ’ ἐλάσσας.  Βαρτίμιος τε φάος.
15. Τυφλὸς ε’ Ἴεροχούντος ἐσέδραξεν. Ὁς δὲ ἄναρπον
Εὗρεν συνήν χιτέων, νεκρὰν ἐθηκε λόγον.
Τυφλόν δ᾿ αὐ χωλοὺς ὑπὲ γγύθι ἵνα.

I.1.25. Parables of Christ according to Mark. (PG 37.496-497)

Great Christ performed many things, proclaiming stories
in parable form. On earth one planting is not the same (4:1-9)

[Although planted together with the seed of the weeds (4:26-29)]

And the mustard seed (4:30-32), and the heir killed by the lawless hands (12:1-12)

[Mark recorded these things, the offshoot of Peter. For the wide-ranging
Hellas of Paul Luke wrote these things.

The demon, and the fever, and the field, the leprosy, and the purification]

Παραβολαὶ Χριστοῦ κατὰ Μάρκον.
Τόσσα Χριστὸς ἐφεζε μέγας, μύθους δ’ ἄγορευσε
Παρβλήθην· ἐπὶ γὰρ ἐνα σπόρον οὕτω δμοιιν,
Καὶ τὸν Ἰζανίων σπέρματι σιμφεῖα,
Καὶ νάποτο, καλμονόμον τεθανόνθ’ ὑπὸ χερσιν ἀθέαμοις.
5. Μάρχος μὲν δὴ τοῖς, Πέτρου φυτὸν· εὐφυχόρῳ δὲ
Εὐλλάδι Παύλοιο Λουκᾶς ἔγραψε τάδε·
Δαίμονιν, καὶ πυριτός, καὶ ἀγη, λέπρα, λύσει τε.

I.1.22. The miracles according to Luke (PG 37.492-494)

Luke wrote these splendid miracles of God for Greece,
A daring [friend] to Paul, the great attendant of Christ.

A demon (4:31-35) and a fever (4:38-39) and leprosy (5:12-15) and paralysis (5:17-25)
at his word yielded. And the withered hand dried up (6:6-10).
Then he settled the ailing servant of the centurion (7:1-10).

He gave the widow at Nain her son, back from the dead (7:11-16).

By his word he purified her who anointed his pure feet with ointment (7:46-48).

He settled both the winds (8:22-25) and that great Legion (8:26-31).

And he held back the flow of blood (8:43-47), and he drew Jairus’ daughter into life (8:49-55). And from five loaves and two fishes in the desert he once fed five thousand men (9:10-16). He showed the brilliance of his form (9:28-36).

He drove the evil demon from the only-born son (9:37-42), likewise the one inhabiting another’s mouth (11:14), just as he drove off the one that long crippled the Hebress with a dread disease (13:10-16), and once he cast the burden from a dropsied man (14:1-5).

And he cured ten lepers, one of them a Samaritan (17:11-19).

He gave sight to a blind man on the road from Jericho (18:35-42).

So many signs they saw from the Christ (who passed away)

When he appeared from the dead, to his friends.

Τοῦ αὐτοῦ θαύματα κατὰ Λουκᾶν.

Λουκᾶς δ’ Ἐλλάδι σεπτὰ Θεοῦ τάδε θαύματ’ ἐγραψεν, Παῦλῳ θαρσαλέος Χριστοῦ μεγάλῳ θεράποντι. Δαίμονι καὶ πυρετῷ καὶ λέπρῃ καὶ παράλυσις· Εἰς λόγῳ καὶ χεῖρι τείνατο καρφαλέη.

5. Εἰδ’ ἐκατοντάρχου λελυμένον ἠδρασε παιδα. Χήρῃ τ’ ἐκ νεκύων ἐν Ναίμ ὑπερίτε σὲ. Τὴν δὲ μήνῳ χρώσασαν ἰχνοὺς πόδας ἠγνισε μύθῳ. Καὶ στήσεν ἀνέμους, καὶ λεγεώνα μέγαν.

Αἰματος ἐσχε ὑσίων, καὶ Ἰσαέων ψυγαταρά. 10. Ἡγαγεν ἐς ζωῆν. Πέντε δ’ ἄρ’ ἐξ ἀκόλουθων Καὶ δύο ἰχνοῦν, ἐν ἐρήμῳ πέντε ποτ’ ἀνδρῶν Θείην ἄραδας. Εἴδες ὤν ἐκάλας. Δαίμονι τηλυγέτοιο πικρὸν ἀποέργασε παιδός, Καὶ τὸν ἐπ’ ἡλίωσις ἤμενον, ὡς δὲ πάλαι.

15. Ἐβραΐην στυγερῇ νοῦσῳ κλίναντα γυναῖκαν, Ναὶ μήν καὶ υδαῖου δόχου ἀπεσκέδασε.

So many parables did Luke record:

of him who set a firm seat built on rock (6:46-49)

and the one who loves more, because he has

undergone more (6:27-39). Then the seed falling on the four

5 kinds of the earth (8:4-8). Then the wayfarer

who falls in with thieves (10:25-37). Then he who comes so early

to the door, asking, but still he does not receive bad things (11:5-13).

And the unclean spirit entering to dwell

with seven others (11:26). And the one who vainly rests

10 in hopes of fruit, not knowing what will stay for him (12:13-21).

He who kept watch for the Anointed coming from

the wedding, useful for one who ministers well (12:35-40),

the aiding of the fruitless fig with manure (13:6-8).

Mustard (13:18-19), and leaven (13:20-21), and the needy at the wedding (14:15ff).

15 The joy in the finding of the drachma (15:8-10), and the nursling (15:1-7).

And the father sympathetic to the son who fell (15:11-32).

And the steward congratulates the clever thieves of


And then a strict repayment of the widow (18:1-8).

20 Again the tax collector and the blindness of the Pharisee (18:9-14),
and the dividing of the menas equally among the ten (19:11-27)

the evil farmers who were jealous of the master (20:9-19).

I.1.23. The miracles of Christ according to John. (PG 37.494)

Now in the sacred book of John you will find few marvels, but many words of Christ the king.

There was the wedding, and winepourers poured wine from water (2:1-9).

He spoke, and the ill son of the official was made healthy (4:43-50).

5 He spoke, and he who could not flee his chains by purifying took up his bed (5:1-9).

Then he performed a miracle from five loaves (6:1-13). He then traveled over the turbulent sea, and rescued the disciples (6:16-21).

He healed the man who was blind from birth, anointing him with mud (9:1-6).

On the fourth day, Lazarus was raised from the tomb (11:17-44).

10 And indeed he both died for the dead, and, when he rose for the living
Christ the king appeared to his companions, conversing (20-21).

Τοῦ αὐτοῦ θαύματα κατὰ Ιωάννην.
Παῦλος δ’ Ιωάννου δῆμες ἠζώη ἐν βιβλίῳ
Θαύματα δή, πολλοὺς δὲ λόγους Χριστοῦ ἀνακτος.
Ἕν γάμος, σωματοῦ δ’ ἐκέρων ἐξ ὡδατος ὁ ὅν.
Εἶπε, καὶ γὰρ ἁνουσος ἐν καμινων βασιλισκοῦ.
5. Εἶπε, λέχος δ’ ἀναίρεσεν, ὅς οὐ φύγε δεσμά λοετροῖς.
Πέντε δ’ ἐπεῖτ’ ἄρτοιν τέλεσεν τέρας. Ἐνθεν ὀδευσεν
Πόντον ὑπερζείοντα, καὶ ἐξεσάωσε μαθητάς.
Τυφλὸν δ’ ἐκ γενετής ὃ μαθα, πηλὸν ἀλείψας.
Τέτρατον ἡμαρ ἐν καὶ Λάζαρος ἔγρετο τύμβου.
5. Αὕταρ ὁ καὶ νεκύεσσι θάνεν, καὶ ζώον ἀναστάς
Χριστός ἀναξ ἀναφανδὸν ομήλεεν οἰς ἐτάφοισι.

I.1.27. The Parables of the four Gospels. (PG 37.498-506)

I fear I am placing the foundation of my life on
sand, and I am scattered in the seas and in the winds,
or seed falling on dry and sterile earth,
though swiftly I shoot up, quickly I wither,
5 Struck by the rays of sunlight, and by little blows;
or the bird would eat me, and then thorns strangle.
And let not the sower of evil weeds, the jealous enemy,
mix in evil seed while I sleep,
And let me not lay my hand to the good
10 and evil shoots of grass alike, before the sprouts emerge,
lest I somehow destroy the good shoot with the weeds.
For very few can put a knowing hand to these,
where vice and virtue dwelling separately,
but growing up together, evil is ordered upon the good.
15 I praise the little mustard seed, though starting small,
soon branches out, and grows to such a height,
so as to offer perch for birds that dwell in air.
O pearl, so honored and esteemed, I too,
desirous of your beauty, would play the great merchant,
20 and all I have, up to my final tunic,
my precious property, I’d trade instead through sale, and would surpass
all men in wealth, possessing this one thing above all else,
that is, the treasure hidden in the crannies of the field.
I know as well the world that falls within the net,
25 which, on command from Christ the king, while sailing,
The fishers of men surround by casting out the net,
so as to drag them from the ocean depths, and bid those
swimming on the bitter waves of this life follow Christ.
But when you judge the catch, dividing it in half
30 May you not cast me far away, as though a useless fish,
But place me safe in vessels, guarded by the king.
Into God’s vineyard, lovely, flourishing and vast,
At dawn I entered to undertake a heavy task.
I have a salary the same as latecomers, and equal praise.
35 Who’s jealous, if God should portion His own desire for the work?
The father sends his sons to cultivate the vineyard for cultivation,
the first one first, who willingly received the task,
but not at all did he perform the father’s will, as he set forth,
but though the younger one did not accept the charge, he finished it
in haste. To me he seems the better, but sweeter than both to the
father, is he who takes the charge, and carries out the wish.

But having killed the heir, they’d be driven from the vineyard and fire would destroy
them.

A wedding feast, which the loving father dear to his excellent son
celebrates rejoicing. I have a part in this.

45 I have a part in this, along with whoever is my friend!

That man remained outside, who placed before the feast
his field, or untrained yoke of oxen, or his wife.

Let me not be found among the guests wearing their wedding dress,
myself in filthy garb, and then bound hands and feet,

50 and so to fall, cut off from friends and the bridegroom’s feast.

Or when the ten pure virgins, with burning
torches keeping watch, looked out with lights unsleeping
for ruler, bridegroom, their beloved God,

so that alight they went to meet the joyful one approaching,

55 don’t put my mind among those dull and senseless ones,

who labor on when Christ is soon to come,

lest I catch sight of all my torches’ feeble flame

and seek the flowing oil of the light of life too late.

Let not locked doors restrain me from the wedding,

60 while the mingled Word, within, by using great chains of desire,
gives glory and courage to the pure of heart.

And should my king return again from the wedding feast,
to look over the waiting and those not waiting,
me he’d find among the waiting, and would praise me for my fear,

65 Just like a faithful servant, and find me mild among the ones who guard,
and one who gives justly grain to both, and a reliable account.
And when the goats and sheep are split, upon that bitter day,
on either side the pious men and those who are not holy,
may you not set me numbered with the goats, but rather with the sheep,
70 upon your right hand, and may your left wait for the worse.
And yet some brilliant lamp shines outside of me,
on high, from the candelabra. Something good and almost God
to see, which puts its overseeing eye on all.

I love God more and more, regardless if I suffer something

75 painful or something good. For all is good. But should I fall
among the thieves, while departing the great City of Christ
may you not let me be killed by murderous hands.
But if you drive a spirit from my soul, let the enemy
not find me listless, that he may run me down with more.

80 Do not destroy the useless fig, but still have hope
for fruit, and do not cut it off, o king; yet by healing, raise it up.
Finding a drachma, or a sheep, or a son who’s wasted all away,
one on the ground, the next in hills, and the other under your feet,
the wretched one who turned around, back to his father’s home, o king,
85 may you count me again among the sons, the sheep, the drachma.
And when the gracious king forgives me in my pains,
may I not play the harsh exactor with the debts of fellow slaves.
and let me strike in secret the debt of those in need, and by this cunning plan,
when I’m in need, I might later have support!
90 May I be now like Lazarus, and later, too. The one who
haughty here is later abandoned and has more than enough flames.
May I not boast, since I too am an evil taxcollector.
I merit mercy by my tears, but the Pharisees would fall.
And should I send away the widow wailing from my gates
95 unrewarded, and if a rock or fearsome snake
rather than good bread and pleasing fish,
as though plotting evil things, I offer from my palm,
I would receive in turn such things from God. But if the seal has
storerooms, to be sure, it must have hopes, which quickly vanish,
100 and night would destroy me with vain dreams.
And let not the talent, which God has placed into my hands,
that richer grace of meter for others, I pray,
remain without profit in our hands,
or, likewise, a mina of my native speech, an gift to be measured out equally,
but rather that I might create a work, and receive glory in exchange.
May I not pay a harsh penalty, and be ashamed.
Παραβολάς τῶν τεσσάρων εὐαγγελιστῶν.

Δείδω μή βιότοι θεμελίων ἐν ψαράθοισι.

Βαλλόμενος, σωστοί καὶ εἰν ἀνεμοίῳ κεδασθώ,

"Ἡ ὁπόρος οὐς ἐπὶ γαίαν ἦν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀκαρων,

ἀκα μὲν ἀντέλαμη, τάχιστα δὲ αὐτός ἐσομαι.

5. Ηλίαοι βολήσας τυπίς· καὶ πήμασι τυπίς·

"Ἡ με φάγοι πετεινά, καὶ εὔθλεψας ἀανάθεια.

Μὴ δὲ μοι ὑπνώσει κακῶν ὑπόθεται ἔγκαιταμέζη

Ζιζινίων ἀρότης τε κακῶν, καὶ βάσκανος ἐφῳδός.

Μὴ δ’ ἄρ’ ὁμοία ἐλεύθοροι βαλὼν ἐπὶ χείρα φυτοῖσιν

10. Ἐσθλοίς ἦδε κακοίς, πρὸς ἑν σταχαμματι σταθῆναι,

Σῶν ποι ζιζίνιωι καλὸν φυτὸν ἔξολέσαμαι.

Παῖραν γὰρ τοιῷσδε νοήμανα χεὶρ’ ἐπιθείναι,

Ἐνθ’ ἀσετῆς κακῆς τε διάνδρας ναυτάκουσι·

Ἀγχύθυσις γαγάσι, κακὸν δ’ ἐπιτέλλεται ἔσθλορ.

15. Ἀνῆς τὸν ἀλέγον νάντιος ὑπόρον, ὡς ὀλέγος μὲν,

δενδροῦσα τίς τάχιστα, καὶ ἐς τόσον ῥήγος ὀδευει,

ἔστε καὶ ἀρνίθεσας πέλεν σχέπας ἡμίοια.

Μάργαρη τιμής καὶ κόμιμε, σοῦ δ’ ἄρ’ ἐγώνε

Κάλλεος ἰμείρων, μέγας ἐμπυρός αἰθέ γενοιμάν.

20. Πάντων δ’ ὅσα μοι ἐστί μέρχης πυρότοιο χιτῶνος.

ἐνον ἀντάλαμοι βίον κτέαρ, ὡς κεν ἀπαντας

Πλοῦτον νηρᾶσαμα, πεπασμένος οἴον ἐπ’ ἄλλων,

'Ἡ ὁμαυρόν ἄγροιοι μυχός ἐν χυμιτόν ἐόντα.

Οἶδα δ’ ἐγὼ καὶ κόσμον ἐπὶ πάντονα σαγηνῆς,

25. Ὡς Χριστῷ βασιλῆς ὑποδήξοοντες ἐφετμάεις,

Ἀνθρώπων ἀλήθες ἐν πάνω ἀμφίς έθημαν,

Ὡς ἀλός ἐξερουόσα βεβοῦν, ὅπασους δε Χριστῷ

Νηρομένονοι πικροῖς ἔνι κύμαισι τοῦδε βίοιο.

Ἀλ’ ὁπόταν χρίνης ἀλήνη, διὰ δ’ ἀνδιχα τέμνης,

30. Μὴ μ’ ἀπὸ τῆς βάλας, ἀχρήμιον ὀιὰ περ ἢχθυν,

Ἀγγεις δ’ ἐγκατάθειο φυλασσόμενον βασιλῆι.

Ἐς μεγάλην δε Θεοῦ καλῆν ἐρευθήλ ταῦτην,

Ἦμος μὲν ἐβὴν, καὶ πλείονα μόχθον ἀνέτλην.

Μισθόν δ’ ὑστατοῖοι ιοῦν, καὶ κόδος ἐξομι.

35. Τις φόνονος, εἰ μόχθοιο πόθον Θεοῦ ἀντιφειρίζει·

Πέμπτα πατὴρ νυμῆς ἐς ὑμελον, ὡς κομέεσιν.

Τὸν πρότερον, πρότερον· ὁ δ’ ἅρα πρόθρον ὑπέδεκτο,

Ὅ δ’ οὐν ἐξετέλεσεν πατρὸς πόθον, ὥσπερ ὑπέστη.

Αὐτὰρ οὐ πόθεν ὑπέδεκτο, καὶ ἐξετέλεσσαν ἐφετμά.

40. Ὅπλεττος. Κρείσσον μὲν ἔμω, γλυκων δὲ τοῖχῃ,

Ἀμφοτέρων, ὡς ἐδεκτο, καὶ ἐξετέλεσσαν ἐξέλωρ.

Κληρονομόν ό δ’ ὑλεσαν, ὁσι πυρός, ἐκτὸς ἀλωίς·

Ἔστι γάμος, τὸν παῦν πατὴρ βίος ἐφήλος ἀριστό

Δαίμονας καθαλάδω· τοῦτ’ ἀντιάσαμα ἔγωγε.

45. Τοῦτ’ ἐγὼ ἀντίσαμα, καὶ δ’ βίος ἐστίν ἐμοιγε.

Μίνων δ’ ἐκτοθε κείνος, ὡς πρὸ γάμιο τῆς ἡμῶν

"Η ἄγρον, ἕπο διὸν χείρος νέον, ἕπο τάμαρτα.

Μὴ’ ἐνι δαστυμόνεσι γαμήλιοι εἴδος ἔχουσιν.

Εἴματé ἔχον ὑψώσοντα, δεθεὶς χείρας τε πόδας τε.

50. Νυμφόνος τε γάμου τε, βίολον τ’ ἀπὸ τῆς πέσου.

"Νῦκαι δ’ αἰθομέναι ἄγρων δεχάς ἐν δαίμονι

Παρθένοι ἐγρήσουσα, ἀκομήτωςι φαέσσαι.
Νυμφίων ἢμερόντα Θεόν δοκέωσιν ἄνακτα,
Ὡς λαμπρὰ γανοῦντι ὑπαντήσουσιν ἱόντι,
55. Μή μ’ ἐνι ταῖς κενεῖσι νόον, καὶ ἄφοροι θείς,
 Ἥδη που Χριστοῦ παρεσσομένου μουγεῦσας,
Μηδ’ ὠλγοδρανέον διάδοιν σέλας ὡμματες λεύσον,
Ὅψε φάσος ἱερὸς ὑγρὸν ποθέοιμ ἕλαον.
Μηδὲ με κλήσθέντα γάμων ὠσαύτῳ θύμερα,
60. Ἐνθά Λόγος καθαρμῇ πάθου μεγάλοις ὑπὸ δεσμοῖς
Μιγνύεσθαι θράδοις θάρσος καὶ κύδος ὀπάξει.
Ἐκ δὲ γέμων παλένοροσ ἄναξ ἐμός εὑρ’ ἀν ἐπέλθῃ,
Ἑξαπίνες δοκέουσι, καὶ οὐ δοκέουσαν ἐπιστάς
Εὖροι μ’ ἐν δοκέουσι, καὶ ἀνίψης φοβοῦ.
65. Ὡς ἀγαθὸν θεράποντα, καὶ ἦπον ἀρχομένοις,
Καὶ σίτοις δοτήρα, λόγου στέρεοι, φέρμυτον.
Σαιξομένων τ’ ἐρίφων καὶ οἶνων, ἤματι πικρῶ.
Ἀνδρῶν εὔπεθέων τα καὶ οὐχ οἶνον εὐκατέρθην,
Στίμους μ’ μ’ εὐφύς ἔναρθμοι, ἀλλ’ οἴσσα
70. Δεξιτερήν παρὰ χειρά, μένου τ’ ἐν χειρίσι λαίη.
Λύγνοις δὴ τ’ ἐμοίον φαινόμος ἔποικτο λάμμοι
Λυχνίας καθύπερθε. Καλὸν δὲ τ’ καὶ θεὸν οἶον
Ἰδομυν, ὡς πάντεσσαν ἐπαίσαισαν ὡμα τίθην.
Αἰεὶ δὲ στέργοιμα Θεόν πλέων, εἶτε τ’ πικρὸν
75. Εἴτ’ ἀγαθὸν παρέχοι: παῖς γὰρ καλὸν. Εἰ δὲ τυπεύν
Λημοτας, μεγάλης κατὼν ἀπὸ Χριστοπόλης,
Μή με λίπης χείρεσθην ὑπ’ ἀνδροφόνουι δαμήνα.
Εἰ δὲ πνευμ’ ἐλάσσεις ψυχῆς ἀπο, μηκέτ’ αἰερόν
Εὐφών σὺν πλεόνεσσι καταδράμοι εὔχρος ἐμεῖο.
80. Μηδ’ συκὴν ὠλέσεις ἄχρομον, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ χαρὶν
Ἐλευσ, μήδε τέμης μυ, ἄναξ: χομέου δὲ τ’ ἐγείρερν.
Δραμής τ’ ἐμκοβάτ’ τε, πάν τ’ ἀπὸ πάντ’ ὀλέσαντα
Εὐφών, τὴν μὲν ἔραξε, τὸ δ’ οὕρεαι, τὸν δ’ ὑπὸ ποσάν
Οἰκτρόν ὑποστρέφοντα πατρώιον ἐς δόμον, ὡς ἀναξ.
85. Αὐθίς ἀριθμῆσαις ἐν υἱόσ, θρέμμασι, δραχμαῖς
Μή δ’ ἀγαθὸν βασιλῆς ἐμοῖς πατήσασαι ἐόντος,
Προκάτη αὐτός ἔοιμι πικρὸς χρήσιας ομοδοῦλος.
Καὶ τ’ χρεόν κοίμασι λαθόν πυντοφόροι βουλή,
Ὡς κεν χρῆζων ποτ’ ἐς ὑπερὸν ἄλκαρ ἐχομί
90. Λάξαρος ἐνθάδ’ ἐοιμ, καὶ ὑπερον’ ἄλλος ἄγινοι
Ἐνθάδε, κεθή δ’ ἀτύμος ἔχον φλόγας ἀντί χόροι.
Εἴην μή μεγάλανος, ἐπεὶ κακοὶ εἰμι τελώνης.
Διάχυσαν οἰκτόν ὑχομί, Φαινόσαοι δὲ πέσουν.
Χῆρην δ’ εἶπον’ ἐμεῖο παρὰ προθύρωροι μογέουσαν
95. Ἀπερητον πέμπαμα, καὶ εἰ ὑδοχὸν ἣ ὀδὸν αἰών
Ἀντ’ ἀρετοῦ φίλου καὶ ἵθυς ἡμιφύομο
Ἐχθρά φιλοφρονέων, παλάμης ἀπὸ τίθυ’ ὑφέγομι,
Τοιών αντιτύχησα Θεοῦ πάρα. Εἰ δ’ ἀποθήκας
Τάς μὲν ἀφρήγης ἔχει, τάς δ’ ἐλαίδες ὡςα θέουσαν,
100. Ἡδε μὲ νῦξ ὀλέσεισε σῦν ἄδορανεύσιν ὄνειρος,
Οὐδέ μὲν σύδε τἄλαντον, δ’ μοι Θεὸς ἐγγυαλίζε
Πλευτέρην ἄλλοις μετρὼν χάριν, εὐχομ’ ἑγομέ
Τοῦτο μὲν παλάμησιν ἐν ἡμετέρησιν αἰρογόν.
Ἡ μὲν φυσικοὶ λόγοι, χάριν ἵσονμεμιτον,
105. Ἀλλ’ ἔχον τ’ ὁπάσαιμ, ἄλεος τ’ ἐπὶ τ’ ἀντι τύχομι.
Μηδὲ δίκην τίςσαι πορήν, καὶ αἰόχος ἔχομί.
OTHER BIBLICAL POEMS

I.1.16. On the miracles of Elijah and Elisha the prophets (PG 37.477-479)

These are the miracles of the prophet Elijah the Tisbite.

First he was fed by a crow (1Ki 6). Second he himself fed richly the Sarephthan woman (1 Ki 17:14), with small remains of oil and flour; so he also raised her son from the dead by breathing on him (1Ki 17:19-23). He held back the rain by God, then he let it come (1Ki 18:45). He sacrificed the offering in a strange fire (1Ki 18:38) and for strangers, since he lived for many days without tasting food.

He entirely burned up two fifty-men armies (2Ki 1:12).

He went through the Jordan, splitting it with his cloak (2Ki 2:8).

He rose up to heaven on a chariot of fire (2Ki 2:11).

He left both his skin and his grace to Elisha (2Ki 2:12).

Observe, too, the miracles of the latter.

_Elisha_

He went through the Jordan, splitting it with Elijah’s cloak (2Ki 2:14).

He blessed the city’s fountains with fertility by means of salt (2Ki 2:21).

He killed the arrogant children haughty with beasts (2Ki 2:23).

He led streams from Edom to the thirsting army (2Ki 3:30).

He freed the woman from debts by means of fountains of oil (2Ki 4:4).

To the Sunammite woman, who was with child
he gave a son, and raised him back again from the dead (2Ki 4:16 and 2Ki 4:34).

He held off the poison from the grass (2Ki 4:41), and he saved many from famine with scanty nourishment (2Ki 4:43).

20  He purified Naaman the Syrian of leprosy (2Ki 5:14)

And he sent that sickness to Ghazi (2Ki 5:27). And after
he made axe-heads float from the depths of the Jordan (2Ki 6:6).

He gave bleary eyes to those coming from the Syrians
to their enemies (2Ki 6:18). Then plenty was put out for the army,

25  the work of lepers. And, as a corpse he raised a corpse

when their bodies were laid next to each other (2Ki 13:21).

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**Εἰς τά θαύματα Ἡλίου τοῦ προφήτου καὶ Ἕλιος.**

Τσαύτα θαύματ’ Ἡλίου τοῦ Θεοβίτου.  
Κόραξι πρῶτον ἑτράφη καὶ δεύτερον  
Ἐθηρείς χήμαν πλουσίως Σαραφίαν,  
Μιχροίς ἐλαίον καὶ ἀλέφων λειψάνοις.  
5. Ἡς καὶ τὸν ύδιν ἐκ νεκρῶν φυσήσαν  
'Ἡγεὶς. Ἡτὸν τ’ ἀνέσαν ἐκ Θεοῦ,  
'Επειτ’ ἀρίθμη. Θυσίαν καταγνίσας  
Πυρί ἔσφε τε καὶ ἔξοικος. εἰς ἢκεσε  
Τροφής σπέσιν ἡμέρας ἐν πλείοισι.  
10. Ἐφλέξεν ἀρόνην πεντηκοντάρχας δύω.  
Ἰορδάνην διήλθε μηλοτή τεμών.  
Πυρὸς δ’ ἀνήλθεν ἀρματι πρὸς σύρανον  
Ὄμοι δοράν τε καὶ χαίρων Ἕλιοσαίω  
Ἀφήνεν. Ἀθίν καὶ τά τούτου θαύματα.  
15. Ἡράναν διῆλθε μηλοτή τεμών.  
Πηγὰς ἔθησαν ἄλοιν εὐτέκοις πόλει.  
Παιδας δ’ ὑβριστάς θηρίος ἀπόλλεγεν  
Δώσοντι δεύτερον ορδάνος. Ἕδωμ ἐπήγασε  
Στρατῷ γυναῖκα τε χρέους εὑρίσκατο.  
20. Πηγὰς ἐλαίον τῇ δὲ Σουμαμίτιδι  
Οὐκ ὁντ’ ἐδοξε πάθαν, κ’ ἐκ νεκρῶν πάλιν.  
Φθοράν τ’ ἔπαιζεν ἐκ πόσας καὶ πλείον.  
Ἡμνυς λιμῷ εὐδεστέρα τροφή.  
25. Ναιμάν δὲ λέγας ἐκκαθήσας τὸν Σύρον.  
Πέμπει Γεζεὶ τὴν νόσον εἰς ἀξίνην  
Ἐπέλουσε νότοις ἐκ βυθῶν Ἡράναν.  
Σύραν δὲ τοὺς ἐλκοντας ὁμίλης ἐμβλέναις  
Ἐδοξεῖν ἐγέροντες εἴτε τῷ στρατῷ χόρον.  
30. Προείτοι, λεπρῶν ἐγκα. Καὶ νεκρῶς νεκρῶν  
'Ἡγείς, ἐγκαὐς συνετθέντων ῥαπέων.
I.1.17. Epigram on the martyrion of Elijah, which is called Cherios. (*PG* 37.479-480)

[1 Ki 17]

This, stranger, is indeed Zarephath of Sidon,

but this is the tower of the widow, who guest-lovingly

received Elijah the Tishbite, prophet of God,

while a plague was vexing the cities.

5 She had little oil in her flask

and one drachma of flour hidden in the water jar.

This she unsparingly gave to her guest.

The well that nourished the household, she found as a gift.

Elijah nourishing her son when he was alive,

10 raised him up from the darkness of the dead.

But the mother, previously bewailing her childlessness,

became a mother again without birth pains.

Ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τὸ μαρτύριον �ятλίου τὸ καλούμενον Χηρείον.
Αὕτη, ἔνε, καὶ Σαρεπτά τῆς Σιδωνίας.
Οὕτως δὲ χήρας πύργος, ἢ φιλοξένος
Θεοῦ προφήτην Ἡλίαν τὸν Θεσβίτην,
Λιμοῦ κακοῦντος τὰς πόλεις, εἴδεξατο.
5. Ἡτ καὶ μικρὸν ἤν ἐλαίαν ἐν τῷ κατάσώμη.
Καὶ δραχμὴ ἀλεύρων ὑδρία κεχυμμένος.
Τοῦτο δ’ ἄφθονος μεταδόουσα τῷ εξόνι,
Πηγήν, τρέφοντας οἶκον, εὑρέ τὴν δόσιν.
Ταύτῃ τὸν υἱὸν Ἡλίας ζώντα τρέφων.
10. Θεανότα νεκρὸν ἐξανάστησα ζώφου.
Μήτηρ δὲ, πρὸν κλαίουσα τὴν ἀπαθίαν,
Ἐγένετο μήτηρ αὖθις ὁδίων δίχα.

I.1.28. The storm calmed by Christ (*PG* 37.506)

There was a time when Christ slept naturally on the merchant’s ship,
but the sea rose up with gales that bred waves.

and the seamen cried out in fear: “Rise, Savior,

protect the perishing.” The king rose up and commanded

the waves and the winds to rest, and they did so.

Because of this miracle those present spoke of the nature of God.

Χειμών ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ κατασταλθείς.

Ἡν οτε Χριστὸς ἰαυν ἐφ’ ὀλχάδος ἐμφυτων ὑπνον,
Τετρήρχει δὲ θάλασσα κυδομοτόχουιν ἁίταις.
Δείματι τε πλωτῆς ἄνιαχον· Ἐγέρσθε, Σώτερ,
Ὀλυμένοις ἐπάμον. Ἀναξ δ’ ἐκέλευεν ἀναστάς
5. Ἀτρέμεειν ἀνέμους καὶ κύματα, καὶ πέλεν οὗτος.
Θαύματι δ’ ἐφράζοντο Θεοῦ φύσιν οἱ παρεόντες.
CHAPTER V.

COMMENTARY


This poem, a catalogue of the books of the scriptural canon, is the best known of the group presented here. Gilbert has his own translation, which I have consulted; the circumscribed content of the poem means that our versions do not differ much. Lefherz has claimed that the verse is inauthentic, but his arguments are generally rejected. In manuscript organization of Gregory’s corpus, this poem appears at the beginning of Group III, which I discuss in the introduction, and Group XVIII. The poem appears in other manuscripts under Gregory’s name, but often lacks the first five introductory lines.

meter: The meter of the poem varies. Palla argues that the metrical changes are pedagogically significant insofar as various portions of the Bible are grouped together by meter. The first 8 lines are hexameters, which exhort readers to reflect on Scripture and to avoid non-canonical books. The next 21 lines, which present the books of the Old Testament, are in iambic trimeter, with an elegiac couplet inserted at the introduction of the historical books (9/10), at their conclusion (14/15), and at the end of the list (28/29). The final 10 lines, which present the books of the NT and conclude with a warning to avoid inauthentic texts, begin with one elegiac couplet and a half, followed again by

93 On G.’s use of books outside this canon, see Frederick Norris, “Gregory Nazianzen: Constructing and Constructed by Scripture,” The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity, in edited by Paul Blowers, 149-162.
94 On God and Man, 85-86; Demoen, Pagan and Biblical Exempla, 233.
96 Many mss also append to this poem the Iambs to Seleucus of Amphilochus of Iconium, a contemporary of Gregory, who offers a similar list, but includes the books of Esther and Revelation.
iambic trimeters. The shifts seem to have helped the poem’s catechetical end by linking specific meters to biblical units.  

1-2. *Exhortation to meditate on the words of Scripture.*  

The couplet “mind and tongue” (γλώσσης τε νόω τε) is frequent in G.’s poems. For early Christians, prayer and meditation were not primarily silent mental activities, but rather involved vocal recitation and/or singing of the sacred text.  

2. στρωφάθ’, “turn/spin,” is relatively rare and only appears in this plural imperative form in classical literature. G.’s metaphorical use of the verb, in the sense of “ruminate on,” is unusual. It appears with this definition in the *Lexica.*  

2-5. *Rewards for studying Scripture.*  

G. offers three incentives for the study: 1. to gain insight; 2. to grow in virtue; 3. to transcend mundane worries. The first motive seems to encourage a better grasp of the literal or historical meaning of scripture, that is, the small details that only come to light on close examination. The second motive, which he calls the ἄριστον (“noblest”), corresponds to the moral reading of the set of poems discussed in the introduction: study of Scripture inspires the Christian to live according to the divine law. The third motive, as a diversion or, rather, as a means of drawing the mind from distraction in the mundane, corresponds to the fourth motive for writing poetry that G. offers in his poem “On his verses” (I.1.39): that it be a means of comfort in his old age.

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98 McGuickin, “Gregory: the Rhetorician as Poet,” 201 n.27.
99 Cf. II.1.34, ll.1-10.
100 Homer II. 20.422; Apollonius Argonautica 1.827.
101 Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla,* 286 notes the preeminence of this motive in the poem.
102 II.1.39, ll.54-57.
4. "καθαρό Ὁ Θεό, “The pure God,” that is, God Himself. The epithet καθαρός applied to God is unusual outside of G. G. uses it rather frequently. μεγάλης, “great”; G. uses the adjectives μέγας very often in these poems. The effect is tedious, but I generally translate it consistently as “great.”

6. Literally, “lest in mind you be stolen by foreign books,” i.e. heretical literature. Gregory reprises this sentiment in the final couplet of the poem. The exhortation responds to his persistent concern to distinguish those outside from those inside, as we often find in the moral reading of the parables in I.1.27.

7. παρεγραμμένοι, “spurious”; τελέθωνεν from τελέθω, “to be,” which is rather common in Homer (e.g., Iliad 9.441; 12.447) becomes relatively infrequent by G.’s time; it has an entry in the Lexica.

8. ἔγκριτον, “recognized/approved,” a term that became a quasi-technical word for the canon (Lampe, s.v.). G. refers to “number” and “numbering” often in these poems, reminding his audience of the importance of simple methods for recalling the essentials of the narrative; cf. ll.28-29, where he notes that the number of books in the OT equals the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

9-10. The numbering of the twelve “historical” books. “Hebrew wisdom” (Ἑβραϊκῆς σοφίης) here seems to refer generically to the teachings of the Old Testament.

11. Palla emends the metrically unacceptable text given by Caillau, but I am not certain his version, which follows the majority of the mss, is metrically superior. In either case the meaning of the verse remains virtually the same.

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103 Outside Gregory it appears in a work attributed to Origen (Fragmenta in Psalmos, Ps. 67 v.18 1.3).
104 E.g l.2.38, 1.37; ll.1.45, 1.289.
12. Gregory has Δεύτερος Νόμος, a literal rendering of “the Second Law”; the standard title, Δευτερονόμιον appears in one of manuscripts, but probably represents a scribal correction.

13. Ruth may be singled out as the “eighth” since the first seven were often grouped together as a unit in G.’s time as the Heptateuch.

14. Today these two books of the “acts of Kings” are divided into 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

15. Ezra or Esdras, the twelfth of the historical books for G., is variously divided in subsequent canonical lists into Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Esdras.

16-18. The five Writings in verse: Job, David’s Psalms, and Solomon’s Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Proverbs; the attributions to David and Solomon are traditional.

19-27. The Prophets, the third major division of the OT. G. groups the twelve minor prophets together. The first six, Joel through Zephaniah, do not follow the order that later became standard. Perhaps G. recognizes the discrepancy by calling attention to the fact that Micah is “the third.”

20. Metrically problematic; perhaps the final epsilon on Ὠσηὲ should be ignored.

26. Jeremiah “called from the womb,” an allusion to Jer 1:5.

27. The “grace of Daniel” (Δανιήλου χάρις) perhaps refers to the special visionary nature of the book.

29. A mnemonic marker, to remember the number of books.

30-39. The books of the NT.

30. Repetition of the need for “number” (cf. v.8) to mark a beginning of the new sequence.
νέου μυστηρίου ("New Mystery") as a description of the New Testament; G. uses the phrase in *De Virtute* (1.2.1, l.701). It otherwise seems unattested.

31-32. In all of the poems on Scripture, G. observes this partition of the audiences of the three authors of the Synoptics, that is, Matthew for the Hebrews, Luke for Greece, and Mark for Italy; each represents one of the three languages of the early Church, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as inscribed above the Cross.

33. John’s epithet, οὐρανοφότης ("dwelling in Heaven"), which refers to the mystical quality of the gospel, may also suggest a connection to the Evangelist’s authorship of Revelation, where he reports his heavenly vision; this book is otherwise not mentioned in this list.  

John is also μέγας; cf. v.5.

38. Gilbert makes Jude “eighth,” but I am not sure why, since the Greek has ἐβδόμη and it comes, in fact, seventh on the list.

39. The final line repeats the warning to stay away from what is “outside,” a theme frequent in these poems.

I.1.14 The Plagues of Egypt (*PG 37.475-476*)

G. here presents the list of the plagues in a concise set of verse. There is a moral end to memorizing the series: that the reader might show the proper fear of God. The vocabulary is especially antiquating and Homeric, with some clever allusions. At the same time, most of the key terms for the plagues come from the LXX. G. presents the plagues using identical vocabulary and sequence in *Or*. 16.10, where G. cites the sort of harsh penalties of Exodus as those that the people of Nazianzus have avoided.

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**meter:** elegiac couplets

1. ἀρίθμει, “number,” recalls the injunction to number the books of scripture that opens the first poem in the series, I.1.12.

3. ἐρυθαίνετο, “redden,” is an unusual epic verb. With the word, G. parallels the reddening of the Red Sea with the reddening of the Xanthus at II. 21.21 (ἐρυθαίνετο ὃντος αἷμα τῷ ὄδωρ).

4. βατράχους, “frogs,” is from the LXX.

5. σκνίπεσσιν, “gnats,” is from the LXX.

αὖ is repeated in the same position, a bit like a jingle, *metri causa.*

7. λυγρὸς ὀλέθρος, “murderous plague”; the probable allusion to II. 10.174 renders the alternate mss reading λοιγὸς, listed in the apparatus of the *PG,* unlikely.

9. The reference to “fire” (πῦρ) must refer to the lightning that came with the hailstorm. The ὀμβρος ἄμμκτος seems to allude to the steady fail of the rain, as described in Exodus.

**I.1.15 The Decalogue of Moses (PG 37.476-477)**

This poem is often paired with I.1.14 in a well-attested ms tradition; both appear together in groups III, IV, and IX. Gregory’s list corresponds to the modern-day Orthodox and Protestant numbering of the Ten Commandments, in contrast to the Catholic numbering, which groups together the injunction to worship God alone and the injunction against idol worship, while distinguishing the commandment against coveting another’s property from the commandment against coveting another’s wife. Like I.1.14, the rather obvious structure of the poem can belie some of the linguistic subtleties.
meter: dactylic hexameter.

1. G. introduces the poem with an intricate couplet, distinguishing the Old Law, written on stone tablets, from the New Law of Christ, written on the heart (cf. Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:3).

λαῖνεις, “stony,” an epic word that appears in the Lexicon.108

2. “You” would seem to be Christ, the author of the New Law inscribed on human hearts.

6. Presumably from the sunset until sunset, and including the day.

7. The peculiar form of this paraphrase, as a macarism, conveys the fourth commandment’s distinctive language, which includes a blessing for its observance; i.e., “so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

8. Lit., “the murderous guilt of the hand.”

κακόφρονα, “evil-hearted,” is the same adjective applied to Egypt above (I.1.14, 1.1 ad loc.), further evidence that the two poems are a pair.

I.1.13 The Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob (PG 37.475)

This five-line summary of the names of the twelve patriarchs has slight literary merit and philological interest. As in all of these initial poems, G. cleverly manages to make the names fit his meter. The poem was frequently copied and appears in the ms Groups III, IV, and IX.

meter: dactylic hexameter.

1. Literally, the “patriarchs,” but there is an obvious polyptoton in G.’s use of Ἰακώβ πατρὸς, their “father” and πατρῴχοι “forefathers”
2. The sons of Leah. G. gives Ῥοουβείμ for the standard LXX spelling, Ῥοουβίν, which is slightly more common in patristic literature. Ῥοουδάς for the standard LXX Ῥοοῦδα.

3. νόθοι, “illegitimate sons/bastards,” is common in the Iliad, but never appears in the LXX. Dan and Naphtali are the sons of Rachel’s servant Bilhah. Gad and Asher are the sons of Leah’s servant Gilhah.

4. These sons are “noble” because they are from Jacob’s marriage to Leah.

5. Joseph is the son of Rachel (Gn 30:23)

Benjamin, a son of Rachel, is the πυματος, “the last,” an adjective frequent in G.

I.1.19 The Disciples of Christ (PG 37.487)

This five-line poem appears in Group III, IV, and IX. It closely resembles the poem on the twelve patriarchs, both beginning with δώδεκα, “twelve,” and offering a list of important biblical figures. In both cases, the final name on the list (Benjamin, Judas) merits special attention.

meter: dactylic hexameter; in order to accommodate the names, the lines are more spondaic than is typical for G.

1. The introduction, Δώδεκα δ’ αὖ (“twelve, too”) reinforces this poems placement in a pedagogical series, since it follows on the twelve patriarchs.109

5. Jude is often identified with Thaddeus, the name that appears in Mt and Mk.

I.1.18 (PG 37.480-487)

On the genealogy of Christ

Palla shows that this lengthy poem, preserved in Group III, is in fact composed of two different poems. The first, I.1.18A, comprises ll.1-59 and is primarily concerned to reconcile the genealogy of Matthew with that of Luke. The second, I.1.18B, comprises ll.60-102, and reports the genealogy according to Luke, in reverse order, and then, concisely, that of Matthew. To reconcile the genealogies, G. relies heavily on the account given by Julius Africanus, as preserved in Jerome’s De viris illustribus (63.3).

The catechetical motive of both poems is clear: they function as an apology to prepare students to reconcile the two accounts and a verse paraphrase to aid in memorizing the long list of names.

*meter:* mixed meter.

1-3. The opening question presents the content of the poem, which does not, in fact, include a listing of all the names in the genealogies, as we have in I.1.18B.

3. The genealogies both trace Christ to a primordial ancestor: Matthew to Abraham and Luke to Adam. The PG editors take the final relative clause (“which trace”) to be limited to the genealogy starting with Adam, that is, Luke’s version, but the relative clause must be plural and therefore must refer to both genealogies; each of the two has its own “First Father.”

6. That is, the genealogies in Mt and Lk are consistent until they reach David.

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110 “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 179.
11. Nathan, son of Bathsheba (1 Chr 3:5), the third son born to Bathsheba in Jerusalem; Solomon is the fourth. Generally, Solomon is credited with passing on the kingly line.\(^{111}\)

12. Χριστὸς ἀναξ μέγας, a combination of standard formulae in G.

14. ὁρουσέων, “he raced ahead,” a Homeric verb that suggests aggressive or speedy action.\(^{112}\)

18. κέασθεν, “it split/cleaved,” appears in this form only here in G. and is in the *Lexicon*; G. seems to mean that Matthew and Luke report the same genealogies, but Luke reports fewer additions to the generations (such as the names of the women).

19. That is, Jacob in Matthew and Heli in Luke.

24. The “Levirate” marriage (cf. Dt 25:5-10), that is, if a married man dies childless, his brother should marry his widow.

25. The language is confusing here, as Gregory refers to Christ as the “mortal God,” (Θεοῦ βροτεοῦ); he has Christ’s mortal nature in mind.\(^{113}\)

26. For this problem Eusebius also has a long discussion, which G. seems to adopt here.\(^{114}\) But Eusebius seems to rely on the claim that “Melchi” was Christ’s grandfather, whereas both Gospels read “Matthat.” Palla notes that the names were often conflated.\(^{115}\) It is key that Christ descended from Nathan through Melchi/Matthat, since this is the source of his priesthood.

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\(^{111}\) By contrast to Gregory, Marshall D. Johnson has argued that the aim of Matthew’s genealogy is precisely to refute other Jews who would claim that the Messiah would emerge from the priestly line; see *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (SNTSMS 8; London/New York: Cambridge University, 1969) 208, 224.

\(^{112}\) Cf. *Il. 2.310*; *Il. 3.325*.

\(^{113}\) Cf. *Il.1.34, 1.3*; note that Euripides speaks of Dionysus in the same language at *Bacchae* 1.4.

\(^{114}\) See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.7.

32. Thus, Joseph is “of Heli,” as we find in Luke, who reckons according to the Law, but Jacob “begot” Joseph, as we find in Matthew, who reckons according to blood; the two lines converge in Christ.

33. The meter shifts here for three lines, to iambic trimeter, perhaps as a “conversational” insertion.

42. That is, in referring to Elizabeth as Mary’s kinswoman, the angel refers to Mary relationship to the tribe of Aaron, attributing to her a priestly lineage.

45. According to Ex 6:23, Aaron, a Levite, married Elisheba, who was sister of Nahshon, who was of the tribe of Judah. I cannot find the reference to Nahshon marrying Aaron’s daughter. Perhaps G. is confused about the details here, but even if he is wrong, the reference still proves that the tribes mixed.

49. G. refers to the Babylonian exile, suggesting that there was a change in reckoning after the Law went unobserved during the occupation.

59. This line makes more sense if we take it as the conclusion of a separate poem; Joseph, from Bethlehem, is from the royal line of David. Here G. repeats l.50, only changing μήτρος to πάτρος, in order to frame his presentation of the royal and priestly lineage of Christ.

60. The start of the second poem, which presents the details of the genealogy. My notes here are minimal since, as Billius notes, the names are available to anyone who wants to read the scripture. Like Billius, who struggled to put the names in Latin, I cannot manage to make the names fit any recognizable English meter.

61. That is, Luke’s genealogy begins with Christ and ends with Adam. G. relates this genealogy to himself, in his typical turn.
62. Gn 2:7, specifying the manner of Adam’s creation.

65. Enoch according to the description of his ascent into heaven in Heb 11:5.

74. Meter faulty; perhaps we are missing a consonant, δ’, before Αράμ.

79. Meter faulty, unless we read the final syllable of Ἰωάναν as short, despite its position.

85. Meter faulty and not easily corrected.

95. There seems to be an extra foot in the hexameter.

102. See l.50 above on Joseph “seeming” to be Christ’s father, reprised here.

1.1.20. The Miracles of Christ according to Matthew (PG 37.487-491)

This poem is treated at some length in the introduction. According to Palla’s reconstruction, this is the first in the series on the miracles and parables of Christ. As the opening poem, it is the longest of the group and most carefully fashioned; many of the details of the miracles present here are absent from the other poems. Although G. stops numbering the miracles at twenty, the final two miracles seem to count in the catalogue. If so, then we have twenty-two miracles, a nice mnemonic, where the number of miracles equals the number of books in the OT, which equals the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

meter: elegiac couplets.

1-2. As in all the miracle poems, G. begins with an opening couplet as a simple introduction to the catalogue.

1. ἔρεξε, “performed,” is Homeric and is rare in Christian literature before G. Indeed, the first line seems to recall Homer, Od., 14.139:
πάσιν, ἐμοὶ δὲ μάλιστα, τετεύχαται; οὐ γὰρ ἐτ᾽ ἄλλον ἔπεσεν ὑδε ἄνακτα κιχήρομαι, ὅππος ἐπέλθω.

G.’s placement of ἄναξ close to ὁππός’, a word that rarely occurs in post-classical Greek literature, suggests that G. is deliberately classicizing here.

2. Χριστὸς ἄναξ, “Christ the ruler,” a very common epithet in G.’s poems; indeed, G. seems to have coined the title; ἄναξ, a classical word for “King” or “master,” never occurs in the New Testament and is rare by the fourth century.116

2. κρανάμενος: a medical term for “mixed,” which appears in Galen and Plotinus. On Christ as mixed: Gregory often uses words from the root μίγνυμι to express the union between Christ’s divine and human natures.117 Here the point does not seem to be that Christ is “mixed in a mortal body,” but rather that he is “mixed, and in a mortal body,” that is, his mixture occurs at the level of the union of the two natures, rather than between the divine Person and the mortal body, which would lead to a sort of Apollinarianism; in another poem (I.1.9) G. specifically attacks this view.

3. G. begins recounting Matthew’s record of Jesus’ miracles at Mt. 8:1, after the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. This means he ignores the record of Christ ministering to a great multitude (Mt 5:23-25). Palla claims that G. often overlooks “generic” miracles, but such a rule is not consistently observed.

3. The line shows G.’s characteristic juxtaposition of biblical and classical vocabulary; ἀπεσείσατο, “he shook off,” a word used by Hellenistic authors, especially Theognis;118

116 The title is widely imitated in later Byzantine authors; Simelidis, Selected Poems, 67.
117 On G.’s use of κράσις and μίξις for “mixed,” see Portmann, Die göttliche paidogogia, 63-74 (as applied to humanity, “the first mixing”) and 109-124 (as applied to Christ, “the second mixing”).
λεπροῖο, “of the leper,” corresponds to the Greek of the NT, but is hapax in this unusual
genitive form. In addition the line introduces a peculiarly Gregorian phrase, πυκρήν
νοῦσον, “acute disease,” which G. seems to have invented, and used frequently.\textsuperscript{119}

4. The healing of the centurion’s servant, who is paralyzed. Some vocabulary,
ἐκατοντάρχου and παιδὸς, is from the NT, while the word for “binding,” from
πήγνυμι, is classical and, used in this context, that is, with limbs, it may mean “to fix”
and thereby recall Euripides’ \textit{Cyclops}, 302: οὐκ ἀμφὶ βουτόροιο πιχθέντας μέλη.\textsuperscript{120}
G. may also juxtapose the “shaking off” of the sickness in l.3 with the “binding” of the
limbs here.

5. The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law. Following the text of Matthew, I take χειρί to
refer to Peter’s mother-in-law’s hands, although the Greek is ambiguous and could refer
to Christ’s hand. Instead of the \textit{koine} word for mother-in-law that appears in Matthew,
πενθερά (which in the genitive would be metrically impossible here), G. uses the

6. The calming of the storm. Here G. uses the verb εὔνασε (“he calmed”) perhaps
alluding to the Hellenistic author Apollonius of Rhodes, who also uses the verb in a
similar context, to refer to a calmed sea (\textit{Argonautica} 1.1155). G.’s μέγας appears again.

7. The Healing of the Gerasene demoniacs. Readings of this biblical place name vary in
ey early witnesses. “Gergesenes” is widely attested, although always with a single
consonant. G. here has Γεργεσσὴν ἰ, with a double \textit{sigma}, which does not appear in
the standard apparatus. The doubled consonant is odd, since metrically the syllable must

\textsuperscript{119} Cf. \textit{epigram} 8.36; \textit{Il}.1.34, 1.175; \textit{Il}.1.46, 1.47.
\textsuperscript{120} It is worth noting that in the Cyclops, Odysseus is here referring to the Cyclops fixing, i.e., placing,
limbs on posts, while G. by contrast refers to Christ fixing, i.e., healing, the servant’s limbs.
be short; we are forced to conclude that this is either one of G.’s false quantities or a mistake in the mss.

G. uses the classical σύεσσι for the swine in place of Matthew’s χοίρων.

8. Healing of the paralytic. The Greek is difficult. PG’s Latin version has eo iubente, “when Christ bid him.” I translate ἐὴν as a possessive adjective modifying χλίνην. This reading, in fact, suggests that G. was paying close attention to the Gospel text, which also modifies the paralytic’s litter with an emphatic placement of the possessive adjective σου, twice in the verse (Mt 9:6).

9. Healing the hemorrhaging woman; an elegantly compact summary of the miracle, which communicates the woman’s illness and her action – touching Christ – in a four-word chiasm. While the description of the woman recalls the biblical vocabulary (αἵμοροούσης and ἁψαμένης comes directly from Mt 9:20), G. employs a Homeric form for Christ’s action of “holding back,” σχέθεν.121

10. The healing of the ruler’s daughter. For some discussion, see the introduction (p.20).

11. The healing of two blind men. G. repeats the word for light (φάος) from the previous line. G. has a tendency to repeat key words and phrases for emphasis and probably as an aid to memory;122 the phrase πόρεν φάος, “gave the light,” seems to be G.’s innovation.123

This is the first moment in the poem where the insertion of a miracle, the healing of a dumb man, does not begin with a new line.

12. G. uses ἑκ here as an adverb, “therefrom” (cf. LSJ, s.v.; Il. 11.480).

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121 Cf. Od. 14.494; Od. 23.243; the form also appears in the Byzantine lexicon.
122 See Simelidis, Selected Poems, 52-54
ῥῆξε λόγον, “he let loose the word,” a phrase G. uses frequently to refer to speaking after a period of silence.124

13 Healing the man with a withered hand. G.’s phrasing here, “loosing the withered hands from its chains” is odd, but consistent with G.’s sense that Christ’s acts to “free” those he heals (cf. 1.26 and 1.29).

15-16. The feeding of the five thousand. This is the first miracle that G. treats in a couplet, a structure evident in all subsequent miracles of the catalogue. Here the sense of the verse is marked by a clever poetic pause: two groups were “filled,” i.e., not only the men, but also the baskets. We also find the juxtaposition of biblical and epic vocabulary. The word for baskets, κοφίνους, is from scripture, while the word for “scraps,” ἀκόλων, is classical.125

G. calls those who were fed κἀνδρῶν, “men,” a significant word choice, since in Matthew the number of those fed does not include women and children (Mt 14:21). The second half of the pentameter in the couplet is an especially memorable play on sound, perhaps to foster memorization for young children: πέντ’ ἀπὸ πέντ’ ἀκόλων.

17-18. Walking on the water. There is a probable allusion to the Il. 21.263:

ὡς αἰεὶ Ἀχιλῆς κακήσατο κύμα ὀξὺο
καὶ λαυησάμον ἐόντα: θεόι δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν.

κακήσατο is in the same metrical position in both instances. Moreover, G. seems to play on the context of the word in his epic source: just as in the Iliad the River, a god, “overtook” Achilles, who was not a god, so Jesus, as God, “overtakes” the sea.

125 The PG editors note that ἀκόλων has been glossed in the ms (37.489 n.16), presumably because its meaning was obscure to later authors.
18. ὀρινόμενος, “aroused,” often describes stormy seas in classical literature.126

Gregory does not include any reference to the miracle at Mt 14:34-36, the healing of the sick in Gennesaret; this may simply count as “generic” (cf. l.3 ad loc.).

19-20. The healing of the Canaanite woman’s daughter.

From the Greek it is unclear whether πολλὰ modifies the woman’s rejoicing or her begging. Attention to Matthew’s text suggests that it is the beseeching that is “much”; G. may use the adverb to allude to the woman’s persistent response to Christ’s initial hesitance to heal her daughter (“Even dogs eat of the scraps that fall from the table of their master”). In addition, G. seems be alluding to πολλὰ λιταζομένης in the Sibylline Oracles 2.2, thus further supporting my translation.127

21-22: The feeding of the four thousand.

The construction ἑκτὸ ἀπὸ ἐπτὰ mimics πέντε ἀπὸ πέντε in l.16 (see note ad loc.), which also treats a multiplication of loaves. Here G.’s reference to the “filling” (χόρος), like the reference to “filling” (πλήση) in l.16 points to Matthew’s description of the result of the miracle, namely, that all present were filled (ἐχορτάσθησαν).

23. The Transfiguration.

G. shifts the language of scripture to allude to Euripides’ Bacchae, where Dionysus explains his adoption of human form:

\[ ὃν οὖν ἔδοξεν ἔμην μετέβαλεν ἐις ἄνδρος φύσιν (52-53). \]

The allusion may suggest that G. knew the parallels between the Incarnation and mythological accounts of divinities taking on human appearance. At the Transfiguration,

126 Cf. Il. 2.294; Apollonius, Argonautica 1.1086. See Sykes, Poemata Arcana, 254 n.20, on the verb as used in Arcana 8.20.
127 On G.’s use of the Sibylline Oracles, see Simelidis, Selected Poems, 38.
Jesus reveals his true divine nature, as a special moment of revelation for his closest friends. Dionysus, by contrast, takes on human form to deceive and thereby test humanity.

24. ἠελίοιο πλέον, “brighter than the sun”; with the phrase, G.’s version outdoes the Gospel account, which only has Christ shining like the sun.

25-26. Healing of a boy with a demon. This couplet is discussed in the introduction (p.20).

G. couples the sun in l.24 and the form of “epilepsy” that contains the root “moon” (σεληναίης) in l.25. The juxtaposition of the two images may well have aided memorization.¹²⁸

After l.25, Gregory includes no reference to Mt. 17:27, the payment of the Temple tax with the coin from the fish’s mouth. Perhaps G. overlooks the miracle because in the Gospel text it is not actually performed, but only anticipated.


The participle, πορευόμενος, (“traveling”) recalls Mt.’s language, ἐκπορευομένων.

29-30. G. summarizes a group of miracles, giving sight to the blind, healing the lame, and cleansing the Temple, but he reverses the scriptural order. Notably, he treats the cleansing of the Temple as a miracle, perhaps because Christ’s action reveals his special authority over the Father’s house. Indeed, perhaps this inclusion points to an early Christian conception of miracles (“marvels”) as not simply the moments where Christ

¹²⁸ Moreover, Gregory often juxtaposes sun and moon in his verse; see Simelidis, Selected Poems, 39.
suspends the laws of nature, as an enlightenment view might hold, but rather to any moment where Christ reveals his divine nature.

**31-32.** The cursing of the fig tree.

G.’s Βηθανίηθεν shows that he has in mind the verse prior to this miracle, which speaks of Christ going “into Bethany” (Mt 21:17; εἰς Βηθανίαν). Christ’s entry into Jerusalem must therefore have occurred from there. G., then, is not simply paraphrasing the miracles in isolation, but rather he has in mind the broader Gospel narrative.

G.’s claim that this is Christ’s μέγιστον or “greatest” miracle seems strange, especially since he is just about to present the Resurrection. Elsewhere in his poems G. offers other candidates for the title of μέγιστον θαύμα, including for instance, in the poem “On the Soul” (I.1.8, l.47), the Resurrection of the body. Here G. may be claiming that the miracle is Christ’s greatest because it signifies the passing away of the Old Law and the revelation of the New.

**33-38.** The catalogue of miracles culminates in Christ’s death and Resurrection. The passage contains many direct verbal references to Matthew’s account.

**34.** πέτασμα comes directly from Matthew’s καταπέτασμα.

Here, too, we most likely have another reference to the *Sybiline Oracles*, 8.305.

**35.** The translation is uncertain on account of the ambiguous object of ὑπέρ. Gregory seems to want to communicate the geography of the Scripture, that is, where exactly the rocks split. It may read, as the Latin of the *PG* editors has, “The earth shook, and on earth, it split the rocks.”

**35-36.** G.’s tendency to repeat appears again in his use of τύμβον and τύμβους in l.36.

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129 Other candidates are offered at II.1.1, l.104, “The praise of virginity,” where it is the creation of humanity and II.2.7, l.280, “To Nemesius,” where it is the Crucifixion.
37-38. Christ appears to his “friends,” as he had done at the Transfiguration (1.24).

I.1.24. The parables and puzzles according to Matthew (PG 37.495-496)

G. gives an 18-line summary of the parables in Matthew, about half the length of the poem on the miracles and, again, in elegiacs. Unlike the poem on the miracles, the lines of I.1.24 are dependent clauses, not complete sentences. The use of indirect discourse may imitate the nature of the parables as “spoken” by Christ, as opposed to the miracles, which are reported directly. It may well also have been a way of introducing a younger audience to this grammar, which is common in classical literature, but is often abandoned in biblical Greek and in the Byzantine era.

Each miracle is presented succinctly, often in a single line or less. The syntax of the poem is rather difficult, even more than in the poem on the miracles, since the details of the parables are almost entirely ignored. Only a reader who was already quite familiar with the Gospel text could make out the sequence of references and, even then, ambiguities remain. Yet perhaps for this reason, G. seems to favor words taken directly from scripture to paraphrase the parables; he wants to make the references more obvious.

The Greek title printed in the PG is simply “the parables and puzzles,” although all of the parables come from the First Gospel.

1. A single line functions as an exhortation and introduction.

Εἰ δ’ ὁγε occurs frequently at the beginning of G.’s poems, and is a standard Homeric opening. 130

130 E.g. Il. 1.302, 1.493.
Here we have a play on “seeing” (δέρκεο, a word frequent in epic) and “darkness” (σκοτίων). G. invites the reader to see what is hidden.

2. The two foundations. Instead of biblical word for sand (ἄμμον), G. uses the Homeric equivalent here (ψάμμος), even though the two words are metrically identical.

3. The parable of the sower.

4. The parable of the weeds and wheat. The repetition of καὶ σπόρον at the beginning of lines 3 and 4 is one of G.’s preferred touches. Here it may aid memory, but it also calls attention to the textual proximity of the two “seed” parables in Mt 13. Line 5 will alter the opening phrase slightly to καὶ δένδρον, even as the subsequent reference to σπόρον in the line calls attention to yet a third “seed” parable in the same chapter of Matthew.

5. While the referent of the line is clear enough, that is, the parable of the mustard seed, the phrase is impressively compressed. G. presents the yeast hidden in the dough with the same degree of compression. The language here is strictly scriptural, perhaps to fix the referent.

9. νεπόδων, “sea creatures,” is an unusual word, but occurs a few times in Callimachus. The word order for the sentence is concentric, perhaps visualizing the net that encloses the catch.

G. ignores Mt 13:51-53, the treasures old and new. Again, he may simply overlook “generic” passages.

10. A detail in the parable of the lost sheep, that the shepherd carried the sheep on “his shoulders,” does not appear in Matthew but rather in Luke.

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131 Fragment 295.2;
G. ignores the parables of 15:14-18, the blind leading the blind and food that renders impure.

11. G.’s repetition of the adjective πικρὸν, “harsh/petty,” to describe both the servant and the ruler underlines the Gospel presentation of the two characters as parallel figures. In these final parables G. notes the simple opposition present in the Gospel by contrasting the opposing groups mentioned in the Jesus’ sayings.

12. The workers in the vineyard.

13. The parable of the two sons. G. signals the Gospel’s explicit opposition of the response of the two sons by the emphatic οὐδὲν ὁμοίους, “not at all alike.”

14. The vineyard and the talents.

15. The marriage feast.

16. The ten maidens.

17. The talents.

18. Again, we find emphasis on the opposition between the good and the bad, here through the adverb ἔμπαλιν.

I.1.21. The Miracles of Christ according to Mark (PG 37.491)

Unlike the poems on Matthew, this poem begins with an introduction to Mark the Evangelist and his intended audience. G. reprises the attribution he makes in 1.1.12, where he writes that Mark “wrote the marvels of Christ for Italy.”

Also departing from the companion poem on Matthew, G. does not here number the miracles, but runs through them summarily. After the opening couplet, enjambment

132 Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 183 takes this to be an amplificatio of the original text.
appears at almost every verse, carrying the reader along rapidly until the conclusion.

Most likely, this hastier treatment of Mark’s miracles presupposes some knowledge of Matthew’s list. In my translation I have attempted to imitate the mnemonic and catechetical end of the verses through rhyme and assonance. Still, I follow the Greek line by line, attempting to be as literal as possible.

*meter:* The meter shifts to dactylic hexameter, at least for the first ten verses, probably to distinguish the meter from the poems on Matthew and to familiarize students to another standard meter. The last seven lines are corrupt; although they are printed as hexameters in the *PG*, the manuscripts present them variously as elegiacs or in mixed meter. There are some false quantities and other metrical peculiarities, especially with G.’s use of καὶ, which he generally treats as long, but sometimes is short; 1.6 requires that the word be scanned both ways.

1. Αὐσονίοιοι, a classical Greek designation for the Romans/Italians.

2. θαρσαλέος, “brave/bold,” is common in Homer; the force of the adjective to describe Mark is probably generic, since Gregory reprises the same formula to describe Luke, merely substituting Paul for Peter, in his poem I.1.22 on the miracles according to Luke. The epithet makes more sense for Luke, who accompanies Paul in *Acts*, than it does for Mark, who is never explicitly linked to Peter in Scripture. Eusebius, however, takes Mark to be Peter’s companion and Mark’s Gospel as a record of Peter’s teachings.

3. The enjambment of the lines, which I imitate in the translation, begins here.

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134 On his false quantities, see Simelidis, *Selected Poems*, 54-57; Crimi, “Il problema.”
135 Cf. Il. 21.589; Od. 7.51.
136 *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15, citing the words of Papias.
G. here evokes the man with an unclean spirit, the healing of the crowd, and the cleansing of a leper, presented in sequence at the beginning Mark’s Gospel.

4-5. “His hand was stretched,” χεὶρ ἐταυνόσθη; G. is fond of the formula, which appears in Homer.① The referent is obscure until 1.5 and ἔμφης, which identifies the miracle as the healing of the “dry” hand (cf. Mk 3:1).

5. λήξεν μένος, “he calmed the wrath” uses epic language to describe the miracle of the calming of the seas.②

6. Casting out Legion; G. specifies the original Gospel text through the name Legion, which does not appear in Matthew, but only in Luke and Mark.

Healing of the hemorrhaging woman.

αἵματόεσσαν; a form of the participle “bleeding” that differs slightly from αἵμοροούσης used of the same miracle in Matthew (cf. I.1.20, I.9), although the two forms are metrically equivalent. G. may use these variations to expose his audience to different verbal forms.

7. Healing Jairus’ daughter; G. specifies the father’s proper name, a detail that does not appear in Matthew, but only in Luke and Mark.

8. Walking on the sea; ἔδησε πόντον, “he bound up the sea,” is a striking phrase. As in his account of the same miracle in Matthew, G. makes explicit the theophanic implications of the walking on the water, where Christ reveals his divine powers over chaos.

9-10. The healing of the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter.

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① Cf. II.1.55 l.23; cf. II. 23.761.
② Cf. II. 21.305; II. 13.424.
10-11. The grammar of the sentence requires that Christ drives out two “spirits,” that is, one from the Phoenician girl and the other one a “deaf and dumb” spirit in the region of Tyre and Sidon.

11-12. The feeding of the four thousand. Here G. simple refers to “thousands” without specifying the number as he had in Matthew.

12. Healing the blind man at Bethsaida.


13-14. While the miracle here occurs at Mk 9:20, the specific language of the δεσμὸν γλώσσης is from the earlier account of a similar miracle, that is, Mk 7:35.

14-15. The healing of Bartimaeus. Again, G. marks the miracle’s source by using the proper name, which occurs only in Mark.

16. The cursing of the fig tree. Although not called the “greatest” of the miracles, as it is in the poem on Matthew, G. treats the cursing with special attention; it is the only miracle in the catalogue presented in more than one line.

16. G. inserts a pentameter here.

17. The referent of this line is unclear, perhaps because it is an interpolation. The account of these miracles, unlike those of Matthew and Luke, does not conclude with the Resurrection.

I.1.25. The Parables of Christ according to Mark (PG 37.496-497)

From the manuscript evidence, Palla claims that only lines 1, 2, and 4 of this poem as it is printed in the PG are authentic. If so, there is very little content to the verse, a mere three

parables. I have translated the remaining verses, although the sense remains obscure, especially the reference to Luke at the end. Following the Syriac manuscripts, Palla suggests that the final verses belong at the opening of the subsequent poem, I.1.22, on the miracles of Luke, in place of the verses that are printed in the *PG*.

It may be that these lines of the poem look to summarize the two contiguous poems.

*meter:* Like the poem on the miracles of Mark, the authentic lines of this poem are in dactylic hexameter.

2. *σπόρον οὔτι ὁμοίον,* “seed that is not the same,” resembles the reference to the sower and the seed in the poem on the parables of Matthew (I.1.24, l.3), where the planting was likewise not “the same.”


This poem follows the more compressed structure found in the poem on the miracles in Mark, although all the miracles are presented as complete sentences.

Besides the dubious opening couplet, the meter is elegiacs. Again, G. shifts from the hexameters of the poems on Mark.

1. As noted, the introduction of Luke is virtually identical to the introduction of Mark in l.1 of I.1.21.

2-4. These first four lines are virtually identical to the opening of I.1.21, even though one of the miracles, the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, is presented differently in Mark

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(where Christ touches her) than it is in Luke (where the demon is rebuked by Christ’s words). Perhaps this simplification helped memorization.\(^{141}\)

4. At the healing of the withered hand, G. alters the language he uses in Mark, using καρφαλέης, a Homeric word for “dried.”\(^{142}\)

5. Healing the centurion’s daughter; ἥδρασε, lit. “he settled,” is a unusual verb, and does not generally mean “he healed.”\(^{143}\)

6. G. includes the place name Nain, which only occurs in Luke.

7. The anointing at Bethany, elegantly rendered. Note the polyptoton, where G. juxtaposes the “sanctifying” of Christ’s “sacred” feet in the words ἁγνοῦς and ἡγνισε. Note also the contrast between the woman anointing Christ with μύρῳ, or oil, and Christ purifying her with μῦθῳ, his word.

8. The calming of the storms and the driving out of Legion. By using the verb στῆσε, “he stayed” or “he put down” for both actions, G. stretches its meaning, almost to nonsense. He must mean that he “stayed” the storms and he “settled” Legion in the swine, since Christ did not stay the demon, but rather drove him out.

9. A third, briefer rendering of the healing of the hemorrhaging woman. From Matthew to Mark and now to Luke, the rendering of the miracle becomes progressively more compressed.

9-10. Healing Jairus’ daughter. Whereas G. presents the parallel account in Matthew by writing that “she found the light” (viz., since she was actually sleeping; Mt 9:24), here he

\(^{141}\) Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 183.

\(^{142}\) Cf. Od. 5.369.

\(^{143}\) But cf. the remark on πήγνυμι and G.’s use of “fixing” for “healing” (I.1.20, 1.5 ad loc.)
states that Christ led her into life (Ἦγαγεν ἐς ζωήν), since in Luke she is actually accounted dead.

11. The feeding of the five thousand.

12. The Transfiguration. Greek here (εἰδεος ἤκεσε σέλας) is somewhat peculiar. The PG Latin takes εἰδεος as “face,” but I find no warrant for such a translation.

13. The healing of a boy with an unclean spirit. The line is carefully wrought, with an elegant ABACB, construction, perhaps mimicking the way the demon possesses the boy. At the same time, G. includes the unusual word for “only begotten” (τηλυγέτοιο) to signal Luke’s detail that this boy was the father’s “only begotten” (μονογενής).

14. The healing that precedes the dispute on Jesus and Beelzebul (Lk 15-23).

15. The reference to the Hebrew woman seems to correspond to the Lukan setting of this miracle, that is, on the Sabbath and, perhaps, in the synagogue.

16. The healing of the man with dropsy. The word ὄγκον here has the sense of “a weight/burden” and the word for dropsy, ὑδέρου, seems an epexegetical genitive.

17. The healing of the ten lepers. G. includes the detail unique to Luke, that there was a Samaritan in the group.

18. Healing the blind man on the way from Jericho.

19-20: The conclusion, on the Resurrection, resembles the final line from the poem on the miracles in Matthew, here slightly altered to emphasize Christ’s appearance to his friends (perhaps in reference to the Lukan account of Emmaus).

I.1.26 The Parables of Christ according to Luke (PG 37.497-498)

144 Cf. Il. 9.482; the word appears in the Lexica.
As in the poem on the parables in Matthew, G. presents all of the accounts tersely, in indirect discourse. Here, too, G. rushes through the catalogue and uses frequent enjambment. This group is, in fact, so compressed that it seems to presume some familiarity with the Matthew list, or, perhaps, is simply a prelude to a more thorough reading of the parables in the final poem of the series (I.1.27).

This is the only poem of the group in iambic trimeter. In his translation, Daley has a poem in the same meter and concludes that the effect is conversational. The choice, here, however, seems more arbitrary, since there is no inherent reason that the parables of Luke should sound more conversational than those of Matthew and Mark. Moreover, the iambics seem to hamper G.’s capacity for conveying the basics of the parables. Often the references are virtually inscrutable.

1. As in the other poems on parables, this begins with a single line introduction. The reference to Luke “remembering” the parables (ἐμνήσθη) may be a play on the student who was attempting to “memorize” just as many parables as Luke recorded.

Παροιμίαν, “of the proverbs,” differs slightly from the term G. generally uses, παραβολή; see n.51 below.

2-4. The list here is hard to follow. G. ignores the parable of the blind leading the blind (6:39), and makes the two foundations the first on his list. The referent in lines 3 and 4 does not seem to be a parable, but rather to the healing of the woman who anoints Christ’s feet (7:36-50), where Christ asserts that whoever has loved much will be

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145 A. Tuilier argues that G. uses this meter because he presents these parables as “proverbs” (in J. Bernardi, A. Tuilier, and G. Bady, Grégoire de Nazianze, oeuvres poétiques, lxii). Demoen, Pagan and Biblical Exempla, however, believes that the distinction is not observed.
forgiven much. If so, G. has disregarded the biblical sequence, which he usually follows reliably.

4-5. The sower and the seed. The reference to the φύσεις (“natures”) of the earth may allude to Luke’s Greek here, which includes many terms related to φύω (i.e., φυέν 2 times and, συμφύεσθαι). The term and its roots are absent from Matthew’s and Mark’s account of the parable.

5-6. The Good Samaritan. The salient figure for Gregory is not the “Good Samaritan,” as most modern readers tend to presume, but rather the traveler who falls among the thieves.

6-7. G.’s use of the word πονηρὰ (“bad things”) suggests that he is combining the parable of the man who asks his friend for help late in the night with Christ’s subsequent questioning about the way selfish men respond to their children’s request by never giving them bad things for good; at issue in the parable of the visit at night is not receiving “good things” but rather receiving anything at all.

8-9. Ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα, “unclean spirit,” is taken directly from the Gospel, while G.’s εἰσοικίζεται renders Luke’s εἰς τὸν οἶκον as a verb.

9-10. The rich fool; ὁ here is a masculine dative personal pronoun, with the verb στήσεται, “will stand”; the PG’s Latin has quo rapietur, “by whom it will be snatched,” which corresponds better to the Gospel text, but is hard to reconcile with Gregory’s Greek.

11-12. The watchful servants; ἐκ τῶν γάμων is directly from Lk 12:36. But note that G. inserts χριστῷ for “the Anointed” here. He thus intends a Christological reading of the parable, recalling the interpretation that Jesus himself gives in Lk 12:40 (“when the Son of Man comes”).
13. The barren fig tree.

14. The parable of the mustard seed and the hidden yeast; Gregory captures these brief parables in a single word.

14. Very compressed, but Gregory seems to have the parable of the guests and hosts in mind here.

15. The parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin, their Gospel order reversed.

16. The prodigal son. As in the parable of the Good Samaritan, there is a shift in identification of the central character: Gregory places the emphasis on the father who feels pity, rather than on the son who was lost.

17-18. The parable of the dishonest steward. The reference to the οἰκονόμος is direct from Lk.

18. Lazarus and the rich man, as briefly and as directly as can be included in a single line.

19. The widow and the judge.

20. The tax collector and the Pharisee.

21. The parable of the ten pounds; μνών, for minas, fixes the referent in Luke. The meter here is faulty.

22. The vineyard and the tenants.

I.1.23. The Miracles of Christ according to John (PG 37.494)

The eleven-line poem on the miracles of John is the shortest of the miracles poems, a point G. himself explains in the first two lines. The vocabulary of the poem is remarkably sophisticated, including a hapax at l.3.

*meter*: dactylic hexameter.
1. Gregory’s simple, two-line introduction clarifies the nature of the Gospel for young readers: there are many more words than deeds in John. δῆμου, as printed in the PG, seems wrong; the word should have no iota subscript if the word is to mean “meet with, find.”

2. Χριστὸς ἄναξ, G.’s preferred epithet for Christ (cf. the poem’s final line).

3. The wedding at Cana; ἔξερσων, is unusual; it only occurs here, and seems to come from κεφάνωμι, “to pour.”

4-5. The healing of the official’s son and the healing at the pool. The repetition of εἴπε at the start of both lines, in addition to serving as a helpful mnemonic, plays on the style of the Gospel that G. mentions in the introduction, namely, it has “many words.”

5. Impressively compressed; G. seems to capture the peculiar nature of the paralytic’s plight – that he could not reach the pool to be purified and, therefore, freed from his chains.

The opening of the next four verses seems especially assonant, perhaps as a mnemonic device: Πέντε, Πόντον, Τυφλὸν, Τέτρατον in sequence.

6. The feeding of the five thousand.

7. ὑπερζεύοντα, literally “boiling over,” here used metaphorically to refer to the sea.

8. The man blind from birth.

9. The raising of Lazarus, dead four days.

10-11. The Resurrection; G. reprises the formula Χριστὸς ἄναξ from 1.2.

The reference to an appearance to “his companions” (οἶς ἐτώςοι) closely parallels the conclusion of the poems on the parables of Matthew and Luke, where Christ appears to
“his friends”; in all three cases, the somewhat unusual form of the possessive adjective appears.

I.1.27 The parables of the four Gospels (PG 37.498-505)

As discussed in the introduction, where would expect the parables of John we instead get G.’s “final prayer.” Here Gregory reexamines the Gospel parables, often from a moral or a personal perspective, generally presenting them in six-line units. Thirty-one lines of this poem appear in another of G.’s verses, “Exhortation to virgins” (I.2.2). Palla argues that they are much more appropriate to the present context and that, thus, they first appeared in this biblical group. While the first half of the poem draws mostly from the parables in Matthew, the second half generally incorporates material specific to Luke, a division that underlines the rather elegant and careful structure of the verse.

meter: dactylic hexameter.

1. Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:47-49. A two-line personal paraphrase of the parable two foundations. Gregory combines the vocabulary of the two versions of the parable. Matthew’s account refers to the foundation built on sand (although, as in I.1.20, Gregory uses the classical ψάμαθος for Matthew’s ἄμμον); Luke, by contrast, mentions the house built on earth without “foundation,” which explains G.’s θεμελίον.

2. κεδασθῶ, “scattered” is an epic word that Gregory uses instead of scriptural vocabulary.  

147 Specifically I.1.27, 1-5, 7/8, 51-61, 43-50, 62-66 becomes I.2.2. 371-401
149 The term likewise appears in the Lexica.
3-6. Four-line personal paraphrase of the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1-9; Lk 8:4-8; Mk 4:1-8). Gregory changes the synoptic order slightly, placing the seed that falls on shallow ground first, before the seed eaten by birds. The vocabulary here does not follow the Gospels very closely.

4. ἀντεῖλαιμ (“to unwind in the opposite direction”) is a rare verb, appearing in Pindar and the Sybilline Oracles outside of Gregory. Perhaps he uses it to call to mind Mark’s language: ἐξανέτειλεν (“to spring up”).

5. The mention of “little blows” (πήμασι τυτθοῖς) does not have any obvious referent in the Gospels, but must mean the blasts of the sun’s rays.

7-14. The parable of the weeds among the wheat from Mt 13:24-30; G. relies primarily on Matthew as his source. First the sowing of the bad seed at night (ll.7-8) and then the injunction not to gather the harvest until it is ready, so as not to destroy to good growth with the bad (ll.9-11). The final three lines explain precisely how the parable corresponds to the moral life: very few are capable of distinguishing the good from the bad (νανἰόι and Ἐσθλοῖς, repeated as a couple both in 1.10 and 1.14) when they dwell in such close proximity. Indeed, the word for evil, κακὸν, and related words, is scattered throughout this parable five times. Perhaps, then, the verse pictures the parable itself: just as it is difficult to extricate the bad from the good without harming the good, so we cannot remove the “evil” from this passage of verse. The passage takes the moral form standard in this poem: first, an outline of the parable, and second an exhortation to observe it.

150 See Pindar Isthmian 7.5; Sibyllines 11.103; it likewise appears in the Lexicon.
9. The phrase βαλὼν ἐπὶ χεῖρα, “put to the hand,” recalls Callimachus.\textsuperscript{151} Alternatively, it may be Homeric separation for ἐπιβαλὼν χεῖρα.

11. The “good shoot” here is singular, perhaps emphasizing God’s mercy for the sake of the single just one.

15-17. A three-line paraphrase of the parable of the mustard seed (Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-31; Lk 13:18-19). The vocabulary, especially δενδροῦτα, recalls Mt and Lk rather than Mk. This parable does not conclude with any moral application of the poem.

18-23. Six lines on the pearl of great price (Mt 13:45-46), a parable that appears in this form only in Matthew. The first three lines paraphrase the parable; here G.’s vocabulary closely follows the Gospel (Μάργαρε and τιμήει both have immediate parallels in the Gospel text). The second three lines direct the parable to the first person. G. identifies himself with the merchant who sells all he owns.

24-31. A eight-line treatment of the parable of drawing in the net (Mt 13:47-50). G. shows special concern for the fact of falling “within” (ἔσω) the net. He introduces Christ into the parable, making him the king who commands the catch. The apostles, the “fishers of men” (a reference to Mt 4:19), are those who cast the net. Finally, Gregory places himself among those “caught,” begging that he might not be rejected, but rather kept with the catch that is saved and placed in baskets.

30. Again, the consistent concern that G. not be “outside” (ἀπὸ τῆλε) the fold, but preserved within it. The phrase appears elsewhere in G.’s writings.\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{151} In Cererem, 1.96:
καὶ δ ἀυτὸς Τριώπας πολλαῖς ἐπὶ χείρας ἐβαλλε,
τοῖα τὸν υἱὸν ἀγόρινα Ποτειδάωνα καλιστρέων.

\textsuperscript{152} I.1.1, 18; cf. Simelidis, Selected Poems, 32.
31. “The King,” recalls l. 25 and the reference to Christ. The sense could be either “preserved for the King” or “preserved by the King.”

32-35. The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-15). Gregory identifies himself with the workers who arrive early in the day and yet receive wages equal to those who arrive later. Perhaps he thus alludes to his own Christian formation, that is, growing up in a Christian household as opposed to coming to the faith through conversion. The reference in 1.35 to the “jealous one” (φθόνος) applies to those who complain that the master is unfair in giving an equal salary to the latecomers.

36-41. Six lines on the parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28-31). G. takes it that Mt reference to the “πρῶτος” must mean the elder, whereas the scripture does not make this clear. G. changes the order so that the second son, and not the first, follows the command after saying that he would not do so.

41. ἐέλδωρ, “desire/wish,” is classical and appears in the Lexica.153

42. A very compressed line, which alludes to the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Mt 21:33-43; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19). G. offers no moral reading of the parable.

43-50: The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Mt 22:1-14; Lk 14:15-24). G. combines details from the two accounts. For the excuses that the invited offer in rejecting the invitations (l.47), Gregory follows Luke. But the allusion to the guest without the proper garment, in 1.48, and the binding of his hands and feet (l.49), comes from Matthew. Precisely at the center of the poem (ll. 44-45) G. exclaims, “May I take part in this.” The verb ἀντιάσαιμι is archaizing and needs to be clarified in the Lexicon. G. distinguishes

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153 Cf. II. 1.41; II. 1.455; II. 1.504.
those “inside” the feast from those “outside” (ἐκτοθι), that is, the ones who seek to take care of their personal affairs before attending the wedding feast.

From this point, G. relies more on the Lukan version of the parables.

51-61. Parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13). The first four lines paraphrase the parable. The second four direct the parable to G., who begs not to be among the foolish who have no oil. The final three refer to the final lines of the parable, when the bridegroom enters into the wedding feast and shuts the door on the foolish.

53. Here G. gives three distinct titles for the bridegroom of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

55. G. does not want to be “among” the damned, for that would put him “outside” the feast.

61. The reference is obscure; the line may be an occasion to include the phrase κῦδος ὀπάζει, alluding to II 8.141: τούτῳ . . Ζεῦς κῦδος ὀπάζει.

62-66. Five lines on the parable of the watchful servants (Mt 24:45-51; Lk 12:35-40). G. draws on Lk here, including the detail that the king returns from a wedding (Ἐκ δὲ γάμων).

The final sequence of references to servants in ll.65-66 are obscure, but they may allude to dishonest steward of Lk 16:8.

67-70. The parable of the Judgment of the Nations. Again, note the balance: a two-line paraphrase of the parable, followed by two lines of personal reflection. It is not enough that G. ask to be included among the saved; he wants the excluded, those outside, to remain excluded. This is the final parable in Mt, but G. will continue his reflections by returning to earlier parables and alluding to new ones, especially in Luke.
71-73. I am not certain of this reference, unless it is simply an allusion to the city set on a hill (Mt 5:14-16; Lk 14:35). The language resembles Matthew’s, but the reference to God who sees all is difficult to locate in this context.

71. Again, distinguishing the outside from the inside.

74-75. A vague reference to accepting all that God gives him.

75-77. An allusion to the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). As in the treatment of the parables of Luke, we note that the emphasis is on the man who has fallen among the thieves.

76. A significant detail: G. refers to himself leaving “great Christopolis,” μεγάλης Χριστοπόλης. The name only occurs here in Greek and may simply refer to his monastic community (often called ουρανοπόλεις in later Byzantine literature). Yet the name may identify Karbala, in Asia Minor, that is, the same name as G.’s estate. In this case, do we have further evidence that the poem was composed while G. was in the region, as he was after his return from Constantinople until the end of his life.

78-79. The return of the unclean spirit into the unprepared soul (Mt 12:43-45; Lk 11:24-26).

80-81. More Lukan material; here the parable of sparing the barren fig tree is combined with the account of the cursing of the fig tree.

82-85. The parables of Lk 15, in close sequence. G. changes the order, to make the sequence lost drachma, lost sheep, prodigal son, which is then reversed to the Gospel order in l.85.
86-87. While this couplet could be tied to the following, it seems more likely to be a reference to the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:21-34), especially by the reference to ὁμοδούλοις corresponding to Matthew’s συνδούλοις.

88-89: The dishonest steward (Lk 16:1-12), with the reference clarified by verbal parallels.

πυντόφρονι, “cunning,” is a rare word; G. probably takes it from the Sybilline Oracles.154

90-91. Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:19-31). Again we find the desire to be with those “inside,” that is, in the tomb with Lazarus.

92-93: The tax-collector and the Pharisee (Lk 18:9-14). G. adds the detail of the tax-collector’s tears winning him mercy.

94-95. The judge and the widow (Lk 18:1-5). G. again does not follow the Gospel sequence, inserting this paraphrase after the one it precedes in Lk.

95-98. Ask and receive bread (Mt 7:9-11; Lk 11:11-12).

98-100. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16-21). Again, Gregory is not following the sequence. The reference here is established by the ἀποθήκας in Lk 18. The Greek here is difficult to decipher.

101-106. The final six lines seem to go together and allude to the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27). They allow G. to conclude with a general statement about the aim of his poetry, to bear fruit for his audience. Indeed, he has two talents: the gift of meter in verse, and the gift of his oratory, that is, writing and rhetoric. The emphasis here

154 Sibylline Oracles 8.500.
seems to be on the account in Lk, since G. refers to minas (μνᾶς) rather than talents, which appear in Mt.

106. The final, single-line prayer can be incorporated into the previous five lines, but it also functions independently. G. often concludes his poems with a request for mercy that can seem desperate or even apotropaic, warding off an evil he may have incurred by undertaking the task of composing verse.155

I.1.16 On the miracles of Elijah and Elisha the prophets (PG 37.477–479)
This poem and the next, I.1.17, appear to be out of sequence, later additions to the corpus; they are the only poems on scripture preserved separately, in Groups XV and XX. Still, they treat biblical themes and, like the rest of the poems I translate, the first of the couple seems fit for catechetical purposes. My notes here are minimal.

* meter: iambic trimeter *

1. G. includes no reference to Elijah stopping the rain (1Ki17:1).
3. Miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil.
8-9. The referent to the “strangers” is obscure.
18. “Gourd stew” is the poison mentioned in the scripture.
25. It is unclear which “dead man” raises the dead.

I.1.17 Epigram on the martyrion of Elijah, which is called Cherios (PG 37.479–480)
Although this epigram is preserved with the previous poem in one of the manuscript traditions,156 it would seem better placed among the collection of epigrams that are grouped together later in the collection, according to the ordering of the PG. While it

155 See, e.g., the conclusions to II.1.21 (“Against a demon”) and II.1.78 (“To his own soul”).
156 Specifically, W; see Palla, “Ordinamento e polimetria,” 174.
treats a scriptural theme, the poem does not otherwise belong with the poems aimed at catechesis.

*meter*: iambic trimeter

### I.1.28 The storm calmed by Christ (*PG* 37.506-507)

This poem is the most doubtful of the group and, while it appears in two manuscripts of G.’s poetry, in one of the two it is attributed to Basil. Still, Werhahn, who has doubts, generally accepts the authenticity of the verse on internal grounds. G. follows the three Gospel accounts of the miracle (Mt 8:23-27; Mc 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25) rather closely. Still, the poem is more an epigram than a paraphrase, and is preserved as such in the *Anthologia Palatina*.158

*meter*: dactylic hexameter.

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