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HOMER AND HIS LEGACY IN GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS' 'ON HIS OWN AFFAIRS'

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Abstract: This paper investigates how Gregory of Nazianzus imitates and responds to the Greek literary tradition in the autobiographical poem 'On his own affairs' (2.1.1). Through six case studies, it contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of Gregory's literary merit. With learning, wit, subtle humour and faith, Gregory adapts and reinvents earlier poetry to express Christian themes. Imitation is at the heart of his poetic technique, but his imitations are never straightforward. They include imitating both Homer and other poets' imitations of Homer, learned word-play and combining references to non-Christian literature and the Septuagint. Gregory's references add nuance to 'On his own affairs' and give pleasure to readers trained to judge poetry by comparing it to earlier poetry, especially the Homeric epics. They also demonstrate the breadth of his scholarship, which extends to Homeric variants, Platonic epigrams and the entirety of the New Testament and Septuagint. Above all, Gregory insists that he is a rightful participant in a living poetic tradition. He writes Greek poetry for the fourth century AD, just as Oppian did in the second century and Apollonius and Callimachus did in the Hellenistic period.

Keywords: Gregory of Nazianzus, late-antique poetry, Homer, pagan and Christian, Callimachus

This paper investigates how Gregory of Nazianzus imitates and responds to the Greek literary tradition in the autobiographical poem 'On his own affairs' (2.1.1). Famous in the Byzantine tradition as the 'Christian Demosthenes' or simply 'the Theologian' for his elegant Greek and defence of Trinitarian orthodoxy, Gregory (AD 329–389) was also one of the most prolific poets of late antiquity. The *Suda* knows of approximately 30,000 verses,[1] of which more than 18,000 survive.[2] Like other late-antique Greek poets, both Christian and non-Christian, Gregory writes in traditional metres and dialects, and frequently alludes to earlier poems, especially the Homeric epics.[3] D.A. Sykes compares Gregory's *Poemata Arcana*, eight poems on the Trinity, humanity and the created world, to 16th-century English satire that seems 'to glory in its own derivativeness'.[4] This judgment could apply to all of Gregory's poetry, which scholars have been mining for classical fragments since the 19th century. Despite the vast number of references, it has until recently been customary to deny that Gregory is a *poeta doctus* exploiting intertextual links.[5] Gregory's poetry has been enjoying a mini-renaissance for the past two decades, and scholars studying his derivative relationship to the Greek poetic tradition have rejected this view as too narrow.[6] Gregory is a self-consciously traditional poet who expects his readers to recognize his sources and interpret his poetry in the light of them.

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[1] *Suda* Γ 450 Adler.

[2] Tuilier et al. (2004) LX count 1,042 verses for the epigrams and 17,595 for the other poems, including 'Iambs to Seleucus' (2.2.8) but excluding the *Christus Patiens*. Pollmann (2017) 145–49 is the most recent discussion of the evidence against Gregorian authorship of the *Christus Patiens*.

[3] On Christian and non-Christian classicizing poetry of the fourth and fifth centuries in both Greek and Latin, see Agosti (2011); Cameron (2016) 163–84.

[4] Sykes (1979) 13, quoting Lucie-Smith (1967) 15. On the *Poemata Arcana* (1.1.1–5, 7–9) more generally, see Keydell (1951); Sykes and Moreschini (1997) 51–76; Meinel (2009); Faulkner (2010); Norris (2012).

[5] For the 19th-century tendency to dismiss Gregory's references to earlier work as superficial or based on anthologies or digests, see Edwards (2003) 7–13.

[6] For example, Demoen (1993); (2006); Edwards (2003); Milovanović (2008); Whitby (2008); Simelidis (2009) 30–46; Abrams Rebillard (2012); Hawkins (2014) 142–80. On intertextuality in Gregory's prose, see

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This article contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of Gregory's literary merit. Using 'On his own affairs' as a case study, I argue that the essence of Gregory's poetry is derivative in the best sense of the word. To be a poet, for Gregory, meant to be part of a continuous tradition of responding to his predecessors, which to a great extent meant Homer and other poets' responses to Homer. This is the way Greek poetry had been composed by everyone from Aeschylus to Theocritus to Marcus Argentarius to Quintus of Smyrna, who probably lived a century before Gregory,[7] and as it would continue to be composed by Nonnus, Agathias, Musaeus and Paul the Silentiary, who all lived during the two centuries after him.

Christos Simelidis in particular has shown that understanding Gregory's poetry requires knowledge of earlier poetry, especially Callimachus and Homer.[8] To take one of Simelidis' examples, only audiences who know the *Iliad* can appreciate the significance of Gregory's attributing κλέος ἄφθιτον, 'unwithering fame', to the sufferings of Christ in 'On silence in the time of fasting' (2.1.34) 83. The unwithering fame conferred on mortals like Achilles by Greek poetry (*Il.* 9.413) is trivial in comparison to the unwithering fame of Christ's passion, which has granted mortals a share in divinity itself.[9] If Homer ceases to be read, the significance of the Homeric language and concepts that Gregory imitates and refashions will be lost as well. His poetry is not meant to replace traditional Greek literature, but to be read alongside it and compared to it. Gregory's approach contrasts with what Sozomen tells us about Gregory's contemporaries, the father and son both named Apollinarius, who sought to create replacements for traditional school texts by rewriting parts of the Old and New Testament in the styles of Homer, Menander, Euripides, Pindar and Plato.[10]

'On his own affairs' is 634 dactylic hexameters in classicizing, quasi-Homeric language, but it is neither epic nor didactic in any conventional sense. It describes Gregory's struggles to resist 'the evil thorns of living' (50) and devote himself to God. A monologue addressed to Christ, it mixes autobiographical episodes with petitions and praise, ethical reflections and biblical exegesis. 'On his own affairs' has received more attention from modern scholars than most of Gregory's poems. There are two critical editions, the first, a dissertation by Rolande-Michelle Bénin, accompanied by a detailed introduction and commentary. There are also recent translations into English, French and Italian.[11] Bénin documents Gregory's creative engagement with classical literature,

Børtnes (2006) 46–48. Recent literary treatments of Gregory's poetry not concerned primarily with his relationship to the Greek tradition include Milovanović-Barham (1997); Abrams Rebillard (2003); (2010); McGuckin (2006); Demoen (2009); Brodňanská (2012), as well as the works cited in n. 4 above.

[7] On Quintus' date, see Baumbach and Bär (2007) 1–8. On the *Posthomerica*'s learned engagement with Homer, in many ways similar to Gregory's, see Maciver (2012), especially the first chapter, 7–38.

[8] Simelidis (2009) 30–46; *cf.* Kaldellis (2007) 162–63. On Gregory and Callimachus, see also Hollis (2001) 43–49; De Stefani and Magnelli (2011) 554–57; MacDougal (2016). There is a partial list of Gregory's sources in Wyss (1983) 839–63. Besides Homer and Callimachus, a full catalogue would include at a minimum the Attic dramatists, especially Euripides (Stoppel (1881) 3–18 with the comments of Edwards (2003) 10–11 and Casanova (1999) 151–52), Herodotus and Thucydides (Bacci (2010); Abrams Rebillard (2012)), Sappho (Koster (1964); Cataudella (1972) 66–73, 79–82; Costanza (1976) 217–19), Archilochus and other iambic poets (Costanza (1976) 204–12; Hawkins (2014) 142–80), Plato (Bénin (1988) 274; Sykes and Moreschini (1997) 78; Edwards (2003) 54–75), the *Sibylline Oracles* and other oracles or magical texts (Cameron (1969); Simelidis (2009) 33–34, 38–40, 47 with n. 81) and the Orphic Rhapsodies (Herrero de Jáuregui (2007); *cf.* Herrero de Jáuregui (2010) 173–77). Themistius 20.236b–c shows that a highly educated person in the fourth century would have been familiar with Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Menander, Euripides, Sophocles, Sappho and Pindar.

[9] Simelidis (2009) 35–37. On this section of the poem, see also Costanza (1984) 233–35; Demoen (2009) 59–60; Agosti (2011) 280–81.

[10] None of the Apollonarii's literary works survive, but they are mentioned by Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3–8 and Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 3.16.1–6. Sozomen states that a 24-book epic version of Hebrew history through the time of Saul was 'instead of the poetry of Homer' (ἀντὶ τῆς Ὁμήρου ποιήσεως, 5.18.3). On these rewritten Biblical texts as a replacement for traditional school texts of classical authors, see Sandnes (2011) 97–105.

[11] Bénin (1988) is an introduction, text, translation and detailed commentary in French. Tuilier et al. (2004)

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showing particularly how he describes Biblical concepts in traditional literary language and how he writes for a sophisticated audience that can take pleasure in recognizing imitations and adaptations of non-Christian texts.[12] There are over 300 footnotes to Bénin's text of the poem listing Gregory's Biblical and classical models. Gregory's engagement with the Greek poetic tradition in 'On his own affairs' has not been systematically studied since Bénin's dissertation. The most recent article that treats it in terms of the poetic tradition focuses on its generic relationship with didactic poetry and does not look closely at individual passages.[13] My approach in this article resembles Bénin's and is indebted to her research, conclusions and interpretative method. I analyse six passages that exemplify different ways Gregory reworks his models, including adapting other poets' adaptations of Homer, playing a dialectical word game and creating a complex interpretative frame by combining references to the Septuagint with references to Homer and a Hellenistic epigram. Through close readings, I reveal Gregory's learning, his precision in imitation and the simultaneous innovation and traditionalism of his poetics – a creative blending of old with new, pagan with Christian.

By imitating, reacting to and competing with earlier authors, Gregory situates 'On his own affairs' within a continuous tradition of poetic reinvention dating back to Homer. His references are more than a display of cultural allegiance. For readers who share Gregory's intimate familiarity with Greek literature, they give depth and nuance to his poetry. They also demonstrate how the thorough knowledge, and even love, of non-Christian Greek literature could be consistent with sincere Christian faith.[14] By writing poetry the way that he does, Gregory puts into practice his lifelong polemical contention that Christians are heirs to the Greek literary and intellectual tradition. As Gregory maintains in the *First Oration Against Julian* (*Or.* 4), all *logoi* are linked to the *Logos* who created them, and so they belong by right to Christians who worship the *Logos*.[15] At the same time, Gregory also reflects an attitude to non-Christian literature common among patristic authors in the East and the West, who likened the Christian use of pagan culture to the Israelites taking gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians at God's behest.[16] Gregory addresses this despoiling of the Egyptians in his second Easter sermon, insisting that Christians should take gold and silver from the Egyptians, by which he means any treasure from those who are not Christians, because it does not belong to them but to God. He says, 'Yesterday it was theirs because he was permitting it. Today the master supplies it and gives it to you to use well and consistently with your salvation' (*Or.* 45.20). This sums up Gregory's attitude to the living Greek literary tradition. God permitted the polytheists to use it for a time, but now he has transferred it, still living and developing, to Christians. 'On his own affairs' shows how Gregory accepts the transfer and the responsibility that comes with it. He adapts the Greek literary tradition to express the mystery of his own salvation and bring other people to salvation as well.

is an introduction and text accompanied by French translation and notes that relies partly on Bénin (1988); for critical appraisals, see Simelidis (2004); Tompkins (2007). There is an English translation in Meehan (1987) and an Italian one in Crimi and Costa (1999). I quote the text of Tuilier et al (2004) throughout this article, but all translations are my own. For other poems I rely on the text in Migne *PG* or on the most recent critical edition.

[12] Bénin (1988) 261–97, especially 270–72, 274, 287–89.

[13] Milovanović (2008).

[14] *Cf.* Kaldellis (2007) 161–64.

[15] Greg. Naz. *Or*. 4.3–4, 107–08 with Elm (2012) 336–432, especially 348–49, 378–80, 387–89. *Cf.* Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.11 with Norris (1984) on the role of traditional *paideia* in Gregory's understanding of Christian education. Wordplay with *logoi*, *logos* and *Logos* is frequent in Gregory's works: see Szymusiak (1964); Camelot (1966); Costanza (1984); Demoen (2009) 58–59; Hofer (2013) 11–54; Brodňanská (2016).

[16] *Ge*. 15.14, *Ex*. 3.21–22, 11.2–3, 12.35–36. The fathers who interpret the despoliation of the Egyptians in this way include Origen (*Ep. to Greg. Thaum.* = *Philokalia* 13) and Augustine (for example, *De doct. Chris.* 2.40). For further discussion and a full set of references, see Folliet (2002); Beatrice (2006); Allen (2008) 181–272.

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I. Reading Gregory's devil through Homer and Oppian (lines 55–58)

Four verses near the beginning of 'On his own affairs' illustrate Gregory's poetic artistry in all its derivative glory. Describing the allure of the devil, Gregory compares him to the baited copper hook that entices fish.[17] He writes of the devil (55–58):

> τοῖον γὰρ ἐπ' ἀνδράσι λοιγὸν ὑφαίνει
> οἷον ὑπ' εἴδατι χαλκός, ὅτ' ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρῃσιν
> οἳ ζωὴν ποθέοντες ἐνὶ σπλάγχνοισιν ὄλεθρον
> εἴρυσαν ἀπροϊδῆ, σφέτερον μόρον ἀμφιχανόντες.

He weaves ruin for men just like copper beneath food, whenever it brings death to fish. Desiring life, they drag unforeseen destruction into their stomachs as they swallow their own doom.

The comparison draws on two concepts of the New Testament. First, the devil as a deadly fishhook is the antithesis of the apostles as 'fishers of men'. In *Oration* 41, Gregory says of these fishermen that they 'gather up the whole world in the mesh of the word' through the influence of the Holy Spirit (14). The fishnet that takes in everything – the whole world – without discrimination comes from the eschatological parable in Matthew's Gospel where fishermen sorting the good and bad fish they caught are compared to the angels who will separate the righteous from the wicked at the last judgment (13.47–50). This indiscriminate fishnet is a central image of salvation for Gregory. In 'Parables from the four evangelists' (1.1.27), he prays that he may be sorted with the good fish (24–31), and, in *Oration* 37, he likens Christ to the fisherman who casts the net, bringing up from the depths 'a fish, or more precisely a man swimming in the changeable and bitter waves of life' (1). The net allows everyone to swim safely within it until they reach the day of judgment represented by the shore.[18] The hook of the devil, on the other hand, kills immediately and does so through trickery rather than judgment. This is the point of the second New Testament concept that Gregory invokes. Within the simile, the fish's desire for life refers to the hunger that leads them to swallow the bait. In the larger context of Gregory' works, the combination of the words 'desire' (ποθέω/πόθος) and 'life' (ζωή) always refers to the desire for eternal life with God.[19] The phrasing is based on the quotation of LXX *Psalm* 33.13 in *1 Peter* 3.10, where 'the one who wishes to love his life' (ὁ γὰρ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν) represents the person who looks forward to eternal life.[20] The people who fall prey to the devil's temptation, therefore, are not evil. They desire eternal life, but out of ignorance or sin they fail to recognize the bait for what it is.

Gregory presents this reflection on sin and salvation in language that recalls non-Christian Greek literature more directly than the New Testament. The simile imitates the one in *Iliad* 24.80–82, where Iris descending to the depths of the sea is compared to a weight on a fishing line:[21]

[17] The metaphor is the reverse of the famous 'metaphor of the fishhook' in Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Or.* 24 lines 29–40 Winling = p. 62 lines 3–14 Mühlenberg and *On the Three Day Period* p. 281 lines 12–16 Gebhardt, where the devil is a fish who swallows the hook (τὸ ἄγκιστρον) of divinity along with the bait (τὸ δέλεαρ) of flesh. On these and other passages that exemplify the theory that the devil was tricked into attacking Christ under the false impression that he was mortal, see Constas (2004) 143–49; Ludlow (2007) 108–19. It is not impossible that Gregory of Nyssa could have been influenced by 'On his own affairs', which predates both of these texts, but he seems to have taken both his metaphor and his vocabulary primarily from Lucian *Dial. mort.* 8 (= 18 Macleod) and LXX *Jb* 40.25. In *Or.* 4.57, Gregory uses similar language to describe the deceit of Julian, who 'puts gentleness around his tyranny like bait around copper' (καθάπερ χαλκῷ περιβάλλοι δέλεαρ τῇ τυραννίδι τὸ προσηνές). Bénin (1988) 548.

[18] On the possibility that the fishnet allows for repentance, see, for example, Gregory the Great's *Homily on the Gospels* 11.4 = 76.1116.14-1117.3 Migne *PL* = *Homily* 9 in Hurst (1990).

[19] 'Exhortation to Hellenius concerning Monasticism' (2.2.1) 257–58; Epigrams *AP* 8 32.1–2, 77.6; *cf.* Greg. Nys. *Contra Eunom.* 3.8.14–16, 21.

[20] The link between the two phrases is clear in Clem. Al. *Quis dives* 10.4, 10.5.

[21] Frangeskou (1985) 18–19 points out the parallel to *Il.* 24.80–82 but does not analyse it.

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ἡ δὲ μολυβδαίνῃ ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν ὄρουσεν,
ἥ τε κατ᾽ ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας ἐμβεβαυῖα
ἔρχεται ὠμηστῇσιν ἐπ᾽ ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρουσα.

She leapt to the bottom of the sea like lead, which, fastened to the horn of an ox of the field, goes bringing death to fish who eat their food raw.

The verbal and metrical parallel ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρῃσιν and ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρουσα establishes the link between the two passages. In adapting this simile, Gregory reveals an interest in Homeric passages that excited scholarly controversy.[22] Ancient scholars debated the purpose of the ox horn,[23] and Plato preserves an alternate version of the simile that resembles one attested in the so-called city editions of the *Iliad*.[24] Gregory's adaptation follows the standard text.

Gregory's simile, which focuses on the deception of the lure, is more elaborate than its Iliadic model, which focuses on the speed of the weight.[25] In making deception the central element, Gregory relies on two passages of Oppian's *Halieutika* that are partly based on this same Homeric simile. Gregory knew the *Halieutika* well and also imitated it in other poems, including 'Rules for virgins' (1.2.2) and 'Advice to Olympias' (2.2.6).[26]

First, Gregory borrows the word ὑφαίνει, 'weave', from a passage of the *Halieutika* describing Hermes' prowess as the inventor of fishing. Oppian writes (3.12–14):

βουλὰς δὲ περισσονόων ἁλιήων
αὐτός, ἄναξ, πρώτιστος ἐμήσαο καὶ τέλος ἄγρης
παντοίης ἀνέφηνας, ἐπ᾽ ἰχθύσι κῆρας ὑφαίνων.

You yourself, lord, first invented the schemes of clever fishermen, and, for every method of pursuit, you showed the ideal, weaving deaths for fish.

By replacing Homer's φέρουσα, 'bringing', with ὑφαίνων, 'weaving', Oppian has changed what in the *Iliad* is a simple description of what the baited hook does into a sign of Hermes' crafty ingenuity. Continuing this cycle of imitation and innovation, Gregory keeps the form of ὑφαίνω from Oppian but changes Hermes' scheme to kill fish (ἐπ᾽ ἰχθύσι κῆρας ὑφαίνων) into the devil's scheme to kill men (ἐπ᾽ ἀνδράσι λοιγὸν ὑφαίνει), maintaining the same construction, word order and metrical structure.[27] Second, Gregory borrows the idea of fish swallowing their own doom

[22] On Gregory's engagement with Homeric scholarship, see Sternbach (1908); Whitby (2008) 88–89.

[23] Aristarchus argues (correctly) that the ox horn prevented fish from biting through the line against a rival tradition that held that ox horn here really refers to an ox-hair fishing line: Plut. *Mor.* 976f–77a; Schol. to *Il.* 24.81a, 81b Erbse; D-Schol. to *Il.* 24.81 van Thiel; Schol. to *Od.* 12.253 Dindorf.

[24] Pl. *Ion* 538d: ἡ δὲ μολυβδαίνῃ ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν ἵκανεν, / ἥ τε κατ᾽ ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας ἐμμεμαυῖα / ἔρχεται ὠμηστῇσι μετ᾽ ἰχθύσι πῆμα φέρουσα ('She went to the bottom of the sea like lead which, hastening upon the horn of an ox of the field, goes among fish who eat their food raw, bringing misery'). Schol. to *Il.* 24.81c, 82c Erbse; D-Schol. to *Il.* 81 van Thiel. Van der Valk (1963–1964) 2.323–25; Rijksbaron (2007) 44–46.

[25] The ultimate source of the baited hook as an instrument of deception is probably *Od*. 12.251–55, where Odysseus compares the sailors captured by Scylla to fish captured by a fisherman and describes the food (εἴδατα) on the hook as a trick (δόλον). There are some verbal parallels between 'On his own affairs' and this section of the *Odyssey* (for example, ὄλεθρον in *Od.* 12.244 and 'On his own affairs' 54, 57; δόλον in *Od.* 12.252 and δολόμητις in 'On his own affairs' 59), but they are not systematic enough to show direct dependence.

[26] Demoen (1993) 241–42 with n. 17; Whitby (2008) 88–90. Oppian was a popular model for the poets of late antiquity. See Kneebone (2007) on Quintus of Smyrna's engagement with the *Halieutika.*

[27] Gregory's 'weave ruin' (λοιγὸν ὑφαίνει) may also recall *Il.* 6.187 (Bénin (1988) 271, 548), where Glaucus describes how the king of the Lycians 'wove another clever stratagem' (πυκινὸν δόλον ἄλλον ὕφαινε) against Bellerophon. On weaving metaphors in Homeric poetry, see the brief discussion with further references at Stoevesandt (2016) 81–82.

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from a passage in the *Halieutika* describing the thought process of the fish known as the *kossyphos* as he goes for a hook baited with a shrimp. Oppian writes of the *kossyphos* (4.227–29):

> αἶψα δ᾽ ἐπιθύσας ὁ μὲν ἔλπεται ἐν γενύεσσι
> τίνυσθαι καρῖδος ἐπήλυσιν, οὐδ᾽ ἐνόησεν
> ὃν μόρον ἀμφιχανών.

> Suddenly hurling himself forward, he expects to punish the encroaching shrimp with his jaws, but he didn’t notice he was swallowing his own doom.

Although the number and metrical position is different, Gregory’s σφέτερον μόρον ἀμφιχανόντες is clearly based on Oppian’s ὃν μόρον ἀμφιχανών.[28] Oppian is describing here how the fisherman takes advantage of the *kossyphos*’ jealousy. The male *kossyphos* has many female mates, and he spends all of his time suspiciously patrolling their bedrooms. When the shrimp appears, the *kossyphos* assumes he is seeking one of his wives and attacks. Oppian compares the *kossyphos* to the polygamous Assyrians who go to war with each other because of jealousy and suspicion. He says of jealousy, ‘It is a companion of madness and shamelessness. It happily mingles with madness, it dances into the deepest infatuation, and destruction comes upon it in the end’ (4.213–15).[29] Gregory’s simile, therefore, borrows both the words and the lesson of Oppian’s *kossyphos* ‘swallowing his own doom’. The devil’s victims’ metaphorical desire for food leads to their deaths, just as the *kossyphos*’ inability to be content with one wife leads to his death. Gregory’s readers should not be like this silly fish – greedy, impulsive and easily fooled. Instead of gorging themselves or guarding their possessions, they should be on guard against the devil and his wiles.

These parallels illustrate Gregory at work. He expresses significant themes of the New Testament by reconfiguring the language and concepts of Homer and Oppian into a striking, almost metaphysical, conceit. Just as importantly, the parallels reveal Gregory’s awareness that he is working within a tradition of continuous poetic reinvention that builds on what came before. Oppian reinvented Homeric epic as didactic fishing poetry, and, in this passage, Gregory reinvents Oppian’s reinvention as a Christian reflection on salvation and temptation.

While Gregory delights in derivativeness, one could ask whether his sources add enough to ‘On his own affairs’ to make it worth the reader’s while to discover them. The simile of foolish people devouring their death like fish devour baited hooks is striking even for the reader who hasn’t read Homer, never mind Oppian. Gregory’s simile also teaches a moral lesson in a way that does not depend on knowledge of his sources. His readers can easily appreciate the simile’s message about the devil without knowing that the jealousy of Oppian’s *kossyphos* lies behind it. Furthermore, anyone whose literary expertise extends only to passing familiarity with the New Testament can appreciate the contrast between the devil’s fishing and the fishing of Christ and the apostles. To ask what the references to Homer and Oppian add to ‘On his own affairs’, however, is to miss a central aspect of Gregory’s poetics. The references are not meant to decorate the poem like so much extraneous ornamentation. They are integral to it.[30] Gregory’s poetic voice in ‘On his own affairs’ is a systematic imitation of earlier poets. His method of composition is the same one recommended by Longinus in *On the Sublime*, ‘imitation and emulation of the great prose writers and poets of the past’ (13.2).

[28] The idea seems to be an inversion of ‘hateful death swallowed me’ (ἐμὲ μὲν κὴρ / ἀμφέχανε στυγερή), which the spirit of Patroclus says to Achilles in *Il.* 23.78–79. Oppian has a similar phrase in *Hal.* 3.473, where he says of the fish called the *melanouros* that ‘they seize destruction’ (ἁρπάζουσιν ὄλεθρον) by eating bait. Gregory’s phrasing also recalls ‘On his own affairs’ 42, which describes evil men who ‘delight in error and embrace their own doom’ (τέρποντ᾽ ἀμπλακίῃ, σφέτερον μόρον ἀμφαγαπῶντες). See Bénin (1988) 548–49 and, on the parallel for ‘embrace their own doom’ in Hes. *Op.* 58, Bénin (1988) 271.

[29] See Bartley (2003) 165–67.

[30] *Cf.* Bénin (1988) 271.

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As James Porter has shown recently, imitation is the heart of Longinus' conception of the sublime. To attain sublimity, authors must imagine how great writers of the past, Homer above all, would have expressed what they wish to express and how those same writers would react to what they write. Technical precision is a prerequisite for this imaginative exercise, since there can be no way to write as one imagines Homer would have written without the detailed knowledge of Homer's style that can only be gained by reading Homer and trying to write like him.[31] Regardless of whether Gregory knew Longinus' treatise,[32] this section of 'On his own affairs' reveals him employing his technical and imaginative skill in a way that parallels Longinus' analysis of sublime writing. Gregory composes as he imagines Homer would have composed if Homer had been a Christian trying to express the allure of sin.[33] He borrows Homeric language not out of desperation at his own lack of poetic talent, but because borrowing like this is what makes poetry great. As Longinus says, 'it is not a matter of theft' (13.4). Furthermore, writing like Homer is fundamentally a traditional process. When Gregory imitates Homer, he not only borrows from Homer but from Oppian's borrowings from Homer. Later, when Nonnus imitates Homer, he similarly borrows both from Homer and from Gregory's borrowings from Homer.[34]

Gregory composed 'On his own affairs' for an audience that would judge it by these standards. Such an audience would not only agree that great poetry is by definition an imitation of excellent predecessors but would also have the time to study the poem and the training to appreciate Gregory's imitations. For such an audience, a significant amount of the pleasure in reading 'On his own affairs' would come from identifying Gregory's sources and puzzling through the ways he has adapted them.[35] The poem is meant to be read slowly, by people with detailed knowledge of Greek literature, and perhaps even with books at their side. Gregory's friends and students may even have gathered together at symposia to listen to his poems and discuss them.[36]

In 'To his own verses' (2.1.39),[37] Gregory identifies his ideal audience as 'the young, and those among them who especially delight in *logoi*' (37–38). For this audience, his poetry will be 'some pleasant drug of persuasion, an inducement [ἀγωγόν] to better things, making the bitterness of rules sweet with art [τέχνῃ]' (39–41).[38] The language here is characterized by words associated

[31] Longinus *Subl.* 13.2–14.2; Porter (2016) 67–68. On late-antique poets imitating Homer, see Lib. *Ep.* 990 Foerster = 173 Norman, with Cribiore (2001) 227–28.

[32] Longinus seems to have been 'unread or at least not widely read' in late antiquity (Porter (2016) 18), although Heath (1999) tentatively suggests that Gregory of Nyssa may have known *On the Sublime.*

[33] Speaking of Gregory's practice of memorization and composition, Børtnes (2006) 48 writes 'the whole point was that memorised texts could be played around with, taken apart and recombined into new patterns and new discourses'.

[34] For Nonnus' imitations of Gregory, see Simelidis (2016) 298–307, especially 300–01, for examples of Homeric words that Nonnus uses in the sense given to them by Gregory.

[35] *Cf.* Bénin (1988) 270–71, 289.

[36] McLynn (2006) 228–38, with the refinement offered by Simelidis (2009) 173 n. 105; Demoen (2009) 65–66.

[37] Gregory provides a polemical justification for why he writes poetry in this challenging and ambiguous poem, but its importance for interpreting Gregory's poetry as a whole remains the subject of scholarly debate. Hawkins (2014) 146–63 identifies 'To his own verses' as 'a statement' of Gregory's 'literary program' (147) and a 'literary manifesto' (148), following McGuckin (2006) 205–12, who suggests that it appeared first in Gregory's own edition of his poems; *cf.* Norris (2012) 66–67. On the other hand, Demoen (2009) 54–58, responding both to McGuckin (2006) and to Milovanović-Barham (1997), maintains that 'To his own verses' is not a definitive statement of Gregory's poetics.

[38] Gregory is drawing on a set of commonplaces about the power of language. The *locus classicus* is Gorg. *Hel.* 14, but Gregory probably has in mind Socrates' definitions of rhetoric as a 'producer of persuasion' (πειθοῦς δημιουργός, *Grg.* 453a; recognized by Demoen (2009) 55 n. 28) or 'an inducement of the soul' (ψυχαγωγία) through words (*Phdr.* 261a), Theocritus' claim that the only 'drug' (φάρμακον) for love is poetry (*Id.* 11.1–3) and the Athenian stranger's comment in Pl. *Leg.* (659e) that people who treat the sick mix healthy nourishment into tasty food and drink. See also the discussion of *pharmakon* at Hawkins (2014) 151–53. The closest model for Gregory's language is Clem. Al. *Protr.* 1.2.4, which calls the 'heavenly *logos*' of Christianity 'some sweet and true drug of persuasion' (γλυκύ τι καὶ ἀληθινὸν φάρμακον πειθοῦς). Gregory also discusses *logos* as a *pharmakon* in an interpretation of the *Odyssey* in 'A poem of Nicoboulos on behalf of his son' (2.2.5) 196–202: see Demoen (1993) 242 with n. 18.

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with joy; those who 'delight in *logoi*', that is, the highly educated, will find Gregory's poetry a 'pleasant drug'. Not everyone will find it so. Gregory is speaking explicitly of connoisseurs, the people who can recognize how his *tekhnē* has sweetened what would otherwise be bitter. Part, and perhaps most, of this sweetening comes from recognizing through time-consuming study how Gregory imitates earlier poetry and interpreting his poetry through the frame of his models.[39] Apuleius' injunction, 'Pay close attention, reader, and you will be delighted',[40] applies nicely to the way that Gregory expects his audience to read and enjoy 'On his own affairs'.

Gregory did not compose 'On his own affairs' in the 'uncultured' language he claims to recommend to preachers in 'Concerning himself and the bishops' (2.1.12) 306–08.[41] On the contrary, it is written in a sophisticated style for a sophisticated audience who would approach it as a kind of research project. Gregory does not call attention to his sources in 'On his own affairs' with Alexandrian footnotes such as 'it is said'.[42] His readers should join his literary game without such prompting. Continuing to address educated youths in 'To his own verses', Gregory writes of his verses, 'I have given them to you to play with [παίζειν], if you wish to play [παίζειν] a little, so that no harm may come to you as your defences are stripped away for a good end' (45–46) and, later, 'words are the stuff of those who play [τὰ παιζόντων]' (60). The delight, pleasure and fun that readers will find by finding and appreciating Gregory's sources have a serious purpose.[43] 'The words will teach you, if you are willing', Gregory writes, 'Some are mine, and others come from elsewhere – praise of good men, censure of bad ones, doctrines, a maxim of some sort, excerpts from literature' (63–66). The same basic idea appears already in Plato's *Laws* (659e), where songs with an educational purpose are called 'playthings' (παιδιαί) to make them more appealing to young people. Kristoffel Demoen finds a similar sentiment about playfulness having a good end in Gregory's epigram 25, which says, 'Old age plays [παίζει]. They are playthings [παίγνια], but playthings [παίγνια] are serious when childish pleasure is mingled with Christ.'[44]

At the same time that Gregory's readers find intellectual delight in the games Gregory plays with his words, recognizing which are his and which come from other authors, they will be stripped like conquered soldiers, made into trophies for the good. This is the 'sweetening' that Gregory has added to the 'food' of Christian doctrine and values ('To his own verses' 98). 'On his own affairs' – and specifically its multilayered references – acts like a drug or a victorious warrior, compelling readers towards a better understanding of the Christian life. Once they are through studying the poem, once the 'ingenuity' is taken away like 'scaffolding from arches', what will remain is 'the good' ('To his own verses' 95–96). To reiterate what I wrote earlier, this does not mean that the references are ancillary to the poetry and need to be taken away like scaffolding to reveal an unadorned expression of Christian doctrine. Rather, it means that the entire poem, as a medium of communication, will lead readers to 'a good end', even if they are not actively pursuing it. Gregory's metaphor of the rose enclosed by sepals in 'Concerning himself and the bishops' (2.1.12) 278–83 functions in a similar way. The sepals represent language and the rose represents the concept the language expresses. Once these metaphorical sepals are burst open as the rose blooms, what remains is not simpler language but the actual concept, unencumbered by the need to express it. Just as sepals conceal a rose until it matures or scaffolding a building until it is completed, the Homeric diction and sophisticated references of 'On his own affairs' conceal, support and enrich

[39] There is a clear link between 'sweetness' and poetic quotations in ancient rhetorical theory. On poetic quotations embedded in prose, see Hermog. *Id.* 2.4.22–29 Patillon = 336.15–338.18 Rabe; *cf.* Cribiore (2007) 167–68.

[40] Apul. *Met.* 1.1: *Lector intende: laetaberis.*

[41] Although, even here, Gregory cannot help but admire the style of the philosophers he claims to condemn: Meier (1989) 106.

[42] Bénin (1988) 289; Demoen (1993) 242–44. In this regard, Gregory resembles late Latin poets: Kaufmann (2017) 151.

[43] Gregory makes a similar connection among pleasure, play, poetry and education in 'On his own life' (2.1.11) 6–8.

[44] Demoen (2009) 47, 55.

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the core concept that God-made-man makes sinful, imperfect man God. They are necessary elements that will recede into the background when they are no longer needed, once they have led readers to a truth that is beyond expression and will lead to their salvation.

While Gregory's poems surely have a didactic and evangelical purpose, we should not forget that he writes for an audience besides mortal lovers of literature. 'On his own affairs' is addressed to Christ. The first two words of the poem are Χριστὲ ἄναξ, 'Christ, king', and σε, 'you', appears in the last line, after a catalogue of titles for Christ. This Christ seems to be a Christ who is a connoisseur of Greek poetry, a Christ who can appreciate the breadth of Gregory's learning and his artistic achievement. There is no surprise here. As Salvatore Costanza has shown, Gregory consistently invokes the Pauline concept that his work, his mind and his words are sacrificial offerings to God.[45] In refashioning both Homer and Oppian's refashioning of Homer, Gregory is demonstrating that he has used his intellect and literary talent in the best way possible, returning to God what God has given to him.

II. The devil and a scholarly word game (lines 59–62)

Continuing to appeal to readers steeped in Homer, Gregory describes the devious way that the devil interacts with humans immediately after the simile of the fishhook. He writes (59–62):

> ὣς καὶ ἐμοὶ δολόμητις, ἐπεὶ ζόφον ὄντα μιν ἔγνων,
> ἑσσάμενος χρόα καλὸν ἐπήλυθε φωτὶ ἐοικώς,
> αἴ κεν πως ἀρετὴν ποθέων κακίῃ πελάσαιμι,
> κλεπτομένου πρὸς ὄλεθρον ἐλαφροτέροιο νόοιο.

> In just this way, the devious one, although I knew that he is dark, clothed himself in beautiful skin and came to me like a man, in case I, desiring good, might in some way approach evil, and my mind, easily swayed, might be snatched away to destruction.

The phrase 'clothed himself in beautiful skin' (ἑσσάμενος χρόα καλόν) recalls a familiar Homeric type scene. Homeric figures routinely put clothing or armour on their skin,[46] and sometimes even beautiful clothing.[47] Knowledge of the Homeric parallels reveals the cleverness and the humour behind Gregory's description. Gregory's devil, like the skin-changing snake he is, puts on not beautiful clothing, but beautiful skin itself.[48] As Bénin notes, 'the Homeric dress clothes the Biblical concept' of Satan as a serpent.[49] Gregory also draws here on the metaphorical language of Paul's epistles. In clothing himself in skin, the devil differs from Christians, who 'clothe themselves in Christ' (*Rom.* 13.14; *Gal.* 3.27) at baptism. In 'On holy baptism' (*Or.* 40), Gregory encourages the Christian being tempted to invoke this new clothing and say to the devil, 'I am a likeness of God. I have not been cast down from lofty glory like you were because of pride. I have clothed myself in Christ. I have changed into Christ through baptism. You, worship me' (10).[50]

[45] Costanza (1984) 235–42. Paul articulates the idea of human bodies as a 'living sacrifice' (θυσία ζῶσα) to God most clearly in *Rom*. 12.1. Gregory quotes *Rom.* 12.1 in *Ep.* 223.2 and *Or.* 2.95, 11.4, 15.3, 20.4, and he alludes to it in 'Hymn to Christ after the silence, at Easter' (2.1.38) 29, calling himself a 'breathing sacrificial offering' (ἔμπνοος θυηλή).

[46] *Il.* 7.207, 12.464, 14.383, 23.67; *Od.* 11.191, 16.457, 17.203, 17.338, 19.72, 19.218, 19.237, 23.115, 24.158, 24.467, 24.500 and, with δύω rather than ἕννυνι for 'clothe oneself in', *Il.* 8.43, 9.596, 13.25; *Od.* 15.60–61, 22.113. Homeric poetry can also use the language of clothing metaphorically, as when Odysseus urges Achilles in *Il.* 9.231 to 'clothe yourself in strength' (δύσεαι ἀλκήν).

[47] *Hom. Hymn (5) Aphr.* 171: αὐτὴ δὲ χροῒ ἕννυτο εἵματα καλά ('She put beautiful clothes on her skin'). *Cf. Il.* 13.241: δύσετο τεύχεα καλὰ περὶ χροΐ ('He put beautiful armour around his skin'). *Il.* 5.858 and *Od.* 2.376 are the most likely among the possible parallels that Bénin (1988) 447, 550 lists for Gregory's 'beautiful skin', although neither passage has to do with 'putting on'.

[48] Bénin (1988) 550. On Gregory's wit, see also Gallay (1984) 321-22, McGuckin (2012).

[49] Bénin (1988) 550: 'Ici encore, l'habit homérique revêt la pensée biblique'.

[50] Gregory echoes Paul's vocabulary in this passage with 'I have clothed myself in Christ' (Χριστὸν ἐνδέδυμαι), as he also does in *Or.* 14.14 and 40.25, 31.

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The next part of line 60, ἐπήλυθε φωτὶ ἐοικώς ('he came like a man'), continues to engage with both Homeric language and Christian concepts.[51] φωτί followed by any form of ἔοικα is a rare collocation, appearing only here in Gregory and before him almost exclusively in Homer, in quotations of Homer, in scholarship on Homer and in imitations of Homer.[52] Here, Gregory is imitating the scene in *Iliad* 14 where Poseidon appears to Agamemnon as an old man and reassures him of the gods' support. The lines read (14.135–38):

> οὐδ᾽ ἀλαοσκοπιὴν εἶχε κλυτὸς ἐννοσίγαιος,
> ἀλλὰ μετ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἦλθε παλαιῷ φωτὶ ἐοικώς,
> δεξιτερὴν δ᾽ ἕλε χεῖρ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρεΐδαο,
> καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.
>
> The famous Earthshaker was not keeping a blind watch, and he came to them like an old man. He grasped the right hand of Agamemnon, Atreus' son, addressed him, and spoke winged words.

The verbal and contextual parallel with Gregory is clear – ἐπήλυθε φωτὶ ἐοικώς echoes ἦλθε … φωτὶ ἐοικώς – and both passages feature a supernatural being turning into a man. The reader who recognizes the Poseidon passage lying behind Gregory's can see an even more sinister devil, who, truly δολόμητις,[53] seems like Poseidon coming to reassure the Greeks. The disguised devil has particular relevance in 'On his own affairs', since Gregory repeatedly laments that the devil has interfered with his attempts at holiness by concealing his true identity.[54] By saying the devil is 'like a man', Gregory contrasts him with the second person of the Trinity, who did not put on skin as a disguise but actually 'became flesh' (*Jn* 1.14). While the devil only resembles man out of treachery, the *Logos* both resembles man and becomes man through the incarnation. Gregory expresses this in 'On the Theophany' (*Or.* 38): 'He approaches his own image, puts on flesh for the sake of flesh, and mixes himself with an intelligent soul for the sake of my soul, cleansing like with like. Indeed he becomes man in all things except sin' (13).[55]

Gregory is also making a learned play on words.[56] Following Homeric usage, I have been translating φωτί as the dative of φώς, 'man', which is what it means in this section of *Iliad* 14. In the Greek of the New Testament and of Gregory's time, however, φωτί is regularly the dative of φῶς, the Attic word for 'light'. The Homeric word for light is φάος and its dative singular is φάει. Gregory knows the Homeric word well; he uses it over a hundred times in his poetry in a variety of cases, although never in the dative singular. In this poem, the term is playfully ambiguous, as homonyms also can be in Callimachus, one of Gregory's favourite models.[57] Read as Attic, φωτί means that the devil 'came like light', which draws a contrast between what the devil pretends to

[51] Gregory seems to have conceived of demons as having 'material bodies, but of such a fine "stuff" that they are invisible and can easily inhabit other bodies, whether human or animal or inanimate': Ludlow (2012) 200.

[52] *Il.* 3.219 (quoted at Philox. Gramm. *fr.* 450 Theodoridis; in Schol. to *Il.* 3.219b Erbse), 14.136 (quoted in Schol. to *Il.* 14.136c Erbse); *Od.* 6.187 (quoted at Bion *fr.* 15 Kindstrand = *Supp. Hell. fr.* 228 = Plut. *Mor.* 82e; Hermog. *Meth.* 37.9 455.15 Rabe); *Hom. Hymn (4) Herm.* 265, 377; Tryph. 115.

[53] Tompkins (2007) 493 notes that δολόμητις in Homer almost always refers to Aegisthus, an appropriate parallel for the devil. *Cf.* Bénin (1988) 549.

[54] 'On his own affairs' 54–56, 102–03, 491–92; *cf.* 512–17. On demons and the devil as tricksters who deceive humans into accepting false impressions in Gregory and the other Cappodocians, see Kalleres (2007) 179–80; Ludlow (2012) especially 198.

[55] For the phrase γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος in the literal sense of 'becoming man', see *Or.* 14.2, 29.19, 44.4. On Gregory's view that the divine Christ was the same as the human Christ (the 'unity of Christ'), see Beeley (2008).

[56] On wordplay with *metron* and *metria* in 'To his own verses' (2.1.39), see Bayliss (2012).

[57] Callimachus puns on νόμος (tune) and νομός (pasture) in the last line of the *Aetia* (*fr.* 112.9 Pf. with Romano (2011) 315–16). On Greek puns and riddles based on homonyms, see Luz (2013) 87–89. On the theological implications of φῶς/φώς wordplay elsewhere in Gregory, including in 'On his own affairs' 625 and 630–31, see Bady (2013) 469–75.

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be and what Gregory knows he really is: 'dark'. This is the way that Bénin, Denis Meehan, Jean Bernardi and Carmelo Crimi all translate it.[58] If φωτί is understood in this way, as Bénin points out, the passage alludes to the frequent contrast between the light of Christ and the darkness of sin in the New Testament, especially in Johannine texts,[59] and in the writings of Gregory's contemporaries.[60] The closest verbal parallels are not with the New Testament but with the *Iliad*, and learned readers can interpret the passage in terms of both texts. Familiar with Homer's Greek and with the *Iliad*, they can perceive that the devil makes himself look like a man by putting on skin and they can recognize the parallel with Poseidon. The double meaning arising from dialectical wordplay reminds us of the vocabulary of fun in 'To his own verses', since παίζω, 'play with', is the verb for playing on words in scholarly Greek.[61]

Gregory uses similar language to describe the devil in 'On battles with the devil' (2.1.83). In a striking turn of phrase, he calls the devil the 'sophist of death' and says of him (7–11):

> πολλάκι μοι καὶ πρόσθεν ἐπήλυθε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς,
> καὶ φωτὸς αὖθις ἐν πανούργῳ πλάσματι.
> πάντα γὰρ, ὅσσ' ἐθέλῃσι, πέλει θανάτοιο σοφιστής,
> γεγὼς ὁ Πρωτεὺς εἰς κλοπὰς μορφωμάτων,
> ὥς κέ τιν' ἢ λοχόων, ἢ ἀμφαδόν, ἄνδρα δαμάσσῃ.

> Many times before he also came to me like the night, and on other occasions in a cunning disguise of a man/light. For the sophist of death is everything, as many things as he wants. He is Proteus in stealing forms, so that he may capture any man, either lying in wait or openly.

ἐπήλυθε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς, 'He came like the night', which resembles ἐπήλυθε φωτὶ ἐοικώς, 'He came like a man/light' in 'On his own affairs', is based on Homer's description of Apollo, who in *Iliad* 1.47 'came like the night' (ὁ δ' ἤιε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς) from Olympus to shoot his plague-bringing arrows at the Achaeans. The reference is fitting for this poem, since Gregory goes on to compare the devil to a disease (17–23).[62] φωτός in line 8 is once again an ambiguous form, with 'light' opposed to 'night' and 'man' looking ahead to the shape-shifter Proteus who can adopt even the form of men.[63] With 'a cunning disguise of a man', Gregory is once again contrasting the devil, who pretends to be a man, with the second person of the Trinity, who is a man. The description of the devil as sometimes light and sometimes dark seems to have appealed to Gregory. In 'On rational natures' (1.1.7), he describes the fallen angels as 'night, light, any way that enables them to capture, either openly or lying in wait' (νύξ, φάος, ὥς κεν ἕλωσιν, ἢ ἀμφαδόν, ἢ λοχόωντες, 81).[64] Here, however, he uses the unambiguous Homeric form for 'light'.

[58] Meehan (1987) 27; Bénin (1988) 363; Crimi in Crimi and Costa (1999) 44; Bernardi in Tuilier et al. (2004) 6. Bénin (1988) 283–84 notes that light/dark opposition is central to the imagery of 'On his own affairs'.

[59] *Jn* 1.5–9, 3.19–21, 8.12; *1 Jn* 1.5–7; Bénin (1988) 549–50. On the light/dark opposition in John, see Ashton (2007) 389–95. In *2 Pet.* 2.4, 17 and *Jud.* 6, 13, ζόφος is closely associated with punishment after death, and so with the devil.

[60] For eample, Greg. Nys. *Contra Eunom.* 3.6.78, 3.10.27 (with reference to *Jn* 1.5), John Chrys. *Homilies on 1 Ep. Cor.* 27.2 (= 61.242.47–50 Migne *PG*).

[61] Schol. to Ar. *Av.* 42a, 68a. Callim. *fr.* 228.46 Pf. may use the word παῖγμα to call attention to another type of wordplay, an anagram: see Danielewicz (2017).

[62] Perhaps leprosy: Milovanović (2009) 288 n. 65.

[63] *Cf.* 'Lament over the sufferings of his soul' (2.1.45) 336, where the devil is said to turn himself 'into an angel of light' (ἄγγελον ἐς φωτός). Proteus is a favourite figure of evil for Gregory. In *Or*. 4.62.2, 82.3 he compares Proteus to Julian (see Lugaresi (1993) 309–10), in 'Concerning himself and the bishops' (2.1.12) 728 to an excessively adaptable bishop and in 'On his own life' (2.1.11) 808 to Maximus. On Maximus and the politics surrounding his consecration as bishop of Constantinople, see McGuckin (2001) 311–25; Torres and Teja (2013).

[64] On the title of this poem, see Sykes and Moreschini (1997) 195; *cf.* 'Against the Evil One' (2.1.54) 3. On the devil as the imitator of the true light of God, see *Or.* 40.37 with Kalleres (2007) 179–81.

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In 'On his own affairs', 'On battles with the devil' and 'On rational natures', Gregory sees the devil and his ilk as malevolent shape-shifters who make themselves seem like something they are not. The textual parallels with Homer (φωτὶ ἐοικώς and νυκτὶ ἐοικώς) underscore that the devil is like Poseidon and other epic gods, who are never recognized by humans for what they are until after they leave. The learned reader who recognizes the parallels receives both intellectual pleasure and a moral message. The intellectual pleasure comes from delight in Gregory's literary skill and from his subtle philosophical reflection on the difference between being and seeming, central to the doctrine of the Trinity. The moral message is to be on guard all the time. The devil will come to you in disguise, and, whether he approaches like seemingly friendly Poseidon or like malevolent Apollo, his intentions are always bad.

III. Erotic temptation and a Homeric variant (lines 69–70)

In the two passages that I have discussed so far, Gregory reveals a scholar's interest in Homer, alluding to the oft-discussed fishing simile and playing a dialectical game with φώς/φῶς. He continues to show knowledge of Homeric scholarship in describing his simple lifestyle, unbound by marriage and free of the trappings of luxury. As he catalogues the pleasures he has spurned, Gregory writes (69–70):

> οὐ μούσης ἀταλοῖς ἐνὶ κρούμασι θυμὸν ἰάνθην,
> οὐδὲ μύρων μαλακή με διέδραμε θῆλυς ἀϋτμή.
>
> My heart did not melt in tender sounds of music, nor did the soft feminine breath of perfumes run through me.

The two lines are formally and phonetically similar. They both begin with a form of οὐ followed by a word starting with μ-, they both end with the same vowel sound, -ην and -η, and θυμόν and θῆλυς appear in the same metrical position.[65] The first line ends with θυμὸν ἰάνθην, an expression Gregory uses with slight variations five other times in his poetry.[66] It is a Homeric expression, appearing, again with slight variations, four times at line ends in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[67] Here, however, Gregory is imitating Apollonius' imitation of Homer rather than Homer himself.[68] When the Argonaut Boutes hears the Sirens and leaps into the sea, Apollonius writes that 'his heart was melted by the sweet voice of the Sirens' (Σειρήνων λιγυρῇ ὀπὶ θυμὸν ἰανθείς, 4.914). In both Apollonius and in Gregory, it is music that melts the heart. Not only does Gregory allude to the *Argonautica* here, but in the next line he also presents himself as a poet-scholar like Apollonius by quoting a Homeric variant. θῆλυς ἀϋτμή, 'feminine breath', is an ancient variant of θῆλυς ἀϋτή, 'feminine cry', in *Odyssey* 6.122. When the voices of Nausicaa and her friends wake up Odysseus, he says, 'It's as if a feminine cry [or breath] of maidens surrounded me' (ὥς τέ με κουράων ἀμφήλυθε θῆλυς ἀϋτή (or ἀϋτμή)).[69] Gregory replaces ἀμφήλυθε with the near synonym διέδραμε.

So, these two verses exemplify three characteristic features of Gregory's poetics: a concern for formal parallelism and euphony, a tendency to repeat word combinations in different poems and, most important for my argument, a learned engagement with the poetic tradition. For readers who

[65] On parallelism and euphony in 'On his own affairs', see Bénin (1988) 286–91.

[66] Variants appear in 'The praise of virginity' (1.2.1) 271; 'To the priests of Constantinople and the city' (2.1.10) 13; 'Lament on the sufferings of his soul' (2.1.45) 253; 'To Vitalianus on behalf of his sons' (2.2.3) 306; 'Exhortation to Olympias' (2.2.6) 14.

[67] *Il.* 23.600, 24.321; *Od.* 15.165, 23.47.

[68] There are other clear imitations of Apollonius in 'On his own affairs' 481 (*Argon.* 1.244) and 530 (*Argon.* 2.1176). See Wyss (1983) 852.

[69] The reading θῆλυς ἀϋτμή is attested in D-Schol. to *Od.* 6.122 Ernst; in Apollon. *Lex.* (*s.v.* ἀμφήλυθε = gl. 376 Steinicke = 29.18 Bekker); in Porph. *Quaest. Hom.* 7.32.16–17 Sodano; in Eust. *Il.* 4.242.8 van der Valk and Eust. *Od.* 1.231.33 Stallbaum; and in some medieval manuscripts.

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recognize Gregory's models and read 'On his own affairs' with them in mind, the references add interpretive depth to this passage. 'His heart was melted' (θυμὸν ἰανθείς) in *Argonautica* 4.914 describes the deadly longing induced by the Sirens' song, a longing that can cause men to throw their lives away. Gregory's resistance to music's heart-melting charms, therefore, is a sign of his self-control against the erotic temptation embodied by the Sirens' voices.[70] Along the same lines, the learned reader familiar with Homeric variants who recognizes the *Odyssey* passage lying behind θῆλυς ἀϋτμή can compare Odysseus' response to the wafting scent of the Phaeacian maidens with Gregory avoiding even a hint of perfumes. For Gregory and other fourth-century intellectuals, Odysseus' encounter with Nausicaa was considered a model of virtuous behaviour.[71]

There are possible resemblances to two other poems in these two lines. First, με διέδραμε, 'did ... run through me', may recall the famous line of Sappho 31: 'and immediately a fire has run under my skin' (δ᾽ αὔτικα χρῷ πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμακεν, 10). Gregory knows Sappho's poetry well. According to John McGuckin, no late-antique Christian author alludes to her as often as he does.[72] If Gregory is recalling Sappho here, he is contrasting himself with Sappho's speaker. A fire runs under her skin, but perfume's scent cannot run through Gregory. He is impervious. Second, the proximity of θυμὸν ἰάνθην, μούσης and μύρων resembles the language of poem 50 in M.L. West's edition of the *Anacreontea*, a poem whose speaker describes the effects of wine. One effect is that, 'my melted heart [ἦτορ ἰανθέν] begins to sing a song and strikes up the Muses [Μούσας]' (2–4).[73] Another is that, 'I drench my skin with sweet-smelling perfume [μύρῳ εὐώδει], I hold a girl in my arms, and I sing of Cypris' (18–20). Gregory may have known this poem, since he appears to allude to it in 'Hemiambic verses to his own soul' (2.1.88), a poem written in a characteristically Anacreontic metre.[74] If he has it in mind here as well, he is portraying himself as an anti-Anacreon in Anacreontic language. It is far from certain, however, that Gregory could have known poem 50. It may not have been composed until the fifth or sixth century.[75] Even if Gregory is not referring to poem 50 directly, he is certainly employing motifs and vocabulary that are characteristic of sympotic poetry to describe his rejection of wine, women and song. He is turning the sympotic genre against itself.

IV. Dogs, death, a Hellenistic epigram and LXX *Psalm* 21 (lines 177–84)

The death of Gregory's brother Caesarius, who had been a doctor in Constantinople and later the Imperial Treasurer in Bithynia, ensnared Gregory in a dispute over Caesarius' estate and its debts. He compares the various claimants to ravenous dogs surrounding him and devouring his brother's dead body. Gregory addresses his dead brother (177–84):

> Ὤ μοι Καισαρίοιο, πάρος γε μὲν ἐν βασιλῆος
> ἀστὴρ ὥς τις ἔλαμπες ἑωσφόρος, οὔνομα σεμνόν,
> ἄκρα φέρων σοφίης τε καὶ ἤθεος ἱμερόεντος,
> καὶ πολλοῖς σθεναροῖς τε φίλοις κομόων ἑτάροισι.
> πολλοῖς μὲν μογερῶν ἄκος εὕραο σώμασι νούσων·
> πολλοῖς δ᾽ αὖ πενίης λύσιν ὤπασας, αἴσιμα ῥέζων.

[70] Hunter (2015) 209 notes that θυμὸν ἰάνθην in this context refers specifically to Boutes' 'erotic longing'.

[71] Basil, *To Young Men* 5 lines 25–42 Boulenger = 5.6–8 Deferrari and McGuire, with Webb (2008) 67; Greg. Naz. 'On virtue' (1.2.10) 401–06, with Crimi et al. (1995) 270; 'A poem of Nicoboulos on behalf of his son' (2.2.5) 207–13; Them. *Or.* 24.309b.

[72] See n. 8; McGuckin (2006) 193. A 16th-century calumny that Gregory ordered Sappho's poems burned still circulates: Penrose (2014) 422–24.

[73] The stanza is corrupt, and I follow West's reconstruction. Regardless of the corruption, there is no question that ἦτορ ἰανθέν and Μούσας are authentic.

[74] The apparatus in West (1984) 36 notes that Gregory's ἔρριψα γὰρ μερίμνας (2.1.88.25) resembles ἀπορίπτονται μέριμναι (*Anacreontea* 50.6). Müller (2010) 181 suggests that each poet may have worked independently, drawing on models such as *1 Pet.* 5.7 or LXX *Ps*. 54.23.

[75] West (1990) 273.

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νῦν δὲ θανὼν πολλοὺς κόρεσας κύνας, οἵ μ’ ὑλάουσι,
πάντοθεν ἱστάμενοι· πηῶν δέ μοι οὔτις ἀρήγει.

Alas Caesarius! Before, in the emperor’s court, you shone like some dawn-bringing star, a respected name. You were contributing the heights of wisdom and of pleasant company, and you were proud of your many strong and dear companions. For many you found a cure for the painful diseases in their bodies, and for many you granted a release from poverty. You were doing the right thing. But now that you’re dead you fill up the many dogs who bark at me, standing on my every side. None of my relatives comes to help me.

Gregory constructs this passage to emphasize contrasts. The μέν ... δέ opposition between ‘before in the emperor’s court’ (πάρος γε μὲν ἐν βασιλῆος) and ‘now that you’re dead’ (νῦν δὲ θανών) frames it. The repetition ‘many … many … many … many’ (πολλοῖς … πολλοῖς ... πολλοῖς ... πολλούς) contrasts Caesarius’ popularity and kindness with the loneliness of death. His many friends, his many patients and the many recipients of his generosity have abandoned him and left only the many dogs who scavenge for his body. Further emphasizing the theme of abandonment, Gregory complains that ‘no one’ (οὔτις) is willing to help him administer the estate. In the final contrast, the focus of the lines shifts from Caesarius to Gregory, as the second person verbs of the first six and a half lines give way to the first person pronouns μ(ε) and μοι.

This passage reveals Gregory’s blending of sources from the Greek literary tradition and the Bible into a coherent new context. The vocabulary, as always, shows pervasive Homeric influence,[76] as well as echoes of Theognis[77] and the *Book of Revelation*.[78] Gregory’s two most important sources besides Homer are a Hellenistic epigram attributed to Plato (*AP* 7.670 = *FGE* ‘Plato’ 2)[79] and LXX *Psalm* 21. The epigram, which seems to have been well known in the Imperial period,[80] reads:

ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῷος·
    νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

Before you were shining among the living as the dawn star, but now that you’re dead you shine among the dead as the evening star.

Gregory adapts it to frame his contrast between Caesarius living and Caesarius dead. Lines 177–78 are based on its first line. Gregory repeats ἀστήρ and ἔλαμπες, keeping them in the same metrical positions. His ἑωσφόρος echoes ἑῷος, and his πάρος γε μὲν ἐν βασιλῆος is an adaptation of πρὶν μὲν ... ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν. Where the epigram is brief, however, Gregory is expansive, explaining in the next four lines why and how Caesarius was like the dawn star in Constantinople. Then, in

[76] ἄκος εὕραο appears at the same position in the line as ἄκος εὑρεῖν in *Il.* 9.250; ὑλάουσι appears in the same position as ὑλάουσι and ὑλάοντο in *Od.* 16.9, 16.162; αἴσιμα ῥέζων, a particularly rare expression, echoes αἴσιμα ῥέζειν, the last words of the hexameter poem ‘The kiln’, variously attributed to Homer or Hesiod (Hes. *fr.* 302.23 Merkelbach-West = Ps.-Herod. *Vit. Hom.* 32 = *Suda* O 251 Adler). The rarity of this expression points once again towards Gregory’s scholarly interest in Homeric curiosities. Bénin (1988) 375 n. 2, 625 n. 2, on the other hand, suggests that Gregory is modelling αἴσιμα ῥέζων on αἴσυλα ῥέζων in *Od.* 2.231.

[77] πενίης λύσιν echoes Thgn. 180, λύσιν πενίης. On Gregory’s use of Theognis, see Bénin (1988) 272; Simelidis (2009) 118–19.

[78] Bénin (1988) 625 with nn. 3–4 suggests that ‘the dawn star’ (ἑωσφόρος) may recall ‘the star of the morning’ (τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν) in *Rev.* 2.28 or ‘the star that is the lamp of the morning’ (ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός) in *Rev.* 22.16 and also lists some of the many Biblical parallels for threatening dogs.

[79] On the date and authorship of the Ps.-Platonic epigrams, see Ludwig (1963), with the analysis of this epigram at 77–80.

[80] It is quoted in Diog. Laert. 3.29 and Apul. *Apol.* 10.8. Along with the other Ps.-Platonic epigrams, it may have appeared frequently in doxographical works: Vardi (2000) 156.

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line 183, he returns to the epigram with νῦν δὲ θανών.[81] Gregory's emphasis is not on Caesarius' fate in the afterlife but on his own sufferings on earth; so he completes the line with a far bleaker image than the epigram's description of the dead person shining among the dead.

To 'become food for dogs' is a fate commonly feared by Homeric heroes. It appears most prominently in the proem of the *Iliad*, where the wrath of Achilles is said to have made the dead heroes 'spoils for dogs and every bird'.[82] Gregory may have this passage in mind, but he is more directly imitating the phrase κορέει or κορέεις κύνας, 'fill up the dogs', which appears three times in the *Iliad* to describe the fate of warriors who die on the battlefield, always occupying the same metrical position as his κόρεσας κύνας.[83] The phrase establishes the dead indebted bureaucrat Caesarius as a kind of Homeric hero, but Gregory is doing more than making a simple comparison. The *Iliad* refers to actual scavengers who would have eaten unburied bodies. Gregory turns this into a metaphor, since the dogs who feast on Caesarius are actually the creditors Gregory is seeking to malign.[84] As in the simile of the devil as a fishhook, Gregory is not slavishly copying from Homer but rather reinterpreting Homeric language and ideas in a new context.

With the reference to scavenging dogs, Gregory may also be likening his grief for Caesarius to Andromache's grief for Hector. The two words κορέω and κύνες appear together in Andromache's lament in *Iliad* 22, this time in the middle construction κύνες κορέσωνται. Andromache says to her dead husband (22.508–11):

> νῦν δὲ σὲ μὲν παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσι νόσφι τοκήων
> αἰόλαι εὐλαὶ ἔδονται, ἐπεί κε κύνες κορέσωνται,
> γυμνόν· ἀτάρ τοι εἵματ᾽ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κέονται
> λεπτά τε καὶ χαρίεντα, τετυγμένα χερσὶ γυναικῶν.
>
> But now beside the curved ships, far from your parents, wriggling worms feast on your naked body, after the dogs have filled themselves up; meanwhile elegant and handsome clothes sit in your halls, made by women's hands.

The νῦν δέ, 'but now', in both passages suggests that we should read Gregory through Andromache. As we have seen, Gregory takes the νῦν δὲ θανών from the epigram attributed to Plato, but the words could be a sophisticated double reference, pointing to both the epigram and Andromache. A comparison to Andromache would not be inconsistent with Gregory's self-presentation in 'On his own affairs', since in lines 229–34 he compares his soul to a captured queen in language that recalls Hector's prediction of Andromache being captured and led away into slavery in *Iliad* 6.454–61.[85] In invoking Andromache, Gregory may be reflecting his rhetorical training, since we know that students sometimes were asked to adopt her character in the exercise known as *ēthopoiia*.[86]

[81] νῦν δὲ θανών is a very rare collocation, appearing only in Gregory, this epigram, the purported funerary epigram for Diogenes the Cynic (*AP* 7.64 with Hansen (1990)) and three funerary inscriptions: *IG* XII.6.2 672.6 (Samos, fourth century BC), *IK* Rhod. Peraia 209.7 (Tymnos, third/second century BC), *IGUR* III 1190.2 (Rome, second century AD). In metrical texts, it always occupies the same position.

[82] *Il.* 1.4–5: αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν / οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι. The variant δαῖτα for πᾶσι is not important for our purposes.

[83] *Il.* 8.379, 13.831, 17.241.

[84] *Cf.* 'On his own life' (2.1.10) 371–74, where Gregory again compares Caesarius' creditors to dogs. On Gregory's handling of Caesarius' debts, see Bénin (1988) 625–28; McGuckin (2001) 156–64.

[85] Aside from the parallel content, both passages begin with ὅσσον (*Il.* 6.454; 2.1.1.229) and emphasize 'seeing' the captive woman (ἰδών *Il.* 6.459; εἰσορόων 2.1.1.231). Despite the clear Homeric echoes, scholars have not recognized the parallel to Andromache. Bénin (1988) 650–52 finds Platonic overtones, Demoen (1996) 345 suggests an allusion to Hecuba's imprisonment and Milovanović (2008) 47, n. 10 suggests that Gregory is imitating Heliodorus.

[86] Hermog. *Prog.* 9 (21.13–14 Rabe); Lib. *Prog.* 11.2 Foerster; Prisc. *Praeex.* 9 (557.27–28 Halm). Libanius' speech follows closely the same section of *Il.* 6 that Gregory uses as a model here: Webb (2010) 140–43. On Gregory and declamation, see Milovanović (2005); Demoen (2006). On Gregory adopting a female persona (a mother) elsewhere in his poetry, see Elm (2006).

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Those who comment on the scavenging dogs in this passage of Gregory have often drawn connections not with Homer but with the *Psalms*, especially LXX *Psalm* 21, closely associated with Christ on the cross, where the speaker laments that 'many dogs circled me, a crowd of evildoers surrounded me' (ἐκύκλωσάν με κύνες πολλοί, / συναγωγὴ πονηρευομένων περιέσχον με, 17).[87] Gregory probably bases the 'many dogs' (πολλοὺς κύνας) standing on his every side on the 'many dogs' (κύνες πολλοί) that surround the speaker in this verse, especially since the end of the next line, 'None of my relatives comes to help me' (πηῶν δέ μοι οὔτις ἀρήγει), recalls verse 12 of the same psalm: 'Do not turn from me because crushing troubles are near and there is no one to help' (μὴ ἀποστῇς ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι θλῖψις ἐγγύς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ βοηθῶν). Gregory rephrases the words of *Psalm* 21 in epic language. Five lines later, in 189–91, Gregory also imitates LXX *Psalm* 79.13–14, comparing his brother's estate to a vineyard overrun with trespassers and wild animals.[88]

The references to *Psalm* 21 temper the bleak tone of Gregory's words about ravenous dogs and unfaithful relatives. Readers familiar with the psalm would know that the speaker's despair is temporary and gives way to thanksgiving for God's mercy. 'He has not treated me as though I am nothing, he has not been angered at the request of a beggar, he has not turned his face from me', says the speaker; 'When I cried out to him he heard me' (*Psalm* 21.25). By integrating the sentiments of *Psalm* 21 into his lament, therefore, Gregory signals his confidence that divine consolation will eventually come. His grief for Caesarius and despair over the estate is only temporary. This section of 'On his own affairs' therefore reflects in microcosm the central theme of the entire poem: Gregory's hope and trust in God despite all of his sufferings.[89]

Gregory's πάντοθεν, 'on every side', may lead readers to recall yet another Septuagint text that juxtaposes despair with trust in God's saving power: the *Book of Sirach* 51.7–8.[90] Repeating a sentiment common throughout the Old Testament and using similar language to *Psalm* 21, *Sirach*'s speaker anticipates his death and laments, 'They surrounded me on every side, and there was no one to help' (περιέσχον με πάντοθεν, καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ βοηθῶν).[91] The speaker's despair then gives way to a recollection of God's mercy: 'And I remembered your mercy, Lord, and your workings from of old, that you rescue those who remain faithful to you and you save them from the hand of their enemies.' If Gregory does have this section of *Sirach* in mind, he is treating the Septuagint in an analogous way to the Greek literary tradition. Just as he draws on both Homer and Oppian's imitation of Homer in the fishhook section, here he would be drawing on both *Psalm* 21 and on the echo of *Psalm* 21[92] in *Sirach* to underscore his hope in God even in the midst of suffering and grief.

By interweaving references to Homer, the Ps.-Platonic epigram and the Septuagint in his lament for Caesarius, Gregory brings to life his insistence that Greek literature and the Bible are both part of the Christian inheritance, just as he does with the simile of the fishhook and his wordplay with 'light' and 'man'.[93] He is not, however, placing Homer and the Bible on the same level.

[87] Bénin (1988) 177–78 analyses this sentiment as an instance of Gregory drawing on *Psalms* to describe the struggle between good and evil that characterizes the human condition: *cf.* Bénin (1988) 625 n. 4; Tuilier et al. (2004) 14 n. 56. Gregory seems to be imitating this same verse with similar language in 'An indignant complaint about his own sufferings' (2.1.19) 19–20, where he compares himself to a lion that 'evil dogs are barking around on every side' (ὥστε λέοντα / πάντοθεν ἀμφυλάουσι κακοὶ κύνες): see Simelidis (2009) 182–84. In *Or*. 30.5, Gregory says that *Ps*. 21 'clearly refers to Christ'. On the importance of the Bible, especially *Job*, *Psalms* and the New Testament in 'On his own affairs', see Bénin (1988) 168–82. For general discussion of Gregory and the Bible, see Gallay (1984); Argárate (2014) 118–24.

[88] Bénin (1988) 175–76.

[89] See in particular 596–634.

[90] On Gregory's knowledge of *Sirach*, see Gallay (1984) 317.

[91] *Ps*. 21's 'there was no one to help (me)' is echoed in the original Hebrew (*Ps*. 22.12 אין עוזר = *Sirach* 51.7 ואין עוזר לי) as well as in the LXX.

[92] *Ps*. 21.12 is unlikely to have been the direct model for *Sirach* 51.7, which in Hebrew is much closer to *Isa*. 63.5: Beentjes (2002) 113; *cf.* Di Lella (1986) 404. The verbal parallels with *Isa*. are not as evident in Greek as they are in Hebrew.

[93] *Cf.* Bénin (1988) 274, which shows how Gregory interweaves Platonic and Biblical language and concepts in 'On his own affairs'. This characterizes Gregory's literary technique in other works as well. In *Or.* 5.1, he

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The references to *Psalm* 21 show clearly that a firm distinction between life and death belongs to pre-Christian ignorance. A Christian like Gregory trusts in God's mercy even in moments of great despair because he believes that becoming food for dogs is not really the only end that humans can anticipate.

V. Rewriting the Bible in Homeric dress (lines 365–92, 549)

In alluding to LXX *Psalm* 21 and possibly to the *Book of Sirach*, Gregory avoids direct quotation apart from πάντοθεν, even though ἦν ὁ βοηθῶν could have been accommodated in a hexameter line. This is characteristic of his references to both the Septuagint and the New Testament throughout 'On his own affairs', which frequently refers to Biblical people and events. The poem begins, for instance, with a catalogue of God's salvific activity throughout history: the Hebrews' defeat of the Amalekites, Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den, Jonah's deliverance from the whale, the three young men's deliverance from the fiery furnace, Jesus' calming of the storm and his miraculous healings (1–13). Later, Gregory retells and interprets the parables of the Good Samaritan (367–92) and of the tax-collector and the Pharisee (393–423), and he compares his own birth to those of Samuel (424–36) and Isaac (437–44).[94] Despite the prominence of Biblical references, Gregory rarely imitates Biblical language in 'On his own affairs'. This is true both when Gregory refers to individual verses and when he retells long episodes.

Two examples will illustrate Gregory's practice with individual verses. First, right before he retells the parable of the Good Samaritan, Gregory calls God the one 'who shows kindness to all the humble and makes light of the haughty' (ὃς χθαμαλοῖσιν / εὐμενέων πάντεσσιν ὑπερφιάλους ἀθερίζει, 365–66). The sentiment recalls LXX *Proverbs* 3.34, 'The Lord sets himself against the arrogant and gives grace to the lowly' (κύριος ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, / ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν), which is quoted in *1 Peter* 5.5[95] and echoed in Mary's Magnificat, 'He has confounded the arrogant by the thought of their own heart; he has cast down the powerful from their thrones and has raised up the lowly' (διεσκόρπισεν ὑπερηφάνους διανοίᾳ καρδίας αὐτῶν· / καθεῖλεν δυνάστας ἀπὸ θρόνων / καὶ ὕψωσεν ταπεινούς, *Lk* 1.51–52). Gregory carefully preserves the sentiment of these passages but rephrases it in Homeric idiom.[96] Byzantine readers linked these verses of Gregory with his Biblical models. Two lexica gloss his ὑπερφιάλους with the ὑπερηφάνους of *Luke* and *Proverbs*.[97] Second, near the end of the poem and at the start of a confident prayer of hope addressed to Christ, Gregory says of his enemies, 'with shaken heads they are laughing at my woe' (κινυμέναις κεφαλῇσιν ἐμὴν γελόωντες ὀϊζύν, 549). The verse is yet another reference to LXX *Psalm* 21, whose speaker says, 'All who saw me sneered at me, they chattered with their lips, they shook their head' (πάντες οἱ θεωροῦντές με ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με, / ἐλάλησεν ἐν χείλεσιν, ἐκίνησαν κεφαλήν, 8).[98] Once again, Gregory preserves the sentiment but changes the words to Homeric synonyms or forms, including the υ form of the middle/passive participle of κινέω, a favourite of both Gregory and the Hellenistic poets.

combines a reference to the *Odyssey* with references to *Proverbs*: Elm (2012) 433–34. In 'On first principles' (1.1.1) 1–24, he combines references to Plato, Callimachus and *Exodus*: Edwards (2003) 54–65.

94 For a fuller catalogue of Biblical exempla in 'On his own affairs', see Bénin (1988) 161–67; Demoen (1996) 345. On possible parallels to Homer and Sappho in the opening catalogue of divine achievements and in the comparison to Samuel's birth, see Casanova (1999) 147–49.

95 Bénin (1988) 721; Tuilier et al. (2004) 26 n. 92.

96 There are similar paraphrases in 'To Vitalianus on behalf of his sons' (2.2.3) 116–17 and 'Rules for virgins' (1.2.2) 7–9. Bénin (1988) 270 notes of Gregory's rephrasing of Biblical passages, 'Grégoire cherche visiblement à "poetiser" le grec biblique en remplaçant, chaque fois que cela est possible, le mot par un équivalent, même très peu différent au point de vue étylmologique.'

97 The alphabetical lexicon (lemma Y 21) and the lexicon following the order of verses (lemmata 315). Both lexica are edited by Kalamakis (1992), which is the *TLG* text, and there is further discussion in Simelidis (2010) 206–09 of their likely dependence upon paraphrases of Gregory.

98 Bénin (1988) 784; Tuilier et al. (2004) 37 n. 133.

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Gregory does not take advantage of a particular Homeric intertext when he rewrites these two passages. In his version of the Good Samaritan parable, however, Gregory both rewrites Luke's Greek and encourages his readers to interpret it through the lens of the *Odyssey*. Consistent with his usual practice, Gregory borrows only six words from Luke, aside from the proper name 'Jericho', the titles of the characters in the story and incidental pronouns and particles: 'went down' (κατέβαινεν, *Lk* 10.30, 31/καταβάντα, 382), 'robbers' (λῃσταῖς, *Lk* 10.30; λῃστάς, *Lk* 10.36/λῃστής, 382), 'blows' (πληγάς, *Lk* 10.30/πληγῇσιν, 370), 'strip' (ἐκδύσαντες, *Lk* 10.30/ἐκδύσαντες, 371), 'bind up' (κατέδησεν, *Lk* 10.34/κατέδησε, 375; κατάδησον, 388) and 'wounds' (τραύματα, *Lk* 10.34/τραύματα, 391). His rephrasing keeps close to the original meaning.[99] Hence, 'Abandoning him half-dead' (ἀφέντες ἡμιθανῆ, *Lk* 10.30) becomes, 'They left him barely breathing' (λεῖψαν ἀποψύχοντα, 372); 'A certain Samaritan came travelling along the road' (Σαμαρίτης δέ τις ὁδεύων ἦλθεν, *Lk* 10.33) becomes, 'A certain one of the Samaritans came up' (Σαμαρέων τις ἐπήλυθεν, 374); and 'Seeing, he had compassion' (ἰδὼν ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, *Lk* 10.33) becomes, 'Looking at him, he pitied' (τόνδ' ἐσιδὼν ἐλέηρεν, 377). To a certain extent, the changes are necessitated by the metre, but Gregory even changes words that could be accommodated in the hexameter. For instance, 'He passed by' (ἀντιπαρῆλθεν, *Lk* 10.32) becomes 'They left' (λεῖψαν, 372; λίπον, 373). Gregory even avoids adopting words that he uses elsewhere in his poetry, like 'half-dead' (ἡμιθανῆ, *Lk* 10.30), which appears in 'On silence in the time of fasting' (2.1.34) 116.[100]

By repeating the Homeric phrase 'pitiless heart' three times in his version of the parable, Gregory draws a parallel between the robbers, the priest and the Levite and the Cyclops Polyphemus, the prime example from Greek literature of someone who fails to care for strangers.[101] First, he describes the robbers stripping and abandoning the traveller 'with pitiless heart' (νηλέϊ θυμῷ, 371). Later, he uses the same words, noting that the priest and the Levite turned away from the injured traveller 'with pitiless heart' (νηλέϊ θυμῷ, 373). Finally, at the end of his reflections on the parable, Gregory prays that God will keep him safe from 'wayfarers who have a pitiless heart' (παροδίτας / νηλέα θυμὸν ἔχοντας, 391–92). The dative construction 'with pitiless heart' (νηλέϊ θυμῷ) is rare in Greek literature, appearing outside of Gregory only in *Odyssey* 9, where it three times describes Polyphemus,[102] and in Theognis 1123–28, where it describes, probably ironically, Odysseus slaughtering the suitors. Gregory, therefore, not only rewrites the parable of the Good Samaritan in Homeric Greek but also adds nuance to it by urging his readers to interpret the actions of the uncharitable passers-by in terms of the 'pitiless heart' associated with the man-eating Cyclops. Since Gregory identifies himself with the wounded traveller,[103] the language also allows him to characterize his enemies as latter-day Polyphemuses. When he mentions his own mistreatment by 'priests' (387) as he 'was going down from the noble city' (382) he is clearly referring to his clerical enemies.[104]

[99] Gregory keeps closer to Luke's Greek in his three-word summary of the parable of the Good Samaritan in 'Parables according to Luke' (1.1.26) 5–6, where 'the traveller who fell among thieves' (ὁδοίπορου / λῃσταῖς πεσόντος) echoes *Lk* 10.30: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves' (ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινεν ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ εἰς Ἰεριχὼ καὶ λῃσταῖς περιέπεσεν).

[100] Bénin (1988) 722–24 discusses Gregory's paraphrase of Luke in terms of both a fanciful etymology of 'Jerusalem' and an appeal to the reader's emotions.

[101] On Polyphemus' violations of hospitality, see Reece (1993) 123–43.

[102] *Od*. 9.272, 287, 368. The construction νηλέα θυμὸν ἔχοντας, 'who have a pitiless heart', appears in the same position in *Il.* 19.229 (Bénin (1988) 395 n. 5), where Odysseus urges Achilles to 'have a pitiless heart' and bury Patroclus. On the ironic connotations of the usually negative 'pitiless' (νηλέα) in this context, see Edwards (1991) 262.

[103] The wounded traveller is one of a set of Biblical figures that Gregory identifies himself with: Bénin (1988) 163–66.

[104] Tuilier et al. (2004) 27 n. 95 identify the 'noble city' as Constantinople, in which case the 'priests' would be Gregory's enemies there. Bénin (1988) 728–30 finds this problematic for chronological reasons and proposes instead that the 'priests' are the bishops who pressured Gregory to leave the monastic life and later failed to help him untangle Caesarius' estate, namely his father and his friend Basil, as well as his other enemies among the bishops of Cappadocia.

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In an epigram (*AP* 8.181), Gregory also identifies the phrase 'with pitiless heart' with the uncivilized behaviour of Polyphemus. The speaker of the epigram, a despoiled gravestone, calls a grave robber, 'the one who threw me to the ground with pitiless heart even though I was lofty, fearing neither God nor the sanctity of the dead' (ὅς με καὶ αἰπὺν ἐόντα χαμαὶ βάλε νηλέϊ θυμῷ, / οὔτε θεὸν δείσας οὔθ᾽ ὁσίην φθιμένων, 3–4). Polyphemus, like this grave robber, famously disdains the gods. With the proximity of 'with pitiless heart' and 'fear God', Gregory specifically recalls what Odysseus says about the Cyclops' response to his request for hospitality. Odysseus begins his report (*Od.* 9.272–74):

> ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽ ἀμείβετο νηλέϊ θυμῷ
> 'νήπιός εἰς, ὦ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
> ὅς με θεοὺς κέλεαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι.'
>
> So I spoke, and he immediately answered me with pitiless heart, 'You are a fool, stranger, or else you have arrived from far away, since you urge me either to fear the gods or to be on guard against them.'

Gregory's νηλέϊ θυμῷ and θεόν occupy the same metrical positions as their Homeric equivalents. His imitation also echoes the sounds of the *Odyssey*, since χαμαὶ βάλε νηλέϊ θυμῷ replicates in the same position the -αμ- and -β- sounds of the Homeric ἀμείβετο νηλέϊ θυμῷ. Gregory shows his literary playfulness by not imitating the vocative ὦ ξεῖν(ε), 'stranger', which is a common way for tombs to address their audience and would have been fitting for an epitaph like this one. The reader who compares the two passages would find pleasure both in what Gregory borrows and what he chooses not to borrow. The themes of godlessness and lack of pity characterize Polyphemus in Euripides' *Cyclops* as well. The chorus of satyrs draws on Homer and calls him νηλής, 'pitiless', and his man-eating sacrifice ἀποβώμιος, 'far from an altar' (361–69).

The Homeric resonances of 'with pitiless heart' were significant enough to Gregory for him to imitate the phrase in two different poems. By repeating it in his version of the Good Samaritan parable, he shows that even the words of Jesus can be made sweeter through references to the Greek literary tradition. Far from being harmful, this sweetening can help strengthen the faith of Christian 'lovers of *logoi*' who recognize the parallel. We can compare Gregory's use of the Cyclops as a negative exemplar to Basil's use of Socrates as a positive exemplar in 'To young men on reading Greek literature'. There, Socrates' refusal to fight back against his attacker exemplifies Jesus' teaching to turn the other cheek (7.22–35 Boulenger = 7.5–7 Deferrari and McGuire). Here, the allusion to Polyphemus' treatment of Odysseus and his men helps to make even more vivid Jesus' teaching on how we should treat our neighbours. To behave like the robbers, the priest or the Levite is not just to act like a hypocrite, but to act like the vicious, drunken and stupid Cyclops.

VI. Praising God in a Callimachean way (lines 627–34)

Gregory ends 'On his own affairs' with a prayer addressed to the Son and the Spirit. In a long sentence, he catalogues their titles, asks them for mercy and prays that he may sing unending hymns in praise of God forever. The last line of the poem adapts language from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to show how proper worship of God has replaced the animal sacrifices that were dedicated to the Olympians. Gregory's adaptation draws on the Homeric Hymns, Pindar and Callimachus as well as on Homer. He writes:

> Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, σοφίη, βασιλεῦ, λόγε ἀτρεκίη τε,
> εἰκὼν ἀρχετύποιο, φύσις γεννήτορος ἴση,
> ποιμὴν, ἀμνὲ θύος τε, Θεέ, βροτὲ ἀρχιερεῦ τε
> Πνεῦμά θ᾽ ὃ πατρόθεν εἶσι, νόου φάος ἡμετέροιο,
> ἐρχόμενον καθαροῖσι, Θεὸν δέ τε φῶτα τίθησιν
> ἵλαθι καί μοι ὄπασσον ἐπιπλομένοις ἐνιαυτοῖς

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ἐνθάδε καὶ μετέπειτα ὅλῃ θεότητι μιγέντα
γηθοσύνως ὕμνοις σε διηνεκέεσσι γεραίρειν.

Son of God, Wisdom, King, *Logos* and Precision, Image of the Ideal, Nature Equal to your Begetter, Shepherd, Lamb and Sacrificial Victim, God, Man and High priest, and also Spirit who proceeds from the Father, Light of my Mind, who approaches the pure and makes man God, be merciful and grant to me in the years to come that I may mingle with complete divinity here and in the future and honour you joyfully with continuous hymns.

διηνεκέεσσι γέραιρεν appears twice in Homer in the same position of the line as διηνεκέεσσι γεραίρειν, the last two words of Gregory's poem. Both Homeric passages refer to the division of roasted meat; διηνεκέεσσι means 'long' in the sense of 'cut in a continuous section' and it describes νώτοισιν, the 'back' or 'chine' of a roasted animal. In *Iliad* 7, after the duel of Hector and Ajax, Agamemnon sacrificed a bull to Zeus and then 'honoured Ajax with the long chine' (νώτοισιν δ' Αἴαντα διηνεκέεσσι γέραιρεν, 321). Similarly, in *Odyssey* 14, before Odysseus revealed his identity, Eumaeus sacrificed a boar, prayed to all the gods, gave special portions to Hermes and the nymphs, and then 'honoured Odysseus with the long chine' (νώτοισιν δ' Ὀδυσῆα διηνεκέεσσι γέραιρεν, 437).[105] Ancient scholars frequently excerpted and commented on the *Iliad* passage in particular,[106] and, through this allusion, Gregory once against signals his interest in Homeric passages thought noteworthy in antiquity.

Gregory transforms the act of honouring with meat to honouring with song, changing the connotation of διηνεκής from 'long' to 'continuous'. His adaptation reflects the kind of praise appropriate for Christian worship, no longer the sacrifice of animals but the continuous hymns of human beings who have found salvation through Christ's incarnation and resurrection. To describe this new, more perfect sacrifice, Gregory composes in light not just of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* but of the entire Homeric and post-Homeric tradition. In the *Homeric Hymn (4) to Hermes*, γεραίρω is used three times to describe Hermes honouring the gods in song (60, 429, 432) and Pindar uses it three times to describe songs that honour athletes (*Ol.* 3.2; *Isth.* 2.17, 8.62). By the Roman period and into late antiquity, γεραίρω often appears with 'with hymns' (ὕμνοις) to describe honouring divinities in Jewish, Christian and polytheistic contexts.[107] In this section of 'On his own affairs', therefore, Gregory places the Homeric phrase διηνεκέεσσι γέραιρεν into a new, Christian context that depends on the connotation of γεραίρω that comes from the Homeric Hymns, Pindar and the standard usage of his own time.

In using διηνεκέεσσι to modify ὕμνοις, 'hymns', rather than νώτοισιν, 'chine', Gregory further adapts his adaptation of Homer, using Callimachean language to articulate a Biblical concept. ὕμνοι διηνεκεῖς, 'continuous hymns', is a favourite expression of Gregory, describing the praise of God in three other extant poems.[108] The eternal praise of God is a familiar Biblical motif, appearing, for instance, in the beginning of LXX *Psalm* 88 ('Your mercies, Lord, I will sing forever', 2), in the beginning of LXX *Psalm* 144 ('I will exalt you, God my king, and I will bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever', 1–2) or in the characteristic New Testament doxology, 'to him be glory forever'.[109] The regular Biblical expression for 'forever' is a variation on 'to eternity' (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) or 'to the eternity of eternity' (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

[105] On the use of διηνεκής with pieces of meat in sacrifice terminology, see Carbon (2017) 155.

[106] Pl. *Resp.* 5 468d2–3 (quoted in Hermog. *Id.* 2.4 336.17–23 Rabe); Posidonius *FGrH* 87 F116 = Diod. Sic. 5.28.4; Ath. 1.13f.

[107] For example, Philo, *Who is the Heir* 110; Lucian, *Gout* 190; Euseb. *Praise of Const.* 1.2; Basil, *Ep.* 2.2 l. 47 Courtonne; Lib. *Dec.* 34.2.35. Perhaps significantly, Basil's second epistle is addressed to Gregory.

[108] 'A second poem of thanksgiving' (1.1.34) 10, on which, see Hollis (2001) 43 n. 35 with Simelidis (2009) 24; 'A poem of supplication' (2.1.22) 12; 'Against the Evil One' (2.1.54) 20.

[109] *Rom.* 11.36. There are similar expressions in, for example, *Rom.* 16.27; *Gal.* 1.5; *Eph.* 3.21; *Phil.* 4.20; *1 Ti.* 1.17; *2 Ti.* 4.18; *Hebr.* 13.21; *1 Pet* 4.11; *2 Pet.* 3.18; *Rev.* 1.6, 5.13, 7.12.

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τοῦ αἰῶνος); these appear in the singular and plural. In articulating this concept with 'continuous hymns', Gregory recalls Callimachus' famous disavowal of an ἄεισμα διηνεκές, 'continuous song', in the *Reply to the Telchines* 3.[110] By referring to such a programmatic passage of Callimachean poetics at the end of 'On his own affairs', Gregory calls special attention to it. Embracing what Callimachus claimed to shun, he signals that the brevity and episodic nature of the Callimachean aesthetic cease to matter in the context of eternal praise. Also, much as Ovid does by calling the *Metamorphoses* a *perpetuum carmen* (1.4), Gregory may be declaring that he can write in a sophisticated, Callimachean way even the kind of poetry that Callimachus himself disavowed.[111] Indeed, Gregory may be overtly signalling his affinity with Callimachus by combining the reference to 'continuous hymns' with ἵλαθι, the Doric form for 'be merciful'.[112] As Simelidis has shown, ἵλαθί μοι, 'Be merciful to me', in 'On human nature' (1.2.14) 119 is an imitation of the last line of Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter*.[113]

'On his own affairs', therefore, ends with a programmatic demonstration of Gregory's poetic artistry. Describing the eternal praise of God in heaven with language that comes from Callimachus, he shows that the 'continuous song' that Callimachus disdains for poetry has now, after the resurrection of Christ, become fitting for the praise of God. In a more self-referential vein, Gregory demonstrates that even a 'continuous song' can be learned, allusive and attentive to all stages of the poetic tradition.

VII. Conclusion

'On his own affairs' is a poem written by a scholar for scholars. It smells of the lamp and cries out for a library, for a concordance, for the *TLG*. It delights in its own learning and expects its readers to delight in it as well. More than a pedant's showpiece, however, 'On his own affairs' reflects on what Greek poetry is and on who is entitled to write and read it. Gregory insists that poetry is above all a tradition of poets building on each other's work, where novelty is less important than clever adaptation. Carefully positioning 'On his own affairs' in the line of continuous imitation and innovation going back to Homer, Gregory shows that he is engaged in the same project as poets as varied as Oppian and Callimachus. They are colleagues of a sort, each renewing the poetic tradition through their compositions and ensuring that it remains culturally relevant in their own times, at least as far as the 'lovers of *logoi*' are concerned.

Through his method of composition, Gregory also makes a far-reaching intellectual and artistic claim for Christianity. He is not merely showing that Christians are permitted to study and read Greek poetry, although that is significant enough. He is also showing that he, and by implication all Christians, are full heirs of the Greek poetic tradition. Homer and the tradition that follows him are not to be studied like museum pieces or clandestinely plundered in an act of what was not yet called cultural appropriation. On the contrary, Gregory treats Homeric poetry as though it belongs to him just as much as it did to Apollonius or Callimachus or Oppian, ready to be imitated, manipulated and refashioned for his own ends. God gave it to him and to all Christians to take with them as their own when they left the Egypt of polytheism behind. In 'On his own affairs' there is no contradiction between being a Greek poet and being a Christian. Gregory's Christian poetry is Greek poetry for the fourth century AD, just as Callimachus' was Greek poetry for the third century BC. The content is different – vitally different, of course – but the language, conventions and most importantly the tradition are the same.

[110] Simelidis (2009) 37; *cf.* Hollis (2001) 43–44; Edwards (2003) 81–127; De Stefani and Magnelli (2011) 555; MacDougal (2016) for further echoes of the *Reply to the Telchines* in Gregory's poetry.

[111] On the preface to the *Metamorphoses* as both 'Callimachean and un-Callimachean', see Kenney (1976) 51–52; *cf.* Wheeler (1999) 25–30; Acosta-Hughes (2009) 241–44.

[112] ἵλαθι καί μοι ὄπασσον, 'Be merciful and grant to me', may be formulaic prayer language. A prayer to a dead doctor in an Imperial-era hexametric inscription from Pergamon features the same words with the present rather than the aorist imperative of ὀπάζω: ἵλαθι καί μοι ὄπαζε, 'Be merciful and grant to me' (*IVP* II.576.12–13).

[113] Simelidis (2009) 30.

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