

5 Gregory's Themes: Self-Portrait with Enemies

Τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐκεῖθεν, ὦ φίλοι, λελέξεται·
 Πλὴν ἐξιτήριόν τιν', εἰ δοκεῖ, λόγον
 Βραχὺν μὲν, ἀλλὰ χρήσιμον, δέξασθέ μου
 Ὡς οἱ πατρώας λαμβάνοντες ἐν τέλει
 Φωνάς ἐπισκήψεις τε μνήμης ἀξίας· (815)
 Μεθ' ἃς λόγος τις οὐκέτ' ἐξακούεται,
 Ὡ καὶ πλεόν μένουσιν ἐν βάθει φρενός.
 Ἄλλον τιν' εἰ λάβοιτε Γρηγόριον, φίλοι,
 Φείδοισθε μᾶλλον· εἰ δὲ μὴ, τὸ δεύτερον,
 Εἴητε καλοὶ κάγαθοι τοῖς πλησίον (820)
 Ὑμῖν τε αὐτοῖς, οἱ τέως ὁμόφρονες,
 Ἐως κρατεῖσθε τοῖς ἴσοις παθήμασιν·
 Ἦν τ' αὐτὸς ἐσπούδαζον εἰρήνην ἀεὶ,
 Στέργοιτ' ἀφέντες τὰς ἰδίας ἀρρωστίας,
 Ὑφ' ὧν τὸ κοινὸν ἐκταράσσετ' ἀθλίως. (825)
 Κἀγὼ παρήσω τοῦμόν, εἴτε τι πλεόν
 Ἄλλων φρονοῦμεν, εἴτε μ' ὁ μακρὸς χρόνος
 Ποιεῖ τραχὺν τε καὶ τὰ πλείω δύστροπον,
 Εἴτ' οὖν πεπληγὼς ἐκ μέθης τὸν νοῦν μόνος
 Μέθη τετρῶσθαι τοὺς αἰόνους οἶομαι. (830)
 Νομίζεθ' ὡς βούλεσθε· πλὴν μέμνησθέ μου
 Τοῦ πολλὰ μοχθήσαντος ἐν φίλων τρόποις,
 Καλὸν δ' ἔχοντος τὸν λογισμὸν προστάτην
 Τό τ' ἐκλύον με τῶν κακῶν γῆρας τόδε. –
 Οὔτω τάχ' ἂν μοι τῶν φίλων σπείσαιτό τις, (835)
 Πάλης θανούσης, ἢ φθόνος συνέρχεται.
 (II, 1, 12, 811–836)

All the rest, my friends, will be brought up in the end;
 however, please accept from me a valediction
 which, although brief, is still useful,
 like those who receive the last, fatherly
 words and commands, worthy of remembrance (815)
 because not a word more will be ever heard again,
 so that they remain even more deeply in the heart.
 If you should receive another Gregory, my friends,
 be more careful with him; if not, then
 be ye gentlemen with your neighbours (820)
 and with yourselves, you that agree just as long
 as you are possessed by the same passions;
 and that peace that I always earnestly served
 you should love, giving up your weaknesses,
 by which the community is miserably troubled. (825)
 I too shall let go of mine, be it that I think
 myself better than others or that my old age
 has made me harsh and peevish for anything,

or finally that I, the one high in spiritual drunkenness,
 believe the sober to be dead drunk. (830)
 Be it as you prefer, but remember me,
 who has suffered much for the behaviour of friends,
 but keeping reason as a good guide
 and this old age, which delivers me from these sorrows.
 In this way maybe a friend could make peace with me (835)
 after the strife has died, with which envy goes along.

With these heartfelt lines Gregory closes the longest poem on bishops (II, 1, 12) and, with it, his experience in Constantinople. The occasion is momentous, and the poet underlines it with different devices: this passage comes after a line which seemed to close the poem (811) and is introduced almost as an afterthought (πλὴν, 812); it is explicitly named and classified in a genre by the poet, who calls it ἐξιτήριοις λόγος (812); these lines are compared to the last words of a dying father (814–815); they are said to be worthy of memory (815), the last and final (816), and again destined to be established in the depths of the heart of the hearers (817). Gregory repeats his plea to remember him once more towards the end of the speech itself (831). This insistence, together with the other framing devices, signals that this passage must stay with its readers.

Another clue to the passage's importance is that Gregory mentions his name in the first line of the speech (Γρηγόριον, 818). It is the only time, in the long II, 1, 12, that the poet mentions his own name, which makes it even more relevant. In all of our poems, Gregory writes his own name only three times: here, at the end of II, 1, 10, and in the middle of II, 1, 17. Even though towards the end of II, 1, 13 the poet speaks of himself, in that epic narration his name is rightly omitted. When he does write it, it seems to increase the pathos of the sentence, usually in relation to his removal from Constantinople¹. Moreover, in II, 1, 10, too, the mention of the name relates to the memory thereof the addressee should preserve.

The insertion of the name, as well as the idea that these are Gregory's last words, suggests the real-life frame in which we should imagine II, 1, 12 pronounced (see §1.1.1). This fictive frame lends his historical glamour to our poem: if we imagine these to be Gregory's last words in Constantinople, before the whole congregation of the bishops of the empire, they weigh much more than the private venting of an old man. On the other hand, we do know that these are not Gregory's last words; indeed, he had still many lines to write. Therefore, the interpreter must ask himself what is the reason behind Gregory's insistence on the memorability and importance of these words. The occurrences of his personal name, above all here at II, 1, 12, 818, where he speaks of ἄλλον τινα Γρηγόριον, seem to suggest the danger of being forgotten and erased by his substitute: not only formally on the episcopal seat but also in the hearts and minds of

¹ Τούνεκα καυχάλων φθόνον ἐκφυγον... Οὗτος Γρηγορίοιο λόγος, τὸν θρέψατο γαῖα / Καππαδοκῶν, Χριστῷ πάντ' ἀποδυσάμενον. (II, 1, 10, 31; 35–36); Οὐ θνητοῦ βασιλῆος ὁμέστιος, ὡς τοπάραιθεν, / Γρηγόριος... (II, 1, 17, 59–60; here the enjambement gives even more prominence to the name).

the city congregation and of the court. Therefore, in these last lines Gregory distills his political stance vis-à-vis all the questions relating bishops.

Strangely enough, these are also the lines in which Gregory elaborates the most on his personal feelings. He does talk about himself in other passages, as we shall see, and he employs his feelings as an excuse to write our poems (§1.3.2). Here, however, he seems to confess them for their own sake, neither as part of a narration nor as an argument to reach a conclusion. In this respect, the ἐξιτήριοις λόγος has something of the letter, which was thought of as a “living image” of its sender and his soul². After all, these poems were published and enjoyed in much the same way as letters (§1.2.2). The prevailing mood here is bitterness, and not only because the poet confesses it openly as he refers to himself as δύστροπος (828), abases his own character as that of a drunken old man (827; 829), and acknowledges his estrangement from the other bishops (829–830), but because he also conveys bitterness through the tone, as he violently criticises the bishops and at the same time addresses them as φίλοι (811; 818; 832; 835).

However, this self-portrait is not completely disinterested. Indeed, Gregory advances it as a confession of his own weaknesses, in exchange (Κάγῳ, 826) for other bishops' renouncing theirs (τὰς ἰδίας ἀρρωστίας, 824): the two verbs “give up/give in” (ἀφίημι/παρίημι, 824; 826) institute this exchange. Yet the exchange is far from equitable, since the poet gets to define his own weaknesses *and* those of his addressees. Furthermore, Gregory's weaknesses are such only in the context of the argument, as they are really meant to convey a positive image of the poet. His old age should inspire reverence and, formulated as ὁ μακρὸς χρόνος (827), contrasts with the short time or the absence of time between baptism and ordination of current bishops³. Physical and psychological weakness are ascribed to the pains (μοχθήσαντος, 837) Gregory took in treating with the other bishops; thus, Gregory shifts the blame to them and reinforces the image of himself as a reluctant yet engaged bishop⁴.

Precisely this reluctance, deduced from Gregory's dramatic descriptions of his public ministry (§1.3.2), is the main trait of his autobiography. This is also the meaning behind his self-description as old and inebriated (827–830). He was indeed quite old, and he likely felt that he bore a divine charisma granted by his asceticism and his holy orders, which would be the easiest interpretation of his μέθη in light of Act. 2:13. In this sense, the attributes are true, and there is a similar row of attributes in *or*: 26, 14, for example⁵. However, though old he was not senile, and clearly he was not literally intoxicated. The audience would

2 Storin 2019, 13n82.

3 Οὐδὲ χρόνου πύρωσιν ἐνδεδειγμένους, / Ἄλλ' αὐτόθεν... (II, 1, 12, 380–381); τῷ χρόνῳ τι δὸς μόνον / αἰτῷ σε μικρὰν τοῦ ποθοῦ προθεσίαν. (444–445); Τίς ἐγγυᾶται τὸν τρόπον χρόνου δίχα / Δεικνύντος, ὡς ἔσμηξε καὶ βάθος χάρις (522–523); cf. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν εἰσιν οἱ γεγραμμένοι / Λόγοι, τοσοῦτον πῶς ἐπαιζόμεν χρόνον (288–289). On this theme: §3.3.2.1.

4 On this theme: §1.3.2.

5 Αἰπαίδευτον ὀνομάσουσιν;...Πενίαν ἐγκαλέσουσι...Φυγόπατριν ἀποκαλέσουσιν...Γῆρας δὲ οὐκ ὀνειδίσαις ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ νοσῶδες;... (*or*: 26, 14).

have been aware of the layer of conventional fiction in this portrait and would have been capable of decrypting its political connotations: these not-quite-metaphors express Gregory's alienation from the world and its conventions. The specular image is provided by the bishop "well-versed in the business" (εὖστροφος ἐν τοῖς πράγμασι) whom Gregory criticises in II, 1, 12, 709–746 (see §2.2.3.2). If we trace this self-portrait to Gregory's ascetic ideals (§3.2.2) and his insistence on time and experience for the newly elected bishop (§3.3.2.1), we will find that, here as there, the ideal bishop and the self-portrait coincide.

On the other side, Gregory's advice to the bishops coincides with the themes of his invective against them. He advances three requests: first, that they treat the "other Gregory" well (818–819); second, that they avoid strife (819–821.823–824); third, that they give up their weaknesses (ἀρρωστίας, 824)—namely, their passions (παθήμασιν, 822). The first request corresponds to the many times in which Gregory laments the bad treatment he received during his tenure in Constantinople, beginning with this very passage (832; 836). Discord and moral unworthiness are the two major themes of Gregory's invective against the bishops, and they are here rapidly recalled. They are immediately contrasted with the correct approach represented by Gregory: he is the one who loved peace above all (823) and whom reason (λογισμὸν, 833), not passion (822), guides⁶.

If this is Gregory's final pitch to his audience in Constantinople and in the empire, then it nicely summarises the mechanisms of his poetry against bishops. These poems offer a portrait of Gregory as the ideal bishop, of the ideal bishop as similar to Gregory, of Gregory's opponents as the opposite of the ideal bishop. Every description of Gregory's character is at the same time an ideal for the prelates and an attack on his adversaries; every projection of the ideal bishop is an attack on his adversaries and a defence of Gregory's character; every attack on the adversaries reaffirms the portrait of Gregory as the ideal bishop. Since what pertains to the ideal bishop has been already analysed at §3, I will explore here the passages more explicitly autobiographical and the outright invectives against the bishops, in order to confirm what is in nuce already in II, 1, 12, 811–836 and to see how it takes different literary garments in different contexts.

Taking autobiography as my point of departure (§5.1), I would like to demonstrate this mechanism of mutual implication of autobiography, theology, and invective in extended form—namely, in the poem II, 1, 17, which is based on this mechanism (§5.1.1). Then, I will reflect on autobiography proper, comparing the narratives of different poems (§5.1.2). Finally, I try to determine the role of the "I" in the poems and the genre conventions that helped to shape it (§5.1.3). Things get spicy in the second part of the chapter (§5.2), where I will closely read the invectives against bishops, in particular Gregory's rivals Maximus and Nectarius. The discourse moves from the most concrete criticism—namely, Gregory's dissing of the bishops' social background (§5.2.1)—to

⁶ Interestingly, the line is similar to a preceding one on the "political" bishop: Καλὸν δ' ἔχοντος τὸν λογισμὸν προστάτην (II, 1, 12, 833); Ὡσπερ λογιστὴν ἐσκόπεις τὸν προστάτην. (749). The καλὸς λογισμὸς is different from the crude reasonings of the λογιστής: the latter is concerned with *Realpolitik*, the former is the result of asceticism and purification.

the most abstract, which is the problem of discord in the college of bishops (§5.2.5). In between I will devote a section specifically to Nectarius (§5.2.2), bringing together social and moral critiques, one to the strictly moral criticisms (§5.2.3) and one to Maximus, characterised by his duplicity and deceit (§5.2.4).

5.1 The self-portrait

The most obvious difference in content between Gregory's and Ephrem's treatment of bishops is the role of autobiography in Gregory's poetry. At first glance, the reader notes that Gregory speaks often of himself and his personal experience, whereas Ephrem only rarely drops information on his person, and he presents himself in the highly stylised role of the poet-panegyrist or the pupil of the holy bishops⁷. Yet the difference goes deeper than this: self-writing⁸ is not only a choice of content for Gregory; it constitutes and permeates his whole approach to the bishops in these poems. In this first part of the chapter, I will inquire into the structural role of this theme as well as into the contents it adds to our poems. I begin with a prime example of its structural role, even in absence of an explicit autobiographical narrative—namely, the poem II, 1, 17 (§5.1.1). Then, I will explore the autobiographical narratives proper (§5.1.2) and finally give an assessment on self-writing in these poems (§5.1.3).

5.1.1 II, 1, 17 as self-writing

Nowhere is the structural role of self-writing in the poems more clearly to be seen than in II, 1, 17. The whole poem is based on Gregory's self-portrait and its contrast with the profile of his adversaries, so that invective and autobiography are reflected in each other. Furthermore, Gregory formulates parts of this contrast in a generic way, thus reflecting on the ideal bishop and its counterpart, the *a priori* bad bishop, so to speak. Not casually, the title of the poem is *περὶ τῶν τοῦ βίου διαφορῶν*, "On the differences in life": difference (*διαφορά*), in the sense of divergence, is the theme.

Divergence is a structural principle, because the whole poem is built around the contrast between two fundamentally different attitudes, so that Gregory oscillates continually between the description of one and the other; moreover, the framing device of these descriptions is always the same (often with literal repetitions), and we know from

⁷ Ephrem as pupil: *CN* 14, 25–26 (here the poet speaks of himself in the third person); *CN* 17, 1–2; 11–12 (the poet-panegyrist).

⁸ I take this more generic term (instead of the limiting "autobiography") from the analysis of Gregory's epistolary in Storin 2019, esp. 13–17.

Roberts's work how important framing devices are for late antique poetry⁹. In this case, a tabular representation of the poem's structure may clarify the analysis:

	The good bishop	The bad bishop
Priamel (1–10)		
1–2	ζωγράφος ἐστὶν ἄριστος, ὃς . . .	
3–4		. . . οὐχ ὃς
5–6		νῆα . . . ἐπήνεσα οὐ . . .
7–8	. . . ἀλλ' ἦν	
9–10	summary	
Argument (11–40)		
11–13	ὁ μὲν ἄμβροτος, ὃν τινα . . .	
13–16		. . . ὃς δὲ κάκιστος
17–20		ὁ μὲν . . .
21–28	. . . αὐτὰρ ὃ γε	
29–34		οὐδ' ὃ γ' ἐπιστρέφεται . . . οὐδὲ . . .
35–40	. . . ἀλλὰ νόον . . . ἀέξων	
Autobiography (41–58) τῶν μὲν ἐγὼ . . .		
Invective (59–94)		
59–82		οὐ θνητοῦ βασιλῆος ὁμέστιος, ὥς τοπάροιθεν . . . οὐχ ἔδρη τίσει με . . . οὐδὲ χέρας . . . οὐδ' ἱερὴν . . . οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ πρόεδρος...
83–88	. . . οὐ χόλον αἰχμάσας . . . οὐ σώματος . . . οὐ χέρα . . .	
89–94		. . . ἀλλ' ἐν φάρμακον . . . οὐδὲ τί . . .
Peroration (95–108)		
95–96	τῶνδε γὰρ εἵνεκ' ἔγωγε . . .	
97–101		. . . οὐ γὰρ ἐμῆς πολιῆς . . .
102–108	. . . αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ . . .	

Structurally, the poem has similarities with the other pieces against bishops. They all begin with a classical rhetorical structure, in this case a *Priamel*, in the case of II, 1,

⁹ Roberts 1989, 37. See §3.3.2.1.

13 and 10 a long apostrophe¹⁰. The endings always express Gregory's will to abandon public life in favour of ascetic retreat, as we can see here at 95–108¹¹. As in II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 12, Gregory recalls his parable in Constantinople in the first half of the composition (here 41–58), in order to examine it in the second (59–94). However, this common grid is played out here as a contrasting structure, with alternating descriptions of the good and bad bishop. Framing devices sustain the dialectic between the two models: among the most obvious devices are the correlation of *μὲν* and *δὲ* (11–13) and strong adversative conjunctions (*ἀλλὰ*, 7; 35; 89; *αὐτὰρ*, 21; 102). A peculiarity of this poem is its use of negations in this sense: what the good or bad bishops *do* and *not do* is neatly divided into two sections, so that the section of the *do not*s can be read as a description of the opposite model. This device, evident beginning with the *Priamel* and continuing through the first presentation of the two kinds of life (21–34), goes so far that Gregory nests a series of negations (83–88) inside a series of negations (59–94), thereby describing the moral tasks of the good bishop inside the description of the bad bishop.¹²

Οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ πρόεδρος ἑὼν ἱεροῖς ἐνὶ χώροις, (75)

Ἦ μόνος, ἢ πλεόνων εἰς ἓν ἀγειρομένων,
Φθέγγομαι οὐασι τερπνὰ, τὰ Πνεύματος ἔκτοθι ρίψας,

Ὡς κεν ἔοιμι πρόφρων, φίλτρον ἔχων πλεόνων,
Τερπόμενός τε κρότοις, καὶ ἐν θεάτροις χορεύων,
Κρηνοβάτης ἐπέων ἀντικορυσσομένων, (80)

Ἀθλοφόροιςιν ὁμοῖα, πολυγνάπτουσί τε λώβαις,
Ἦ καὶ μαινομένοις ἀντίπαλ' ἡνιόχοις·

Οὐ χόλον αἰχμάσας, οὐ σώματος αἰθομένοιο
Λύσσαν ἐπιψύξας, οὐ χέρα μαινομένην
Πᾶσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις, λόγου δεσμοῖσι πεδήσας, (85)

Οὐ ψευδῇ κραδίης δόξαν ἀποσκεδάσας,
Οὐ τύφον οἰδαίνοντα διδάγμασιν ἐς χθόνα ρίψας

Οὐ πηγαῖς δακρύων δάκρυον ἐκκαλέσας,
Ἄλλ' ἐν φάρμακον αἰνὸν ἔχων, θηρήτορα τιμῆς
Θυμὸν, καὶ θανάτου φάρμακον ἀτρεκέως. (90)

(II, 1, 17, 75–90)

Nor, presiding in the holy places, (75)

be I alone or with many gathered as one,
Shall I utter something pleasant to hear, excluding the Spirit,
that I may be prudent and loved by the majority,
enjoying the applause and dance in the theatres,
a tightrope walker of fighting speeches, (80)
the like of winning athletes and much-modulating disgraces,

¹⁰ For an analysis of the argument on painting in this *Priamel* §2.2.3.2; for similar structures, comparing the bishop to ancient professionals, see §2.1.2.1; §2.2.4.9 and §3.3.2.1.

¹¹ For this recurring structure at the end see §3.1.2.

¹² On this description of moral tasks: §3.1.4.2.

or even the mad antagonist charioteers:
 not wounding the rage, not quenching the fury
 of the burning body, not fettering with reason
 the hand raging all over other people's properties, (85)
 not scattering false conceit from the heart,
 not throwing on the floor with doctrine swelling delusion,
 not calling forth tears with floods of tears,
 but using just one terrible drug, a heart hunting
 glory, and really a deadly drug. (90)

In this breakneck sentence, the negative clauses οὐ... αἰχμάσας (83), οὐ ἐπιψύζας (83–84), οὐ... πεδήσας (84–85), οὐ... ἀποσκεδάσας (86), οὐ... ῥίψας (87), and οὐ ἐκκαλέσας (88) are not coordinated with οὐδὲ... φθέγγομαι (75–77) but with the series of participles subordinated to the latter (ἔων, ῥίψας, ἔχων, τερπόμενος, χορεύων, and again ἔχων at 89). Therefore, the negative clauses do not describe how Gregory was compelled to behave as bishop and what behaviour he can finally discontinue, as is the case for οὐδὲ φθέγγομαι and the coordinate verbs in the preceding lines. Instead, the negative participles express the behaviours Gregory culpably neglected as bishop. Since, however, neglect is culpable, this means these behaviours are to be taken as duties of a good bishop, so that the double negation (οὐδὲ φθέγγομαι... οὐ αἰχμάσας) equals an affirmative.

The description of the bad bishop in 59–94 not only follows the autobiography (41–58) but uses it as a foil in a very significant way: adding to the negation of despised behaviours the indication ὡς τοπάροιθεν (59) and his own name (Γρηγόριος, 60), the poet equates the refusal of those behaviours with his retreat, thereby showing how he acted consequently on his convictions. The same nexus can be found in II, 1, 10, 34–35: Θύσω καὶ σιγὴν, ὡς τοπάροιθε λόγον. / Οὗτος Γρηγορίοιο λόγος. Here, too, the ὡς τοπάροιθε alludes to Gregory's public life, and the insertion of his name highlights Gregory's consistency in refusing a world he saw as corrupt. In fact, the negative behaviours of II, 1, 17 are presented in the first-person singular, enhancing this link between reflection on the condition of bishops and his own autobiography¹³.

The same message emerges if we consider how Gregory frames the second half of the poem in terms of his drifting away from the bishops. He introduces himself in line 41 saying that he desired to become a good bishop (τῶν μὲν ἐγὼ ποθέων εἷς ἔμμεναι). Then, in 59–60 he explains what kind of life he abandoned. In case someone should think he only abandoned the bishopric of the capital, he forcefully clarifies in 91 that he will not take part in synods (οὐδέ τί που συνόδοισιν ὁμόθρονος ἔσσομ' ἔγωγε) and, with the same reinforced pronoun ἔγωγε, that he will live the humble life of a pastor (τῶνδε

¹³ τίσει με δικασπῶλος (63); Οὐδὲ χέρας φονίους προσπτύξομαι, οὐδὲ γενείου / Δράζομαι (64–65); Θήσσομαι (70); Ἐλξω (72); Φθέγγομαι (77); ἔοιμι (78). Gregory's recurring ὡς τοπάροιθε recalls the recurring ὡς τὸ πάρος περ in the poem *Vision of Dorotheus* (see Hurst/Reverdin/Rudhart 1984, 16), with the difference that the "before" of Dorotheus corresponds to a positive task he performed, whereas Gregory relates it to negative behaviours (see below, §5.3).

γὰρ εἵνεκ' ἔγωγε μέσος χθαμαλοῖσι κάθημαι, 95). In the last passage from invective to autobiography, as he presents his ascetic choice, Gregory frames it with a strong disjunction followed by the first-person singular (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ πλήσσομαι ἀτρεμέων, 102). These strong first-person statements are to be understood against the tacit foil of “the others”, those bishops who did not make the same choice of retreat as Gregory.

Together with the “horizontal” contrast between good and bad bishops, the other structural axis of this poem is the “vertical” correspondence between abstract and concrete—namely, between the ideal good bishop (and the ideal bad bishop) and the concrete cases of Gregory’s retreat and of his life in Constantinople. What makes a good bishop can be best examined in the context of the other poems on the bishops, since they all present a cohesive picture. Ascetic credentials, linked to the idea of a spiritual priesthood, have been examined at §2.1.3.2 and §3.1.2, whereas the function of moral guidance is analysed at §3.1.4.2. Here, I will give more space and consideration to the negative contents, what constitutes a bad bishop. Moreover, my interest is to show the structural role of the contrast between abstract and concrete: I called it “vertical” because, whereas the contrast between good and bad traverses every passage of the poem (as shown by the table at the beginning of this section), the contrast between abstract and concrete develops throughout the poem, from more abstract considerations to more concrete: the *Priamel* (1–10) suggests the abstract principle guiding the comparison of the ideal bad and good bishop in the argument of the poem (11–40), and these in turn form the mould to describe Gregory’s retreat from Constantinople (41–95).

The *Priamel* functions as an authentic preparation of what follows, in that many concepts introduced by its similes are then applied to the two models of bishops: truth, steadfastness, and life are inherent to the good bishop, while the opposite is true of the bad bishop. This might seem banal, but Gregory is careful to connect these contrasting attributes to concrete behaviours:

	<i>Priamel</i> (1–10)	Argument (11–40)
Truth/Life	Μορφὰς ἀτρεκέας, ἐμπνοα δερκομένας (2)	Ὁ μὲν ἄμβροτος ... πλεκτῆς ἀλλότριον κακίης (11–12)
Falsity	Οὐχ ὅς χρώματα πολλὰ καὶ εὐχροα μάψ ἐπιμίξας (3)	Παντοίης κακίης οὐκ ἄκος, ἀλλὰ τύπος (20) ἄλλος ἐν ἄλλοις Παντοδαποίς κακίης εἶδеси κλεπτόμενος (33–34)
Inward / Outward	Νῆα δὲ ποντοπόρειαν ἐπήνεσα, οὐ παρασήμοις Κάλλεσιν, οὐ πρύμνης ἄνθεσι λαμπομένην (5–6) Καὶ στρατός ἐστιν ἄριστος, ἀρήϊος ἀντὶ καλοῖο (9)	Ὅς δὲ κάκιστος, Ἐνδοθεν ἀδρανέων, ἔκτοθε κάρτος ἔχων (13–14) Οὐδὲ δορὴν βασιλῆος ἔχων βριαροῖο λέοντος, Κεύθει κερδῶν ἐνδοθὶ δουλοσύνην (31–32),

(continued)

	<i>Priamel</i> (1–10)	Argument (11–40)
Stability	Ἀλλ' ἦν ναυπηγοῖο χέρες γόμφοισιν ἄριστα Δῶκαν πηξάμεναι κύμασι θαρσαλέην (7–8) Καὶ δόμος αἰγλήεις δεύτερος εὐπαγέος (10)	Ἔμπεδον, ἀστυφέλικτον , ἀπενθέα (13) Κάμπτεται, ὅσσα λίθος ὀκρυοῖς ἀδάμας (28), τύπον ἐστῆριξεν ἐνὶ πραπίδεσιν ἐῆσι (37)
Volubility		φρενοπλῆξιν ὁμοῖον, οἷσιν ἅπαντα Δινήγента πέλει ἀστατέουσι νόον (14–15), Κλινόμενος καιροῖσι, δόναξ πολύκαμπτos ἀήταις (19) ὃ γ' ἐπιστρέφεται πλούτου μεγάλων τε θωώκων (29)

The table shows that, even though the scheme is not always fully developed with a contrast between positive and negative both in the *Priamel* and in the argument, nonetheless every theme introduced in the *Priamel* gets its spot in the argument proper. The words are never quite the same, but the concepts are clearly repeated. This shows the importance of the abstract/concrete dialectic in the poem, which institutes a correspondence between the ideal bishop and Gregory's self-portrait. As for content, this first part of the poem (1–40) closely follows the polemic against the shape-shifting bishop of II, 1, 12, 709–760 (see §2.2.3.2): the bad bishop is focused on his outward side, fickle and essentially untrue, whereas the good bishop, though lacking in appearance, is true and reliable and impervious to change.

In the argument, the bad bishop is often described in relation to other human beings, whereas the good bishop is in relation only with Christ and the Trinity¹⁴. The bad bishop's flexibility, which Gregory interprets as untruth and confusion, is necessary to accommodate other human beings, but the good bishop lives almost exclusively linked to God, disregarding the logic of the world. As a result, the bad bishop appears powerful and is really miserable, whereas the contrary applies to the model bishop. Naturally, these characterisations are also *pro domo sua*, because they recall Gregory's failure to find a compromise during the council, thereby accusing those who had him removed of duplicity and ambition. If he had been accused of diplomatic cluelessness, he owned up to those accusations and found a way to turn them back on his accusers¹⁵.

This basic contrast is repeated after Gregory's autobiography (41–54). The poet describes himself always in relationship with Christ, with broad use of the word νοῦς, already important in the description of the good bishop. The life Gregory abandoned,

¹⁴ Bad bishop: Ὁ μὲν βροτέου λάτρης αἰσθενέος (18); ἐπιστρέφεται...δόξης βροτέης ἐνθάδε συρομένης (orig. negative, 29–30). Good bishop: Ὁ μὲν ἄμβροτος, ὃν τινα Χριστῷ / Τάρβος ἄγει (11–12); Χριστοῦ σαρκὶ χαρίζομενος (22); Θεὸς...Ὡς ζῶει μούνῳ καὶ τέρπεται (23; 25); Ἥδη καὶ Τριάδος ἅπτεται οὐρανίης (36).

¹⁵ McGuckin 2001a, 314, 359.

on the other side, repeats the fundamental features of the bad bishop: it is true that it introduces new and specific elements, but they all agree in the hectic search for recognition from worldly powers. The correspondences are best shown in tabular form:

	Argument (11–40)	Biography and Invective (41–94)
Good	Χριστοῦ σαρκί χαριζόμενος (22) Θεός ... Ὡς ζῶει μούνῳ καὶ τέρπεται (23; 25); Ἀλλὰ νόον καθαροῖσι νοήμασιν αἰὲν ἀέξων, Ἦδη καὶ Τριάδος ἄπτεται οὐρανίης (35–36)	Τοῦτ' ἀγαθῶν μόνον ἔσται ἐλεύθερον, οὔτε καθεκτόν, Οὐθ' ἐλετόν, Χριστῷ νοῦς ἀναιρόμενος (57–58) Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ πλήσομαι ἀτρεμέων (102).
Bad	Ὁ μὲν βροτέου λάτρις ἀεισθενέος ¹⁶ (18) Ἐπιστρέφεται... δόξης βροτέης ἐνθάδε συρομένης (orig. negative, 29–30)	Οὐ θνητοῦ βασιλῆος ὁμέστιος... Κείμενος ἐν μέσσοισι, κατηφιῶν καὶ ἄναυδος, Ἄπνοον ἄσθμα φέρων, δούλια δαινύμενος ... Οὐδὲ χέρας φονίου προσπύξομαι, οὐδὲ γενείου Δράξομαι, ὥστ' ὀλίγης ἀντιτυχεῖν χάριτος (59; 61–62; 65–66) Ἄλλ' ἐν φάρμακον αἰνὸν ἔχων, θηρήτορα τιμῆς Θυμὸν, καὶ θανάτου φάρμακον ἀτρεκέως (89–90)

In this further case of dialectic between abstract and concrete, we have closer similarities between the two parts. For example, the description of the good bishop's asceticism through the usage of the word νοῦς and through the reference to an ascending and perceptible relationship with God (see §3.2.2.3), is expressed in almost the same terms for the ideal good bishop and for the retiring Gregory. Similarly, the bad bishop's hectic search for fame has similarities with the invective against the life of a bishop in the capital, beginning with the relationship with powerful men (18 and 59). Interestingly, earthly fame is metaphorically described as a wild animal: in 30, it is a snake slithering on the ground (συρομένης), whereas in 89 its desire is a hunt, and the heart that desires it is, consequently, a hunter (θηρήτορα)¹⁷. The θυμός is compared to a φάρμακον in relation to the previous lines (83–88), where the poet describes the bishop's duty to improve the morality of others. Here, however, the theme of duplicity is less apparent, if we exclude the paradox of having Gregory as truly free when “shut in the dark bowels of some beast” (53) and as enslaved when dining in the presence of kings¹⁸. The dominant

¹⁶ Ἀεισθενέος is *vox nihili*, so it must be read something like ἐρισθενέος according to PG 37, 1263, which in this case anticipates the reference to the emperor at 59.

¹⁷ Another passage on the “hunt” for glory, though not verbally related: Φθέγγομαι οὐασι τερπνὰ, τὰ Πνεύματος ἔκτοθι ρίψας, / Ὡς κεν ἔοιμι πρόφρων, φίλτρον ἔχων πλεόνων (77–78).

¹⁸ Cf. Σῶμα μὲν ἐν σπλάγχχοισι· νόος δ' ἀδέτοισιν ἐρωαῖς / Βήσεται, οἳ κ' ἐθέλει, καὶ περ ἐεργόμενος, / Τοῦτ' ἀγαθῶν μόνον ἔσται ἐλεύθερον, οὔτε καθεκτόν, / Οὐθ' ἐλετόν (55–58) with Κείμενος ἐν μέσσοισι, κατηφιῶν καὶ ἄναυδος, Ἄπνοον ἄσθμα φέρων, δούλια δαινύμενος (61–62).

note, not absent even from the first half of the poem, remains the ambition of bishops, which also justifies the polemics against discord during the council in 91–101¹⁹.

In the end, at the core of all these problems lies a question of authority: Gregory's model bishop answers only to God, and every deviation is considered treason, no matter the cost; on the other side, the "bad bishops" seek compromise either with their colleagues or with popular consensus or with secular powers²⁰. Gregory's position, expressed in harsh tones in this poem, may seem to contradict his positive stance towards the emperor and the capital city in his autobiography (§5.1.1.3). In those narratives, he praises the equability of the emperor and presents himself as his faithful associate, whereas here he casts his relationship with powerful people in the most humiliating colours. It is impossible to extrapolate from these contradictory texts how he really behaved in Constantinople, but it is possible to decipher what he wants us to understand of it. As was already said, positioning the humiliating behaviour of II, 1, 17 in the past, Gregory wants to attribute it in the present to his rival Nectarius, while distancing himself from the political arena. In this sense, we can observe a shift in his rhetoric from II, 1, 10–13 to II, 1, 17: the first group of poems is still concerned with the hot topics and aims at defending Gregory directly, whereas II, 1, 17 is already moving towards Gregory's new self-presentation culminating in his renunciation of the word so poignantly described by Storin²¹.

If, however, his description of reality seems contradictory, the underlying ideas remain consistent: both the emperor's equability and Gregory's refusal of self-humiliating behaviours suggest the idea that the bishop should always be independent of secular powers. Ideally, the emperor should encourage and sustain good bishops, but never force the hands of prelates nor require humiliation from them. Bishops, on the other side, should preserve their independence and not behave like courtiers. In the part on invective, we will see that according to Gregory matters ran much differently: the bishops, in comparison to the emperor, held too little leverage to be really independent, and too much to be left alone by imperial power. Moreover, they often were already notable people before becoming bishops, so that their participation in public ceremonies and their need of public consensus, as described by Gregory, were taken for

¹⁹ The θυμός "hunting for glory" (θηρήτορα τιμῆς, 89–90) precedes the description of councils: Οὐδέ τί που συνόδοισιν ὁμόθρονος ἔσσομι' ἔγωγε / Χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἄκριτα μαρναμένων / Ἐνθ' ἔρις, ἔνθα μόθος τε καὶ αἰσχα κρυπτά πάροιθεν / Εἰς ἓνα δυσμενέων χώρον ἀγειρόμενα. / . . . Οὐ γὰρ ἐμῆς πολιῆς παίζειν, καὶ λάτριν ἀεικῶς / Ἐμμεναι ἀντὶ θρόνων, ὧν πέρι μαρνάμενοι / Σχίζονται, καὶ κόσμον ὅλον τέμνουσιν ἀθέσμως. / Αἰ αἰ τῶν μεγάλων ἡμετέρων ἀχέων! / Ταῦτα μὲν, οἷσι φίλον, καὶ κερκῶπων κράτος εἶη (91–94; 97–101). Note the expression λάτριν ἀντὶ θρόνων, which recalls the βροτέου λάτρης αἰσιθενέος of 18: the same slavish mentality of ambition of the bad bishop is the cause of division in current councils.

²⁰ As regards the colleagues: Οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ πρόεδρος ἔων ἱεροῖς ἐνὶ χώροις, / Ἡ μόνος, ἢ πλεόνων εἰς ἔν ἀγειρομένων, / Φθέγγομαι οὐασι τερπνὰ (75–77); as regards the consensus of lay people: Ὡς κεν ἔοιμι πρόφρων, φίλτρον ἔχων πλεόνων, / Τερπόμενός τε κρότοις, καὶ ἐν θεάτροισι χορεύων (78–79).

²¹ Storin 2011.

granted²². In this conflict of authorities there must be a good deal of truth, in the sense that the condition of a bishop at the time was probably not conducive to the expression of personal religious or moral persuasions. It is also a convenient representation of Gregory's own failure to lead the council in Constantinople: he is here claiming that his program was directly inspired by God, that a good bishop prefers removal over compromise (which was precisely his condition), that his adversaries had no good reason to oppose him other than cowardice and ambition. Again, herein appears the consistency of Gregory's rhetorical strategy of presenting himself as the good bishop, who is the removed outsider challenging societal conventions thanks to his superior ascetic charisma, whereas the other bishops are relegated to represent the exact opposite model, the lackeys of public opinion and powerful people, precisely because their intemperance can be held over them.

5.1.2 Autobiographical narrative in the poems

Even though Gregory's personality and experience permeate every line of our poems, some passages are more specific than others: as already anticipated, Gregory includes narratives of his time in Constantinople. In such passages he is explicitly writing of himself, and in fact he does so often in the first person. I will examine these passages, whose content corresponds to the narrative of the famous poem *On His Own Life*. There, the poet offers his version of the facts, which, as Storin rightly points out, should not be confused with the facts themselves²³. The similarities between *On His Own Life* and our poems is explained by the fact that these poems are part of the same reaction by Gregory to the Constantinopolitan events as *On His Own Life*; therefore, it is only natural that the poems should dwell on and manipulate the same facts.

However, before treating the texts directly, it is useful to briefly recall the events related to the poems—namely, Gregory's mission in Constantinople, the council in the city, and the retreat of the poet to Nazianzus. The first source for these events is Gregory himself, in his much-studied poem *On His Own Life* and in a wealth of other texts. Scholarly accounts are given by Gregory's biographers, most recently McGuckin and Bernardi²⁴. The exact circumstances of Gregory's arrival in Constantinople in 379 are not wholly clear, but they must have been linked to Theodosius's accession to the throne and the Synod of Antioch in the same year: either the Nicene community of the capital invited Gregory to prepare the arrival of the emperor, or the bishops in Antioch, headed by Meletius and representing the coalition of prelates animated by Basil, sent Gregory

²² On the status of bishops: Rapp 2000; Rapp 2005, 164–171, 180–207.

²³ Storin 2017.

²⁴ McGuckin 2001a, 229–398; Bernardi 1995, 175–228; see also: Gautier 2002, 354–408; Elm 2000b; Simonetti 1975, 527–552; Gallay 1959. In the next paragraphs I generally follow McGuckin 2001a and Bernardi 1995, providing the most important differences in note.

there for the same reason²⁵. The Nicene congregation in Constantinople must have been small and mostly upper-class, and Gregory had links in the court and capital through his cousin Theodosia, wife of a senator Ablabius. Gregory's task must have been to prepare the passage of Constantinople from its Arian majority to the new course imposed by the emperor.

In the capital, things did not always run smoothly for Gregory: the discontent of the Arian majority, possibly led by ascetics, resulted once in the storming of Gregory's church, the Anastasia, during a celebration and his attempted stoning. The fact is oft and gladly recalled by the poet as a credential of his holiness. The next event to consider is Maximus's attempt upon the see of Constantinople in 380. Maximus, who presented himself as a Cynic ascetic, came to Constantinople from Alexandria and was backed by Peter, the Egyptian patriarch. At first, Gregory's relationship with the man seemed idyllic, with Gregory even writing an encomium about Maximus as a model philosopher (*or*: 25). Then, Maximus tried to get consecrated as bishop of the city by some Egyptian bishops, only to be stopped by an angry mob of Constantinopolitan people. The attempt may have matured from the trust Maximus enjoyed and Gregory's hesitancy to assume the role of bishop, but in hindsight Gregory condemns it and distances himself as far as possible from Maximus. However, the episode not only discredited Gregory to the Alexandrians, but it must have also challenged his reliability and authority vis-à-vis the court and the Antiochene faction that brought him to Constantinople. Moreover, the Egyptians did not drop Maximus's claim to the see until 381, with the Cynic accruing the support of Ambrose of Milan, too²⁶.

Finally, after Theodosius had entered the city at the end of 380, a council met in Constantinople in May 381. Though in many ways the council had to be a rerun of the Antiochene Synod of two years before, it did not turn out the same way. As in Antioch, the president was Meletius, and most of the bishops came from the regions of Syria and inner Anatolia. One of the chief ends of the assembly was to establish the compromise reached in 379 regarding the schism in Antioch²⁷: Meletius, backed by the coalition of Asiatic bishops gathered by Basil, would have reigned as first, and after his death Pauli-

25 Bernardi 1995, 175–176 attributes Gregory's mission to the Nicene community in Constantinople, McGuckin 2001a, 236–238, to the Synod of Antioch, possibly even to Basil, Gautier 2002, 354–355 stresses also the role of Theodosia, his cousin, in arranging the summons.

26 On the dispute over the seat of Constantinople: Simonetti 1975, 450–451, 533–535, 548–550. The endorsement of Maximus from Ambrose and the Westerners (even though Damasus had condemned his election) is witnessed by Ambr. *ep.* 13, while the Orientals backed Nectarius, as demonstrated by the synodal letter preserved by Theodrt. *h. e.* 5, 9.

27 Other purposes were the reaffirmation of the Nicene faith and the appointment of a new bishop for Constantinople after Demophilus' ousting and Maximus' failed attempt (Simonetti 1975, 529). The doctrinal motivations have a great import in McGuckin's narration of the events; I have left them out, because they are barely treated by Gregory in our poems. In a nutshell, the emperor and bishops wanted to simply reaffirm Nicaea with the broadest consensus possible; Gregory wanted to assert his innovative doctrine of the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit, which was bound to create conflicts.

nus, backed by the Alexandrians and the Latins, would have become bishop. However, Meletius died suddenly during the council, and the presidency over the assembly passed on to Gregory, as senior member and prospective bishop of the capital: the council had explicitly rejected Maximus's claim and was to confirm Gregory in the position. In his capacity as president, Gregory pushed to enforce the 379 compromise and therefore to endorse Paulinus, but Meletius's faction was not satisfied and proposed to order Flavian as bishop. Gregory was in the minority and resorted to one of his favourite tactics: retreat; he abandoned the works of the council. While he was away, the bishop of Alexandria, Timothy, together with bishops from Egypt and the Illyricum, joined the council. It is doubtful whether the invitation came from the emperor or even from Gregory, but it is certain that they were summoned to support Paulinus²⁸. The move backfired against Gregory, since the Egyptians and Westerners still held a grudge against him for the Maximus affair. They cast doubts on the canonicity of Gregory's election, because he had been already consecrated bishop of Sasima by Basil, and under canon 15 of the Canons of Nicaea bishops were forbidden to change see. At this point, it was clear that the only thing that could bring together emperor and bishops, East and West, Antioch and Alexandria, Flavian and Paulinus, was Gregory's head. He resigned and set sail for Nazianzus. Meletius's faction, likely led by Diodore of Tarsus, proposed the unbaptised civil servant Nectarius for the see of Constantinople: the man was harmless enough not to worry Timothy; was well linked to the Asiatic bishops, being of Tarsus like Diodore; and obviously ready to satisfy imperial desiderata. The schism of Antioch remained unresolved.

In the year following the council, Ambrose still backed Maximus. Therefore, when Gregory wrote our poems, he had to defend himself not only from Nectarius but also from Maximus, whose affair still projected a shadow on the poet. Gregory had to justify the fact that he was duped by Maximus, while at the same time highlighting the latter's flaws. On the other side, he had to recover his face after being replaced by a man without baptism, without ascetic credentials, and without any particular gift in the realm of *paideia*, as a consequence of a clear and known failure on Gregory's part. Little is known of Gregory's relationship with the court, but certainly he had lost his standing as an active politician before all bishops, the remote Egyptians and Westerners as well as his former allies in Asia. Their power plays were—in his eyes—the true reason of his downfall. With these targets in mind, Gregory elaborated his poems on the bishops.

Coming to our texts, it is interesting to note *where* these events are recounted by Gregory: they are briefly mentioned in II, 1, 10, 8–24; an extensive summary is found in II, 1, 12, 71–154; the second half of II, 1, 17 (from line 41) presupposes that narration but

²⁸ McGuckin 2001b, 166–167 hypothesises that Gregory himself may have called the Egyptians, even though in his longer biography (McGuckin 2001a) he attributes the call to the emperor alone. For Bernardi 1995, 215, the Egyptians were simply late. Gautier 2002, 397–398 considers both the idea that they were called since the beginning but came late, and the idea that they were called by the emperor to solve Gregory's impasse.

does not engage it directly. Finally, II, 1, 13 lacks references to many of these events. This confirms the fictional settings of the poems described in §1.1.1. The hexametric poem II, 1, 13, with its strong links to the conciliar speech of II, 1, 11, 1600–1682, is less concerned with Gregory's personal position and more with the discord among bishops, and, being set in the heat of the council, it could not host a comprehensive reflection on Gregory's time in Constantinople. Moreover, this is the most epic poem, in which the voice of the poet is most detached from the matter at hand, as demonstrated by the fact that it is the only one out of four in which the poet does not mention his name. On the other hand, the reflection on the mission in Constantinople finds its natural place in the formalities of Gregory's farewell to the other bishops and the community, represented respectively in II, 1, 12 (and *or.* 42) and in II, 1, 10. Here, Gregory has the best opportunity to present as one comprehensive narrative his time in Constantinople in order to defend it, purportedly at the very moment in which it is defeated and concluded. II, 1, 17 preserves its character of meditation even as it presents the autobiographical materials, which are arranged less as a narration than as a declaration of intents and as a strong contrast between Gregory's character and that of his colleagues.

Before analysing how Gregory treats the single episodes of his political biography, I must to outline how these single episodes are organised in the different texts. In the analysis, I have followed the order of II, 1, 12, but both II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 17 and the other important texts on the argument (II, 1, 11 and *or.* 42 mainly) present different structures. II, 1, 12, 71–153 is the easiest to analyse, because the poem introduces the narrative as a distinct section of its argument, reviewing the events in the form of a cohesive story. Indeed, as already noted (§1.1.1), this autobiographical passage corresponds perfectly to the *narratio* of a public speech: it bridges the preamble, which puts forth the theme of bad bishops, with the invective (see §5.2) and the argumentative part (§3.1.3.1 and 3) that form the centre of the poem. Gregory's story is presented as an example (70) not only of the damages caused by bad bishops but also of the more generic moral statement that the wicked tend to have an easy life, whereas the pious is often unlucky (64–69; see §3.2.2). However, it is clear that the story has much more than an exemplary value; the very formulation with which Gregory expresses the concept hints to more: λόγου δὲ μάρτυς αὐτὸς, ὃς λέγω τάδε (70). The word μάρτυς is laden with meaning, all pointing to Gregory's aptness to discuss what he is going to discuss. The fact that the example he uses to prove his point is something he lived in first person on one side entitles him to pass judgements on the themes, giving him even the authority of a martyr, as the name μάρτυς and the narrative itself imply. Moreover, the extended narrative makes clear the context in which Gregory's proposal on the episcopate has matured, so that the proposal comments on and analyses the concrete situation with a clear apologetic aim from the poet. In II, 1, 12, the traditional oratorical structure of the poem produces the same short circuit between Gregory's autobiography and his general ideas on the episcopate that we have already noted in the construction of his model bishop (§3.1.5; §3.2.2) and in the previous section (§5.1.1).

II, 1, 10 lacks any general proposal, the poem being simply aimed at defending Gregory's reputation. The events of Constantinople are confined to the first part of the poem (1–24), and the poet draws a clear line between this theme and the description of his ascetic retreat (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν λήθης κεύθοι βυθός. Αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε . . . , 25). Through this strong distinction he wants to establish his status as outsider. The events of Constantinople are not exactly narrated; rather, they are recalled; therefore, the order of exposition is the opposite of the chronological order, because Gregory begins lamenting his being removed from Constantinople—the community that he so painstakingly established in the Nicene faith—in favour of “another”. Then he explains the reason behind his removal, which is an indictment of the episcopate of his time. Everything is expressed shortly and allusively: Gregory mentions his work in Constantinople to defend his right to that bishopric; then he alludes to the council to delegitimise his removal.

II, 1, 17 is also very elliptical: Gregory begins by declaring that, though he had desired to become a bishop, the wrongdoings of the other prelates made him change his mind (41–44). This generic plot is enriched thereafter with flashbacks from the mission in Constantinople (45–56). All this serves to justify Gregory's leaving his post and the description of the bad habits of bishops in the following lines. Narrative and description all concur to devalue the current state of the episcopate and to highlight the difference between Gregory and his peers.

This apologetic rewriting of the story is even more prominent in *or.* 42 and II, 1, 11. The speech presents itself as an account of Gregory's mission before the other bishops²⁹. For this reason, it presents at length the situation of Nicene Christianity in Constantinople before Gregory's arrival as desperate and states the critical importance of his preaching for establishing a first community. The *refutatio* of accusations is located after the positive results Gregory boasts. In II, 1, 11 the apologetic aim is less explicit but just as evident as in the other pieces. Here, Gregory follows more or less the same order as in the narration of II, 1, 12, with more precision thanks to the greater space allowed by the theme. The accusations brought against Gregory are discussed as they occur; for example, criticisms of his mildness are brought up as a comment on the events which would have required more strength, and the problem of his allegiance is discussed in the midst of the council (see §5.1.2.2). What stands out from this narration is the great space devoted to Maximus (lines 728–1112), whereas *or.* 42 and the narrations in our poems do not discuss the affair³⁰. Moreover, both *or.* 42 and II, 1, 11 are very concerned with doctrinal problems: *or.* 42 has a long doctrinal section (14–18), in which Gregory clarifies his position vis-à-vis the Arian and Macedonian dispute and consequently the kind of faith he has transmitted to Constantinople; II, 1, 11 constantly refers to the

²⁹ The legal overtones of this speech are pointed out by Elm 1999 (see also Elm 2000b).

³⁰ II, 1, 12 attacks Maximus, albeit without mentioning him, at 658–791, where he examines duplicity of character and the bishop-Proteus (see §2.2.3.2).

problem of the Holy Spirit³¹. Such precise references are completely lacking not only from II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 12 but also from II, 1, 13 and II, 1, 17. The last of these has a passing allusion to the question of the divinity of the Spirit, and in general the poems take for granted that the Nicene position is the orthodox one, without addressing possible dissent. The impression is that the poems on the bishops target a different audience than II, 1, 11 and *or.* 42.

In the following sections I will present the texts of II, 1, 10; II, 1, 11; II, 1, 12; II, 1, 17; and *or.* 42 side by side and in the order of events of II, 1, 12, so as to compare and analyse them. I will begin with Gregory's call to Constantinople (§5.1.2.1), then address the criticisms and difficulties he received there (§5.1.2.2), then give an account of his achievements (§5.1.2.3) and finally describe how he retreated (§5.1.2.4). For reasons of readability, I have decided to have no more than two columns; therefore, I have divided the texts according to metre in descending order of "dignity" (according to late antique literary theories) from elegy to iambus and prose.

5.1.2.1 Gregory is called to Constantinople

The passages of II, 1, 11 and II, 1, 12 have the same structure: after a premise, they explain whom called Gregory to the city and then what Gregory had to do there; finally, Gregory explains why he accepted³². The different premises notwithstanding, the verbal parallels between the two poems are clear, and they permit an analogous subdivision of the passage³³. On the beginnings of Gregory's ministry in Constantinople, II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 17 are much less detailed.

How Gregory came to Constantinople is one of the least clear points of the story, partly because his accounts on the matter present differences. I have already briefly discussed how the different texts trace back Gregory's call to different people (§2.2.1.2). II, 1, 10 attributes it to God and his servants, who could be the clergy of Constantinople as well as the bishops at large. II, 1, 12 mentions "the assemblies of shepherds / and the orthodox people" (81–82)—namely, the bishops and the local community—together with the Holy Spirit (79). The term "assemblies" (σύλλογοι) may even allude to the synod of Antioch in 379. *On His Own Life* agrees with II, 1, 12 in mentioning

³¹ The doctrinal conflict at Constantinople is perfectly described by McGuckin 2001a, 354–357, 367–368. Gregory pressed for a full confession of the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with God the Father and the Son, but in the council the cautious line prevailed.

³² Premise: II, 1, 11, 583–594; II, 1, 12, 71–76; call: II, 1, 11, 595–597; II, 1, 12, 77–82; Gregory's task: II, 1, 11, 598–606; II, 1, 12, 83–89; acceptance: II, 1, 11, 607–608; II, 1, 12, 90–92.

³³ Analogies are to be found in the forceful call to Constantinople (ἀνδράσιν / κλαπείς βιαίους, II, 1, 11, 607–608; τις τῶν καλῶν ἀποσπάσας / Ἐκδημον ἤγαγε, II, 1, 12, 77–78), its attribution to the Spirit, the bishops and the community (ἡ χάρις τοῦ πνεύματος / πολλῶν καλούντων ποιμένων καὶ θρεμμάτων, II, 1, 11, 595–596; Εἴτ' οὖν τὸ θεῖον Πνεῦμα. . . σύλλογοί τε ποιμένων / Καὶ λαὸς ὀρθόδοξος, II, 1, 12, 79; 81–82), the formulation of Gregory's task there (ὡς ἂν καταψύξαμεν, II, 1, 11, 598; Ὡς ἂν τις ἔλθῃ, II, 1, 12, 84) and of his arrival (Οὕτω μὲν ἦλθον, II, 1, 11, 607; Οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἐπῆλθον II, 1, 12, 90).

bishops and people. Moreover, II, 1, 12 speaks of “one good person” (τις τῶν καλῶν, 77) who “dragged” (ἀποσπάσας) Gregory, and so II, 1, 11 has Gregory “summoned / by forceful men” (ἀνδράσιν / κλαπείς βιαίους, 607–608). This is perfectly in agreement with what Gregory says at the beginning of his eulogy for Basil (*or.* 43, 2), where he suggests that Basil was behind Gregory’s mission in the capital and describes Gregory’s call as a violent one (βιασθέντες)³⁴. Gregory distances himself as much as possible from the decision through the use of passive verbs to express his acceptance of the mission: καμφοθείς (II, 1, 12, 91); κλαπείς (II, 1, 11, 608); βιασθέντες (*or.* 43, 2). He did not accept; he has been made to accept—or so he would have us believe. On the contrary, in II, 1, 17 Gregory himself wants to become one of the bishops, probably meaning—in consideration of what follows in that poem—to become bishop of the capital. These different versions in the sources produce the different versions in the interpreters, who from time to time privilege the role of the “assemblies of shepherds” or of the “orthodox people” and try to explain how Basil may have contributed to the call, since he died before the Council of Antioch even began.

Gregory is also ambiguous as regards the divine call he received. At II, 1, 10, 15 and *or.* 43, 2 he gives the agency to God, while at II, 1, 11, 595 and II, 1, 12, 79 it is the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα) who calls him to Constantinople. Moreover, two sources underline—each one twice—that Gregory’s mission was linked with a λόγος³⁵. Clearly, this λόγος may be simply interpreted as the “doctrine” Gregory was meant to spread and defend in the capital, but since that doctrine was the ὁμοουσία of the Son or Λόγος with the Father and his divinity, it would be entirely correct to capitalise the lambda of Λόγος in these occurrences. From this perspective, the oscillation between God and Holy Spirit as to the agency of his call to Constantinople may serve Gregory to signal his own innovative doctrine of the divinity of the Spirit.

It is interesting to note that in the final passages II, 1, 11, 607–608 and II, 1, 12, 90–92, parallel in many respects, Gregory presents himself with two different titles: λόγου συνήγορος (II, 1, 11) and εὐσεβῆς ξένος (II, 1, 12). In *On His Own Life* he privileges his doctrinal mission, whereas in the poem against the bishops he puts forward his ascetic credentials. Indeed, if εὐσεβής indicates Gregory’s orthodoxy, the word ξένος is no mere legal fact, but an allusion to the ascetic value of ξενιτεία, which Gregory so often appropriated and Gautier has already studied³⁶. The word ἐκδημιον (II, 1, 12, 78)

³⁴ καλῶς βιασθέντες, καὶ κατὰ Θεὸν ἴσως ἐκδημιον γεγονότες. The prosaic passage is linked verbally to II, 1, 11 by the use of βιασθέντες/βιαίους and to II, 1, 12 by the use of ἐκδημιον.

³⁵ λόγου συλλήπτορας (II, 1, 11, 597); λόγου συνήγορος (II, 1, 11, 608); περὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον ἡσυχολήμεθα... μηδὲν ἕτερον ἀναπνεύσαντι ὅτι μὴ λόγον εὐσεβῆ καὶ κόσμου παντὸς σωτήριον (*or.* 43, 2). Note in this last reference how εὐσεβῆ can be referred to a correct doctrine (one that permits to accord devotion to the right objects, in this case the Son), but that the second attribute, κόσμου παντὸς σωτήριον, would be much more apt for Λόγος in the sense of Son of God. The ambiguity is conscious in Gregory’s words.

³⁶ On εὐσεβής, see Lampe 1961, 575–576, s.v. εὐσεβής 5. On ξενιτεία, see §3.2.2.2; Gautier 2002, 7–16, 69–77.

has ascetic overtones, too, as demonstrated by II, 1, 12, 579 (νοῦ πρὸς ὕψος ἐκ πάχους ἐκδημίαις). The particular attention of II, 1, 12 for Gregory's ascetic self-presentation is shown also in his premise to the call to Constantinople (II, 1, 12, 71–76): while in *On His Own Life* he begins with a description of the dire straits of the Nicene Christians in the capital (583–594), in the poem against bishops he describes his own condition when the call reached him, tearing him away from ascetic retreat. Even the mention of expiation of sins as one of the causes of his mission is directed at mending the apparent contradiction between the ascetic portrayal and the mission, making the mission congruent with asceticism³⁷. This might seem odd, since *On His Own Life* should be more concerned with the person of Gregory and the poem against bishops more concerned with the state of the church. However, Gregory's ascetic self-portrait in II, 1, 12 may be explained in the wider context of the poem, where the comparison between bishops with an ascetic background and those who are chosen from the realm of politics is a running theme. Therefore, Gregory presents his call to Constantinople as the bishop's passage from ascetic retreat to the *vita activa*, so that, when he will argue in favour of bishops with ascetic background, he will also be legitimising his tenure in the capital, and his tenure in the capital will work as a proof of the usefulness of having bishops with ascetic background³⁸. Once more Gregory develops a general proposal and an apologetic argument side by side.

In boasting of his ascetic credentials at the beginning of II, 1, 12 Gregory also presents his character as it will appear in the following narrative. Lines 592–594 of II, 1, 11 play an analogous role³⁹. Apart from the understatement of 592–593 on Gregory's stance in matters pertaining to religion, what is particularly interesting in this self-presentation through the eyes of others (ἐδόξαμεν) is the expression ἄγρικοις βίος. This means literally that he has lived in the province (Cappadocia) for a long time, but the term ἄγρικοις has a deeper political significance. The trait is presented as a disadvantage through the conjunction καίπερ. Indeed, Cappadocia was perceived as a backwater region⁴⁰. The term has the same negative nuance when applied to Gregory's adversaries at II, 1, 12, 138: “ἄγρική cannot bear παίδευσιν”—that is, the uncouthness of the bishops could not bear Gregory's sophistication. And yet the fact that ἄγρική is applied to Gregory as well as to his adversaries should make us wary about its ambiguity.

For starters, Cappadocia, though provincial, was also considered a bulwark for the faith, a fame renewed by Basil's centrality in church politics of the time⁴¹. On the

³⁷ On asceticism as penance: Griffith 1995, 234–235.

³⁸ On this see: §3.2.2.

³⁹ ἐδόξαμεν γὰρ ἐν θεῷ τινες / εἶναι βίω τε καὶ λόγῳ τῶν γνωρίμων / καίπερ αἱ ζήσαντες ἄγρικον βίον.

⁴⁰ Bernardi 1995, 80–82.

⁴¹ See: Καππάδοσαν γῆν λιπών, / ἥ πίστει ἔρεισμα τοῖς πᾶσιν δοκεῖ (II, 1, 12, 93–94). The export of Arian bishops notwithstanding (Auxentius of Milan, Gregory and George in Alexandria), Cappadocia could boast the heritage of Gregory the Thaumaturge, Origen's pupil (McGuckin 2001a, *passim*), and of

contrary, the city of Constantinople was plagued with heresy, so that “to come from the countryside” may not have been that bad a mark on one’s Christian portfolio. In this perspective, the signature at the end of II, 1, 10 may acquire new meaning: Οὗτος Γρηγορίου λόγος, τὸν θρέψατο γαῖα / Καππαδοκῶν, Χριστῷ πάντ’ ἀποδυσάμενον. (II, 1, 10, 35–36). Second, ἀγροικία is a synonym for strangeness, not only in a geographic sense but most of all as social “otherness”. The ἄγροικος is a kind of savage to the life of the city, marked by *paideia*. In this sense, the term is part of a wider pattern of self-characterisations by Gregory as an outsider to the polite society of the era. We have already seen that at the end of II, 1, 12 (829–830) he characterises himself as an old and drunken man, while at II, 1, 12, 90 he used the word ξένος, which is a key term of his ascetic approach (§3.2.2.2). The same designation of “guest” and “stranger” is implied by his description of the famous stoning in II, 1, 17, 47–48: Λᾶες ἐμοί, κείνων δὲ Τριάς, θεότης νεόπηκτος / Τοίοις ἀλλήλους ξεινίσαμεν ξενίοις. The repetition of the root ξεν- highlights Gregory’s condition as outsider and the hardships he had to endure for it. Again, his whole rationale for writing the poems as poems depends on his status as outsider (see §1.3.2).

In this pattern of otherness, ἀγροικία taps into a wealth of classical images which we can roughly divide into two groups: the philosopher and the comic hero. As for the philosophical side, Gregory’s strangeness recalls Socrates’s ἀτοπία, the “Athenian stranger” of Plato’s *Laws*, and the Cynic and Stoic ξενιτεία⁴². The harshness (τραχύν τε καὶ τὰ πλείω δύστροπον) confessed at II, 1, 12, 828 may echo Eros being αὐχμηρὸς in Plato’s *Symposium*⁴³. Furthermore, philosophy is associated with drunkenness more than once in the same work⁴⁴. Moreover, ἀγροικία, when it means that Gregory came from a faraway province with the fame of being only slightly Hellenised, may be a reference to the idea of an “alien wisdom”, coming from a barbarian⁴⁵. Furthermore, the ἄγροικος was a recurring character of the Old and New Comedy. In New Comedy, the ἄγροικος is mostly ridiculed as uncouth and unable to behave in the context of urban life; Menander is the only one moderating this tendency and representing also

Basil (Meier 1989, 86). Monasticism was important in preserving the Nicaean faith, too (Bernardi 1995, 95–97). A more general perspective on culture and Christianity in late antique Cappadocia: Van Dam 2002, 157–204; Van Dam 2003b.

⁴² Socrates: Plat. *Theaet.* 149A, 9; *conv.* 215A, 2; 221D, 2; *Phaedr.* 230C, 6. On ξενιτεία: Gautier 2002, 9–10.

⁴³ Plat. *conv.* 203D, 1.

⁴⁴ Anagnostou–Laoutides 2021, with many references to the *Symposium*.

⁴⁵ For the prestige of alien wisdom in Hellenistic times: Momigliano 1990, 85–87, 144–149; the *locus classicus* of this idea is the beginning of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives*, where the biographer reports that some people believe philosophy was born among the barbarians, an opinion Gregory echoes at *or.* 4, 107–109, where he lists various arts invented by barbarians and brought to the Greeks. See also §3.1.3.3 n. 125 (comparison of Gregory’s wisdom and classical philosophy, in the same section there is also a reference to the position of Christian philosophy as “alien wisdom”). There was also a Christian tradition of “alien wisdom”, exemplified in *or.* 33, 9–10.

rustic people with noble sentiments⁴⁶. In Aristophanes, on the other side, the ἄγρικοι is seen more sympathetically; in fact, many comic heroes come from the countryside (Dikaiopolis in the *Acharnians*, Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, Trygaeus in the *Peace*, Chremylos in the *Pluto*). Aristophanes often represents through them the point of view of country people on the extravagant and corrupted mores of the city⁴⁷. Moreover, the traditional language for the comic ἄγρικοι shares many features with Gregory's poetry: sententiousness, moralism, long tirades, and a tendency to exaggerate everything⁴⁸. It might well be that Gregory chose to identify himself with this comic mask in many of his iambic poems in order to claim for himself the strangeness from the city and the utopian heroism of Aristophanic ἄγρικοι; in this case, style would be part of his self-presentation and would be used to lend authority to his voice.

All this means that there is an ἀγροικία which is sheer lack of knowledge, opposed to a παιδευσίς, which is pure knowledge; but there is also an ἀγροικία which is strangeness to the logic of the world and of society, as opposed to a *paideia*, which is involvement in the bonds of society. Gregory reserves for himself knowledge, for the bishops ignorance and the burden of social life. Not casually, at II, 1, 12, 138 he assigns ἀγροικία to the bishops and παιδευσίς, "education", to himself, while in the same poem he uses ξένος and not ἄγρικοι for himself (90), thereby avoiding too evident a contradiction. In this sense, when he uses the word ἄγρικοι, as well as other tokens of strangeness, he is casting himself in the mould of the late antique philosopher, which, as Brown points out, was the social role endowed with the authority to chastise others, their social rank notwithstanding⁴⁹. This is in accordance not only with what we already know of his self-presentation as narrator of the poems (§1.3.2) but also with his description of the ideal bishop: the ἄγρικοι βίος of II, 1, 11 corresponds to the ascetic self-presentation of II, 1, 12, and the ambiguity of ἀγροικία to the ambiguity of Christian doctrine as explained in §3.1.3.3.

From the rhetorical point of view, this self-portrait, which implies by necessity a portrait of his adversaries, has some critical advantages. First, it can be exploited to put to shame the adversaries, because they had to have theology taught to them by an outsider, a shameful reversal of roles⁵⁰. Second, it allows Gregory to claim a theological authority (and to undercut the authority of others) despite, or rather thanks to, his political failure: failure itself demonstrates the bishop's ascetic prowess and theological

⁴⁶ Konstantakos 2005.

⁴⁷ Konstantakos 2005, 1–5; Ehrenberg 1975, 82–91; Dover 1972, 35–36.

⁴⁸ Konstantakos 2005, 3.

⁴⁹ On the position of the philosopher outside society in Imperial times: Brown 1992, 64–70.

⁵⁰ This reversal of roles is stigmatised at II, 1, 12, 549–574; 634–641 (see §3.2.2); the word ἄγρικοι is premised to a similar reversal in the fable of swans and swallows in *ep.* 114; the provincial (ἄγρικοι) is perhaps the freest (ἐλεύθερος) when he is ashamed of bad bishops (*or.* 2, 9), as if his isolation and innocence gave him a superior moral sense. The theme may be also used as a *captatio benevolentiae* (see *or.* 38, 7).

depth and thus his strangeness to political machinations⁵¹. Third, and as already anticipated (§3.1.3.3), the double meaning of *paideia* as social ability on one side and theological education on the other is a two-edged sword, capable of striking both of Gregory's rivals. Nectarius, given his background as civil servant, surely had *paideia* in the traditional sense, but his social conformity did not lend him the kind of philosophical authority the bishop should have according to Gregory. Maximus, on the other side, claimed precisely that kind of authority, but Gregory does everything to undermine Maximus's cultural competence, highlighting his lack of *paideia* in the traditional sense⁵².

Apart from the aside of lines 592–594, the premise of Gregory's call at II, 1, 11 is a description of the Nicene community in Constantinople. A similar description is repeated in the following lines of the same poem (598–606), when Gregory sets forth his aims in the city, and, in the same position, II, 1, 12 too has a description of Constantinople. Furthermore, the longest and most detailed such description is found in *or.* 42, whence I have indicated one passage with significant verbal similarities to the poetic ones⁵³. Two issues plague the congregation: on one side, the Nicenes are few and far apart, likely a reference to the prohibition against using the churches of the city and their lack of clergy and leaders; on the other, most Christians in the city are Homoians, so that a wealth of different doctrines circulate and there is a certain confusion on the tenets of the faith. The poet describes these problems with a set of metaphors recurring in all three texts: he compares the community with a harvest, a vintage, and a living organism in need of air, light, and water. The agricultural metaphor dominates *or.* 42, 4. The link with II, 1, 12 is in the quotation from Isaiah relative to the ripe grape in the unripe branch: ὁ ῥῶξ ἐν τῷ βότρυι (Jes. 65:8) becomes ῥάγα μίαν ἢ δευτέραν ὠριμον ἐν ἄρῳ τῷ βότρυϊ (*or.* 42, 4) and τις μέλαινα ῥὰξ ἐν ἄρῳ βότρυϊ (II, 1, 12, 89). In both

⁵¹ This strategy was applied in II, 1, 11, 784–806 to explain away Maximus' affair; cf. τὸ μὲν γὰρ εὐκίνητον εἰς μοχθηρίαν / τηρεῖ τὰ πάντα καὶ βλέπει τὰ καίρια / τὸ δ' εἰς ἀρετὴν πρόχειρον εἰς ὑποψίαν / τῶν χειρόνων ἀργόν τε καὶ νωθὲς φύσει (II, 1, 11, 803–806).

⁵² Gregory criticises Maximus at II, 1, 41 in terms similar to his "generic" criticisms of bishops at II, 1, 12: cf. Κυβιστάτω τις μὴ μαθὼν, τοξευέτω, / Πτεροῖς φερέσθω πρὸς νέφη μετάρσιος. / Ἀρκεῖ τὸ βούλεσθ', οὐδαμοῦ τὸ εἰδέναι (II, 1, 41, 12–14) with II, 1, 12, 541–569 (but also the herald's speech at II, 1, 13, 89–108). In this context, Maximus is accused of ἀγροικία: τῆς ἀγροικίας / Θάρσος λαβούσης οὐ καλῶς ἀζήμιον (II, 1, 41, 9–10). Gregory has not written a separate poem against Nectarius, but the man can be recognised behind various characteristics the poet criticised in II, 1, 12, especially the dishonestly rich man of 432–441 and the mundane man of 610–633 (see McGuckin 2001a, 375, 377, 382–383; McGuckin 2001b, 163–164; Elm 2000b, 420–421; McLynn 1997).

⁵³ Τοιοῦτον ἡμῶν τὸ γεώργιον, τοσοῦτον τὸ θέρος· μέγα μὲν, καὶ εὖσταχυ, καὶ πῖον τῷ θεωρητῇ τῶν κρυπτῶν, καὶ τοιοῦτου γεωργοῦ πρέπον εἶναι, ὃ πληθύνουσι κοιλάδες ψυχῶν καλῶς τῷ λόγῳ γεωργουμένων· οὐ μὴν γνωριζόμενον τοῖς πολλοῖς, οὐδὲ εἰς ἓν συναγόμενον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μικρὸν συλλεγόμενον, ὡς καλάμη ἐν ἀμητῷ, καὶ ὡς ἐπιφυλλίς ἐν τρυγητῷ, μὴ ὑπάρχοντος βότρυος. Προσθήσειν μοι δοκῶ κάκεῖνα, καὶ λίαν κατὰ καιρὸν, ὡς συκὴν ἐν ἐρήμῳ εὖρον τὸν Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ὡς ῥάγα μίαν ἢ δευτέραν ὠριμον ἐν ἄρῳ τῷ βότρυϊ, εὐλογίαν μὲν Κυρίου τετηρημένην, καὶ ἀπαρχὴν καθερωμένην, πλὴν ὀλίγην ἔτι καὶ σπάνιον καὶ οὐ πληροῦσαν στόμα ἔσθοντος (*or.* 42, 4). The complete description spans *or.* 42, 2–10.

cases Gregory's rewriting expands and clarifies the biblical text, adding the attributes ὠριμον/μέλαινα and ἄωρῳ. No difference in style can be detected between the prosaic and the iambic formulation, except perhaps the metonymy of μέλαινα instead of ὠριμος, expressed with an adjective of ample attestation in poetry. As usual in biblical paraphrase, Gregory restores the classical form ἡ ῥάξ instead of the κοινή and Ionic form ὁ ῥώξ, found in the Bible. The agricultural metaphor of II, 1, 12, 88 (ὡς καλάμη ἐν ἀμητῷ) has the same structure as that of *or.* 42, 4 (Οἶόν τι τερπνὸν ἐν μέσῳ βάτων ῥόδον), with pleasing produce standing out from among barren plants, but instead of cereals the poem employs the rose as simile⁵⁴. II, 1, 11 and II, 1, 12 are more similar, to the point that sometimes one is a paraphrase of the other. An example is II, 1, 11, 601 (γλῶσσαι δὲ λάβροι καὶ πολύστροφοι πλοκαί), which is paraphrased by II, 1, 12, 86 (Λάλων τε γλῶσσῶν, καὶ πολυσχιδοῦς πλάνης), preserving the same alliterations, but with II, 1, 11 expanding on the theme in the following lines in accordance with its greater interest in doctrinal strife. Furthermore, λαὸν βραχὺν μέν, τῷ θεῷ δὲ πλείονα (II, 1, 11, 589) and Καὶ λαὸς ὀρθόδοξος, ἀλλ' οὐπω πλατὺς (II, 1, 12, 82) present the same contrast between number and orthodoxy and show the same variation from "shortness" (βραχὺν) to narrowness (οὐπω πλατὺς). In both poems, the community, as a living creature, must breathe, as is said by II, 1, 11, 588 (εἶχέν τι μικρὸν ζωτικῆς σπέρμα πνοῆς) and II, 1, 12, 85 (Μικρὸν τ' ἀναπνεύσῃσι τῶν κύκλῳ κακῶν). Note how the same word, μικρὸν, and the metaphor of breath are employed at II, 1, 11 to describe residual and dying life, whereas in II, 1, 12 it describes new life. Indeed, in II, 1, 11 the community is presented as dying out, whereas in II, 1, 12 it is just born: θανοῦσά τ' οἰκτρὸν ἐξ ἀπιστίας μόρον (II, 1, 11, 587); Ἄρτι πρὸς αὐγὰς ἡλίου μικρὸν βλέπων (II, 1, 12, 83). Much more than a true historical development, these images mark the feebleness and paucity of the congregation.

As we have seen regarding the metaphors for the bishop (§2.2.2; §2.2.4.5), these images are largely traditional in the description of a Christian community. Surely, they imply the figure of the farmer, husbandman, or shepherd, and thus they suggest that the community needs a bishop, but they are also a convenient way to describe a phenomenon which is described not nearly as directly, the state of a collective of people. As to the function of these descriptions, they highlight the necessity of Gregory's mission; indeed, it would be safe to doubt the clear-cut image they depict, not because the Nicenes were not few and banned from the churches, but because many parishioners might not have been so easily classifiable as "Nicene", "Homoian," or "Novatianist," as if these communities were distinct and separated. Moreover, this image omits social inequalities: How did the relationship of imperial court and city reflect in these religious differences? How did these differences play out inside the court? Gregory gives no clue to answer these questions.

⁵⁴ As noted by Meier 1989, 85, it is a proverbial expression. Another agricultural image is used at II, 1, 11, 599 for the souls in need of Gregory's preaching and again in the description of Gregory's work (see §5.1.2.3 and §2.2.2).

5.1.2.2 Criticisms leveled against Gregory

Gregory mentions three main criticisms against his person in Constantinople: first, concerning the validity of his election (II, 1, 12, 95–97); second, concerning his handling of the congregation after Theodosius's arrival in the city (II, 1, 11, 1407–1419; II, 1, 12, 100–105; *or*: 42, 23); and third, concerning his handling of the council (II, 1, 10, 19–24; II, 1, 11, 1766–1776; *or*: 42, 22). It is likely that these criticisms are a faithful representation of those that actually hit him, if we admit that these poems had an apologetic function. Apart from a rapid hint to the first criticism in II, 1, 12, the poems on bishops focus on one accusation each: II, 1, 12 underlines Gregory's failure to retaliate against Homoians in Constantinople when he had the opportunity, whereas II, 1, 10 underlines his refusal to choose one side in the Antiochene schism. Both poems present their respective accusation in chronological order, with II, 1, 10 presenting it *after* Gregory's successes as bishop of the city, reflecting the context of the council, in which the problem was brought up, and II, 1, 12 mentioning its accusation at the outset of Gregory's adventure in the city. The order is inverted at *or*: 42, which, however, is more analytic than narrative in its organisation of themes, dividing achievements and criticisms regardless of chronological order. Finally, II, 1, 11 treats every criticism according to its chronological order; therefore, we find Gregory's excessive meekness right after his violent installation by Theodosius in the Church of the Holy Apostles (installation: 1273–1395; criticism: 1407–1419) and his refusal of partisan politics during the council before the arrival of the Egyptians, when the prelates were still discussing the Antiochene succession (1766–1776). A fourth criticism—namely, one against Gregory's doctrine of the Spirit—is mentioned *en passant* only in II, 1, 17, though it has parallels in other writings of the author. Otherwise, II, 1, 17 does not mention criticisms, but rather attributes Gregory's failure to φθόνος.

As regards the validity of the election, the poems on bishops rarely touch the subject. The main defence on this front is entrusted to II, 1, 11, 521–551⁵⁵. Only II, 1, 12, 95–97 hints at this criticism, dismissing it as a false narrative invented by his “enemies” (ἐχθρῶν)⁵⁶. Since we know from II, 1, 11, 1798–1815 that the problem was brought up

⁵⁵ Here, Gregory assures that he served in Nazianzus not as bishop but only as managing the bishopric his father left when he died waiting for a new bishop. As explained by McGuckin 2001a, 226–227, the idea that Gregory was *de facto* and possibly *de iure* bishop of Nazianzus before he came to Constantinople might have been more significant in the accusations of the Egyptians than his failed consecration as bishop of Sasima by Basil. Gregory never went to Sasima (at least according to him) and that bishopric ended up with another bishop, whereas at his fathers' death Gregory was the sole ecclesiastical authority in Nazianzus, he had administered the community since long and preached in its church, not counting his being the son of the previous bishop and the main benefactor of the local church—which were significant circumstances in the choice of a bishop.

⁵⁶ “Having left the land of Cappadocia, / . . . / not a community [οὐ λαὸν] or anything I was compelled by [τῶν ἀναγκάων ἐμοί]” (II, 1, 12, 93; 95). These lines are interpreted by Meier 1989 as a defence against the accusation of abandoning the community in Sasima, deemed by Gregory to be ἐχθρῶν πλάσματα, ψευδεῖς λόγοι, / Φθόνου καλύμματ' ἀστόχως εὐρημένα (II, 1, 12, 96–97). A passing reference to canon 15

by the Egyptians, we can infer that even after the council, Gregory still considered them “enemies”, whereas the Antiochene faction, even though it equally contributed to his removal, is treated with less harshness. However, the version at II, 1, 11 tends to exclude a personal grudge of the Egyptians against Gregory; this interpretation is accepted by Bernardi⁵⁷, who says that the question of the fifteenth canon of the Canons of Nicaea was brought up to invalidate the decision of the Asiatic bishops, not to attack Gregory personally. It must be noted—and this is but an instance of this phenomenon—that the poet's approach in II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 10 is much more antagonistic than in II, 1, 11, as befits poems titled “Against the bishops” (see §5.1.2.4).

Or. 42, 23 explains well why Gregory was attacked for his tenure in the capital after the arrival of Theodosius. The new emperor brought a twist in the power relations of Homoians and Nicenes, because in the years from 364 to that moment (380), the emperor Valens had strongly favoured Homoians and disfavoured the Nicenes⁵⁸. With the return of the Nicene emperor Theodosius from the Gothic wars and the installation of Gregory as bishop of the capital, a new era could open for the Nicenes. However, it seems Gregory did not exploit his position and the favour of the court to retaliate against the Homoians, proceeding instead with great caution. This caution and his pursuit of reconciliation with the Homoians were seen as a sign of weakness. Indeed, his position was weak, if we believe the narrative of his installation in the Church of the Holy Apostles (II, 1, 11, 1273–1395): the majority in Constantinople was still Homoian, and even with the support of the imperial arms, Gregory might have found it dangerous to push his luck with the city. However, the poet does not defend his politics with this argument from facts; instead, he claims that his leadership approach was his own choice and expressed a different style of leadership from the world.

In this theme, too, Gregory chooses to highlight his personal stake in II, 1, 12 and to develop general considerations in II, 1, 11, as he had done in the premise of the two narrations (see §5.1.2.1). In II, 1, 11, which is more similar to *or.* 42, 23, the poet places

of Nicaea could be the “law” (νόμος) mentioned at II, 1, 12, 350, through which Gregory's enemies silence those who speak too much (τῶν λαλίστέρων), according to Meier 1989, 111. Meier rightly recognises the pejorative sense of the suffix -ιστερος and the negative sense of the adjective λάλος, from which λαλίστερος comes. He is wrong in saying that Gregory uses it here in a positive sense; his mention of New Testament usage is inconsequential, because λαλέω preserved its negative nuance only in Atticist Greek, but was unmarked in Koine Greek. Gregory uses it here in its Attic sense; he is just sardonically assuming the point of view of his enemies. Meier 1989, 78 sees an even vaguer reference to Canon 15 of Nicaea at II, 1, 12, 15 in the expression οἱ κρίνοντες ἄτοπα, which should be referred to those who “judged” Gregory's case as regards said Canon.

⁵⁷ Bernardi 1995, 215.

⁵⁸ At *or.* 42, 23 Gregory lists the persecutions the Nicenes would have suffered from the Homoians during Valens' reign. Leski 2002, 242–263 and Simonetti 1975, 403–405, even as they recognise rhetorical exaggerations in Nicene sources, do not deny that the rude emperor Valens persecuted—albeit not systematically—the Nicene prelates. On the historiographical tradition around Valens: Marasco 2002; Sabbah 2001.

the issue in the realm of justice (δίκαιον, 1407 and 1418)⁵⁹: he refutes a misplaced idea of power (ἀνδρικόν, 1411), hints at the ancient philosophical idea that the wise man does not change his attitude as his fortunes change (1413), and finally compares the bishop's mission to that of the physician (1414). In perfectly rhetorical fashion, he closes with two reasons for the usefulness (the *utile*, κερδαίνειν, 1415) of his approach—namely, the good example and the good reputation he would project. In II, 1, 12, the question is less the state-mandated persecution of Nicenes under Valens and more the hardships Gregory had suffered from the Homoians of the capital before Theodosius came, in particular the attempted stoning from a mob. In this regard, Gregory justifies his reluctance to retaliate with the imitation of Christ's passion, as the express reference and the many verbs of suffering intimate⁶⁰. This *imitatio Christi* must be interpreted in the wider context of the poem, both because Gregory had begun in the proem by denying he could suffer without a word as Christ did, and most of all because recommendation of the imitation of Christ solidifies Gregory's self-portrait as ascetic bishop. In fact, the following lines mentioning his bodily deterioration caused by worries go in the same direction, and the imitation of Christ's suffering was a fundamental part of the monastic ideology⁶¹. The narrative of II, 1, 12 confirms itself as consequent in pushing an ascetic self-portrait of Gregory.

The third important criticism against Gregory is treated in II, 1, 10: what he characterises as the refusal of partisanship is likely a reference to his position in the Antiochian schism. By sticking to the previous agreement after Meletius's death

59 The similarities of II, 1, 11, 1407–1419 and *or.* 42, 23 are the sarcastic naming of the bishops who criticised him (λίαν γάρ εἰσιν ἐντελεῖς καὶ δίκαιοι, *or.* 42, 23; τί οὖν με ποιεῖν, πρὸς θεοῦ, δίκαιον ἦν; / διδάξαθ' ἡμᾶς, εἰπαθ', οἱ νῦν ἐντελεῖς, II, 1, 11, 1407–1408) and the importance given to the *καιρός*, the lucky moment of Theodosius' power (μετὰ τῆς τοῦ καιροῦ ῥοπῆς, καὶ τῆς τοῦ κρατοῦντος ὁρμῆς... τὰ τοῦ καιροῦ, *or.* 42, 23; καιρῷ τ' ἀπλήστως χρωμένους καὶ τῷ κράτει, II, 1, 11, 1413). The general approach of II, 1, 11, 1407–1419 is proved by the number of neuter substantivised adjectives (δίκαιον, τὸ πρᾶον, ἀδρανὲς, τὸ δ' ἐμμανὲς τε καὶ κάκιστον ἀνδρικόν, καλὰ), the infinitives (ὠθεῖν, ἐλαύνειν, ἀγριοῦν, ἀναφλέγειν, φαρμακεύειν) and the use of the first-person plural (cf. τί οὖν με ποιεῖν, πρὸς θεοῦ, δίκαιον ἦν; 1407, and φανήσομαι, 1418, with χρωμένους, 1413, and ἡμᾶς, 1417). Moreover, Gregory gives the passage a general relevance: τοῦτ' ἦν δίκαιον, τοῦτο καὶ φανήσομαι / ἀεὶ τε ποιῶν καὶ τόθ', ὡς μάλιστ' ἐνῆν (1418–1419): the idea is of a personal conformity (φανήσομαι) to a general rule of justice. Similarly, at *or.* 42, 23, the first-person plural is relative to the sufferings of the Nicenes and the retaliation they should impose, whereas restrain is predicated only of Gregory (αὐτάρκης ἐμοὶ τιμωρία). On the contrary, the narrative of II, 1, 12 is wholly in the first-person singular, putting Gregory, even in his suffering bodiliness, in the spotlight. The only similarity of II, 1, 12 and *or.* 42, 23 is in the use of the word ἐγκλημα (II, 1, 12, 107).

60 Verbs expressing patience and suffering: ἐφεισάμην (102), Ἐκατέρησα (104), Παθόντα τὰ Χριστοῦ με οὕτω καὶ φέρειν (105). A good collection of texts on the stoning in Crimi 1998; its christological interpretation is given by Hofer 2013, 178.

61 For the imitation of Christ in the prologue: Ἰσως μὲν ἔχρῃν, ὡς κακούμενον φέρειν / Ταῖς τοῦ παθόντος ἐντολαῖς τυπούμενον, / Οὕτω παθόντα καρτερεῖν καὶ τὸν λόγον, / Ὡς, ἂν πλείως ὦμεν ἡγωνισμένοι, / Καὶ μισθὸν ἐλπίζωμεν ἐντελέστερον (II, 1, 12, 1–5). The intimate link between suffering, asceticism and Christ has been examined at §1.3.2.

and supporting Paulinus, Gregory seemed to have forsaken his natural camp, the Eastern bishops who supported Flavian. On the other side, he could not and would not support the Egyptians and Westerners unreservedly, being also disliked by them. Therefore, Gregory has to defend his on-the-fence (according to his colleagues) or balanced (according to himself) position in a very polarised debate. Comparable texts in the *Speech* (or: 42, 22) and in II, 1, 11 (1766–1776) approach the theme with different language, albeit small linguistic signals demonstrate that Gregory is referencing the same question—besides, we do not know other events involving his loyalty to a “faction” during the council. For example, the verb συμφέρω to indicate the fellowship with one or the other party is employed at II, 1, 10, 22 as well as or: 42, 22⁶². II, 1, 11 and 10, on the other hand, share the use of a verb composite with προ- in a sentence expressing Gregory's refusal to prefer party affiliation to salvation⁶³. Another common character of these texts is their employment of polyptoton to highlight Gregory's nonconformity with the requests of the other bishops, his failure to *repeat* what they do (so at II, 1, 10) or to *return* what they ask (II, 1, 11), up till the *reversal* of their attitude (or: 42, 22)⁶⁴.

In or: 42 Gregory deals with the criticism by referring to his aristocratic self-portrayal: he is a man refusing to conform to the ways of the world even at the cost of isolation, experienced as a sign of his excellence; and not casually does he employ Callimachean language to describe this stance⁶⁵. In both II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 11 the Christian argument of submission to Christ alone prevails, all the more so as the bishops' proposals are characterised as immoral⁶⁶. In II, 1, 10 in particular, the claim not to place anything or anyone above Christ hints at 1Cor. 1:11–13, a biblical passage widely used in our poems to accuse others of schismatic behaviour⁶⁷. Furthermore, II, 1, 10 employs a metaphor and a simile to explain the conformity Gregory was supposed to show: the metaphor of the good soldier (19) and the simile of the raft (22). Denying these images,

⁶² Μηδ' ὡς νηὺς ὀλίγη φορτίδι συμφέρομαι (II, 1, 10, 22) and οὐ τὰ πολλὰ συμφέρομαι τοῖς πολλοῖς (or: 42, 22).

⁶³ Χριστοῦ ἄλλο τι πρόσθε φέρειν (II, 1, 10, 20) and τι προδώσω τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας (II, 1, 11, 1776).

⁶⁴ Ἀμπλακίη δ' ὅτι μηδὲν ὁμοῖον ἡμπλακον ἄλλοις (II, 1, 10, 21); αἰτοῦντες δέ γε / τὸ γνήσιον, φεῦ, Γρηγόριον τὸν γνήσιον, / οἱ γνήσιοι (II, 1, 11, 1768–1770); φερόντων καὶ φερομένων τῶν ἄλλων... οὐ τὰ πολλὰ συμφέρομαι τοῖς πολλοῖς... Ἀνιᾶ με τὰ τῶν ἄλλων τερπνὰ, καὶ τέρπομαι τοῖς ἐτέρων ἀνιαιοῖς (or: 42, 22).

⁶⁵ Signals of elitism: αὐτός τι βέλτιον τῶν πολλῶν γινώσκων; ἐλεύθερος. Cf.: οὐδὲ τὴν αὐτὴν βαδίζειν ἀνέχομαι· θρασέως μὲν ἴσως καὶ ἀμαθῶς, πάσχω δ' οὖν ὁμῶς. Ἀνιᾶ με τὰ τῶν ἄλλων τερπνὰ, καὶ τέρπομαι τοῖς ἐτέρων ἀνιαιοῖς (or: 42, 22) with οὐδὲ κελεύθωι / χαίρω τίς πολλοὺς ὦδε καὶ ὦδε φέρει, / ... σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια (Callim. *epigr.* 28, 1–2; 4).

⁶⁶ For submission to Christ alone: Χριστοῦ ἄλλο τι πρόσθε φέρειν (II, 1, 10, 20); τίς δ' ἐφ' ὀφθαλμοῖς τόσον, / ὡς πλῆθος ἄξει πρὸς τί μ', οὐ θεοῦ λόγος; / ... τι προδώσω τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας (II, 1, 11, 1776). On the immorality: at II, 1, 10, 21, Gregory speaks of “fault” (Ἀμπλακίη), at II, 1, 11, 1769 of a “conspiracy of the wicked” (σύμπνοια κακῶν).

⁶⁷ Cf. II, 1, 11, 679–695; II, 1, 13, 154–157; see also how this biblical verse inspires a theology of the name of the community to Ephrem (Griffith 1999), which is reflected in CN 20 (§3.1.3.1; §3.3.1).

Gregory refuses also a humiliating image of himself, because these images set him not only as one among the many in a faction, but as a sort of lackey, a second-rank character. More importantly, in the following lines (23–24), explaining the negative consequences of his independence, he suggests that the party he had offended, the “fickle-minded” (κουφονόουσιν), had left his episcopal throne to their friends. The attribute κουφονόος is not frequently employed; one notable usage is in Sophocl. *Ant.* 342, where it is used of the birds caught in the nets of men: κουφονόων τε φύλον ὀρνίθων ἀμφιβαλὼν ἄγει. If this famous passage was familiar to Gregory and his audience, it may have suggested a degrading comparison of the bishops in council with birds, and not particularly sly birds at that. After all, the same image of disputes between birds expresses the futility and gratuitous noise produced by bishops in II, 1, 17, 92: χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἄκριτα μαρναμένων. The paradox here is that, for the loyalty they requested from Gregory, the other bishops showed no loyalty towards him. In fact, Gregory must have known that Nectarius’s name was proposed by the Meletian faction (in particular Diodore of Tarsus), which had backed Gregory before. Clearly, Gregory perceives their readiness to accept the objections to his election brought by the Egyptians—expressed with the verb ἀνίημι, “let go”, “loosen up”, “allow”—as treason.

Finally, at II, 1, 17, 75–78, Gregory alludes very obliquely to the criticisms against his doctrine of the Spirit. The passage is part of the longer list of things the poet will not do anymore thanks to his retreat. One thing is to self-censor as regards the Trinity and the Spirit in particular (τὰ Πνεύματος ἔκτοθι ῥίψας, 77). It is remarkable that here the problem is not so much subscribing to heretical teachings as failing to voice orthodox ones. The link with the council of 381 is made clear by the expression πλεόνων εἰς ἓν ἀγειρομένων (76). The reason behind this reticence is to accrue more consensus (φίλτρον ἔχων πλεόνων, 78; note the comparative). A similar passage is found in *or.* 42, 14, where Gregory says that some bishops fail to preach this doctrine because of οἰκονομία or of δειλία, so for convenience or fear. The idea, though more negative in the speech than in the poem, is always that the confession of the Spirit’s divinity makes one an outsider, a position Gregory was all too eager to claim.

5.1.2.3 Gregory’s achievements

The description of the community in Constantinople after Gregory’s work there is a staple of his narrative, because it works as an oblique description of his achievements. In a way, it is the necessary counterpart of his description of the city before his arrival: as much as the Nicene community was isolated and dispersed before Gregory came, so is his preaching vital and fundamental for a growing number of Christians. The result is a living and healthy community. However, even in the long description of *or.* 42, Gregory never presents the community as particularly numerous. On the contrary, a key element of all his descriptions is the partiality of his work: in II, 1, 12 different people have still different stances towards his preaching, and a total conversion is still only a hope (ἐλπὶς δὲ παντός, 121); an analogous subdivision of different people with different stances is

proposed in II, 1, 11; in *or.* 42 the idea of a future growth of the congregation is explicitly stated; in II, 1, 10, the poet characterises what he has built in Constantinople only as the “preliminaries” (πρώτα, 12) of orthodoxy, whereas in II, 1, 17 his preaching lingers still (ἔτι) as an echo (ἤχος)⁶⁸. We can interpret these texts in two ways. On one side, it is reasonable to believe Gregory and to think that the Nicene congregation in Constantinople was still small as the council began, and likely even after, because the faithful and clergy (especially those ordained by Demophilus) would have hardly shifted allegiance in a matter of months from Theodosius's arrival. On the other side, Gregory's attention to this detail may serve to highlight the error of electing to that episcopal seat a civil servant and stranger to theology, especially as the Nicene creed is just recovering there. Conversely, Gregory, who initiated that recovery and is an expert in theology, would have the perfect profile to lead the community towards its ἐλπίς παντός. In any case, implies Gregory, the hardest part of the job has already been done, and whatever positive outcome will appear under Nectarius, it should be attributed to Gregory's tenure.

As regards Gregory's exploits, it is remarkable how consistent his use of metaphors and similes is: his mission, which is primarily characterised as teaching, is defined by the images of water, light, and stability, as the community is sometimes a flock, sometimes a plant, and sometimes an offspring of the bishop⁶⁹. Taken together, these images create a set of connotations around Gregory's mission which echo important symbols

⁶⁸ Τοὺς δ' ἐγγὺς εἶχον, οἱ δ' ἐμελλον αὐτίκα. / ... Ἐλπίς δὲ παντός καὶ ῥοπή τις μετρία. (II, 1, 12, 121; 124); τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἦγεν . . . / ... τοῖς δ' ἦν λόγος τις... / οἱ δ' ὡς ἀθλητῇ καρτερῶ προσέτρεχον, / οἱ δ' ὡς ἑαυτῶν ἔργον εἶχον ἀσμένως. / ... Οὕτω λέγω τὸν ὀρθὸν ἐν πίστει λεῶν / ... τί δ' ἂν τις εἴποι τῶν ξένων τῆς πίστεως. . . (II, 1, 11, 1120; 1126–1128; 1137; 1144); Τοιοῦτόν ποτε τοῦτο τὸ ποίμνιον, καὶ τοιοῦτον νῦν, οὕτως εὐεκτοῦν τε καὶ πλατυνόμενον· εἰ δὲ μήπω τελείως, ἀλλ' εἰς τοῦτό γε ταῖς κατὰ μέρος ὁδεύον προσθήκαι· προφητεύω δὲ, ὅτι καὶ ὁδεύσον. . . Πολὺ γὰρ παραδοξότερον, ἐξ ἐκείνου τοσαύτην γενέσθαι, ἢ τὴν νῦν οὖσαν εἰς ἄκρον προελθεῖν λαμπρότητος. Ἐξ οὗ γὰρ συνάγεσθαι ἤρξατο παρὰ τοῦ ζωογονούντος τοὺς νεκροὺς (*or.* 42, 6). (cf.: Ποία δίκη, μόχθον μὲν ἐμοὶ καὶ δείμα γενέσθαι / Ἀστέος εὐσεβίῃ πρώτα χαρασσομένου / ἄλλον δ' αὖ μόχθοισιν ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ θυμὸν ἰαίνειν; II, 1, 10, 11–13). Note that this relationship between past, present and future of the community is expressed through the typology of resurrection at *or.* 42 and II, 1, 11, 1120–1125, a typology often used by Gregory in relation to his church-headquarter in the city, the Ἀναστασία, “Resurrection” (e.g.: II, 1, 15, 49–52). This image is absent in II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 12, where the stress is rather on Gregory's personal role in the situation. Resurrection-imagery would be absurd if attributed to Gregory's activity.

⁶⁹ On the metaphor of light: φαεσφόρον (II, 1, 10, 9); θεῖος δ' αὐθις ἡστραπτεν λόγος . . . φωτὶ μικρῶ τοὺς ἄγαν σκοτούμενους (II, 1, 11, 1113; 1143); Τριάδ' ἔλαμψα τοῖς πρὶν ἔσκοτισμένοις (II, 1, 12, 118); §2.2.4.5. On the metaphor of water: πέτρης ἐκπροχέοντα ῥόον (II, 1, 10, 10 with reference to Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11 and the typological interpretation at 1Cor 10:4); ὡς τοὺς ἀνύδρους ταῖς φανεύσεις ἰκμάσι (II, 1, 11, 1141); ἄνυδρον τοῖς λόγοις ἐπήγασα (II, 1, 12, 116). On stability: πυκνωθέντος ὥσπερ ἐρκίου / ἢ καὶ φάλαγγος (II, 1, 11, 1114–1115); ἐπήξα λαὸν (II, 1, 12, 115); τὸ ταύτην στηρίζαι τε καὶ σθενῶσαι (*or.* 42, 10); at II, 1, 17, 47 it is the Trinity (*rectius* the doctrine of the Trinity) that gains stability (θεότης νεόπηκτος). On the metaphor of the flock: λαὸν ἐν μέσῳ λύκων / Ποίμνην . . . (II, 1, 12, 115–116); §2.2.1. On the metaphor of the plant: Ἐσπείρα πίστιν τῷ Θεῷ ῥίζουμένην (II, 1, 12, 117); τῆς γεωργίας τῆς ἡμετέρας (*or.* 42, 13); §2.2.2. On the metaphor of the offspring: τεκέων (II, 1, 10, 8); τὸν τῆς ἐμῆς ὠδίνος εὐγενῆ τόκον (II, 1, 11, 1138); §2.2.4.1.

of Christianity. Pastoral, agricultural, and familiar images have already been analysed (§2.2.1–2; §2.2.4.1), and they evoke a rich array of biblical texts on leadership. The result is a complex idea of affectionate relationship but also of hierarchical subordination for the community and almost jealousy for Gregory, especially thanks to the repeated use of the root *τεκ/τοκ/τκ to refer to it. Furthermore, the simultaneous reference to water, light, and stability evokes the ritual of baptism. This can be demonstrated through a reference to *or.* 40, 2–4, where Gregory repeats and explains the different symbols associated with baptism. Among these there is naturally the purification of water, the idea of a second birth (which would justify calling the baptised “offspring”, “children”), and, most importantly, illumination (φωτισμός). Furthermore, at *or.* 40, 3 baptism is called *ἔρεισμα πίστεως*, a formula echoing the images of stability used for Gregory’s mission (see note 68). The unique metaphor found at II, 1, 10, 12 (*Ἀστεος εὐσεβίῃ πρῶτα χαρασσομένου*) may be linked to the idea of baptism as a seal (*σφραγίς*; see *or.* 40, 4). Besides, part of Gregory’s mission likely consisted in baptising people in Constantinople⁷⁰. Hence, Gregory’s mission is characterised as a sort of collective baptism of the city. These baptismal metaphors of water and light are introduced with expressions evoking the water Moses made to spring forth from the rock and the light prophesied by Isaiah⁷¹. While the Isaian tag links Gregory to Christ (see §5.1.2.4), the sophisticated rewriting (*ἐκπροχέοντα* for *ἐξελεύσεται/ἐξηλθεν*, *ρόον* for *ῥόδω*) of Moses’s miracle at II, 1, 10, 10 suggests that Gregory resembles the most important biblical model of the episcopate⁷². By uniting all these images and biblical references, Gregory presents himself as the ideal bishop.

A unique feature of the narration in II, 1, 12 is the emphasis on Gregory’s rhetorical abilities. It is true that in almost every text Gregory refers to the *λόγος* as an instrument or object of the conversion of the city, with II, 1, 17 going so far as to imply a fond memory of the preacher; but it is in II, 1, 12 more than in any other text that the poet puts forth his preaching expertise as a fundamental element of his success in the city; here, therefore, the mission in the capital is given the strongest connotations of a teaching mission⁷³. Gregory describes his ability through a series of striking images that look back at the traditionally Greek theme of the power of rhetoric, conceived as something violent, almost supernatural⁷⁴. The first image, rennet in the milk (*ὁπὸς ἐν γάλακτι*, II, 1,

⁷⁰ Bernardi 1995, 180; McGuckin 2001a, 256–258.

⁷¹ Moses, cf. *πέτρης ἐκπροχέοντα ρόον* (II, 1, 10, 10) with *καὶ πατάξεις τὴν πέτραν, καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ἐξ αὐτῆς ὕδωρ* (Ex. 17:6); *ἐπάταξεν τὴν πέτραν τῇ ῥάβδῳ δις, καὶ ἐξηλθεν ὕδωρ πολὺ* (Num. 20:11). Isaiah, cf. *Τριάς’ ἔλαμψα τοῖς πρὶν ἔσκοτισμένοις* (II, 1, 12, 118) with *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς* (Jes. 9:1).

⁷² On Moses as model of the bishop: Sykes 1982, 1130; Elm 2000b, 422; McGuckin 2001a, 14, 144; Sterk 2004, 62–63, 96–97, 101–110, 124, 128; Rapp 2005, 125–132.

⁷³ *Θεῖος δ’ αὐθις ἥστραπτεν λόγος* (II, 1, 11, 1113); *λιμοῦ βοηθὸν τὸν λόγον ποιουμένους* (1142); *ἔχαιρον τῷ λόγῳ* (1145); *γλώσσης ἤχος ἐθ’ ἡμετέρης* (II, 1, 17, 46); *λιπὼν λόγον οὐκέτ’ ἄπιστον* (49); *στηρίξαι τε καὶ σθενῶσαι τοῖς ὑγιαίνουσι λόγοις* (*or.* 42, 10).

⁷⁴ See Romilly 1975.

12, 119), is traced back by Meier to Ares's healing in Homer (*Il.* 5, 902)⁷⁵, which says a lot about the supernatural connotations of the simile. Another likely source for the comparison is Plutarch's quotation of Empedocles regarding friendship (φιλία), which employs verbs similar to those used by Gregory to describe the thickening power of friendship⁷⁶. Moreover, the comparison with Empedocles's φιλία reinforces the supernatural connotation of Gregory's art. The definition of rhetoric as a φάρμακον πειθοῦς (II, 1, 12, 119–120) echoes analogous definitions of poetry in Gregory's poems (see §1.3.1 and 4) and in classical writers, beginning with Gorgias⁷⁷. It also refers to Helen's νηπενθές φάρμακον (Hom. *Od.* 4, 420), normally allegorised as referring to her words and brought up by Clement of Alexandria in reference to Scripture and with the same words as Gregory⁷⁸. Differently from poetry, which is characterised as sweet or sophisticated (τὸ κομψόν), the kind of “persuasion” rhetoric is said to produce is βίαία, “violent”, and this also has precedents in Greek rhetoric⁷⁹. The oxymoron πειθοῦς βίαίας (II, 1, 12, 120) reminds us of the famous conjecture on the text of Aeschylus, χάρις βίαιος for the transmitted χάρις βιαίως at Aeschyl. *Ag.* 183. This idea of violence is applied to the audience, which is δεσμίους, “bound” (II, 1, 12, 120), another expression with magical connotations⁸⁰. Equally linked to magic or divine power is the idea of soothing “boiling” spirits (τὸ πρὶν ζέων, 122), as well as the word φίλτρον (123), which could also be used for poetry (see Pind. *Pyth.* 3, 63–65). It is true that, in Gregory's line, it may be taken to mean simply “affection”⁸¹, but the verb συνεκράθη, from συγκεράννυμι, “to mix together”, clearly suggests the preparation of a magic potion, whose basic ingredient is λόγος.

This spin to the story has to be understood together with the attention Gregory gives to his ascetic authority and his highlighting of his sufferings among the persecuted Nicenes as an anticipation of the traits of the ideal bishop. As the bishop should be an accomplished ascetic and one not attached to power, he should also be a good teacher (§3.1.3.3). However, the profile of Gregory's good teacher and that of the word

⁷⁵ Meier 1989, 89.

⁷⁶ ἡ μὲν γὰρ συνάγει καὶ συνίστησι καὶ συνέχει καταπυκνοῦσα ταῖς ὁμιλίαις καὶ φιλοφροσύναις ὡς δ' ὅτ' ὁπὸς γάλα λευκὸν ἐγόμφωσεν καὶ ἔδρησε κατ' Ἐμπεδοκλέα (τοιαύτην γὰρ ἡ φιλία βούλεται ποιεῖν ἐνότητα καὶ σύμπληξιν), (Plut. *amic. mult.* 95A-B). Cf. καταπυκνοῦσα with πυκνωθέντος (II, 1, 11, 1114); σύμπληξιν with ἔπηξα λαὸν (II, 1, 12, 115).

⁷⁷ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον ἔχει ἡ τε τοῦ λόγου δύναμις πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς τάξιν ἢ τε τῶν φαρμάκων τάξεις πρὸς τὴν τῶν σωμάτων φύσιν (Gorgias *Encomium of Helen* 14); in Plato: Romilly 1975, 32–35.

⁷⁸ Allegorising of Homer: τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ὡς ἔοικε τὸ ‘νηπενθές’ φάρμακον καὶ ἀνώδυνον, λόγος ἔχων καιρὸν ἀρμόζοντα τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πάθεσι καὶ πράγμασιν (Plut. *quaest. conv.* 614C). In Clement: τὸ ἄσμα τὸ καινόν, τὸ Λευιτικόν, «νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθες ἀπάντων»· γλυκὺ τι καὶ ἀληθινὸν φάρμακον πειθοῦς ἐγκέκραται τῷ ἄσματι (Clem. Alex. *protr.* 1, 2, 4).

⁷⁹ For example: δυναστείαν καὶ βίαν ἀμαχόν (*On the Sublime* 1, 4), although here the ecstatic violence is contrary to persuasion. The opposite connotation is adopted in a mosaic inscription for a bishop Peter in Thesbes of Thessaly, ὁ τῆς μελίσεως τῆς σοφῆς διδάσκαλος τῆς πνευματικῆς (Robert 1971, 446n371).

⁸⁰ Romilly 1975, 13 and n. 32.

⁸¹ Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1942, s.v. φίλτρον, and both the PG 37, 1175 and Meier 1989, 39 translate accordingly

magician are quite different. This contradiction is difficult to interpret; I propose two possible explanations for it, without claiming to be exhaustive. On one side, this appeal to the classical conception of rhetoric may refer to a theme Gregory has always considered important—namely, the bishop's mission to convert the pagans of his city. The theme is referred to both in the narration of II, 1, 11 and elsewhere in II, 1, 12⁸². Presenting himself as the word magician, Gregory asserts his ability to reach a wide audience and even to interest pagan intellectuals thanks to his proficiency in the categories of their *paideia*.

On the other side, the emphasis on the violent power of rhetoric may serve to shift the emphasis from the much more concrete power of Theodosius's soldiers installing Gregory in the Church of the Holy Apostles. The episode was narrated in II, 1, 11, but II, 1, 12 does not mention it. Presumably Gregory, who clearly wants to focus the account of II, 1, 12 more on his own person, found that episode detrimental to the point of his *narratio*: that he behaved as the ideal bishop, that the community was blooming thanks to him, and that all this has been forcefully interrupted by the other bishops, as the next section will show. The impression that Gregory's emphasis on the power of rhetoric serves to cover the role of imperial military force in his installation is reinforced by the mention, immediately after that passage, of the bishop's good standing in relation to the emperor (II, 1, 12, 125–135).

Indeed, this good relationship with the sovereign was too important a credential to be left unmentioned, so that, if one did not want to mention the episode of the violent installation, one had to offer at least an implicit justification. After all, the immense value of an imperial endorsement is recognised (and thereby summoned) by Gregory himself⁸³. He confirms it in the moment of his retreat, because he denies imperial intervention in his removal from the see by saying that the emperor could not do anything more than endorse him with words⁸⁴. Furthermore, Gregory presents his imperial endorsement in the context of his relationship with the capital, as if enjoying a good relationship with the emperor were tantamount to enjoying consensus in the urban community⁸⁵. The link between emperor and city is present also in the invocations at the beginning of II, 1, 10, where, however, the city is praised as more important than any

⁸² τί δ' ἂν τις εἴποι τῶν ξένων τῆς πίστεως, / ὅπως ἔχαιρον τῷ λόγῳ μεμνημένος; (II, 1, 11, 1144–1145); for the example the bishop should give to pagans: §2.2.3.1; for Gregory reusing pagan arguments and thereby correcting them: §3.2.2.1.

⁸³ Παρ' οἷς πλέον καὶ μικρόν εὐκλείας ἔχειν / Ἥ πρώτ' ἐν ἄλλοις τιμίου παντός φέρειν / Καὶ γὰρ τοσοῦτόν εἰσι πάντων κρείσσονες (II, 1, 12, 128–130).

⁸⁴ Πλέον γὰρ οὐδὲν εἶχον ἢ τοῦτο δρᾶσαι, / Οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἦτουν οὐδέν (II, 1, 12, 133–134). With this phrase, Gregory not only denies that the emperor had him removed in 381, but he also implies that Theodosius could not have installed him with violence before.

⁸⁵ The two references to the capital (Ρώμης τόδ' οἶδεν ἄστὺ τῆς εὐδαίμονος, II, 1, 12, 125; Ὡ πόλις πόλις, / Ἦν' ἐκβοήσω καὶ τι καὶ τραγωδικόν, 134–135) frame the whole passage. The imperial family is presented as the “first family” of the city (Καὶ τῆς μάλιστα φημι τὸ πρῶτον γένος, 126).

other, while at II, 1, 12 the imperial family was more important than any other⁸⁶. This spin on the story, the link of emperor and city, is peculiar to these two poems: II, 1, 11 and *or.* 42, though they present verbal similarities with the poems on bishops, tend in different directions, and II, 1, 17 does not mention any of that.

In these praises of Constantinople, Gregory employs a number of recurring themes. First, the city is always called Rome, and only in II, 1, 11 is there a reflection on the existence of another, more ancient, Rome⁸⁷. This reflection, which downplays the role of Constantinople, may be intended as a polemic against the Asiatic bishops (Meletius's party) who removed Gregory for his support of the candidate favoured by the Westerners (Paulinus) in the schism of Antioch. In other places, Constantinople is simply called "new Rome": for example, with the epic and personifying Ὀπλοτέρη in II, 1, 10, 5 and with the prosaic νεουργής in II, 1, 11, 15. Other attributes of the city are εὐδαίμονος (II, 1, 12, 125) and κλεινὸν (II, 1, 10, 4; II, 1, 11, 12): κλεινός is a poetic adjective, frequently used in classical times for cities⁸⁸, whereas εὐδαίμων may allude to the attribute πανευδαίμων, the Greek translation of Latin *alma*, which Constantine employed for his city⁸⁹. Apart from the obvious names of πόλις and ἄστυ, in poetry (both iambic and hexametric) Gregory employs the elevated term ἔδος (II, 1, 10, 4; II, 1, 11, 15) to highlight the link with the imperial family (Κωνσταντίνου μεγάλου; εὐγενῶν ἄλλων). The importance of the city as imperial residence is always made clear by the claims that κράτος (II, 1, 11, 17; 564; *or.* 42, 10) abides there most of all. Twice (II, 1, 11, 12; *or.* 42, 10) the poet employs the metaphor of the "eye of the ecumene", with ὄμμα in poetry and ὀφθαλμός in prose. The metaphor, often employed for the sun, elevates the city to the level of cosmic elements, and accordingly, II, 1, 10, 6 compares the city to the starry sky, II, 1, 11, 13 to a second cosmos, line 576 of the same poem to the evening star, and *or.* 42, 10 to the point of conjunction of East and West. This strong centripetal tendency is highlighted also by the recurring expression γῆ καὶ θάλασσα⁹⁰. Fenster examines Gregory's praises of Constantinople and highlights their religious import—namely, the identity of Constantinople as *urbs christiana*⁹¹. However, in our poems Gregory does not mention this

⁸⁶ Ὡ νόμοι, ὦ βασιλεῖς ἐπ' εὐσεβίῃ κομόωντες, / Ὡ Κωνσταντίνου κλεινὸν ἔδος μεγάλου, / Ὀπλοτέρη Ῥώμη, τόσσον προφέρουσα πολίων, / Ὅσσάτιον γαίης οὐρανὸς ἀστερόεις (II, 1, 10, 3–6). Cf.: παρ'οἷς πλέον καὶ μικρὸν εὐκλείας ἔχειν / Ἦ πρῶτ' ἐν ἄλλοις τιμίου παντὸς φέρειν / Καὶ γὰρ τοσοῦτον εἰσι πάντων κρείσσονες (II, 1, 12, 128–130).

⁸⁷ Ὀπλοτέρη Ῥώμη (II, 1, 10, 5); Ῥώμη νεουργής (II, 1, 11, 15); Ῥώμης τόδ' οἶδεν ἄστυ τῆς εὐδαίμονος (II, 1, 12, 125); but: Δύω μὲν οὐ δέδωκεν ἡλίους φύσις, / δισσάς δὲ Ῥώμας, τῆς ἄλλης οἰκουμένης / λαμπτήρας, ἀρχαῖόν τε καὶ νέον κράτος (II, 1, 11, 562–564). On the significance of the comparison with Rome: McLynn 2012b.

⁸⁸ Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 957, s.v. κλεινός.

⁸⁹ see ἐπωνύμιον ἡμῶν καὶ πανευδαίμονος πατρίδος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, (Athan. *apol.* c. Arian. 86, 6=Socr. *h. e.* 1, 34=Soz. 2, 28, 5); Fenster 1968, 27n4, 68n3, 95; later: Synes. *provid.* 1, 15.

⁹⁰ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης κάλλος ἡμφιεσμένοι (II, 1, 11, 14); γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης ὅτι κράτιστον (*or.* 42, 10).

⁹¹ Fenster 1968, 57–61.

facet, probably to distance himself from the geographic claims and anti-West attitude of his Eastern colleagues.

As for the role of these praises in the larger context of the poem, it is quite varied. In II, 1, 11, Gregory presents his relationship with the emperor with many more details, and consequently he gives a more nuanced appraisal thereof; the praises of Constantinople are not absent, but they are not explicitly linked with the emperor. In *or.* 42, 10, the praise of Constantinople serves to highlight the value of Gregory's mission. This is always a component of Gregory's praises of the city, but it seems likely that in the case of II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 12 the link with the emperor serves to downplay the role of military power in establishing Gregory as bishop of the city.

5.1.2.4. The retreat

The last part of Gregory's narratives, his retreat from Constantinople, is the most important in defining both his own character and that of his adversaries. All the rest serves only as a preparation for this incident, because this very incident is what Gregory must spin in a new and favourable way. In this respect, Gregory has at his disposal two strategies: either to cast his removal from Constantinople as a voluntary retreat or to blame it on the malice of the other bishops. He tries both. *Or.* 42 and *On His Own Life* are more conciliatory with the other bishops, because Gregory asks them to relieve him of his post, invoking his illness, old age, and general lack of strength, while he extols the benefits of the solitary life. In *On His Own Life*, in particular, Gregory tries to flee the council (1745–1765) while the other bishops try to keep him there (1766–1776). In his last speech he offers himself as Jonah (1868–1870): his resignation should bring peace between the Eastern bishops and the Egyptians. If resignation is a willing sacrifice in *On His Own Life*, in *or.* 42 it is presented as no less than a prize (μισθόν) for his accomplishments.

The attitude is completely different in II, 1, 12. Here, Gregory's removal is presented almost as a robbery and a betrayal, prompting the poet to violent attacks against the other bishops. Motives justifying his resignation in II, 1, 11 and *or.* 42 are reversed to become accusations against the others: if Gregory was a new Jonah offering himself for the common good in II, 1, 11, 1868–1870, he becomes “ballast” (ὄγκον) and “a burden” (φόρτος) happily thrown out of the ship in II, 1, 12, 146–147, whereas the same analogy with Jonah turns sour in II, 1, 17, 50–56⁹². Gregory in II, 1, 12 simply states he was thrown out of the ship (Πίψαντες, II, 1, 12, 147), but in the speech of II, 1, 11 he

92 ἐγὼ δ' Ἰωνᾶς ὁ προφήτης γίνομαι. / δίδωμ' ἑμαυτὸν τῆς νεῶς σωτηρίαν / καίπερ κλύδωνος τυγχάνων ἀναίτιος. / ἄραντες ἡμᾶς ῥίψατε κλήρου φορᾶ. (II, 1, 11, 1838); Ὡσπερ τιν' ὄγκον ἐκ νεῶς βαρουμένης / Ῥίψαντες (II, 1, 12, 146–147); Κεῖμ'· ἐπίβαιν', ἐπίβαινε, κακὲ φθόνε. Ἥ τάχα δὴ σε / Σχήσω, καὶ πυμάτοις πείρασι κευθόμενος, / Καὶ θηρὸς ζοφεροῖσιν ἐνὶ σπλάγχνοισιν ἐερχθεῖς, / Κήτεος εἰναλίου, ὥς ποτ' Ἰωνᾶς ἔδω. / Σῶμα μὲν ἐν σπλάγχνοις· νόος δ' ἀδέτοις ἐρωαῖς / Βήσεται, οἷ κ' ἐθέλει, καὶ περ ἐεργόμενος (II, 1, 17, 51–57).

demands to be thrown out (ἡμᾶς ῥίψατε, II, 1, 11, 1841). Apparently, II, 1, 17 entails the same demand, expressed in the imperative (ἐπίβαιν', ἐπίβαινε, II, 1, 17, 51); here, however, the command has a completely different meaning, being a sarcastic request to pile on his misfortunes, a request that serves to highlight the malice of his adversaries (κακὲ φθόνε). It is their pressure, according to Gregory, that has pushed him to resign (ὑπόειξα, ... Πάντοθεν ἡμετέροις κύμασι βαλλόμενος, II, 1, 17, 49–50). On the other hand, Gregory says in the same poem that he wanted to leave the episcopate because he saw the crimes and vices of his colleagues, and he uses an expression similar to a line of II, 1, 11⁹³. If in *On His Own Life* Gregory's removal is presented as a sacrifice for the benefit of the church (δίδωμ' ἑμαυτὸν τῆς νεῶς σωτηρίαν, II, 1, 11, 1839), in II, 1, 17 it should appease the malevolence against Gregory (σε, II, 1, 17, 51 = κακὲ φθόνε), most of all because now that he is going to live in hiding there is no reason to hate him anymore⁹⁴.

The illness which Gregory put forth as a reasonable ground to dismiss him in *or.* 42 and II, 1, 11 becomes an aggravating circumstance of the betrayal of the other bishops towards Gregory in II, 1, 12, 139–141: they should have known better than to exploit the weakness of a church veteran⁹⁵. In fact, no declaration of voluntary resignation may be clearer than that at II, 1, 11, 1849–1850 (καὶ νῦν ἔκων / ἄπειμι, πείθει καὶ τὸ σῶμ' οὕτως ἔχον). Similarly, Gregory requests that the other bishops consider his illness in *or.* 42 (ὁρᾶτε). On the contrary, in II, 1, 12 (λαβόντες) he simply states that they have sent him away. Therefore, the illness completely changes its value, too: if in II, 1, 11 it was a “good patron” (Ἐμοῦ δὲ καλῶς ἡ νόσος προεστάτει, 1745), in II, 1, 12 it becomes the “accomplice” (συνεργόν, 140) of the scheming bishops, with a clear negative connotation⁹⁶. Even Gregory's willingness to turn to an ascetic life, so says the poet, was exploited to get rid of him by his adversaries⁹⁷. This is already apparent from the different agencies in the poems. *On His Own Life* highlights Gregory's will through the first-person singular (ἔρρηξα, ἤρπασα, ἄπειμι), whereas II, 1, 12 expresses compulsion with many verbs in the third plural (Προύπεμψαν, ἔπεμψαν). The word ἄσμενος/ἀσμένως has its meaning

93 Cf. Ἀψ ἀναχασσάμενος ἐκτὸς ἔθηκα πόδα (II, 1, 17, 44) with Ἐντεῦθεν ἐξέκλεπτον ἐκ μέσου πόδα. (II, 1, 11, 1777).

94 Cf.: II, 1, 7; Οὕτω τάχ' ἂν μοι τῶν φίλων σπείσαιτό τις, / Πάλης θανούσης, ἧ φθόνος συνέρχεται, II, 1, 12, 835–836.

95 Ἐμοὶ δὲ ὁρᾶτε καὶ τὸ σῶμα ὡς ἔχει τοῦτο, καὶ χρόνῳ, καὶ νόσῳ, καὶ πόνῳ δαπανηθέν (*or.* 42, 20); Ἐμοῦ δὲ καλῶς ἡ νόσος προεστάτει, / ἢ μ' εἵργεν οἶκοι πολλὰ δὴ καὶ πολλάκις / πρὸς ἓν μόνον βλέποντα, τὴν ἐκδημίαν, / ἢ πάντων εἶχε τῶν κακῶν ἀπαλλαγὴν. / ... καὶ νῦν ἔκων / ἄπειμι, πείθει καὶ τὸ σῶμ' οὕτως ἔχον (II, 1, 11, 1745–1748; 1849–1850); Καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν λαβόντες ἔκγονον πόνων / Ἀρρώστιαν συνεργόν (II, 1, 12, 139–140).

96 Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1711, s.v. συνεργός; e.g.: Thuc. 8, 92.

97 Cf. ἔρρηξα δεσμὰ τὴν τ' ἀφορμὴν ἀσμένως / (οὐκ ἂν πείσαιμι τοὺς φιλάρχους οὐποτε, / εὐδηλὸν ἔστι, πλὴν ἀληθές) ἤρπασα. / ... οὐτ' ἐθρονίσθην ἄσμενος καὶ νῦν ἔκων / ἄπειμι (II, 1, 11, 1824–1826; 1849–1850) with Τό τε θρόνου τοσοῦτου μὴ στέργειν κράτος, / Ταῦτ' οὖν λαβόντες σὺν ῥοπῇ τοῦ δαίμονος / Προύπεμψαν ἔνθεν ἀσμένως οἱ φίλτατοι / ... Οἱ καὶ μ' ἔπεμψαν ἔνθεν ἐκ πονηρίας, / Οὐ σφόδρ' ἄκοντα (II, 1, 12, 142–145; 151–152).

overturned: in II, 1, 11, 1824 it expresses Gregory's preference for a secluded life, and in II, 1, 10, 28, Gregory "gladly fled" (Ἀσπασίως προφυγών), and for this statement he uses the perfect epic synonym for ἀσμένως; but in II, 1, 12, 145 the same word expresses the satisfaction of the bad bishops in removing Gregory (Προύπεμψαν ἔνθεν ἀσμένως). Furthermore, in II, 1, 11, 1849–1850 Gregory resigns with a clear-cut statement, highlighted by chiasm (ἐθρονίσθη/ἄπειμι-ἄσμενος/ἔκων) and enjambement (ἔκων/ἄπειμι). To this dry ἔκων a litotes with a reinforcing σφόδρα corresponds: Οὐ σφόδρ' ἄκοντα (II, 1, 12, 152); this tormented way to express the concept sounds like a difficult confession, but at the same time it is meant to reveal Gregory's detachment from power. Finally, in II, 1, 12 Gregory strikingly attributes to the devil (σὺν ῥοπή τοῦ δαίμονος) what he claims as his choice in II, 1, 11.

The accounts of II, 1, 11 and II, 1, 12 agree on the point of the esteem and warmth the bishops directed to Gregory once he finalised his decision to abandon the post, but if II, 1, 11, 1868–1870 reports this detail cursorily and with the stereotyped comment *nemo propheta in patria*, II, 1, 12 exploits the idea to paint a vitriolic portrait of the courteous bishops, dripping with bitter irony, echoed in the other invective poem, II, 1, 13⁹⁸. The bishops are said to be καλοί τε κάγαθοι and φίλτατοι, but the terms are clearly sarcastic⁹⁹. The word συμποίμενες is likely meant to frame Gregory's removal as a betrayal or with the same sarcastic tone as the mentioned attributes, because Gregory dissociates himself from the other bishops (Καὶ γὰρ ἦν αἵσχος μέγα, / Τούτων τιν' εἶναι τῶν καπήλων πίστεως, II, 1, 12, 152–153)¹⁰⁰. The mention of the sacred rites in this context (148–150) highlights the hypocrisy of the bishops. Similarly, at II, 1, 13, 14–17 Gregory laments the duplicity of the bishops:

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν, εἰ καὶ με κακὸν καὶ ἀνάρσιον ἄνδρα
 Πάντες ὁμοῦ θείητε, χοροῦ δ' ἄπο τῆλε δίοισθε
 Ὑμετέρου, βάλλοντες ἐπασσύτεροισιν οἴστοις,
 Ἀμφαδίους, κρυπτοῖς τε, τό περ καὶ φίλτερον ὑμῖν
 (II, 1, 13, 14–17)

whereas I, even if all of you together may hold me
 an evil man and strange, and pull me far away
 from your chorus, shooting one dart after another,
 openly and, what you love even more, secretly

This difference in attitude of II, 1, 10; II, 1, 12; and II, 1, 17 in respect to *or.* 42 and *On His Own Life* can be explained with the different focus of the poems: as in the case of the fifteenth canon of Nicaea (§5.1.2.2), our poems take a much more aggressive stance against the bishops because their primary concern is to comment on the state of the

98 Ἄλλ' οἱ καλοί τε κάγαθοι συμποίμενες / Φθόνῳ βραγύντες... Προύπεμψαν ἔνθεν ἀσμένως οἱ φίλτατοι (II, 1, 12, 136–137; 145).

99 Meier 1989, 90, 92.

100 Cf.: II, 1, 11, 1777–1780; II, 1, 13, 203–204; II, 1, 17, 41–44.

episcopate, whereas II, 1, 11, though it also comments on the state of the episcopate, is primarily concerned with Gregory's autobiography. In the case of II, 1, 12, the theme of the poem explains the dramatic difference in attitude, because the narration serves as a foil for the invective that follows; this, in turn, must be as grim as possible, so that Gregory's proposals for the episcopate may gain urgency and relevance. Indeed, the autobiography anticipates themes and tones of the invective¹⁰¹. Among these themes is the ever-present φθόνος (φθόνῳ ῥαγέντες, 137), which recurs also in the other poems against the bishops¹⁰². The educational concerns of the poet are anticipated by his comments on the bishops' lack of *paideia* (οὐ γὰρ φέρει παιδευσιν ἢ ἀγροικία, 138), on their scarce experience in all things ecclesiastical (τοὺς καὶ τι μικρὸν τῷ Θεῷ κεκημηκότας, 140), and on their inconsistency in matters of faith (τῶν καπῆλων πίστεως, 153)—it is here that ἀγροικία is employed with its negative sense (see §5.1.2.1). Another important theme of invective is the discord among bishops, and this also is duly anticipated among the circumstances of Gregory's removal (κόσμου ῥαγέντος ἐν μάχης μεταίχμιῳ, 143). Even the use of the comic mask of the Θρασωνίδης in line 137 anticipates the comic style of the invectives. All of this demonstrates how the biographical construction is put in service of the wider argument.

The interpreter could also assume a difference in public. II, 1, 11 and *or.* 42 are in general conciliatory towards the bishops, but II, 1, 11 violently attacks the Egyptians (576–578; 738–751; 831–864; 896; 1800–1802); both are concerned with the doctrinal problem of the Spirit, and II, 1, 11 establishes a strong link between Gregory and Basil (as does *or.* 43). These features may indicate that Gregory intended these works for the Asiatic faction of bishops, to which he himself belonged (hence the conciliatory attitude), which had been organised by Basil and which had failed to recognise the divinity of the Spirit at the council. In this case, II, 1, 12 and the other poems (II, 1, 10; II, 1, 13–17) would be meant for a wider audience, and so they could attack all bishops more generically. However, Gregory's address to the community of Constantinople at the beginning of II, 1, 11 (12–17) may be taken as a counter of this hypothesis, because it is presumable that that community was more varied than the Asiatic episcopate. Furthermore, these different attitudes may correspond to the progress observed at §1.3.2 from an attitude of violent engagement in ecclesiastical politics (exemplified by II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 13) to a more detached and mature style, characterised by ascetic renunciation (manifested in II, 1, 11).

However, even in the most aggressive poem—II, 1, 12—and a fortiori in the others, Gregory does not renounce his ascetic self-portrait: when it comes to his retreat, Gregory never fails to find an element of freewill in the loss of his seat, or at least of relief in

¹⁰¹ Meier 1989, 38 even divides lines 136–153 from the rest of the *narratio* and groups them with the first invective (lines 154–175).

¹⁰² οἷά μ' ἔοργεν / Ὁ φθόνος; ὡς ἱερῶν τῆλε βάλεν τεκέων (II, 1, 10, 7–8); Κεῖμ'· ἐπίβαιν', ἐπίβαινε, κακὲ φθόνε (II, 1, 17, 51).

leaving behind such a corrupt and corrupting atmosphere. Describing his departure in II, 1, 12, Gregory hints at the origin of his illness and affirms his detachment from power and his willingness to leave the post¹⁰³. The fact that the illness should command the respect of fellow bishops—provided they have suffered for God at least a little bit (καί τι μικρόν)—implies that the illness was acquired in service of God. It witnesses at the same time to Gregory's ascetic exercises, which have left him weakened; to his seniority; and to the persecutions and preoccupations he faced in Constantinople. The poet expresses this concept in such an oblique way in order to accuse the other bishops either of falling short of the dignity of their office as servants of God or (more likely) having never really served God in the first place. Meier rightly cites Gregory's age, because the conflict with younger prelates such as Diodore of Tarsus is one of the themes of his polemic¹⁰⁴. However, the illness also lends credibility to Gregory's renouncing attitude towards power, because it implies that power was for him mostly a source of suffering. II, 1, 10 alludes at its beginning to the responsibility of other bishops, but then describes Gregory's retreat as an ascetic feat in its second part¹⁰⁵. The persistence of this feature—glorification of retreat—even when it could counter the main argument in which it is inserted, is a sign of its importance in Gregory's self-portrait.

Another sign of its importance and persistence is the metaphor of the storm at sea¹⁰⁶. Every poem against the bishops employs it at least once. Often it is at the end, where Gregory declares his intention to retreat: it is so in II, 1, 13, 205–211 and also in II, 1, 12, 792–796. In the latter, however, the theme is also anticipated during the autobiographical narrative (II, 1, 12, 146–147). In the short II, 1, 10, the autobiography flows directly into the final declaration of his retreat, and there we find the metaphor (II, 1, 10, 30–32), whereas in II, 1, 17 it is found only at the end of the autobiographical narrative (II, 1, 17, 50–54). The metaphor has two elements: one is the storm at sea; the other is Gregory's destination once he removes himself from the storm. Normally, the autobiographical narratives use the example of Jonah and identify Gregory's destination with the sea itself, into which he is thrown by the bishops: this is the case of II, 1, 12, 146–147 and II, 1, 17, 50–54. On the contrary, when the metaphor is at the end of the poem, the destination is a safe haven, as in the case of II, 1, 10, 30–2; II, 1, 12, 792–796; and II, 1, 13, 205–211 (here Noah's ark). Public life is thus equated with a dangerous and painful environment, while retreat remains ambiguous, sometimes an injustice that has befallen an innocent man, sometimes the sought-for escape from the dangers

103 Detachment from power: Τό τε θρόνου τοσούτου μὴ στέργειν κράτος... Οὐ σφόδρ' ἄκοντα (II, 1, 12, 142; 152). On the illness: Ἀρρωστίαν... ἣν αἰδεῖσθ' ἔδει / Τοὺς καὶ τι μικρόν τῷ Θεῷ κεκμηκότας (140–141).

104 Meier 1989, 91. See II, 1, 11, 1680–1689; II, 1, 12, 620–7; II, 1, 13, 198–200; on the identification of younger prelates: McGuckin 2001a, 352–354.

105 On the responsibility of other bishops: οἳ μ' ἔοργεν / Ὁ φθόνος; ὡς ἱερῶν τῆλε βάλεν τεκέων (II, 1, 10, 7–8). As regards the ascetic connotations of II, 1, 10, 25–28, see §1.3.2.

106 The theme has been studied by Lorenz 1979, but not in relation with political life.

and pains of public life. The metaphor adds to the emotional weight of this ambiguity, because it has a strong link with Gregory's own experience: he was indeed in a storm during navigation, and in that very moment he vowed to be baptised and become an ascetic. Therefore, the storm represents for him what is deeply unsettling as well as the occasion of a conversion.

With voluntary retreat we touch the cornerstone of Gregory's self-presentation. It is not a coincidence that his attitude towards power and his numerous retreats have been already much studied¹⁰⁷: scholars have correctly identified in this recurring motif of Gregory's works their central problem, given the complex of themes linked to it¹⁰⁸. I have already analysed many facets of Gregory's self-portrait with respect to his retreat in our poems, but I want to give a complete picture here and to draw some conclusions.

Retreat being a movement, its verbal expression requires the definition of two points: whence one retreats and whereto he retreats. Gregory applied the scheme to many different situations of his life and of the lives of others, but in general one can say that all these situations—and certainly all instances of retreat in our poems—can be reduced to these two points: retreat *from* public life, retreat *to* ascesis. The movement from public life to ascesis is already implied by Gregory's connotation of the two: public life is characterised as dangerous and painful, whereas ascesis is peaceful and soothing. Therefore, whenever Gregory wants to prepare a declaration of retreat, he presents himself as a very distressed and miserable man, going so far as to imply that public life has left him physically scarred—for example, through sickness. I think this process, already delineated at §1.3.2, can be appreciated from the texts analysed in this section. As regards ascesis, it must first be said that the second point of the movement is not always clearly delineated. For sometimes Gregory depicts retreat *already* as a

¹⁰⁷ The fundamental book, exploring the theme in all its ramifications, is Gautier 2002. The function of retreat in legitimising “philosophical” power is analysed by Elm 2012, 158–165 (in reference to the fundamental *or.* 2; see also Elm 2000a and Elm 2000b, in particular at Elm 2000a, 92n28 with bibliographical indications) and by Storin 2011 (with reference to the poems on silence). Previous scholars had explained Gregory's retreats either in hagiographical tones (Lenain de Tillemont 1714, 479–480) or, more recently, with the poet's psychology (for example, Otis 1961, 160–161; Simonetti 1975, 534–535; see Elm 2000b, 413–415 for more bibliographical references and quotations). Modern research is much more influenced by the application of social sciences to the study of late antiquity initiated by Peter Brown: this tendency produced more general studies on the ideological and ascetic values of retreat from public office (e.g., Lizzi 1987; Rapp 2005, 142–146; see other titles in Elm 2000a, 92n29), which apply to Gregory too. These different strains in Gregorian scholarship are traced by Storin 2017 for the biographical elements.

¹⁰⁸ Gregory's removal from Constantinople is just the last and most controversial of his retreats. Before he even became a priest, he had already employed this strategy in Athens (McGuckin 2001a, 79–81) and upon his return to Cappadocia (McGuckin 2001a, 86–87). He began his ecclesiastical career with the famous flight to Basil's hermitage in Pontus (Bernardi 1995, 125; McGuckin 2001a, 102) and then again he refused the episcopal see of Sasima (Bernardi 1995, 140; McGuckin 2001a, 197–199). Otis 1961, 160 explicitly defines the conflict between active and contemplative life as the kernel of Gregory's poetic experience.

form of ascesis, both because it is a form of renunciation and because it soothes the soul as ascesis does. Gautier has given a good explanation for Gregory's insistence on retreat as a form of ascesis: given his muddled curriculum when it comes to ascetic experiences, Gregory's flights witness to his desire for an ascetic life that he really lived only for short periods of time and often in unconventional forms¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, the desire for ascesis and the distress of public life that Gregory feels characterise him as an outsider, someone who does not fit well in the society of the time because of his extreme sensitivity and ridiculously high moral bar, preventing him from finding a compromise with his environment. It is the already examined trope of the ἄρπουκος (§5.1.2.1).

If these were the only elements of Gregory's retreat, we would be dealing with the self-portrait of a suffering, socially awkward religious fanatic escaping from normal people. In reality, retreat always implies an opposite movement in Gregory's writings, a movement of engagement with contemporary society. This has often gone unnoticed by interpreters, yet more recent research recognises this pattern, which was probably evident to audiences accustomed to such rhetorical tropes. Every element of Gregory's representation of retreat points to a perfect candidate for public offices. First, the very refusal of office and of public life, as Lizzi has shown¹¹⁰, is the prerequisite of the true politician, according to the Platonic model of politician-philosopher current in late antiquity. Then, ascesis, as a mean not only to purify one's moral action but also to obtain specific knowledge about God and the divine world, was the most important qualification for a good bishop according to Gregory: we have seen it in §3.1.3.1, §3.1.3.3, and §3.2.2, but it is also confirmed by Elm's analysis of *or.* 2 and *or.* 6¹¹¹. After all, true priesthood is exercised in solitude as contemplation of God: Gregory says so when he retreats, underplaying the importance of active bishops (§3.1.2). Finally, the status of outsider, which Gregory continually claimed for himself, granted a political authority, not only because the definition of a Christian culture and of the Christian ascetic is couched in the same terms in order to imitate the outsider status of the late antique philosopher but also because this position grants advantages to the authorial voice (see §1.3.2): the educated outsider is the only one who can criticise the prevailing society with authority, as Socrates and Dikaiopolis did. Thus, Gregory justifies at the same time his being worthy of office and his poetic utterances.

Therefore, retreat is a dialectical movement and a cyclic occurrence. It subtracts the subject from the public sphere and, thus, makes him worthy thereof. In practice, the good bishop moves, as did Gregory, between periods of public engagement and of spiritual retreat. The two must be continually alternated. This is how we should understand the contrast between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, so prevalent in Greg-

¹⁰⁹ Gautier 2002, 216, 239–241.

¹¹⁰ Lizzi 1987.

¹¹¹ Elm 2000a; Elm 2012.

ory's poetry. Finally, retreat is a concrete moment in Gregory's life as represented in his autobiography. Through the description of this moment, as we have seen it in this section, he can cast himself in the same mould as his ideal bishop and thus claim to be worthy of office and authoritative in writing. At the same time, his retreat in favour of a less worthy substitute sets the stage for his invective against the other bishops. And so, retreat becomes one of the chief situations in which the short circuit between self-writing, political program, and invective (see §5.1.1) plays out at its best.

5.1.3 The "I" of the poems

If we compare Gregory's poems with those of Ephrem, it is remarkable that Gregory not only speaks of himself in autobiographical parts, giving information in narrative form, but that his personal perspective, often in the form of first-person verbs, always permeates the diction, whereas in Ephrem, except for the rare first-person passages, the poet's voice tends to disappear. Indeed, many passages with first-person plural or singular are spoken *in persona Ecclesiae*—that is, as if the poet were the community at large (first-person plural) or the church in Nisibis personified (first-person singular). In Gregory, on the contrary, the first person represents the voice of the poet as an individual. This is one of the reasons why for Gregory we can speak of fictive situations (§1.1.1) and for Ephrem this is much more difficult: when there is an individual voice, especially if it addresses other people or even voices their objections (§3.3.2.1), one is brought to imagine a situation, an encounter. The impression is confirmed by passages like that at the beginning of our chapter (II, 1, 12, 811–836), where Gregory describes his own mental state in that particular situation. Nothing of the sort can be found in Ephrem, except for the final, self-effacing prayer customary in his poems. This peculiarity in Gregory prompts the question of the nature of the "I" in the poems. Based on what he says of himself, on how he addresses the reader and on how he describes others, what is this "I"? What is the structure of the authorial voice in the poems? What kind of perspective does the poet adopt on his matter? In my opinion, three elements form the structure of the "I" in this poem and allow for its classification according to genre: memory, character, and addressees.

The most prominent element is undoubtedly memory. The "I" of the poems corresponds (or claims correspondence) to a historical figure, which is also the author of the poems. In three of the four poems, the "I" even gives himself a name and a geographic provenance, so that the speaker is unambiguously identified. In this sense, we can define the poems as autobiographical writing. Moreover, this historical figure often focuses on his past, narrating events and occurrences he took part in: these are also elements that allow for an identification of the speaker with Gregory of Nazianzus, but more generically, they provide the "I" with a personal history and a chronological depth. This means that the speaker is not only nominally identified but gets a form of characterisation *inside* the poems through the stories he narrates about himself. Such

a characterisation is first and foremost *external*, in the sense that we get to know the historical position, the relationships, and the actions of the character, but not necessarily his intimate thoughts, feelings, and character. Through memory and narrative, the speaker appears as the character in a story rather than as a “voice” perceiving, filtering, and judging reality.

This is all the truer when the autobiographical narrative lacks details concerning the inner state of the speaker and the development of his personality. This is not completely lacking in Gregory: for example, II, 1, 11 has such character-defining moments, which the poet consequently treats¹¹². Yet the summary narrations of our poems do not contain such moments, except perhaps the moment of truth in II, 1, 17, 41–44 (see §5.2.4): there, Gregory relates how he desired to become a bishop but, seeing the vices of his colleagues, decided to retreat. This version of the trope of retreat is unique in showing refusal of office as a dynamic reaction to a sort of trauma; normally, it constitutes Gregory’s basilar approach. In general, however, the poems are poor in inner development, and the character is defined primarily by what he does and what happens to him.

This reflects on the second fundamental element, which is character. Characterisation may be pursued in different ways: through the actions, through the words, and through description. As regards actions, we get plenty of that in the autobiographical narratives, above all through the trope of retreat, which defines Gregory’s character. Words, too, are carefully chosen to create a definite character for the speaker. I have already mentioned how Gregory’s style may hint at the stock character of the ἄγρικοις through γνῶμαι, digressions, and a tendency to exaggerate things. The frequent use of exclamations and rhetorical questions, as well as the forceful language against the bishops, is employed not only for their rhetorical effectiveness but also to communicate the indignation and sadness the speaker feels regarding the situation of the episcopate. The effect is much more relevant in the hexametric and elegiac poems than in II, 1, 12, where it is confined mostly to the frame of the discussion—namely, the autobiography and the ἐξιτήριοις λόγος examined at the beginning of the chapter. However, even the cooler-minded discussion of II, 1, 12 does not lack its moments of sarcasm or outright attack. A good example is lines 747–750:

Ταῦτ’ οὖν ὁρῶν ἔκαμνες εὐρεῖν ποιμένα;
Ὡς μικρὸν ἐσπούδαζες! ἐγκαλύπτομαι.
Ὡσπερ λογιστὴν ἐσκόπεις τὸν προστάτην.
Κόπρων μέλει σοι, μειζόνων δ’ ἐμοὶ λόγος

(750)

Is it with this in mind, then, that you were striving to find a shepherd?
How small an effort! I’m ashamed for you.
You look for a bishop as for a city curator.
You care for dung, but my concerns are wider.

(750)

112 Storin 2019, 17, with reference to the famous sea-storm.

This kind of language casts Gregory in the role of the diatribic philosopher, with decidedly Cynic undertones¹¹³. In such cases, Gregory's language is in harmony with his self-presentation as outsider, philosopher, and comic hero, a self-presentation examined in §1.3.2.

As regards open descriptions of Gregory's feelings, a reading which does not sufficiently take the context into account may conclude that we are dealing here with a lyric "I" almost of the modern sort. This has been in fact often argued, whenever Gregory was interpreted as a shy man of letters or an oversensitive idealist¹¹⁴. It is true that, in comparison with *On His Own Life* and the famous I, 2, 14, *On Human Life*, our poems offer less material for this type of reading. The autobiography of II, 1, 12 is quite poor in descriptions of the inner workings of Gregory's mind in those moments, and it expresses his view mostly through the connotative value of some words or through sarcasm. In the case of II, 1, 17 and II, 1, 10 the autobiographical narrative is more subjective: II, 1, 17 presents the already mentioned moment of truth at its beginning and laments the workings of φθόνος in line 51; II, 1, 10, 20 explains Gregory's choice to remain neutral in the Antiochian schism as based on his will to remain faithful only to Christ, and then in 28 (ἀσπασίως) and 31 (καγχαλόων) the poet expresses all his joy concerning his retreat. Still, II, 1, 12 shares with II, 1, 13 the emotive justification to write poetry as a form of venting (see §1.3.2). The emotive state of the speaker comes back prominently in the ἐξιτήριος λόγος in II, 1, 12 and in the prayer in the middle of II, 1, 13—devolving in an invective against bishops—and in the final *peroratio* of the same poem¹¹⁵. Interestingly, all these passages are not spontaneous pourings of emotion, but take a mediated form, be it the auto-reported speech of II, 1, 12, 811–817¹¹⁶, the prayer to Christ of II, 1, 13, 139–145, or the figure of the αἰοιδός in II, 1, 13, 195. Given their position in the poems, these authorial interventions have a structural role: they articulate and frame the content proper.

At this point, my treatment of the poems should have made clear how such elements of characterisation must really be read. The speaking voice of the poems has a fundamental role in Gregory's literary strategy; it is not a "lyric" role, in the sense that the aim of the poems is to express Gregory's personal or existential stance, but is fundamental because the construction of a voice contributes to the credibility of the

113 On Gregory and Diogenes: §3.1.3.3 n. 123.

114 On the pitfalls of Gregory's biography, see Storin 2017.

115 On the ἐξιτήριος λόγος see the beginning of this chapter. The passages of II, 1, 13 I am referring to are: Τοῦνεκεν αἰάζω, πίπτω δ' ὑπὸ σεῖο πόδεσσι, / Χριστὲ ἄναξ, μὴ μοί τις ἀπαντήσκειν ἀνὴρ / Χαζομένω. Κέκμηκα λύκοις δηλήμοσι ποίμνης, / Ποιμέσι μαρνάμενος δηρὸν χρόνον. Ἐκ μελέων δὲ / Ῥικνῶν ἔπτατο θυμὸς, ἀναπνέω δ' ὀλίγον τι / Τειρόμενος καμάτοισι, καὶ αἷσχεσιν ἡμετέροισιν. / Ὡν, οἱ μὲν θώκων ἱερῶν πέρι δῆριν ἔχοντες... (II, 1, 13, 139–145); Ἡμεῖς δ' αὖ κακίῃ γέρα θήκαμεν· ὦ θανάτοιο! / Τίς τάδε θρηνήσειε γῶν πολυῖδρις αἰοιδός (194–195).

116 Τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐκείθεν, ὦ φίλοι, λελέγεται. / Πλὴν ἐξιτήριόν τιν', εἰ δοκεῖ, λόγον / Βραχὺν μὲν, ἀλλὰ χρήσιμον, δέξασθέ μου / Ὡς οἱ πατρώας λαμβάνοντες ἐν τέλει / Φωνὰς ἐπισκήψεις τε μνήμης ἀξίας / Μεθ' ἧς λόγος τις οὐκέτ' ἐξακούεται, / Ὡς καὶ πλέον μένουσιν ἐν βάθει φρενός.

message¹¹⁷. Therefore, the voice is determined by genre conventions (diatribe, comedy, elegy, etc.), which are adopted to express a social role, an ideal type of person. The fact that the type of person expressed is an outsider with his personal stance against the world must be regarded as an accident in respect of the structure of the poems: the aim of the texts is not to reproduce a unique individuality, but to propose a model to imitate—which happens to be a unique individuality. By identifying the ideal bishop with the speaker of the poem, Gregory gives to the voice that speaks our texts an exemplary character even as he expresses intimate feelings and personal idiosyncrasies. In reality, the composition must have proceeded in the opposite direction: the social value chosen for the ideal bishop prompted the choice of sentiments to express.

However, thanks to his chronological depth, the speaker is not only a pure type, but comes out as a real, historical person. If to this historical reconstruction we add the presence of addressees in the poems, the compositional procedure will clearly appear. All poems except II, 1, 17 purport to be a real-life, historical act of speaking. They assume—and thereby evoke—the presence of hearers who may eventually respond to this speech act. Indeed, II, 1, 12 tries to anticipate and voice their response, while the Εἰ μὲν δὴ πεπιθοίμεν, ὀνησόμεθ’ of II, 1, 13, 198 invites the audience to respond to the poem. Thus, the poem is embedded in a context which to those in the know would have appeared as a historical event (see §1.1.1). II, 1, 10; II, 1, 12; and II, 1, 13 are not extemporaneous outpourings, but works of historical fiction—not because the autobiographical parts are not true, but because they implicitly create a historical scenario and attribute to one of the characters (Gregory) a speech he did not pronounce. On the contrary, II, 1, 17 lacks this clear contextualisation and comes off as a more abstract piece, a reflection *a posteriori*.

Finally, piecing together the three elements examined, we can identify what is the “I” in these poems. The speaker is a historical person—that is, a character with stories attached. He speaks on a particular occasion before an audience. The style of the speech, as well as the occasional outpourings of sentiment, defines a conventional character, which in turn lends credibility to the content. These elements correspond to the

¹¹⁷ For the importance of suffering and misfortune as justifications for self-writing, see §1.3.2; Storin 2019, 15–17; the precedent of Saint Paul is particularly relevant, since Paul was also the ideal bishop of *or* 2. Another example of self-writing caused by suffering is the *Vision of Dorotheus* from the Bodmer library: Dorotheus identifies himself by name and patronymic (line 300), creates historical depth through his ὡς τὸ πάρος περ (Hurst/Reverdin/Rudhart 1984, 16), describes his own repeated sinning and redemption, in order to propose himself as a role-model for his community (see Agosti 2017). Even though Dorotheus knew well the technique of the *ethopoia* (see Agosti 2005, 43–45), his poem lacks a frame to characterise it as an individualised act of speech in a historical context; therefore, its self-writing cannot be categorised as an *ethopoia*. Given its content, it must be seen as a development of the first-person singular of apocalyptic literature (such as the prophet Ezekiel or the apostle John; see Agosti 2001c, 205–206).

scholastic proceeding of ἡθοποιία (or προσωποποιία)¹¹⁸. In the words of Aelius Theon, the first extant rhetor writing on school exercises (προγυμνάσματα):

Προσωποποιία ἐστὶ προσώπου παρεισαγωγὴ διατιθεμένου λόγους οἰκείους ἑαυτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀναμφισβητήτως, οἷον τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους ἀνὴρ πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα μέλλων ἀποδημεῖν, ἢ στρατηγὸς τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐπὶ τοὺς κινδύνους. καὶ ἐπὶ ὠρισμένων δὲ προσώπων, οἷον τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους Κῦρος ἐλαύνων ἐπὶ Μασσαγέτας, ἢ τίνας Δάτις μετὰ τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχην ἐντυγχάνων τῷ βασιλεῖ. ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ γένος τῆς γυμνασίας πίπτει καὶ τὸ τῶν πανηγυρικῶν λόγων εἶδος, καὶ τὸ τῶν προτρεπτικῶν, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐπιστολικῶν.
(Ael. Theon *progymnasmata* 8)

Personification (*prosôpopoeia*) is the introduction of a person to whom words are attributed that are suitable to the speaker and have an indisputable application to the subject discussed; for example, What words would a man say to his wife when leaving on a journey? Or a general to his soldiers in time of danger? Also, when the persons are specified; for example, What words would Cyrus say when marching against the Massagetae? Or what would Datis say when he met the king after the battle of Marathon? Under this genus of exercise fall the species of consolations and exhortation and letter writing.

(transl. Kennedy 2003)

If we were to introduce and sum up our poems with a question each, they would sound just like the examples of προσωποποιία of historical people (ἐπὶ ὠρισμένων δὲ προσώπων): “What would Gregory of Nazianzus have said to the bishops during the Council of Constantinople?” (II, 1, 13). “What would Gregory’s last speech in the City have been like?” (II, 1, 12). “What sorts of words would Gregory have said to say goodbye to his community in Constantinople?” (II, 1, 10). In the case of II, 1, 17 we find a more traditionally elegiac self-presentation, although the “I” still has the same exemplary role and artificial nature as in the other poems.

It may seem paradoxical that an author would treat his own person as a historical figure like Cyrus and Datis, to feign to be himself while writing. However, we must bear in mind that ἡθοποιία was no obscure extravagance but a common tool of the trade for late antique writers; its applications had potentially no limits, provided one preserved the requirement of correspondence between words and character, situation and audience. Moreover, in the eyes of Gregory, he *did* play a historical role in a critical moment for the church; from a Christian point of view, his adventure in Constantinople may even be more important than the Battle of Marathon. Finally, the mode of publication of these poems may have influenced this rhetorical strategy, especially as regards II, 1, 10. If ἡθοποιία comprised also epistolography, as Theon says, then these poems, which reached Constantinople and their audience attached to letters (see §1.2.2), may have taken on something of the epistolary style to accommodate the publication method.

118 For a useful and complete overview of this concept: Berardi 2018.

After all, if they do not give “an image of the writer’s soul” in his absence, as epistles did, they at least give an image of his role¹¹⁹.

5.2 The enemies

Until now I have examined two prongs of Gregory’s three-pronged literary strategy, the theorising on the ideal bishop (§3) and the self-writing (§5.1). It is now time to look at the third, the sharpest: the invective against the other (or, simply, bad) bishops. Beyond the character assassination of his adversaries, which is an obvious point of our poems, these invectives are deeply significant because of how integrated they are with the other two points. The bad bishops are the negative image of Gregory’s ideal bishop and of Gregory himself; conversely, Gregory’s theorising on the ideal bishop, and consequently his own self-styling, reacts to tendencies in the episcopate of the time which Gregory considered damaging.

Before diving into the contents and intertextual network of Gregory’s invectives, it is worthwhile to consider their genre and position in the contemporary literary space. Then, I will analyse the invective texts closely, dividing them in five groups: first, the difficult question of invectives against the socioeconomic background of bishops and Gregory’s elitism (§5.2.1); second, those passages that lament the social background because of the moral shades it throws on the character of the candidates to the episcopate, which clearly refer to one of Gregory’s enemies, Nectarius (§5.2.2); then, outright moralising against vices and sins of prospective and reigning bishops (§5.2.3); a section will be devoted to the question of duplicity or deception, because Gregory devotes some texts exclusively to this vice in order to attack his rival Maximus (§5.2.4). Finally, we will consider and explain Gregory’s harsh judgement of the episcopate as a collegial body, especially when in joint session during a council or synod (§5.2.5).

II, 1, 10 has no proper invective, but rather some allusions to themes of invective that explain Gregory’s retreat and are presented as elegiac laments. Something similar happens in II, 1, 17: after the first invective (13–20; 29–34), introduced with the lyrical device of the *Priamel*, the longest polemic (59–108) is formally part of Gregory’s autobiographical narrative. Thus, the poet casts invective themes into the traditional themes of elegiac poetry—namely, lament, autobiographical or hot-topic narrative, and moral reflection. After all, since archaic times poetry in distichs had covered a wide variety of themes, not only mourning. Solon and Theognis, two important poets for Gregory’s elegiacs, were particularly interested in moral reflection, especially taking contemporary events as points of departure or as examples. Furthermore, the theme of exile was

¹¹⁹ Cf.: Πλεῖστον δὲ ἔχέτω τὸ ἠθικὸν ἢ ἐπιστολή, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ διάλογος· σχεδὸν γὰρ εἰκόνα ἑκάστος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς γράφει τὴν ἐπιστολήν. καὶ ἔστι μὲν καὶ ἐξ ἄλλου λόγου παντὸς ἰδεῖν τὸ ἦθος τοῦ γράφοντος, ἐξ οὐδενὸς δὲ οὕτως, ὡς ἐπιστολῆς. (PsDemetr. Phal. *eloc.* 227).

frequently treated in this metre; thus Gregory's condition would be particularly suited to elegiacs¹²⁰.

II, 1, 12 presents us with an apparently simple case, invective expressed through iambs. Gregory's choice here demonstrates an unusual respect for the classic system of genres and metres in comparison to the majority of poetic invectives of his time. Agosti and Hawkins offer much material for this discussion¹²¹: for example, the gnomic and moral function of iambs in late antiquity, as well as their *humilis* character appealing to Christian sensibilities, may explain Gregory's choice, since II, 1, 12 has a much more ambitious program than just invective¹²². On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Gregory has chosen in this case a classicising form. Indeed, the poet himself signals his models in the text. From the very beginning, with his denial of ὄνομαστί κωμωδεῖν¹²³, the poet sets his invective in the tradition of comedy and iambus, a setting reaffirmed in the part of his biography immediately preceding the invective proper:

Πλέον γὰρ οὐδὲν εἶχον ἢ τοῦτο δρᾶσαι,
 Οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἤτουν οὐδέν. ὦ πόλις πόλις,
 Ἴν' ἐκβοήσω καὶ τι καὶ τραγωδικόν. (135)
 Ἀλλ' οἱ καλοὶ τε κάγαθοὶ συμποίμενες
 Φθόνῳ ῥαγέντες (ἴστε τοὺς Θρασωνίδας·
 Οὐ γὰρ φέρει παίδευσιν ἡ ἀγροικία)
 (II, 1, 12, 133–138)

More than this they could not do,
 nor did I ask anything. Alas city, city!
 Let me deliver some tragic verse, too. (135)
 Yet those real gentlemen, my fellow shepherds,
 burst with envy (you know those Ancient Pistols:
 the boorish can't stand education).

Comedy is clearly present in the name Θρασωνίδας (137), a typical character of the New Comedy, corresponding to Plautus's Pyrgopolynices in the *Miles Gloriosus*¹²⁴: the bishops are thereby transported into the realm of comedy. Less clear but equally important is Gregory's appropriation of the "tragic" tone (ἐκβοήσω καὶ τι καὶ τραγωδικόν, 135) in his exclamation ὦ πόλις, πόλις (134). The fact that Gregory declares this appropria-

¹²⁰ On elegiac poetry: Crusius 1905; West 1974, 1–22. Nicastrì 1981 highlights Gregory's links with Hellenistic elegy on the basis of I, 2, 14, but he does not examine the moral and paraenetic character of the genre, being concentrated on its expressive function. However, he alludes to the interplay of poetry and autobiography in the genre (p. 453).

¹²¹ Agosti 2001b; Hawkins 2014.

¹²² On Christian iambs: Agosti 2001b, 229–233. "Philosophical" iambs are known since the Archaic period: West 1974, 32.

¹²³ Οὐ γὰρ ὄνομαστί τοὺς λόγους ποιήσομαι, / Τοῦ μὴ δοκεῖν ἐλέγχειν ἃ κρύπτειν χρεών (II, 1, 12, 21–22).

¹²⁴ Meier 1989, 91.

tion instead of simply declaiming in a tragic manner signals that his true model is not tragedy itself, but comedic paratragedy—namely, comedy’s conscious appropriation of elements of tragedy¹²⁵. The indefinite *τι*, which is found also in the first attestation of paratragedy in comedy, signals that the tragic imitation does not obliterate the comic character of the whole and is limited to a part¹²⁶. In particular, Gregory’s exclamation echoes that of Dikaiopolis’s in the prologue of the *Acharnians*, clearly inspired by multiple Sophoclean passages¹²⁷. This would again put Gregory in the role of the comic hero, as explained at §5.1.2.1, but the irony is that he appropriates the exclamation of the honest *ἄγροικος* par excellence (Dikaiopolis) but then just a few lines later calls his opponents *ἄγροικοι* (138). Moreover, after exposing the ignorant and unprepared bishops, as Gregory introduces the problem of the immoral ones, he employs the metaphor of a play (*σκηνή*): “Alas, what a specious scene is played: / Personages now, and the persons later”¹²⁸. He also describes the appointment of bad bishops with a reference to comic masks¹²⁹. In the last part of the poem, as he decries the hypocrisy of some bishops, Gregory refers to three different fables, and in one line he names excrement (750)¹³⁰. Gregory alludes to the dung beetle, too, an animal particularly linked with iambic and comic poetry: Ἄνω τρέχουσι, κάνθαροι πρὸς οὐρανὸν, / Πόλον στρέφοντες, οὐ τὸν ἐκ κόπρων ἔτι (170–171)¹³¹. The inclusion of fables had been an important trait of iambic literature since Archilochus, notably reprised and elaborated by one of Gregory’s models, Callimachus¹³². Summing up all these features, II, 1, 12 is perfectly inscribed—as regards the relationship between its form and contents—in the literary

125 For an overview of the phenomenon, see Farmer 2017.

126 Cf. *Τὶν’ ἐκβοήσω καὶ τι καὶ τραγωδικόν* (135) and *ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸν παρατραγωδησαί τι μοι* (Strattis *frg.* 50 K.).

127 Meier 1989, 90.

128 *Σκηνή τις, οἶμαι, παίζειτ’ εὐπρεπεστέρα* / *Νῦν τὰ προσωπεῖα, τὰ πρόσωπα δ’ ὕστερον* (II, 1, 12, 359–360).

129 Ἡ κωμικὸν πρόσωπον ἄνθρωπος τεθὲν / *Τῶν εὐτελεστάτων τε καὶ μικρῶν ἐνὶ—* / *Πέφηνεν ἡμῖν οὗτος εὐσεβῆς νέος* (II, 1, 12, 397–399). On the importance of performing arts for the characterisation of bad bishops in the following lines see §2.2.4.9.

130 Fables: Ἄρ’ ἔστι καὶ παιζαί τι τερπνῷ πλάσματι / *Σπουδῆς μεταξύ· καὶ γέλως ἐν δακρύοις* / *Γαλῆν καθίζει μῦθος εἴσω παστάδος· κτλ.* . . (II, 1, 12, 699–708; cf. Perry 50 and §2.2.4.4); *Τοῦτ’ ἔστ’ ἐκεῖνο ράμνον ἄρχειν τῶν ξύλων* (723; cf. Perry 213); *Κάνθων δὲ τίς ποτ’ ἀστικῶν ἄλλου πλέον* / *Κάνθωνος ἐζήτησεν ἀγροίκου φέρειν*; / *Ἄλλ’ ἔστιν ὥσπερ ἔστι, κἂν οἰκῇ πόλιν* (784–786; cf. Perry 352); for further references see Meier 1989, 152, 154, 161. The lowly tone of traditional iambus is to be seen at 750: *Κόπρων μέλει σοι, μειζόνων δ’ ἐμοὶ λόγος* (on the scatological language of iambus: Agosti 2001b, 220; Carey 2009, 151).

131 Cf. Semonid. *frg.* 13 W.; Hipponax *frg.* 92, 10–11 W.; in Aristophanes’ *Peace*, Trygaeus, the comic hero, reaches the house of Zeus riding a giant dung-beetle, a reference to the Aesopic fable of the dung-beetle and the eagle (Perry 3). Cf. Steiner 2008. Here then, the identity of the comic hero and *ἄγροικος* is taken on by Gregory’s enemies.

132 Archilocus *frg.* 174–177 and 185–187 W.; *Iambs* 2 and 4 by Callimachus echo respectively Perry 240 and Perry 213 (see Scodel 2011), the latter being also referenced in the Bible at Iudc. 9:15 and by Gregory at II, 1, 12, 723. In this respect, it is true that fables unite different traditions, such as archaic iambus,

space of late antiquity, if with a somewhat archaising sensibility, a conscious reprise of classical models.

The discourse is much more complicated for II, 1, 13, a poem in which, as in II, 1, 12, invective has a prominent role. The former is in fact a hexametric poem, so that, in the classical system of genres and metres, its personal invective regarding current events would not be suited to the metre. Again, a reference to Agosti's article is necessary: late antiquity could make allowances for these combinations of metre and matter, and in particular two dynamics were at play that can explain Gregory's choice. On one side, there is the tendency, especially in pagan poets, to employ the highest forms and languages more freely, particularly hexametric epic. On the other side, invective was ubiquitous in poetry of the time, so that it was bound to invade also the realm of hexameters. And invade it did: as was already briefly recalled (§1.3.1), invective in hexameters was successfully practiced by Claudian, who, though writing mostly in Latin, came from the *pars orientis* and could also compose in Greek¹³³. Indeed, Gregory's invective shares some features with Claudian's, such as the hexametric metre, the narrative form (see §3.3.2.2), the edgy insults covered by epic convention, and their being inverted mirrors for the good bishop or politician¹³⁴. However, there are also important differences. Claudian's invectives, especially the longer *In Eutropium* and *In Rufinum*, are extensively modelled on epics in their overarching narrative structure and on the ψόγος of rhetorical treatises. This, being conceived and structured as the negative image of the ἐγκώμιον, is focused on one person, following his career from infancy to his deeds in public life as examples of his vices. In the case of Gregory, even if framing devices and comparisons have a narrative form, the overarching structure remains that of a deliberative or judicial speech (§1.1.1). Moreover, his invective does not address a single person. It is true that his main target is Nectarius, but he has in mind Maximus and the bishops at the council, too. Yet even if there was only one target in real life, the form of the poems is still that of a catalogic invective, listing different vices and immoral behaviours without construing a single literary character in whom all these features inhere. Gregory's kind of invective is much more similar to the iambus against women by Semonides than to Claudian's character assassinations. If we add that Gregory writes more than a decade earlier than Claudian, there is no single extant work of literature that may have offered a model for II, 1, 13: Gregory's fusion of rhetoric, Homeric speeches, and iambic invective may be an innovation, although perfectly understandable within the literary taste of the time.

Hellenistic diatribe, Callimachus' poetry and non-Hellenic traditions, as Scodel 2011, 370 says. It is the perfect device for Gregory.

¹³³ Agosti 2001b, 238.

¹³⁴ On this facet of Claudian's invectives, closely paralleling Gregory's use of invective, see Perret 2018. On edgy insults, see the oblique Ως ὄφελον Γετθαῖαν ἀναπλήσαιεν ἀνίην, / Ἐνδικὸν ἐδρήεσσον, ἐφ' ἔδρη τίσιν ἔχοντες (II, 1, 13, 149–150 with explanation at §2.2.4.6) and Claudian's allusions to Eutropius as eunuch in the *In Eutropium* (Perret 2018, 6–7).

5.2.1 Socioeconomic invective

Once we have clarified the issue of genres, we must tackle the elephant in Gregory's room—namely, his invective against lowborn prelates: Gregory's elitist attitude is a far cry from our sensibilities.

A long passage from II, 1, 12 and a shorter excerpt of II, 1, 13 lament the humble conditions of many candidates to the episcopate. Such a blatant classism sits uneasily with modern sensibilities, and in particular because if classism was by no means unknown to ancient literature, a Christian writer may be expected to dismiss differences of class inside his community, especially in contrast to a society so deeply influenced by paganism. In these passages, the modern interpreter sees more easily the educated landowner than the ascetic bishop, perceiving also a contradiction between the two¹³⁵. Was it so for Gregory and his contemporaries, too? In a way it was. This is made apparent from the text itself: in II, 1, 12, after the invective against lowborn bishops (154–175), Gregory anticipates the objections of an imaginary counterpart, responding to them with his narrative of historical decadence (176–191; see §3.1.3.1). The objections carry on with the counterexample of the apostles, who were fishers before (192–198), and the response thereto becomes a summary of Christian Greek culture to set against both purely pagan culture and the refusal of culture by some sectors of Christianity (§3.1.3.3). If the poet is so preoccupied with defusing these objections, it means that they might have been raised against him. On the other hand, passages with similar invectives (II, 1, 13, 100–107, but also II, 1, 12, 395–441) are not defended in the same way. Given the likely upper-class audience presupposed by these poems, it is probable that those objections are not to be interpreted in the same way as the modern reader's reactions to ancient classism. To understand these objections, as well as to understand Gregory's elitist argument, we must remove for a moment the filter of our democratic and post-Marx presuppositions and appreciate the various arguments in their context.

In the two passages in question (II, 1, 12, 154–175; II, 1, 13, 100–107), the common theme consists in the lowly trade exercised by would-be bishops. Gregory mentions specifically professional activities (jobs); he reviles them for their low social position and refers chiefly to people who desire to become bishops but are not yet such. First of all, it must be noted that the two passages show the same catalogic structure, defined by anaphora to include different behaviours or professions in the same argument¹³⁶. This use of the anaphora can be traced back to Semonides's iamb against women (*frg.* 7 W.), an important model of Gregory's invective, and it will also find employment in other invective passages I will analyse.

¹³⁵ McGuckin 2001a, 4; Louth 1997, 283.

¹³⁶ Οἱ μὲν... οἱ δ' ἐκ... οἱ δ' ἐξ... οἱ δ' ἐκ... ἄλλοι δὲ... ἄλλοι δὲ... (II, 1, 12, 154; 156–159; 163); μή (II, 1, 13, 100–102) and ὁ μὲν... ὃς δὲ (II, 1, 13, 104–105).

Second, II, 1, 12, 154–175 also has items in common with II, 1, 13, 100–107: in both lists, Gregory includes the labour of the ploughman and of the blacksmith¹³⁷. Besides these, the list in II, 1, 12 includes also the banker (or money changer), the farmer, the seaman, and the soldier, whereas II, 1, 13 has the carpenter, the tanner, the hunter, and, obliquely through the instrument of their work, the lumberjack and (perhaps) the surgeon¹³⁸. While the anaphoric grid and the jobs mentioned correspond by and large, the two passages are also embedded in different discourses through different framing devices. I will begin with the exegesis of the single slurs and then examine the different contexts and aims of the two lists.

The trades listed are almost all the epitome of three-D's jobs, dangerous, dirty, and demeaning, with the stress falling on the third D—demeaning. Apparently, both catalogues are introduced to criticise contemporary bishops' lack of qualifications, but this choice of occupations is also intended to be insulting, no mere statement of inadequacy. From some intertextual clues in II, 1, 12, 154–175, the impression this passage conveys is that these humble jobs are also synonymous with defective moral character. In this way, Gregory discredits at the same time the would-be bishops' theological preparation and moral worth.

For Gregory's strategy to work, however, the insults must be effective as well. Therefore, it is useful to see how precisely they are insulting. Beginning with II, 1, 12, 154–175, as stated before, Gregory lists three-D's jobs and depicts them as particularly debasing. He does so in various ways, first by evoking the jobs through their instruments, visibly conveying the passage from a humble occupation to the episcopate as leaving behind (ἐξ) the instrument, giving a sense of immediacy in the passage and of concreteness in the previous occupation: ἐκ τραπέζης, ... ἐξ ἀρότρων ... ἐκ δικέλλης καὶ σμινύης πανημέρου / Ἄλλοι δὲ κώπην, ἢ στρατὸν λελοιπότες (156–159). Τράπεζα here means the table of the money changer, from which the job takes the name of τραπεζίτης. Δίκελλα and σμινύη are widely employed in dramatic poetry, especially in relation to agriculture¹³⁹.

137 Cf. Οἱ δ' ἐξ ἀρότρων, ἡλίω κεκαυμένοι (II, 1, 12, 157) with Μὴ τέ τις οὖν ἀροτὴρ... ὅς δ' ἄρ' ἐχέτην / Ρίψας (II, 1, 13, 100; 105–106); Ἄλλοι δὲ τεχνῶν ἐμπύρων τὴν ἀσβολὴν / Οὕπω τελείως σαρκὸς ἐκνευμμένοι (II, 1, 12, 163) with μὴτ' ἐμπυρον ἔργον ἐλαύνων (II, 1, 13, 101).

138 Banker (or moneychanger): Οἱ δ' ἐκ τραπέζης, τῶν τ' ἐκεῖσ' ἀλλαγμάτων (II, 1, 12, 156); farmer: Οἱ δ' ἐκ δικέλλης καὶ σμινύης πανημέρου (158); seaman and soldier: Ἄλλοι δὲ κώπην ἢ στρατὸν λελοιπότες, / Ἄντλου πνέοντες ἢ τὸ σῶμ' ἐστιγμένοι (159–160). Carpenter: μὴ τέκτων (II, 1, 13, 100); tanner: μὴ σκυτοεργός; ὅς δὲ δορὴν (100; 105); hunter: Μὴ θήρην μεθέπων (101); lumberjack and surgeon: ὁ μὲν ἐκ χειρῶν πέλεκυν μέγαν ... ὅς δὲ πυράγρην (104–105). On the respective identities of these trades see below.

139 Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 430, s.v. δίκελλα; 1620, s.v. σμινύη; in Plat. *resp.* 370D σμινύη and ἀροτρον exemplify the instruments of the farmer; Callimachus likely contrasted σμινύη and πέλεκυς as the instruments of farming and wood-cutting at *Ait. frg.* 190a, 4; see also Harder 2012, 1014–1015; between the synonyms, Menander prefers δίκελλα (9x) and Aristophanes σμινύη (4x).

The synecdoche of the instruments for the jobs is paralleled at II, 1, 13, 104–107. In the case of the ploughman, the epic version is more vivid because it expresses the verb (ρίψας) and uses the metonymy of ἐχέτλην, “the handle”, to mean the plough. Among the jobs that mark out the hexametric version from the iambic one there are the lumberjack and, maybe, the surgeon (πέλεκυς, πυράγρη, 104–105), which are characterised by their instrument. The πέλεκυς would mean the double axe used to fell trees, hence alluding to the lumberjack’s trade. The word πυράγρη is used often for the fire-tongs in hexametric poets who strongly influenced Gregory, such as Homer (*Il.* 18, 477; *Od.* 3, 434), Callimachus (*hymn. in Del.*, 144), and Oppian (*halieut.* 2, 342). However, in medical prose, the word indicates some kind of forceps, which can be used for various surgical operations, not only for childbirth. It is more likely that Gregory is referencing the fire-tongs of the already mentioned blacksmith (101), as the ἐχέτλη of line 104 refers back to the ἀροτήρ of line 100, and the δορή of line 105 to the σκυτοεργός of the same line. Moreover, if we take the hapax δούρεα (105) as a form of δόρυ, the term may refer to the hunter’s as well as the soldier’s trade; in such a context, the πέλεκυς may also refer back to the τέκτων of 100¹⁴⁰. In this way, all instruments would reprise the previously mentioned occupations. However, there is also the possibility that πέλεκυς refers to the lumberjack and not the carpenter; δούρεα to the soldier or even to the carpenter (in its sense of “beam”, “plank”) and not the hunter; and πυράγρη to the surgeon and not to the blacksmith.

Another insulting element of II, 1, 12 is that each job is associated with the physical marks it leaves on the body of its practitioners: the ploughman is tanned (157), the seaman stinks (160), the soldier is scarred (160), the blacksmith is covered in soot (163–164)¹⁴¹. Foul odour and dirtiness are clearly negative marks; suntan and στίγματα less so. As regards soldiers τὸ σῶμ’ ἐστιγμένοι, there are two viable interpretations: Meier connects the στίγματα to the previous line (στρατὸν λελοιπότες, 159), so that Gregory is referring to a deserter punished with a burning brand, even though in this case a tattoo is more likely than a burning brand¹⁴²; this interpretation anticipates the following reference to runaway slaves. In fact, lines 165–166 (Μαστιγίαι τε, καὶ μυλῶνων ἄξιοι, / Πρὶν καὶ τὸ τίμημ’ εἰσενεγκεῖν δεσπότηις) resemble the description of slaves punished in the flour mill, with flogging and tattoos, at *Apul. met.* 9, 12. Thus, Gregory would not consider the profession of soldier as disqualifying per se, but only because he is speaking of deserters. However, if such were the case, the parallelism with the seaman and with the other professions would not hold. Indeed, the cases of the seaman and of the soldier are peculiar: their lines are carefully built in parallel because the

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., τέκτονες ἄνδρες ἐξέταμον πελέκεσσι (*Il.* 13, 390) and Odysseus building the raft in *Od.* 5: δῶκέν οἱ πέλεκυν μέγαν... πελέκκησεν δ’ ἄρα χαλκῷ... ἐν εἰδῶς τεκτοσυνάων (234; 244; 250).

¹⁴¹ ἡλίῳ κεκαυμένοι (157); Ἀντλου πνέοντες ἢ τὸ σῶμ’ ἐστιγμένοι (160); τεχνῶν ἐμπύρων τὴν ἀσβολὴν / Οὐπω τελείως σαρκὸς ἐκνευμένοι (163–164).

¹⁴² Meier 1989, 93; for this specific sense of λείπω, cf. words like λιποστρατέω, λιποστρατία at Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1053; on tattoos as punishment: Jones 1987, 147–149.

metaphors of the army and of the ship are very significant for church leadership, and the poet highlights the presumption of these tirots of their trade to aspire to its spiritual counterpart. In this respect, it is significant that *Cod. Theod.* 10, 22, 4 and *Aet. Med.* 8, 12 testify that soldiers were tattooed as they entered service¹⁴³. The tattoo (στίγμα) would be the military counterpart of the oar (κώπη) for the seaman, signifying the lowest rank in the respective hierarchies (the rookie and the oarsman), contrasting with their ambition to be Λαοῦ κυβερνηταί τε, καὶ στρατηλάται (161), helmsmen and generals in the church. Still, the στίγμα likened the soldier to the runaway slave, the criminal, and the barbarian (Jones 1987, 144–145), and it was also prohibited by the Bible (καὶ ἐντομίδας ἐπὶ ψυχῇ οὐ ποιήσετε ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν καὶ γράμματα στικτὰ οὐ ποιήσετε ἐν ὑμῖν· ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν, *Lev.* 19:28). In the case of *suntan*, I could not find parallels of this trait as an element of scorn against countrymen. However, Gregory values it at II, 1, 12, 695 as a sign of ascetic efforts. Indeed, all these scorned traits may have a positive meaning when applied to the ascetic: lack of personal hygiene and the olfactory result thereof are typical traits of the monk, while the penal tattoo was reinterpreted by Christian martyrs as a positive sign.¹⁴⁴

Finally, the jobs of II, 1, 12 are associated with moral condemnation: the tax collector and the banker could be damned per se, while the image of the runaway slave, syntactically linked to that of the blacksmith, could taint the rest of the jobs by association. Apart from the eponymous τράπεζα, what characterises banking here is its ἀλλάγματα (156). The term means “compensation” or “vicissitude” and may refer to the profits made by the banker through commissions, to the uncertainties of his job, or to his activity as money changer. Banking (i.e., the τραπεζίτης) in antiquity was primarily money changing, with functions such as deposit and lending exercised by other institutions.¹⁴⁵ The distinction is somewhat lost in late antiquity, justifying the interpretation of ἀλλάγματα as the vicissitudes of an unstable business¹⁴⁶. If Gregory has in mind the business of the moneylender, dubious morality and dishonour are inherent in the very instability of the job and reinforced by the philosophical and biblical condemnation of charging interest¹⁴⁷. On the other hand, the money changers might have inspired antipathy because of the commissions on changes, through which the amount of money was diminished by the change; maybe the money changers (κολλυβισταί) in the Jerusalem temple, whose tables (τράπεζαι) Jesus overthrew in the Gospels, are also referenced here¹⁴⁸. Indeed,

¹⁴³ See Jones 1987, 149.

¹⁴⁴ Harvey 2006, 241–308; Gustafson 1997, 98–101.

¹⁴⁵ Millett 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Bandow 2018.

¹⁴⁷ On the immorality of high-risk jobs cf. the reflections on the merchant at Giardina 2020. Condemnations of usury: *Aristot. pol.* 1258b; *Ex.* 22:24; *Lev.* 25:36–37; *Dtn.* 23:20–21; *Hes.* 18:17; 22:12; *Neh.* 5:7; *Ps.* 15:5.

¹⁴⁸ *Mt.* 21:12–17; *Mc.* 11:15–19; *Lc.* 19:45–48; *Joh.* 2:13–16.

banking was an infamous activity, though not so central in comedy¹⁴⁹. It was associated with slaves, too¹⁵⁰. As regards the slave, he seems not to be stigmatised per se but only in his disobedience: the terms μαστιγίαι and μυλώνων ἄξιοι presume a transgression on his part, confirmed by his behaviour shortly after, wantonness, and stealing by force or by guile. However, μαστιγίας is also a standard comic insult¹⁵¹. Gregory hints at the trope of the bad slave of comedy, so that one suspects his condemnation of slaves is less about morality than about social class¹⁵².

In II, 1, 13 these last two features (physical marks of the job, moral condemnation) are left out; this contributes to making the hexametric version tamer and testifies to Gregory's ability to distinguish different forms and the tone each requires. Another example of this attention to tone is the description of the blacksmith (ἔμπυρον ἔργον ἐλαύνων, II, 1, 13, 101). Gregory pinpoints the blacksmith's trade through the post-Homeric adjective ἔμπυρος in both hexameters and iambs; however, the nexus of ἔργον with a specifying attribute is much more poetic (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 2, 614; *Od.* 5, 67) than the τεχνῶν ἐμπύρων of II, 1, 12, attested in this sense at Plat. *Protag.* 321E. Furthermore, the hexametric expression highlights, through the verb ἐλαύνων, "to forge,"¹⁵³ and the singular object, the concreteness of the trade. Contrary to this poetic, vivid, and alliterative word-choice, II, 1, 12 has the word ἀσβολή, the Ionic form of Attic ἄσβολος, echoing Semonid. *frag.* 7, 61 W. The iambic poem insists thus on the dirtiness of the job. However, II, 1, 13 too implies through word choice that these are disreputable jobs. The hunter is described as θήρην μεθέπων (101), an ambiguous expression meaning either "chasing game" or "plying hunt". The components of the expression, as well as its construction, have some poetic pedigree (see Pseudo-Phocylides 161) but the expression is never used of hunting in Homer and epic poetry, where hunting scenes are mostly concerned with the high-class practice of hunting¹⁵⁴. In antiquity there was a firm social distinction between hunting for sport, reserved for the elites, and hunting for a living, a low-class mean of subsistence¹⁵⁵. Here, the latter is clearly meant. The hapax σκυτοεργός is a more epic-sounding version of the ordinary σκυτοτόμος (cf. ὀβριμοεργός, κακοεργός, ἐκάεργος): though the latter is not wholly un-epic (cf. Hom. *Il.* 7, 221), it still has a

¹⁴⁹ Suet. *vit. Aug.* 4, 2; 2, 6; in Comedy, see Antiphan. *Com. frag.* 159 K.; a quotation from Menander at Phrynichus Arabius *Eclogae* 408.

¹⁵⁰ Millett 2012.

¹⁵¹ Sophocl. *frag.* 329 R.; Aristoph. *equ.* 1228; *Lys.* 1240; Diphilus *frag.* 97 K.; Hipparchus *frag.* 1 K.; Philemon *frag.* 145 K.; Philippides *frag.* 9 K.; Men. *Dysc.* 140; 473; *epitr.* 1113; *kol.* 125; at Eur. *Cycl.* 237–240 μάστιξ with μυλών.

¹⁵² Konstan 2019, 878. In this direction also Pigott 2021.

¹⁵³ Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 529 s.v. ἐλαύνω III.1.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. αἶψα δὲ δῶκε θεὸς μενοεικέα θήρην (Hom. *Od.* 9, 158, but without μεθέπω); other hunting scenes: Hom. *Il.* 9, 533–549; *Od.* 9, 154–158; 10, 157–163.

¹⁵⁵ Anderson 2012.

much better standing in comedy, where the tanner or leatherworker is used in lists of lowbrow jobs as here¹⁵⁶.

Although it is in the nature of late antique poetry that single sections may be elaborated and read with more independence from the whole than in earlier ages, Gregory's catalogues find their complete meaning in the course of the wider argument of the poems. The catalogue of II, 1, 12, 154–175 has indeed a structural role, because it connects the autobiographical part of the poem to the subsequent argumentation, while at the same time hinting back at the initial theme “bad bishops”, so that the autobiographical part is justified by the invective¹⁵⁷. The catalogue begins with a relative pronoun (ὧν, 154), the antecedent thereof being the bishops who forced Gregory to resign and leave Constantinople at the end of his narration. It is interesting to note how Gregory ends the narration and introduces the invective:

Οἱ καὶ μ' ἐπεψαν ἔνθεν ἐκ πονηρίας
Οὐ σφόδρ' ἄκοντα. Καὶ γὰρ ἦν αἷσχος μέγα
Τούτων τιν' εἶναι τῶν καπήλων πίστεως.
Ὡν οἱ μὲν ὄντες ἐκγονοὶ φορογράφων . . .
(II, 1, 12, 151–154)

they who have sent me too thence out of cowardice,
though not very much against my will, because 'twas a real shame
to be one among those dealers in faith.
Some of them are sons of clerks for the exactors . . .

The invective is presented as an enumeration of the bishops who pressured Gregory and amounts to a direct attack against his rivals. This link between invective and the personal life and misfortune of the poet is a topical element of ancient iambus: the iambographer writes to have revenge over his real-life enemies¹⁵⁸. Moreover, here we find the same specular rhetoric examined at §5.1: invective serves to justify Gregory's retreat and unwillingness to participate in the dealings of his colleagues¹⁵⁹. Thus, the

156 τοὺς μὲν καλοὺς τε κάγαθοὺς οὐ προσδέχει, / σαυτὸν δὲ λυχνοπώλαισι καὶ νευρορράφοις / καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ βυρσοπώλαισιν δίδως (Aristoph. *equ.* 738–740); Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν σκυτοτομεῖ καθήμενος, / ἕτερος δὲ χαλκεύει τις, ὃ δὲ τεκταίνεται, / ὃ δὲ χρυσοχοεῖ γε χρυσίον παρὰ σοῦ λαβῶν (*Plut.* 162–164); τίς χαλκεύειν ἢ ναυπηγεῖν ἢ ράπτειν ἢ τροχοποιεῖν, / ἢ σκυτοτομεῖν ἢ πλινθουργεῖν ἢ πλύνειν ἢ σκυλοδεψεῖν, / ἢ γῆς ἀρότροις ῥήξας δάπεδον καρπὸν Διοῦς θερίσασθαι (513–515); cf. ἀνάγωγος ὧν δὲ καὶ βάνασσος παντελῶς / ἐν σκυτοτομείῳ μετὰ τινων καθήμενος (*Machon frg.* 17, 359–360 K.).

157 See: Θάρρει λέοντα· πάρδαλις τῶν ἡμέρων· / Ἀσπίς τάχ' ἂν σε καὶ φύγοι δεδοικότα· / Ἐν ἐκτρέπου μοι, τοὺς κακοὺς ἐπισκόπους, / Μηδὲν φοβηθεῖς τοῦ θρόνου τὴν ἀξίαν (II, 1, 12, 33–36).

158 Hawkins 2014, 2; see §1.3.2.

159 For Gregory's forceful expressions of difference from the other bishops, see §3.1.2; οὐ μὲν ἐγὼ κείνοισιν ὁμόθρονος, οὐχ ὁμοεργός, / οὐδέ τι συμφράδμων, οὐ σύμπλοος, οὐ συνοδίτης (II, 1, 13, 203–204); τῶν μὲν ἐγὼ ποθέων εἷς ἔμμεναι (οὐκ ἐπικεύσω) (II, 1, 17, 41); οὐδέ τί που συνόδοισιν ὁμόθρονος ἔσσομ' ἐγῶγε . . . (II, 1, 17, 91).

poet gives a positive evaluation of his defeat, while at the same time claiming outsider status and difference from the other bishops.

If there is much exaggeration in Gregory's narrative of the affair, an element of his accusation is, however, true: he calls those bishops *κάπηλοι πίστεως* ("dealers in faith", 153), with a reference not only to the following description of their humble background (which may well be grossly exaggerated), but above all to their nominating Nectarius as bishop of Constantinople. This choice reveals how this-worldly their preoccupations were, since the only credential of the man was the approval of the emperor. Therefore, the theme of the humble background is introduced also as an explanation for the philistine behaviour of the prelates. In fact, retail trade (*καπηλεία*) had a poor reputation in antiquity, because it was not felt to add any real value to the merchandise, while it increased its price, as opposed to the risky but necessary long-distance trade (*ἐμπορία*)¹⁶⁰. It must be noted that Gregory is not consistent in the use of words: in II, 1, 11, 1756 he uses *χριστεμπόρων*; in *or.* 40, 11 *Χριστοκάπηλοι καὶ Χριστέμποροι*. In our text, Gregory refers to the election of Nectarius in his place; in II, 1, 11, to doctrinal questions; and in *or.* 40, 11 to those who defer baptism to be forgiven of all their sins (*μηδὲ ἀναμείνωμεν πλείον γενέσθαι κακοὶ, ἵνα πλείον συγχωρηθῶμεν· μηδὲ γενώμεθα Χριστοκάπηλοι καὶ Χριστέμποροι*). In this last case the metaphor is apt, since the bad catechumen reasons as a good merchant, hoping to obtain a greater benefit (more sins forgiven) at the same "price" (baptism). The two poetic usages are vaguer. In II, 1, 12, 153, Gregory probably does not want to suggest simony—he does not seem to accuse his opponents of having been bribed by the emperor or Nectarius. It is more likely that he refers to the immaterial advantages—especially in terms of political opportunity—of his removal in favour of Nectarius.

The invective ends with Gregory saying that these bishops coming from a slavish background are not even able to count their own feet and hands. This *pointe* serves to highlight their ignorance, but what immediately precedes it is more important: they *ἀριστερὰ λαλοῦντες*, "babble awkwardly" (174). Lack of education is a problem, in Gregory's view, insofar as it hinders correct teaching from the bishops. Thus, the invective introduces the long discussion on the intellectual skills required of a prelate in a time of widespread heresy (§3.1.3). The equation of low background and bad teaching demonstrates that the following discussion is concerned with *paideia*, the expensive and long training of the upper classes, and not in general with any form of knowledge. This is confirmed by the negative moral connotation of these lowbrow jobs, since *paideia* was also conceived as a training of personal character and restraint¹⁶¹. On the other hand, Gregory does not automatically link upper-class status and aptness to the role, as II, 1, 12, 344–352 demonstrate: there he attacks those who presume to be capable of being

¹⁶⁰ Cf. the excellent analysis of commerce in the Roman world given by Giardina 2020 for this distinction.

¹⁶¹ Brown 1992, 48–50.

bishops just because of their social position and education¹⁶². Again, centrality is given to specifically Christian elements, such as experience in asceticism and command of Christian doctrine, not to *paideia* for *paideia*'s sake. However, it is remarkable that, through its position at the beginning of the discussion on *paideia* and by its concentration of the background of bishops, the invective in II, 1, 12, 154–175, formally referring to reigning bishops (Gregory's enemies), ends up being more significant for candidates for the episcopate such as Nectarius and Maximus.

The similar invective in II, 1, 13, 100–107 concentrates on this last function. It vividly represents the lack of scrutiny of candidates for the episcopate, a lack that Gregory denounces throughout the herald's speech. Much less than intellectual insufficiency, the whole speech seems to stigmatise the low bar set on morality, considering the preceding catalogue of vices (see below §5.2.3). However, even here the list of jobs is linked, although indirectly, to Gregory's autobiography: in the ascetic old man thrust away by one stronger than him as a sundry mob crowds the altar, it is easy to read Gregory's removal from Constantinople in favour of the more connected Nectarius¹⁶³.

5.2.2 Against Nectarius

Indeed, Gregory's remarks on the lowly social background of bishops are an attack against Nectarius. This is apparently paradoxical: Why should these elitist tirades insult a wealthy senator of Constantinople? To answer this question, as well as to relativise Gregory's elitism, it is worth adding two more passages out of II, 1, 12 to consideration. Here is the first :

Ὡ τῆς ταχείας τῶν τρόπων μεταστροφῆς. (395)
 Πεσσῶν κυλίσματ'· ἐν κύβοις τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ·
 Ἡ κωμικὸν πρόσωπον ἀθρόως τεθὲν
 Τῶν εὐτελεστάτων τε καὶ μικρῶν ἐνί—
 Πέφηνεν ἡμῖν οὗτος εὐσεβῆς νέος.
 Πολλὴ τις ὄντως ἡ χάρις τοῦ Πνεύματος, (400)
 Εἴγ' ἐν προφήταις καὶ Σαοὺλ ὁ φίλτατος.
 Χθὲς ἦσθα μίμων καὶ θεάτρων ἐν μέσῳ
 (Τὰ δ' ἐκ θεάτρων ἄλλος ἐξεταζέτω),
 Νῦν αὐτὸς ἡμῖν εἴ ξένη θεωρία.
 Πρώην φίλιππος, καὶ Θεῶ πέμπων κόνιν, (405)

¹⁶² Ὅς μὲν τις εὐγένειαν, ὃς δ' εὐγλωττίαν, / Πλοῦτόν τις ἄλλος, ὃς δὲ κομπάζει γένος. / Οἱ δ' οὐκ ἔχοντες, ἐξ ὅτου δόξουσιν τι, / Ποιοῦσιν αὐτοὺς γνωρίμους πονηρία (II, 1, 12, 345–348).

¹⁶³ Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐκ χειρῶν πέλεκυν μέγαν, ὃς δ' ἄρ' ἐχέτλην / Ρίψας, ὃς δὲ δορὴν, ὃς δούρεα, ὃς δὲ πυράγρην, / Ἐνθάδ' ἴοι, θείην δὲ περιθλίβοισθε τράπεζαν, / Στεινόμενοι, στεينوῦντες. Ὁ δ' ἄλκιμος ἄλλον ἐλαύνει, / Πολλάκι καὶ τ' ἄριστον, ἐνιδρώσαντα θρόνοις, / Γηραιὸν, σάρκεσσι τετρυμένον, οὐρανοφοίτην... (II, 1, 13, 104–109).

Ὡς ἄλλος εὐχὰς ἢ νοήματ' εὐσεβῆ·
 Τὸ δ' αἵτιον· πίπτων τις ἀρματηλάτης
 Ἦ τις τὰ δεύτερ' ἵππος ἐν δρόμοις φέρων·
 Ἴππων δ' ἀήρ σοι κοῦφος ἀντετύπτετο
 Ὡς ἐκ φρενῶν πεσόντι καὶ μεμηνότι· (410)
 Νῦν εὐσταλῆς τις καὶ βλέπων αἰδῶ μόνην,
 Πλήν εἰ λαθὼν που πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον δράμοις,
 Ὡς λοξὸς—οἶμαι—πτόρθος ἐκφυγὼν βίαν
 Χειρὸς κατευθύνουσιν εἰς ταῦτόν τρέχει.
 Χθὲς ῥητορεύων τὰς δίκας ἀπημπόλεις (415)
 Στρέφων ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὰ τῶν νόμων,
 Ἐξ ὧν ἀπώλλυς οὐς ἔσωζεν ἡ δίκη·
 Στάθμη δικαίᾳ χρώμενος τῷ πλείονι·
 Νῦν μοι δικαστῆς, καὶ Δανιήλ τις ἀθρόως.
 Χθὲς μοι δικάζων σὺν ξίφει γυμνουμένω, (420)
 Τὸ βῆμ' ἐποίεις ἐννομον ληστήριον
 Κλέπτων, τυραννῶν, καὶ πρὸ πάντων τοὺς νόμους·
 Ὡς ἡμερὸς μοι σήμερον. Οὐδ' ἐσθῆτά τις
 Οὔτως ἀμείβει ῥαδίως, ὥς σὺ τρόπους.
 Χθὲς ἐν χορευταῖς ἐστρέφου θηλυδρίαῖς, (425)
 Γάμων δὲ ἡκόρδαξ† ἦσθα Λυδαῖς ἐν μέσαις
 Ὡιδὰς λυγίζων καὶ πότοις γαυρούμενος·
 Νῦν σωφρονιστῆς παρθένων καὶ συζύγων·
 Ὡς σου τὸ καλὸν ὑποπτον ἐκ τοῦ πρὶν τρόπου.
 Σίμων Μάγος χθὲς, σήμερον Πέτρος Σίμων. (430)
 Φεῦ τοῦ τάχους, φεῦ, ἀντ' ἀλώπεκος λέων.
 Σὺ δ' εἰπέ μοι, βέλτιστε, καὶ πράκτωρ φόρων,
 Ἦ καὶ στρατοῦ τιν' ἐκλελοιπῶς ἀξίαν . . .
 (II, 1, 12, 395–433)

What quick reversal of ways and habits! (395)
 It's a roll of dice: what is divine is decided by dice.
 Or you just put at once a comic mask
 on someone paltry and cheap,
 and suddenly he appears to us as a pious man.
 Truly, great is the grace of the Spirit, (400)
 if even our most dear Saul is among the prophets.
 Yesterday you were a mime in the theatre
 (let another one inquire what you were outside the theatre),
 now you yourself are our unusual show.
 You were just now a horse lover, sending God dust (405)
 as others send prayers or pious thoughts;
 something happens—a charioteer falls,
 or a horse comes second at the races—
 and the nimble haze of horses strikes you,
 as a madman or one out of his mind; (410)
 now you are well-behaved and radiate only sobriety,
 unless you are not seen and run to your old vice,
 like a queer branch that, fleeing the grip

of the hand that kept it straight, runs to its shape.
 Yesterday an attorney, you sold justice, (415)
 twisting the law up and down,
 thus damning those whom justice would have saved
 and applying the rule of justice to the highest bidder;
 Now you are my judge, an instant Daniel.
 Yesterday you judged me, sword drawn, (420)
 and made of the court a lawful den of robbers,
 stealing and bullying, above all the very laws;
 how meek are you today! One could not change
 clothes as easily as you your character.
 Yesterday you squirmed among effeminate dancers, (425)
 at weddings you played the burlesque among the Lydians,
 twisting your voice in songs and swelling on drunken pride;
 now you watch the behaviour of virgins and consorts:
 how suspicious your virtue after your former habits!
 Simon Magus yesterday, today Peter Simon. (430)
 O the speed! O a lion instead of a fox!
 But tell me, dear friend and exactor of tributes,
 or former-something in the civil service . . .

As was the case for socioeconomic invectives, here too Gregory's attack is structured as a list of damning scenarios¹⁶⁴. The list is concerned with the credentials one has *before* one becomes bishop; in fact, the invective is part of the longer discussion on the role of sacraments in the election of bishops. It underlines Gregory's argument that the bad state of the episcopate of the time is due to a faulty selection of candidates (371–394; §3.3.2.1). From the point of view of content, it describes the swift change from a morally despicable situation to a morally admirable one, but it can also be read as an attack against the new bishop of Constantinople and Gregory's substitute, Nectarius. The common character of this passage and the following one is in the explicit derivation of a moral tarnish from some social circumstances, something we have already seen, though only implicitly, in the invectives of the former section (§5.2.1); however, here we are considering not the professional occupations of lower social classes, as was the case there, but the leisure and pastimes of the higher classes. Thus, these passages are much more apt to attack Nectarius.

The attack against Nectarius is explicitly signalled by the reference to the tax collector in II, 1, 12, 432–433. This reference is shared with the previous list (154–175), although it must be noted that in 432–433 the tax collector is not included in the catalogue proper; instead, the poet speaks directly to him (σὺ δ'εἰπέ μοι, βέλτιστε) at the

¹⁶⁴ The framing devices are the exclamations of lines 395–401 at the beginning and the exclamation of line 431 followed by the apostrophe at 432. Internally, the list is structured around the repeated contrast between adverbs meaning “before” (Xθὲς, 402; 415; 420; 425; 430; πρῶην, 405) and adverbs meaning “now” (νῦν, 404; 411; 419; 428; σήμερον, 423; 430).

beginning of the next section, as a framing device. In the previous list (154–175), the tax collector opened the catalogue of bad occupations. These two placements highlight him among the others as the focus of Gregory's invective. Therefore, McGuckin is partially justified when he concentrates on the mentions of the tax collector to interpret II, 1, 12; moreover, his reading of the tax collector as an allusion to Nectarius is certainly correct¹⁶⁵. Gregory chose to highlight this facet of Nectarius's career because the tax collector had always had a bad reputation in Christian and Greek literature. Tax collectors are known to the New Testament and mocked by comedy primarily as *τελώναι*¹⁶⁶. Gregory's *φορογράφος* (154) is a hapax, whereas the term *πράκτωρ* (432; 612), besides being the good Attic form, has less of a comic connotation and a more serious, even intimidating aura¹⁶⁷. The office is associated with dishonesty, and this feature is apparent in the treatment at II, 1, 12, 432–441¹⁶⁸: having introduced his rival as tax collector, the poet goes on to ask him how he will dare to occupy the episcopal throne after he accumulated riches in such a disreputable way.

In this context, the function of the preceding catalogue of occupations is clear: Gregory lists behaviours that have bad moral associations to introduce the case at hand, that of Nectarius. In this light one can understand also Gregory's emphasis on "speed" (*ταχεῖα μεταστροφή*, 395; *τὸ τάχος*, 431) as regards the movement from immoral occupations to the episcopate: as the following tirade against Nectarius demonstrates, the poet's problem is not so much with Nectarius's occupation per se, but with his hasty election. The catalogue in II, 1, 12, 395–433 arouses more indignation at these hastily elections. The harsh contrast between previous life and episcopal duties brings home the point that time and trying are needed to make a good prelate. The underlying message of II, 1, 12, 395–433, as well as of II, 1, 13, 100–107, is specular to that of II, 1, 12, 154–175: all three catalogues justify the idea that one should be prepared, both intellectually and morally, to assume the role of bishop and that improvisation cannot be tolerated any longer.

If, however, the jobs listed in II, 1, 12, 154–175 and II, 1, 13, 100–107 were suspect for their social class, the behaviours listed in II, 1, 12, 395–433 are damning for their moral status. Yet each damns in its own way. In this respect, two jobs stand out, the attorney (*ῥητορεύων*, 415) and the judge (*δικάζων*, 420), because they are not morally reproachable in themselves, but only if the practitioner is dishonest—as Gregory

165 McGuckin 2001a, 381–384.

166 E.g.: Mt. 9:10–11; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31; Anaxippus *frg.* 1, 40 K.; Apollod. *Car. frg.* 13, 13 K..

167 E.g.: Jes. 3:12 in the Septuaginta version; ὁ κριτής σε παραδώσει τῷ πράκτορι, καὶ ὁ πράκτωρ σε βαλεῖ εἰς φυλακὴν (Lc. 12:58); καὶ οὐκ ἔσονται μοι τῶν βαρβάρων οἱ πράκτορες φοβερώτεροι (Themist. *or.* 8, 115a 4).

168 Ancient disdain towards tax collectors is demonstrated by Aspasia's definition of greedy people: καὶ τίνες εἰσὶν οἱ κατὰ τὴν λήψιν ὑπερβάλλοντες· εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ πανταχόθεν ἀξιοῦντες λαμβάνειν καὶ μηδὲν κέρδος αἰσχρὸν νομίζοντες, οἷον πορνοβοσκοὶ καὶ τελῶναι καὶ οἱ κατὰ μικρὰ δανείζοντες καὶ ἐπὶ πολλῷ τόκῳ πάντα γὰρ οὗτοι αἰσχροκερεῖς (Aspas. in *Aristot. eth. Nic.* 102, 19–22).

describes these examples to be. Indeed, these jobs were part of the world of the elites, who occupied most such posts¹⁶⁹. Their negative features are commonplace, too. The judge is here represented as corrupt and violent. As regards corruption (Τὸ βῆμ' ἐποίεις ἔννομον ληστήριον, 421), this image had been a classic since Hesiod¹⁷⁰. It was occasionally employed as a motif of slander or a real accusation to attack a political enemy¹⁷¹. In late antiquity, the corruption of judges was widespread, passively accepted even if theoretically deemed immoral¹⁷². For example, Palladas repeatedly accuses the *praefectus Aegypti* Damonicus—who was also supreme judge of Egypt—with the participle κλέπτων¹⁷³. In the Bible, favouritism and corruption are the sins most commonly associated with judges¹⁷⁴. The judge is also represented as dreadful and violent (σὺν ξίφει γυμνουμένω, 420), which agrees with contemporary reality, with its pervasive use of torture¹⁷⁵. This connotation of the judge is found in the Bible, where sometimes God's judgement is symbolised by the sword¹⁷⁶. It is also interesting to compare the description of the fugitive slave in II, 1, 12, 165–170 and that of the corrupt judge in 420–422: both end up “stealing” (κλέψαντες) through bullying (τυραννικῶς, 169; τυραννῶν, 422). That a slave would be dishonest is no surprise by itself, and the judges, as we have seen, also had a bad reputation, but the poem, through these lexical echoes, enhances the coincidence of theological preparation (which the slave lacks) and moral worth (which the corrupt judge lacks). In this way, socioeconomic invectives acquire a moral undertone, and at the same time they can be applied—even against the appearances of social success—to Nectarius.

Gregory represents the barrister as unnaturally perverting the laws through his words (στρέφων ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω, 416)¹⁷⁷. The injustice of professional barristers was notorious in late antiquity¹⁷⁸, but the trope goes back to Old Comedy and fourth-century orators, to the time when professional formation in public speaking (resulting in

169 Jones 1964, 479–484, 507, 510–515.

170 αὐτίκα γὰρ τρέχει Ὀρκος ἅμα σκολιῇσι δίκῃσιν / τῆς δὲ Δίκης ρόθος ἐλκομένης ἢ κ' ἄνδρες ἄγωσι / δωροφάγοι, σκολιῆς δὲ δίκης κρίνωσι θέμιστας· . . . ταῦτα φυλασσόμενοι, βασιλῆς, ἰθύνετε μύθους, / δωροφάγοι, σκολιέων δὲ δικέων ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθεσθε. (Hesiod. *op.* 219–221; 263–264). Athenian comedy writers, though lawcourts are a big concern of their plays, do not lament corruption as a problem, since juries were popular and their system lacked any professional of law (Wohl 2014, 323–324).

171 Kelly 2012, 386.

172 Harries 1999, 153–171; Jones 1964, 496; Gregory's oxymoron is telling: Τὸ βῆμ' ἐποίεις ἔννομον ληστήριον, (II, 1, 12, 421).

173 *Anth. Gr.* 11, 283, 4–6; 285, 2–3; Jones/Martindale/Morris 1971, 242; Jones 1961, 479.

174 Ex. 23:26; Lev. 19:15; Dtn. 1:16–17; 23:2–3; 1Reg. 8:32; Jes. 1:23; 5:23; 10:1; Amos 5:12; 6:12; Mich. 3:11; 7:3; Prov. 6:19; 12:17; 18:15; 2Chron. 19:7.

175 Harries 1999, 156–158; Jones 1961, 519–520; cf. Brown's parallelism between process and exorcism at Brown 1981, 108–111.

176 Dtn. 25:2; Mt. 5:25; sword: Dtn. 32:41–42; Jes. 34:5–6.

177 Cf. Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1654, s.v. στρέφω II.

178 Jones 1964, 496; Agath. *Anth. Gr.* 11, 350.

παρασκευή, “preparation”) was at its beginning and looked upon with suspicion¹⁷⁹; Pal-ladas, like Gregory, highlights the venality of lawyers but also describes a judge as a sophist¹⁸⁰.

Incidentally, judge and attorney are also the only unequivocally professional activities listed, because in all other cases Gregory describes participation in disreputable activities without clarifying if the person described is effectively exercising the activity as his job. Indeed, μίμων καὶ θεάτρων ἐν μέσῳ (402) may mean direct participation as well as fruition, but the expression νῦν αὐτὸς at 404 seems to imply that the subject was spectator before, spectacle now. Φίλιππος (405) and the third-person πίπτων τις ἀρματηλάτης (407) exclude the possibility that the satirised person is firsthand chariot-ing, but whether Gregory has in mind a spectator or an investor in games is unclear¹⁸¹. Ῥητορεύων (415) and δικάζων (420), on the other hand, define the activity of the subject; finally, ἐστρέφου (425) and following verbs describe direct involvement, but given the occasion (γάμων), it is unclear whether these words refer to a professional involvement or simply participation in the festivities as a guest. The reason is that the common thread of the list is not so much profession but participation in all the paramount occasions of civic life that, in Christian thought, were notorious for their immorality: the theatre, the circus, the court, and wedding feasts¹⁸². Some of these occasions were scorned also by pagan authors, but the true insult here lies in the description of these activities in a way that could be universally damning in contemporary society.

As regards the theatre, Gregory's rival is too engaged in the show, going so far as to share the habits of theatre professionals *outside* the stage (402–403). Performers of mime and pantomime (the most widespread forms of theatre in late antiquity) were the subject of prejudice, especially as regarded their ambiguous sexuality and an alleged promiscuity outside the stage¹⁸³. The circus elicits emotional reactions that are unbecoming in an educated man, and Gregory describes an excessive show of rage for a

179 Cf. Aristoph. *Ach.* 676–718; Cratinus *frg.* 197 K.; Andoc. 1, 1; Lys. *or.* 19, 2; Isaeus 4, 5; 8, 5.

180 Venality: cf. τὰς δίκας ἀπημπόλεις (II, 1, 12, 415) with *Anth. Gr.* 10, 48; sophistry: Ἐπεὶ δικάζεις καὶ σοφιστεύεις λόγοις, *Anth. Gr.* 10, 92, 1.

181 Meier 1989, 118.

182 The classic treatment of the social significance of spectacles in Antiquity is Veyne 1976 but see also Cameron 1976; Potter 1999. The difficult relationship of early Christianity with the shows has been thoroughly studied: Veyne 2009, 479–558 (on gladiators); Lugaresi 2008; Weismann 1972; Jürgens 1927. On mime and theatre in particular: Webb 2008, 139–216. Condemnations of dance are relevant both for the bad fame of theatre shows and of wedding feasts: Meier 1989, 120–121; Webb 2008, 26, 180. On the wariness of the Christians towards secular courts: Τολμᾷ τις ὑμῶν πρᾶγμα ἔχων πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον κρίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων; ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἅγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινούσιν; καὶ εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος, ἀνάξιοί ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων (1Cor. 6:1–2); Harries 1999, 191–192.

183 Webb 2008, 139–167; Meier 1989, 117. Leppin 1992, 160–168 is also useful, because it explains the apparent ambiguity of Western Roman attitudes towards actors and performers as a consequent strategy of integration and preservation of the social order.

defeat in the circus (405–410)¹⁸⁴. There is a wealth of parallel texts from the same time period, highlighting the visible reactions of the public at the circus¹⁸⁵. This insistence is due to the powerful etiquette of the late antique elites, proscribing any excessive show of emotions, most of all of rage, which was also considered a sign of unmanliness¹⁸⁶. The attorney and the judge take on the worst traits of their profession, cunning amorality and dreadful and violent greed (415–424). Finally, participation in wedding feasts is marked by unmanly dances and excessive drinking (425–428). Gregory's description is rich with connotations: the χορευταῖς θηλυδρίαις (425) imply the perversion of natural gender roles, expressed also with the verb ἐστρέφω, which hints at something more than the simple movements of the dance, echoing the perversion of law by the attorney (στρέφω, 416). The same connotation is carried by the verb λυγίζω in 427. Meier also cites Aristoph. *ran.* 775 (τῶν ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν), an application of these two verbs to the realm of rhetoric¹⁸⁷. Indeed, in Aristophanes the new rhetoric was often associated with sexually licentious and gender-bending behaviours¹⁸⁸. This would even more strongly link the unmanly show put on by the would-be bishop in line 425–428 with the perversion of laws by the attorney in line 416. Again, Meier correctly identifies the denotative sense of the “Lydians” (Λυδαῖς) in 427 as referring to female flute players, but he fails to notice the connotation of decadent luxury associated with the Lydians in Greek literature¹⁸⁹. The transmitted κόρδαξ nicely plays in this connotation, through its link with theatre, drunkenness, and obscenity¹⁹⁰. One of the common threads of all these insults is Gregory's undermining of the virility of his adversary: theatre life, excessive venting of rage, crookery through rhetoric, and finally effeminate dancing are not only behaviours contrary to propriety; they signal in the mind of late antique males a serious defect of masculinity, such as to render a man unsuitable to public life, as well as to the clergy, since canon 1 of Nicaea forbade churches to consecrate eunuchs.

¹⁸⁴ Meier 1989, 118.

¹⁸⁵ τηλόθεν ἔσκοπίαζον ἐπειγομένων δρόμον ἵππων / ὣν ὁ μὲν εἰστίκει πεφοβημένος, ὃς δὲ τινάσσων / δάκτυλον ἄκρον ἔσειεν ἐπισπέρχων ἐλατῆρα, / ἄλλος ἀμιλλητῆρι πόθῳ δεδονημένος ἵππων / ἵππομανῇ νόον εἶχεν ὁμόδρομον ἡνιοχῆος / καὶ τις ἐοῦ προκέλευθον ἰδὼν δρόμον ἡνιοχῆος / χερσὶν ἐπεπλάταγχε καὶ ἴαχε θυιάδι φωνῇ / θαρσύνων, γελῶν, τρομέων, ἐλατῆρι κελεύων. (Nonn. *Dion.* 37, 269–278); λαοῖς δ' ἔμπεσε λύσσα· καὶ ἦρισαν ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλῳ, / συνθεσίας τεύχοντες ἀτεκμάρτου περὶ νίκης / ἔσσομένης· τὰ δὲ δῶρα θυελλοπόδων χάριν ἵππων / ἢ τρίπος ἢ ἐλέβης ἢ φάσγανον ἢ βοεῖν / καὶ ναέτης ναετῆρι, φίλος δ' ἐρίδανεν ἑταίρω, / γηραλέος δὲ γέροντι, νέψ νεός, ἀνέρι δ' ἀνῆρ. (439–444); Greg. *Naz. or.* 43, 15, 4; Greg. *Nyss. vit. Moys.* 1.

¹⁸⁶ Brown 2008, 10–12; Brown 1992, 48–58.

¹⁸⁷ Meier 1989, 120.

¹⁸⁸ See the texts mentioned at Hubbard 2007, 493–495.

¹⁸⁹ Meier 1989, 120; Gazzano 2017, 42–44, with notes; Herodt. 1, 94, 1 says that the only tradition distinguishing Lydians and Greeks is that Lydians prostitute their daughters.

¹⁹⁰ On the problem posed by this word, see Meier 1989, 120; I concur with Rossi 2022 in believing the transmitted text to be correct and that Gregory took the word κόρδαξ not as referring to the dance, but to the dancer.

Yet this is only one-half of the scorn: these already insulting remarks are contrasted, one by one, with the countenance and functions that the bishop should take, so that the insults serve the wider point of highlighting the inadequacy of candidates with those features, vividly and with a moralistic connotation. In this respect, the images evoked at the beginning of the passage are very significant: Gregory is apparently astonished by the sudden change of character in the candidates he is going to describe (ὦ τῆς ταχείας τῶν τρόπων μεταστροφῆς!, 395), but in reality he knows full well how these changes are illusory, since they are described as masks and dice, two notoriously unstable objects. The mask signals that though inthronisation may happen in a few moments, the depths of the new bishop's heart are not prepared for his task, which is to him something external and false and something that dissimulates his true nature. The metaphor of the clothing in 423–424 (οὐδ' ἐσθῆτά τις / οὕτως ἀμείβει ῥαδίως, ὥς σὺ τρόπους) has the same function. The dice, on the other hand, see the situation from the point of view of those who must select new bishops; speed is still an element (throwing dice is quicker than looking carefully for a good candidate), but here it is particularly important to note the low esteem Gregory has for “random” methods of selection, although the church accepted them (§3.3). Another important clue is the recurring proverb on Saul prophesying¹⁹¹. The very same harsh contrasts involved in the following catalogue serve to debunk this apparent change of character. The concept is then recapitulated in the two concluding lines (II, 1, 12, 430–431).

Therefore, Gregory plays with the contrast between the insults and the description of the bishop's functions. “Theatres and mimes” (μίμων καὶ θεάτρων, 402) contrast with the “strange spectacle” (ξένη θεωρία, 404) of the new bishop, completely unapt to his role. This way, the poet hints at the almost theatrical role of the bishop during the liturgy or at his function as an example (§2.2.3). The “dust” (κόνιν, 405) furiously thrown contrasts with “prayers and pious thoughts” (εὐχὰς ἢ νοήματ' εὐσεβῆ, 406), both ironically moving upwards as offerings to God; thus, the neurotic downfall of the horse-fanatic, mirroring the fall of his favourite, contrasts with the bishop's appearance of decorum and restraint (πίπτων τις ἀρματηλάτης . . . ἐκ φρενῶν πεσόντι καὶ μεμνηότι / νῦν εὐσταλῆς τις καὶ βλέπων αἰδῶ μόνην, 407; 410–411). The same bishop, however, is still addicted to the races, so much that he “runs” to them as they had run before (ἵππος ἐν δρόμοις . . . πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον δράμοις, 408; 412). Even the metaphor of the fresh sapling is expressed in terms of running (ἐκφυγῶν βίαν . . . εἰς ταῦτόν τρέχει, 413–414). “Prayers and thoughts” in this context (εὐχὰς, νοήματα) may hint both at the bishop's liturgical role and at his mystical mediation, a theme Gregory often underlines with the word νοήματα (see §2.1.3.1; §3.1.2; §3.2.3.3). The relationship of the dishonest lawyer with justice (δίκας, 415; δίκη, 417; στάθμη δικαία, 418) is turned upside-down when he becomes a bishop and is sarcastically compared with the just judge par excellence, Daniel (δικαστῆς καὶ Δανυήλ τις, 419). The judge in the space of one day changes from a dreadful bully to a lovable

¹⁹¹ See II, 1, 12, 401; II, 1, 13, 99 and §2.1.2.1 n. 48.

person (σὺν ξίφει γυμνουμένῳ, 420, vs. ὡς ἡμέρὸς μοι σήμερον, 423). Lawyer and judge serve to remind readers that the bishop too has juridical responsibilities (§3.1.1), and the stress respectively on justice and mildness echoes the idea of reconciling justice and mercy in judgement (§3.1.4.2). The role of σωφρονιστῆς (428) contrasts both with sexually relaxed behaviour (ἐν χορευταῖς ἐστρέφου θελυδρίαις, Λυδαῖς ἐν μέσαις, λυγίζων, 425–427) and with the wantonness induced by excessive drinking (πότοις γαυρούμενος, 427). However, it also confirms the episcopal role of disciplinarian (§3.1.4) and of guardian of the ascetics (§3.2). The whole rhetorical procedure is summed up in the “jewel” line 430: Σίμων Μάγος χθές, σήμερον Πέτρος Σίμων.

In this tirade, again, we find an example of Gregory's three-pronged literary strategy. The jabs against the past activities of bishops are all constructed as an inversion of the ideal bishop and his activities, but at the same time they are strongly connected with Nectarius through the theme of hasty ordinations and, therefore, with Gregory's biography. Thus, personal invective, the formulation of an ideal, and the wider invective against the episcopate are all connected.

The other passage, II, 1, 12, 610–630, is another good demonstration of this strategy, since its invective sets a counterexample to the ideal ascetic-bishop of the preceding lines (576–609; §3.2.2), while at the same time attacking Nectarius, Gregory's real life rival:

Τοιαῦτα κάλλη καὶ σύ μοι φράζειν τὰ σά· (610)

Οἶκος, γυνὴ σφριγῶσα, τεκνίων πόθος,
Κτήσις, κελευσταί, πράκτορες, βοαί, δίκαι,
Ἀπαντα μεστὰ φροντίδων καὶ πραγμάτων·
Treal-lifeεγμαιίνουσα τῶν ἐδωδῖμων

Ταῖς ὀψοποιῶν καὶ κερασμάτων πλοκαῖς (615)

Γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καρποφορούντων ἐντέροις
(Ἐξ ὧν ὁ νοῦς βαπτίζεται· οὐδ' ἔχει πλάτος),
Μύροις, γέλωσι, ψαλμάτων συναυλίας,
Οἷς κυμβάλων δεῖ καὶ ποδὸς ψοφημάτων.

Ἄλλοι δὲ λύσσης ἔμπλεοι τῆς συμφύτου, (620)

Νοσοῦντες, οἰδαίνοντες, ἐστιλβωμένοι
Γυναιξίν, ἄρτι νυμφίοι, τὸ μέτριον,
Οὕτω λύσαντες παστάδας γαμηλίους
ἢ καὶ πόθοις συζῶντες ἀζύγοις ἔτι

Πρὶν καὶ παρειὰν ἀνδρικῶς κοσμήματι, (625)

Θριξίν, καλύψαι, παντελῶς ἀρτίχνοοι,
Νέοι τὸ σῶμα, τὸν τρόπον νεώτεροι,

Ἦ καὶ παλαιῶν ἡμερῶν πλήρεις κακῶν,
Ἐπειτ' ἀσάρκων εἰσὶ τέκνων προστάται,

Ἀ πνεῦμα τίκτει σαρκὸς ἐξενωμένον . . . (630)

(II, 1, 12, 610–630)

Show me, prithee, such beautiful things among yours! (610)
 A house, a plump woman, desire of children,
 wealth, butlers, exactors, cries, lawsuits,
 everything full of worries and works;
 a table swollen with provisions
 by the combinations of drinks and cooks, (615)
 who bring their fruit to guts by sea and by land
 (by which the mind is drowned and loses scope)
 and by perfumes, laughter, consorts of tunes
 that need cymbals and noise of feet.
 Others then, filled with the folly of nature, (620)
 addicted and swelling, all spruced up
 for women, just married—to say the least—
 having still to open the bridal chamber
 or even living together with their lovers still unmarried,
 even before their cheek is covered with beard, (625)
 the ornament of men, just in their prime,
 young in the body, younger in the behaviour,
 or, on the contrary, laden with vices of days past,
 these are the leaders of not-carnal children,
 whom the Spirit, averse to flesh, begets, (630)

This passage shares the same context as II, 1, 12, 395–433, in that both are part of the longer discussion on the role of sacraments in bishops' elections, and another common point is that both attack would-be bishops for their engagement in elite life. The difference is that, while lines 395–433 are concerned with the public occasions of elite life, such as theatre, hippodrome, and weddings, lines 610–630 stigmatise private matters: if the former passage opened with the keyword *πρόσωπον* (397), the latter pushes the *οἶκος* (611) in the limelight.

Two characters of this invective are worth highlighting. First—and this is important for identifying in Nectarius the direct aim of the lines—this is the description of no common house or family, but rather of a decidedly high-class one. This is demonstrated by the reference to riches (*κτῆσις*, 612). This *κτῆσις* is no mere little property if it requires such legal and fiscal efforts (*πράκτορες*, *βοαί*, *δίκαι*, 612) and even a degree of delegation (the *κελευσταί*) to be maintained, which engenders preoccupations (*φροντίδων*, 613) in its owner; the recourse to formal litigations (*δίκαι*), in particular, was practically reserved to the higher classes, given the amount of corruption and the time required by these proceedings¹⁹². The other signal of high social class is the description of a lavish banquet: fancy and abundant food, imported from all over the world (614–616),

¹⁹² Similarly, Synesius asks to be spared from the preoccupations that go with excessive riches as well as those linked to poverty: *μή μοι χθονίους / ὁμβρους ἀφένου / κρίνειας, ἀναξ, / ἵνα μὴ τὰ θεοῦ/ ἄσυχος εἶην· / μὴδὲ κατηφῆς / πενία μελάνθροισ / ἐγγριμπτομένα / περὶ γὰν ἔλκοι / φροντίδα θυμοῦ. / ἄμφω ψυχὰν / βρίθει περὶ γὰν, / ἄμφω δὲ νόου / ἐπίληθα πέλει, / ὅτε μὴ σὺ, μάκαρ, / ὀρέγοις ἀλκάν* (Synes. *hymn.* 1, 512–527). On the costs of justice: Jones 1964, 499.

perfumes, music and dance (618–619) are the ingredients of a premium quality symposium, one the commoner could hardly afford himself. Since Nectarius was a civil servant and a senator, these descriptions work very well against him. Moreover, they balance the previous invective against low-class jobs (154–175): if three-D's jobs and their practitioners certainly lack the skills necessary to lead a community and often also lack the moral worth to receive the Holy Orders, it is also true that the public and private life of contemporary elites are morally bankrupt from a Christian point of view. Therefore, class alone is by no means a guarantee of worthiness; much to the contrary, taken by itself it is a clue of immorality.

The second element of interest here is the sense in which the private life of higher classes is immoral. In this question, the context plays a key role: before the passage at 610–630 there was the portrait of the ideal ascetic, and right after it the reference to the bishop's role as head of the ascetics in his community (§3.2; here, 629–633). In this respect, 610–630 work much the same as 395–433, in that they overturn one of the bishop's tasks in describing the inadequate candidate. In fact, the private life of the late antique rich man is portrayed as the perfect opposite of ascetic values. If fasting and the kind of nourishment enjoyed by the ascetic were of the utmost importance for Gregory, so also the culinary possibilities elite life offers are one of his main criticisms¹⁹³. Indeed, excess in food and drink work on the mind (*νοῦς*) in a diametrically opposite way to asceticism, effecting a downward movement as opposed to the ascending one of contemplation¹⁹⁴. The perfume of the rich contrasts with the nudity of the ascetic, the laughter of the one with the other's tears, the mundane songs and dances of the former with the psalm singing of the latter¹⁹⁵. Furthermore, the rich man is always preoccupied with money, whereas the ascetic, having renounced money, is preoccupied only with Scripture¹⁹⁶. Finally, Gregory evaluates sexuality cautiously: chastity did not figure prominently in his ascetic portrayal, and accordingly, his usage of attributes in the description of elite life shows that he considered marriage a problem only under certain condi-

193 Cf. Τράπεζα φλεγμαίνουσα τῶν ἐδωδίων / Ταῖς ὀψοποιῶν καὶ κερασμάτων πλοκαῖς / Γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καρποφορούντων ἐντέροις (II, 1, 12, 614–616) with (τί γὰρ τάφοις δεῖ εἰσφέρειν τὸν χοῦν ὅλον, / Σκώληξί τ' εἶναι δαψιλεστέραν τροφὴν, / Γεννῶντα, καὶ τρέφοντα τοὺς γεννωμένους;) / ... Καὶ γαστρὸς ὕβριν ἐνδεεῖ καθύβρισε / Τροφῇ, τὸ θνήσκειν μνώμενος καθ' ἡμέραν. / Τροφὴν γὰρ οἶδεν ἀγγέλων ἀπλὴν Θεόν. (580–582; 591–593) and καὶ μάζῃ στενῇ / Βίον γλυκαίνονθ' (74–75). For this and the following notes, cf. §3.2.2.

194 Cf. Εἶς ὢν ὁ νοῦς βαπτίζεται, οὐδ' ἔχει πλάτος (II, 1, 12, 617) with Καὶ νοῦ πρὸς ὕψος ἐκ πάχους ἐκδημία (579).

195 Cf. Μύροις, γέλωσι, ψαλμάτων συνουλίαις, / Οἷς κυμβάλων δεῖ καὶ ποδὸς ψοφημάτων (II, 1, 12, 618–619) with Οὗτος χαμεύνης, καὶ κόνει βεβρωμένος, / Καὶ σάρκας ἐξέτηξεν ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, / Ψαλμωδίας τε καὶ στάσει νυχθημέρῳ / ... Καὶ δακρύων ἔσμηξε πηγαῖς τοὺς σπύλους / ... Οὗτος τὸ καλὸν σῶμα (πῶς γὰρ οὐ καλὸν / Τὸ τῶν ἀρίστων) μαργάροις συνέκλεισε, / Δεσμοῖς σιδηροῖς, λαθρίῳ κοσμήματι (576–578: 583; 602–604).

196 Cf. Κτήσις, κελυσταί, πράκτορες, βοαί, δίκαι, / Ἀπαντα μεστὰ φροντίδων καὶ πραγμάτων (II, 1, 12, 612–613) with Οὗτος πένις νῦν, ἦν δ' ὅτε ζάπλουτος ἦν / Ἄλλ' ἐκβολὴν ἔστερξε, καὶ κοῦφος πλέει, / Ῥίψας πένησιν, οὐ βυθῶ, τὸ φορτίον. (595–597) and Καὶ νοῦ μερίμναις, ἐν θεοπνεύστοις Γραφαῖς (57).

tions, mainly unrestrained sexual passion¹⁹⁷. The detail of the τεκνίων πόθος (611) is another jab at the aristocratic nature of these vices, because those who had riches and a social position had to be much more concerned about its continuance in the future; indeed, procreation implied the preservation of power as much as the condescending to passion, so that the “desire of offspring” was an important aim of the more subversive tendencies of late antique asceticism, to which the Cappadocians were all but alien¹⁹⁸.

One last observation on this passage in 610–630 is that the hedonism so obviously associated with the upper class is then mirrored in more general invectives on the immorality of bishops, without regard for precise socioeconomic facets. To such invectives I shall presently turn, after a brief summary of Nectarius’s figure in the poem, or, more correctly, the lack thereof. Indeed, Gregory’s archrival for the throne of Constantinople is ever present behind the poet’s considerations on the ideal bishop and his invectives against bad ones, and yet Nectarius does not appear as an individual character in the poems. In the narrative passages, the bishops are described and act as a choral character, causing Gregory’s downfall. On the contrary, Nectarius not only is never named, but he does not appear even as an actor or a described individual. The two pieces of invective more clearly relatable to him, which I have just analysed, are formally second-person accusations: if ever, Nectarius appears as the formal addressee of Gregory’s tirades. This direct character of the invectives and their enumerative form conspire to elude the fixity of a πρόσωπον, of a literary personality beyond the shallow masks of the stereotyped good bishop and of the bad candidate. For these reasons, and differently from Gregory’s own self-writing, Nectarius appears in the poems not as a narrative or descriptive entity, but as an exclusively rhetorical one, as the real-life and internal aim of Gregory’s attacks. His individuality is not immediately clear from the hail of scathing remarks from the poet; rather, the reader must reconstruct that identity, knowing the real-world referents of those remarks, mainly the senatorial rank and past civil service of Nectarius. He is alluded to more than referenced. From this literary construction it may be argued that Gregory’s intended audience knew perfectly well Nectarius’s profile and knew what to do with Gregory’s attacks. The very same Nectarius, if he came to know the poem addressing him directly, could recognise himself in Gregory’s generic interlocutor, although the poet had reserved to himself a space of plausible deniability.

¹⁹⁷ See γυνή σφριγῶσα, τεκνίων πόθος (II, 1, 12, 611); λύσης ἔμπλεοι τῆς συμφύτου, / Νοσοῦντες, οἰδαίνοντες, ἐστὶ λβωμένοι / Γυναιξίν, ἄρτι νυμφίοι, τὸ μέτριον, / Οὕπῳ λύσαντες παστάδας γαμηλίου / ἢ καὶ πόθοις συζῶντες ἀζύγοις (620–622). More on these lines in the next section.

¹⁹⁸ Brown 2008, 32, 285–304. Cf. the τεκνίων πόθος of II, 1, 12, 611 with Ποθὼν λαβεῖν ἔνδυμα τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν at 591, which plays out perfectly the contrast between sexual desire as a means of procreation and so of biological victory over death and the ascetic desire to win death in Christ (here expressed with the Syrian metaphor of clothing, ἔνδυμα). This contrast is the defining character of the Cappadocian view of sexuality according to Brown.

After all, Gregory himself admits obliquely to the allusive nature of his attacks twice at II, 1, 12, 21–32 and 809–810¹⁹⁹. These passages, significantly located at the beginning and at the end of II, 1, 12, are the hermeneutical key to Gregory's invectives. Just as the poet declares that he won't name names, instead addressing his remarks only to the bad bishops, he compels us to find the real people alluded to by the impersonal lists of vices and sins, without tying his own hands to a particular interpretation. Moreover, the preemptive defence that those who will be offended are thereby admitting their fault serves to quench the likely opposition to his program and his version of the events of 381; through it, Gregory compels his opponents to consider him a truthful witness and a trustworthy advisor; otherwise, they will become the object of his not-so-anonymous invectives.

On the other side, the invectives also have a generic significance for the episcopate. When taken in the context of the poems, the catalogic invectives we have examined until now highlight once more the basic dialectic of Gregory's discourse on the episcopate, that between charisma and competence. This dialectic animated Gregory's discussion of Christian culture (§3.1.3.3), which began with the problem of the incompetence of bishops but also refused to acquiesce to the mechanisms of the secular elite network as embodied in its education, *paideia*. Similarly, his discussion of the selection procedure (§3.3.2.1), while it marks a strong departure from the charismatic conceptions current in the church, also preserves the orthodox view of sacraments against pagan criticisms. The two invectives of II, 1, 12 (in 154–175 and 395–433) serve indeed as introduction to those two discussions; therefore, they reproduce or anticipate that same dialectic. Gregory's classism, so clear in 154–175 as well as in II, 1, 13, 100–107, has no positive counterpart in the upper classes, since those too are belittled in comparison to the episcopal office. Among the immoral occupations in II, 1, 12, 395–433, the severe judge and the eloquent attorney stand side by side with the effeminate actor and the lascivious flute player. According to Gregory's formulation, it is not so much the initial condition that poses a problem; in other words, it is not as if to have been humble or immoral, per se, disqualifies a person from the bishop's office. Instead, the poet disapproves of the speed of the passage from one condition to the other and objects to the number of people passing through. Both catalogues of II, 1, 12 highlight the speed with which humble or immoral people reached the episcopal dignity²⁰⁰. The idea of speed

199 Οὐ γὰρ ὀνομαστὶ τοὺς λόγους ποιήσομαι, / Τοῦ μὴ δοκεῖν ἐλέγχειν ἃ κρύπτειν χρεών. / Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πάντων ἐξ ἴσης μεμνήσομαι /—Μή μοι τοσοῦτον ἐκδρομήσειε στόμα—, / Πολλοὺς γὰρ οἶδα καὶ λόγου τοῦ κρείσσονος / Ἀλλ' ὅστις ἐν κακοῖς τε καὶ κακῶν πέρα, / Οὗτος κρατεῖσθω καὶ δαμαζέσθω τὰ νῦν. / Τεμεῖ τοῦ χειρόν ἢ μάχαιρα τοῦ λόγου. / Τί τοῦτο; δείξεις· ἂν μάχη πρὸς τὸν λόγον, / Σαυτοῦ προδήλως ἐκφανῇ κατήγορος. / Τὸ δ' οὖν ἐμὸν τοιοῦτο· βαλλέτω με πᾶς / Πόρρωθέν εἰμι τοῖς λίθοις ἡρμοσμένος (II, 1, 12, 21–32); Ταῦτα πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοὺς κακοὺς ὑπὲρ καλῶν / Οἷς εἴ τις ἄχθεθ', εὖρεν ὃν ζητεῖ λόγος (II, 1, 12, 809–810).

200 ἄνω τρέχουσι κάνθαροι πρὸς οὐρανόν (II, 1, 12, 170); ὦ τῆς ταχείας τῶν τρόπων μεταστροφῆς (395); κωμικὸν πρόσωπον ἀθρόως τεθέν (397); χθές (402; 415; 420; 425; 430); Δανιήλ τις ἀθρόως (419); Φεῦ τοῦ τάχους! φεῦ, ἀντ' ἁλώπεκος λέων! (431).

is less explicit in the first passage (154–175), but the references to the signs that past occupations left on the bishops who had practiced them suggest, all the same, a rushed election²⁰¹. The herald's discourse of II, 1, 13, instead, attacks the great number of people aspiring to the episcopate, which is a sign of faulty selection.

Now, speed is an important factor of charisma, because those who have quickly risen to authority from unlikely backgrounds cannot justify that authority either through tradition or reason; they must claim something else—namely, any form of charisma recognised by their followers. This is even more important in Christianity, because one of its core narratological elements is indeed the unlikely and sudden reversal of fate, the conversion or the transformation of the highest into the most abject and vice versa²⁰². The perfect paradigm of such oscillations is the very model of every bishop—namely, St. Paul, who becomes a pillar of the church after being a fierce persecutor, thanks to an unexpected vision²⁰³. Conversion and reversal of fate, from abjection to glory, are connected in Paul's self-presentation as an abortion (ἐκτρωμα), and then continued in his preaching: the scandal of the cross, which is at the basis of Paul's preaching, represents another form of this paradox²⁰⁴. In such a context, Gregory's invectives are very embarrassing, as he himself admits by discussing the career of the apostles (II, 1, 12, 192–264) and the conversion of Zacchaeus (II, 1, 12, 454–464), two episodes among the many in the New Testament that may have been used against his argument.

The theme of the great number in II, 1, 13 is more difficult to link to charisma, if one assumes this to be something unique or rare that marks out single leaders from the masses. However, the point here is not the claim of charisma and power, but the situation such claims create: if everyone wants to be bishop, then nobody will obey the bishops. In other words, Gregory wants to damn the idea of hasty ordination by tying it to the risk of anarchy. Now, charismatic communities do tend towards egalitarianism, whereas hierarchy often forms later²⁰⁵. The church of Acts, in particular, had egalitarian elements. Paradigmatic of this attitude is the opening of Peter's speech in Acts 2, right after the Pentecost, where he quotes extensively from the prophet Joel: Peter equates the church born on Pentecost with the eschatological Israel, in which all the people

201 οὕτω... ἐκνευμένοι (II, 1, 12, 164); πρὶν καὶ τὸ τίμημ' εἰσενεγκεῖν δεσπόταις (166).

202 Averincev 1988, 117–120; Auerbach 2015, 44–46, 48; Ratzinger 2000, 239–241.

203 Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:6; Act. 9.

204 ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡς περὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὥφθη κάμοι. Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων ὃς οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος, διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ· χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμέ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί (1Cor. 15:8–10). On the scandal of the cross: 1Cor. 1:17–25; 2:1–5; 2:13–15; 1Thess. 1:5. This imagery deeply influenced Christian culture into the Middle Ages: Averincev 1988, 287–299.

205 Weber 1922, 141, 144–145.

have faculty to prophesy (and therefore to teach)²⁰⁶. Ephrem confronted the idea of a collective magisterium at CN 19, 7:

ܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܡܢܬܐ	ܡܢ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܡܢܬܐ
ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ
ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ
ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ
ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ
ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ	ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ

(CN 19, 7)

Ephrem's position is not entirely clear, because it brings together two slightly contradictory Bible passages, Num. 11 and Num. 17. Num. 11, the episode of Eldad and Medad, endorses decentralised prophecy, whereas Num. 17, the story of Korah and Dathan, seems to criticise it. Since Moses in the previous stanza (CN 19, 6) was the type of Valgash (and Joshua of Abraham), I take Ephrem to mean that he advises Abraham to treat eventual dissent as Valgash did (§4.2), with kindness and comprehension if it stays within the community and does not put hierarchy in discussion, but to exclude those who claim positions on the basis of charisma. Similarly to Ephrem, Gregory defends against the dangers of charisma primarily by reference Old Testament and pagan models, eschewing the egalitarian church of the New Testament²⁰⁸.

Gregory's literary strategy consists in highlighting these contrasts: charisma against competence, low-class against educated, the abject called to the highest office, and so on. The function of these contrasts, however, is radically different from the function of such contrasts in the New Testament. First, Gregory moves to and fro in these dialectics in order to find a synthesis; for example, as regards teaching (§3.1.3.3), a new, distinctively Christian and ascetic, culture should characterise the bishops; as regards selection (§3.3.2.1), Gregory reinforces the previous idea, comparing the bishop to professionals rather than civil authorities and charismatic teachers. Thus, by manipulating the extremes, Gregory can present his preferred solution as the "middle way". This strategy is a fundamental feature of his way of thinking, as other scholars have already observed in regard to Trinitarian doctrine and the contrast between active and contemplative life²⁰⁹. No doubt, the strategy has rational advantages, in that it allows for correcting the faults of one position with the virtues of its opposite; but it also has a very practical political value. Through this approach, Gregory can relegate his rivals to the

²⁰⁶ καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ θεός, ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα, καὶ προφητεῦσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὁράσεις διψονταὶ καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνυπνίοις ἐνυπνιασθήσονται (Act. 2:17=Joel 3:1).

²⁰⁷ "The love of Moses abides in you, / whose love is a love of discernment, // and whose zeal is a zeal of understanding; / when Korah and Dathan split away, // earth split apart below them, / and with a split a split was ended; // through Eldad and Medad was known, / that all his will is this, // that all his people prophesy. / **Blessed is he who was pleased in his will!**"

²⁰⁸ On Old Testament types in II, 1, 13 see the analysis at §3.3.2.2.

²⁰⁹ §3.1.1.3 n. 52.

extremes, while rallying support to the centre for his position—one wonders how much this attitude was influenced by Constantius's strategy in dealing with the Arian crisis, which took place when Gregory was still young²¹⁰. In the particular case of our poems, the two extremes are quite naturally Nectarius and Maximus, variously represented to fit into the narrative more suitable to our poet.

Finally, in these catalogues the contrast between abjection (either social or moral) and excellence also has the function of scandalising the audience. The catalogues multiply, insist on, and enrich this contrast to elicit a primal reaction of disgust. This primal reaction is not contradicted by the ensuing synthesis, which exists in fact to correct that previous state of affairs. The emotional motor of Gregory's proposal for the episcopate is indeed the disgust these catalogues convey. This usage of the contrast between abject and excellent goes against typically Christian attitudes and is more coherent from the point of view of Greco-Roman antiquity. It has, in other words, a truly iambic quality. Yet this means, from a literary point of view, that Gregory's poetic is still that of classical literature: a slave who wants to teach the truth about God is something to laugh about, not an epiphany of God's power. Consequently, since these lines were written for an audience, and since that audience had to be moved and persuaded, we have to admit that Gregory's audience, though surely Christian, still had an essentially classicising taste.

5.2.3 Immorality

If the socioeconomic invective of II, 1, 12, 154–175 introduced Gregory's discussion of the intellectual prerequisite for the episcopate (see §5.2.1 and §3.1.3.3), another iambic catalogue (II, 1, 12, 330–354), this time of vices, introduces Gregory's long discussion of the moral problems of candidates for the bishop's office (see §3.1.4.1–2; §3.3.2.1). This list has a parallel in the beginning of the herald's speech in II, 1, 13, 73–89.

Even though the catalogue in II, 1, 13 refers to candidates for the episcopate, under the pretence of offering a bishop's post to unworthy people, and the catalogue in II, 1, 12 refers to reigning bishops, the two catalogues present many similarities²¹¹. Both passages are lists, and both apparently refrain from attacking bishops on the basis of their social background; the passages are concerned only with moral failures. A proof of this mainly moral concern is a structural similarity shared with other invectives: the texts begin with general labels of wrong behaviour (ἀθλιώτεροί τινες, II, 1, 12, 333; κακίης

²¹⁰ On this characteristic of Constantius' doctrinal policy: Elm 2012, 45–48; Simonetti 1975, 347–348.

²¹¹ In the iambic poem the discourse on morality continues the one on ignorance, from which it is clear that the consequences of the unreliability of current bishops is the question: τί χειραγωγεῖς μὴ βλέπων; ... οὗτοι μὲν οὕτως· οἱ δὲ καὶ ἥσσον κακόν (II, 1, 12, 327; 330); at II, 1, 13, the herald invites new people to the episcopate: Δεῦρ' ἵτε θαρσαλέοι. πᾶσι θρόνος εὐρύς ἔτοιμος (II, 1, 13, 89).

ἐπιβήτορες, αἵσχεα φωτῶν, II, 1, 13, 75)²¹². Among such labels, ἀτάσθαλος, found at the end of the generic invective in II, 1, 17, 33, is of particular importance. Not only does the word occur also in II, 1, 13, 66, where the episcopate is defined χώρον ἀτασθαλίας τε μόρου τε, but the nexus also echoes Zeus's first speech in the *Odyssey*: οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ / σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν (Hom. *Od.* 1, 33–34). Ἀτασθαλίη is an important theme of the *Odyssey*, justifying the end of many characters, notably Penelope's suitors, in terms of theological justice²¹³. If Gregory consciously alluded to it, as the parallel between Homer's ἀτασθαλίῃσιν... ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν and II, 1, 13, 196 (ἀτασθαλίη μογέοντες) seems to imply, the word may reinforce his narrative of historical decadence in the church (§3.1.3.1; §3.1.4.1; §3.3.2.2). Beginning from the sources of these catalogues, and through a comparison with passages already examined (§5.2.2), I will examine the significance of the vices Gregory laments. These are primarily high-class vices, which signal the bishop's undue dependence on political power.

As regards the sources of such direct invective against bishops, the iambic catalogue is naturally of the utmost importance (see §5.2.1)²¹⁴. However, this form of expression also has a long-standing New Testament tradition. On one side, there are lists of sins already in Paul's letters and in passages from the Gospels²¹⁵. The list in Mt. 15:19 follows the order of the Ten Commandments (cf. Ex. 20:13–16; Dtn. 5:17–20) except for βλασφημία. The Pauline lists give pride of place and space to sexual sins, with Galatians associating them with sins against religion (idolatry, magic). All three lists close on behaviours typical of ancient symposia and holidays: drinking and giving free rein to language. The list of Gal. 5:19–21 is peculiar because it highlights the specifically “politic” sins, those that threaten the unity of the Christian congregation. The list at II, 1, 12 is more like this characteristic of Gal. 5:19–21, while the list at II, 1, 13 is more various. Here, many items are simply an epic paraphrase of those in Paul's lists²¹⁶. However, Gregory does not highlight sexual sins as much as Paul, while he inserts words suggesting a broader ascetic perspective (εὐρυτένοντες, ἀβροχίτωνες). This is in accordance with his description of asceticism in II, 1, 12, 575–609 (see §3.2.2).

On the other side, a much more relevant model is the lists of episcopal virtues in Paul (1Tim. 3:2–12; Tit. 1:6–10), which must here be reversed to paint a negative picture. The two lists differ, in that 1Tim. joins a description of deacons to that of the bishop, while Titus has a negative foil for the prelate in the many heretics that the bishop should

²¹² Cf. νόμον πονηρίας δίδωσιν τὸν προστάτην (II, 1, 12, 646, beginning the invective against Maximus, §5.1.2.2); ὃς δὲ κάκιστος (II, 1, 17, 13); ἀτάσθαλος (33); αἵσyla ἔργα κακορραφίην τ' ἀλεγεινὴν (43); all these expressions of II, 1, 17 begin (13 and 43) or end (33) an invective.

²¹³ See Heubeck/West/Privitera 1988, 184.

²¹⁴ On the importance of catalogues of single words for late antique Latin poetry: Roberts 1989, 59–62.

²¹⁵ 1Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:3–4; Mt. 15:19.

²¹⁶ Κακίης ἐπιβήτορες (II, 1, 13, 75) = ἄδικοι (1Cor. 6:9); αἵσχεα φωτῶν (75) and ἀναιδέες (76) = αἰσχρότης (Eph. 5:4); Γάστορες (76) = ἄρπαγες (1Cor. 6:10, but cf. ποιμένες ἀγραυλοὶ, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον, Hesiod. *theog.* 26); Ζωροπόται (77) = μέθυσοι (1Cor. 6:10) and μέθαι (Gal. 5:21); φιλοκέρτομοι (77) = λοιδοροὶ (1Cor. 6:10) and μωρολογία ἢ εὐτραπεία (Eph. 5:4).

confute. An important element is the exclusion of neophytes (μὴ νεόφυτον, 1Tim. 3:6) and of people ignorant of theology (ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασκάλειαν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν, Tit. 1:10). Gregory echoes these requirements (Νήϊδες οὐρανίων, νεολαμπέες, II, 1, 13, 87), which are particularly useful because they exclude Nectarius. Moreover, these lists underline the “political” virtues of the bishop (μὴ πλήκτην, ἀλλ’ ἐπιεικῇ ἄμαχον ἀφιλάργυρον, 1Tim. 3:3) that are opposite to the “political” sins of Gal. 5:21, giving great importance to mildness. As we shall see, Gregory’s moral invective too has political implications. Finally, both Pauline lists highlight among the virtues required of the bishop sobriety (νηφάλιον, μὴ πάροιον, μὴ οἶνω πολλῷ προσέχοντας) and an orderly family life (μιάς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα/ἀνὴρ/ἄνδρες, σώφρονα, τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου/τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ, τέκνα ἔχων πιστά).

Gregory refers to family life with his description of freshly wedded bishops in II, 1, 13, 84–86, paralleled in II, 1, 12, 620–630²¹⁷. Indeed, the passage in II, 1, 13 is an epic rewriting of that in II, 1, 12: ἄρτι νυμφίοι (II, 1, 12, 622) becomes ἀρτίγαμοι (II, 1, 13, 84), a word which in Oppian is *halieut.* 4, 179; οἰδαίνω (II, 1, 12, 621) and ζέω (II, 1, 13, 84, in the epic form ζείω) are both poetic; ἔτι χνοάω ἱουλον (II, 1, 13, 84) is the late epic form (Apollon. Rhod. 2, 43; 779 and Oppian. *cyneg.* 4, 347) of ἀρτίχνοοι (II, 1, 12, 626); the literal λύσσης τῆς συμφύτου (II, 1, 12, 620), with the attribute σύμφυτος, which is mostly prosaic and is used in the sense of “natural”—as opposed to “congenital”, “innate”—only in prose²¹⁸, becomes a metaphorical φυσικοῖο πυρὸς (II, 1, 13, 85)²¹⁹, with a possible reference to the myth of Prometheus. The poet’s insistence on a disordered family life is meant to allude to Paul’s texts and, by contradicting them so plainly, to imply the utter inadequacy of such candidates. Moreover, since the poet connects disorder with young age, this vice allows for a criticism of insufficient preparation, which could always be applied—regardless of age—to Nectarius. Finally, one must note that here it is not so much lust as something impure per se that is stigmatised (as in the list of NT sins), but it is stigmatised inasmuch as it overrides mastery of the self and of the house or as a sign of high-class interests. Such interests were also expressed through the image of the banquet (see §5.2.2), and on this point Paul’s insistence on sobriety could be turned to Gregory’s advantage. Indeed, banquets, wine drinking and gluttony are among the vices Gregory stigmatises the most, as a comparison of our passages with II, 1, 12,

217 Οἶκος, γυνὴ σφριγύσα, τεκνίων πόθος... Ἄλλοι δὲ λύσσης ἐμπλεοὶ τῆς συμφύτου, / Νοσοῦντες, οἰδαίνοντες, ἐστιλβωμένοι/ Γυναῖξιν, ἄρτι νυμφίοι, τὸ μέτριον, / Οὕτω λύσαντες παστάδας γαμηλίου, / ἢ καὶ πόθοις συζώντες ἀζύγοις ἔτι / Πρὶν καὶ παρειὰν ἀνδρικῶν κοσμήματι, / Θριξίν, καλύψαι, παντελῶς ἀρτίχνοοι, / Νέοι τὸ σῶμα, τὸν τρόπον νεώτεροι, / Ἥ καὶ παλαιῶν ἡμερῶν πλήρεις κακῶν (II, 1, 12, 611; 620–628); Ἀρτίγαμοι, ζείοντες, ἔτι χνοάοντες ἱουλον, / Ἥ κλέπται φυσικοῖο πυρὸς, φαέεσσιν ἔχοντες / Ἡερίην φιλότῃτα, δὲ ἀμφοδίνην ἀλέησθε (II, 1, 13, 84–86). Cf. also Ἄλλος τὰ τερπνὰ τῶν νέων ἐδρέψατο (II, 1, 12, 60).

218 Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1689, s.v. σύμφυτος.

219 Yet φυσικός never occurs in poetry before Gregory (4x), except for Timon *frg.* 85, where it means “natural philosopher”.

610–630 shows²²⁰. The same metaphor of hunting, which was an upper-class activity, is employed for those who look for banquets (ιχνεύμονες, II, 1, 12, 340)²²¹, but the clearest description of symposia as gatherings of social significance is given by II, 1, 12, 616–619, where to the mentions of food is added entertainment: Μύροις, γέλωσι, ψαλμάτων συναυλίας, / Οἷς κυμβάλων δεῖ καὶ ποδὸς ψοφημάτων (II, 1, 12, 618–619). Furthermore, the word ἀβροχίτωνες in II, 1, 13, 77 may refer to the same upper-class habits. In II, 1, 12, 345–348, Gregory says it explicitly: upper-class bishops use their worldly privilege to unduly manipulate church life²²². This privilege, as we have seen (II, 1, 12, 612; §5.2.2), requires efforts incompatible with a bishop's ascetic way of life; but the implications of this privilege may be even more grim, if II, 1, 13, 78–80 (Ψεῦσταί θ' ὕβρισταί τε, θοῶς ἐπιόρκον ὁμοῦντες, / Δημοβόροι, κτεάτεσσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοισιν ἀάπτους / Βάλλοντες παλάμας) refers to dishonesty in court and to tax evasion or tax collection²²³.

Therefore, both Gregory's inversion of the Pauline criteria for choosing a bishop and his allusions to Paul's lists of vices, though apparently stigmatising gluttony and lust, really are attacks on the elite way of life, consisting in family relationships and social networking. The poet criticises feasts and banquets mainly for their social significance in building up authority. Gregory reveals the link between power and luxury as he says that those who cannot afford the latter try to shut up others, and if only they had the occasion, they could even resort to violence (II, 1, 12, 349–353)²²⁴. The political content of these attacks is made particularly clear in II, 1, 12, 334–343 and its parallel, II, 1, 13, 81–83²²⁵. In both passages, the bishops are opportunistic and inconsistent: the language is very similar, the bishops being described as completely prone to what the political circumstances require, even at the cost of faith. Indeed, this is a recurring theme in the poems. Opportunism is presented as a veritable rule of conduct through

²²⁰ Πάσης τραπέξης εὐφυεῖς ιχνεύμονες (II, 1, 12, 340); Τράπεζα φλεγμαίνουσα τῶν ἐδωδίων / Ταῖς ὀσποίων καὶ κερασμάτων πλοκαῖς / Γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καρποφορούντων ἐντέροις (614–616); Γάστορες... Ζωροπόται (II, 1, 13, 76; 77) and cf. also II, 1, 17, 67–74.

²²¹ See §5.2.1 nn. 154–156. Cf. also the spirit of the ambitious bishops as a hunter at II, 1, 17, 89–90 (θηρήτορα τιμῆς / θυμόν).

²²² II, 1, 12, 345–348 has εὐγένειαν, εὐγλωττίαν, πλοῦτον, γένος, πονηρίαν; except the last, they are all elite values. For πλοῦτος, compare κτήσις at II, 1, 12, 612 and κτεάτεσσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοισιν ἀάπτους / Βάλλοντες παλάμας, II, 1, 13, 79–80. On the distinction of εὐγένεια and γένος see Maier 1989, 110.

²²³ On fiscal pressure as an incentive to pursue the ecclesiastical career: Rapp 2005, 184–185, 211–215.

²²⁴ Σοφὸν δὲ καὶ τόδ'· οὐ γὰρ εἰδότες λόγον, / Γλώσσαν ἔδησαν τῶν λαλιστέρων νόμῳ. / Εἰ δ' ἦν τις ὀφθαλμῶν τε καὶ χειρῶν ἔρις, / Καὶ ταῦτ' ἂν ἡμῶν ἐξεκόψατ', ὥ σοφοί. / Ταῦτ' οὐ πρόδηλος ὕβρις, οὐ βλάβη σαφής (II, 1, 12, 349–353).

²²⁵ Δύστην', ἀπενυκτὰ τοῦ βίου κυβεύματα, / (335) Τὴν πίστιν ἀμφιδέξιοι, καιρῶν νόμους, / Οὐ τοὺς Θεοῦ σέβοντες, Εὐριπτοὶ λόγων / Παλιρροοῦντες ἢ κλάδων μετακλίσεις, / Θῶπες γυναικῶν, τερπνὰ δηλητήρια, / Μικροῖς λέοντες, τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' αὐτοῖς κύνες, / (340) Πάσης τραπέξης εὐφυεῖς ιχνεύμονες, / Θύρας κρατούντων ἐκτρίβοντες, οὐ σοφῶν, / Τὸ πρὸς χάριν τιμώντες, οὐ τὸ συμφέρον, / Ὡς ἂν κακοὺς ποιῶσι καὶ τοὺς πλησίον. (II, 1, 12, 334–343); Θῶπες ἐρισθενέων χθαμαλοὶ, χθαμαλοῖσι λέοντες, / Ἀμφίθετοι, καιροῖο πολυτρέπτου θεράποντες, / Πουλύποδες πέτρησιν ἀειδόμενοι χροῖα μύθος (II, 1, 13, 81–83).

the recurring word καιροί²²⁶. This entails continually changing one's position, most of all in matters of faith (πίστις), a behaviour stigmatised through the metaphors of water and wind, whereas the good bishop is hard and unchanging as a stone²²⁷. These winds and flows express the mutating expectation of the people, to which the bishops conform to achieve recognition²²⁸. In II, 1, 13, 83 (Πουλύποδες πέτρῃσιν αἰδόμενοι χροᾷ μύθῳ), Gregory interprets *in malam partem*, the metaphor of the octopus of Theogn. 213–217. In this context, the beloved metaphor of dice acquires a new meaning, expressing the bishops' lack of responsibility—reflected in their delegating to the seemingly casual preference of the day the most important things—but also highlighting the chaos that befell the church through the immoral activity of gambling²²⁹. The link between this behaviour and luxury is further established in II, 1, 12, 338, a line stigmatising the bishops' relationship with women right in the middle of the invective against opportunism²³⁰. The use of the same word for “flatterers” (θῶπες) as in II, 1, 13, 81, referring to powerful people, suggests that these relationships with women help the bishops gain access to these powerful people²³¹. The themes of flattering, opportunism, and luxury are linked, because opportunism is determined by the bishops' relationship to powerful people: the texts make clear that luxury is the shared language of the bishop with the powerful, so that, to accrue the endorsement of these powerful men, the bishops must participate in and pursue those activities Gregory despises. Moreover, as the allusion to the language of fables suggests, these corrupt prelates, in acquiescing to the powerful (the “lions”), have no qualms about oppressing the poor and weak²³². Indeed, the lion figures in many fables as a personification of raw power and bullying, whereas the dog

226 καιρῶν νόμους, / Οὐ τοὺς Θεοῦ σέβοντες (II, 1, 12, 335–336); καιροῖο πολυτρέπτου θεράποντες (II, 1, 13, 82); cf. καιροθέοισι φίλοις (II, 1, 10, 24) and κλινόμενος καιροῖσι, (II, 1, 17, 19).

227 Τὴν πίστιν ἀμφιδέξιοι, ... Εὕριποι λόγων / Παλιρροοῦντες ἢ κλάδων μετακλίσεις (II, 1, 12, 335–337); πλάγκται, ... Ψεύσται θ' ὕβρισται τε, θοῶς ἐπίορκον ὁμοῦντες ... ἄπιστοι ... ἀμφίθετοι (II, 1, 13, 77–78; 80); cf. κουφονόοισιν (II, 1, 10, 23); δόναξ πολύκαμπτος αἰήταις (II, 1, 17, 19); on the contrary: Ἀνθρώπων δ' ἀγαθοῖσι διδοῖ φρένα, τοῖς δὲ κακοῖσι / Κάμπτεται, ὅσσα λίθος ὀκρυόεις ἀδάμας (27–28).

228 Τὸ πρὸς χάριν τιμῶντες, οὐ τὸ συμφέρον (II, 1, 12, 342); cf. Οὐδ' ὃ γ' ἐπιστρέφεται πλούτου μεγάλων τε θωῶκων, / Οὐ δόξης βροτέης ἐνθάδε συρομένης (II, 1, 17, 29–30); Οὐδὲ χέρας φονίους προσηπύξομαι, οὐδὲ γενεῖου / Δράξομαι, ὥστ' ὀλίγης ἀντιτυχεῖν χάριτος (65–66); Φθέγγομαι οὐασι τερπνὰ, τὰ Πνεύματος ἔκτοθι ρίψας, / Ὡς κεν ἔοιμι πρόφρων, φίλτρον ἔχων πλεόνων, / Τερπόμενός τε κρότοις, καὶ ἐν θεάτροισι χορεύων, / Κρημνοβάτης ἐπέων ἀντικουρυσσομένων (77–80).

229 ἀπευκτὰ τοῦ βίου κυβεύματα (II, 1, 12, 334); cf. Πισσῶν κυλίσματ' ἐν κύβοις τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ (396); Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μή τι καὶ θυμοῦ φέρειν / Κύβευμ' (659–660).

230 Θῶπες γυναικῶν, τερπνὰ δηλητήρια, / Μικροῖς λέοντες, τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' αὖ κύνες (II, 1, 12, 338–339). The oxymoron τερπνὰ δηλητήρια expresses the corrupting influence of bishops on these women.

231 Θῶπες ἐρισθενέων χθαμαλοὶ, χθαμαλοῖσι λέοντες (II, 1, 13, 81). For examples of the relationship of spiritual leaders with upper-class women: §1.2.1. Gregory, too, could install himself in Constantinople thanks to his cousin, Theodosia, wife of the senator Ablabius.

232 Μικροῖς λέοντες, τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' αὖ κύνες (II, 1, 12, 339); Θῶπες ἐρισθενέων χθαμαλοὶ, χθαμαλοῖσι λέοντες (II, 1, 13, 81). Cf. also the bad bishop at II, 1, 17: Ἐνδοθεν ἀδρανέων, ἔκτοθε κάρτος ἔχων ... Οὐδὲ δορὴν βασιλῆος ἔχων βριαροῖο λέοντος, / Κεύθει κερδῶν ἐνδοθι δουλοσύνην (II, 1, 17, 14; 31–32).

is a frequently employed metaphor for the servant of someone²³³. The idea of being a lion and becoming a servile animal when dealing with the powerful through adulation has its origins in Plato, and it is echoed in Gregory's discussion of *parrhesia*, which in a sense is the answer to the invective in II, 1, 12, 330–354:

Εἴ που δὲ καιρὸς ἐμπέσοι παρρησίας,
Ὅψει μαχητὴν τὸν πρᾶον, καὶ πηλίκον
Ἔστί κατορθῶν, τηνικαῦτα γνωρίσεις. (770)
Γνώση, τί κέρκωψ, καὶ τί βρυχᾶται λέων
(II, 1, 12, 768–771)²³⁴

But if the right chance occurs for speaking freely,
you'll see the meek turn pugnacious, and you'll experience
in that circumstance how successful he's been. (770)
You'll learn how the ape and how the lion roars

The final confirmation of the link between luxury, elite society, and weak positions of the bishop comes from II, 1, 17, a poem we have already examined in relation to *paideia* and *parrhesia* (§3.1.1.3), to the moral leadership of the bishop (§3.1.4.2), and to Gregory's rhetorical strategy (§5.1.1). There are indeed many parallels between the moral invectives of II, 1, 12–13 and the references to Gregory's habits in Constantinople in that poem (II, 1, 17, 59–90), which are also anticipated by the description of the bad bishop in the same II, 1, 17.

Among the vices Gregory failed to curtail as a bishop in Constantinople, lust figures prominently, a parallel to the Pauline references in II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 13. Here, as there, it is not intercourse per se that Gregory stigmatises, but rather lack of self-control, in accordance with pagan ideas of sexuality, with Paul's recommendations on the choice of the ἐπίσκοπος, and with the Synod of Gangra²³⁵. Indeed, II, 1, 17, 83–84 (Οὐ σώματος αἰθομένοιο / λύσσαν ἐπιψύξας) combines the word for mad love (λύσσα) in II, 1, 12 with the metaphor of fire in II, 1, 13, whereas the reference to the σώμα is equivalent to συμφύτου in II, 1, 12 and φυσικοῖο in II, 1, 13. If these references are meant to contrast with Paul's requirement that a candidate for bishop be in full control of his house and wife, another of Gregory's supposed failures—namely, to teach orthodoxy (οὐ ψευδῆ κραδίας δόξαν ἀποσκεδάσας, II, 1, 17, 86)—may refer to hastily created bishops' and neophytes' ignorance in matters of faith, which is examined at length in II, 1, 12 and referenced at II, 1, 13, 87 (Νήϊδες οὐρανίων, νεολαμπέες). This, in turn, is a throwback

233 E.g.: "The lion's share" (Babr. *fab.* 67; Perry 149); Liddel/Scott/Jones 2011, 1015, s.v. κύων II.2 and III.

234 Κολακεία δὲ καὶ ἀνελευθερία οὐχ ὅταν τις τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο, τὸ θυμοειδές, ὑπὸ τῷ ὀχλώδει θηρίῳ ποιῇ καὶ ἔνεκα χρημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἀπληστίας προπηλακίζόμενον ἐθίζῃ ἐκ νέου ἀντὶ λέοντος πίθηκον γίνεσθαι; (Plat. *resp.* 590B); see §3.1.1.3.

235 Οὐ σώματος αἰθομένοιο / λύσσαν ἐπιψύξας (II, 1, 17, 83–84); Ἄλλοι δὲ λύσσης ἐμπλεοὶ τῆς συμφύτου, / Νοσοῦντες, οἰδαίνοντες, ἐστιλβωμένοι / Γυναιξίν (II, 1, 12, 620–622); Ἀρτίγαμοι, ζείοντες, ἔτι χνοάοντες ἱουλον, / Ἦ κλέπται φυσικοῖο πυρὸς, φαέεσσιν ἔχοντες / Ἡρίην φιλότητα (II, 1, 13, 84–86); Brown 2008, 9–11, 17–20.

to Paul's recommendations of an experienced bishop, particularly when the bishop had to repel heretical doctrines.

Yet, apart from these isolated references, the image II, 1, 17 conveys is that of a bishop who is servile with powerful people, inconsistent in church matters, and violent towards the weak. Servitude is particularly highlighted and explicitly linked with public occasions and banquets, where the bishop could express his subordination to powerful secular people, beginning with the emperor²³⁶. As in II, 1, 12, here the bishop “hunts” for banquets because he is “hunting” for recognition²³⁷. Therefore, the poet rewrites in II, 1, 17 all those expressions that are used in II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 13 to stigmatise the opportunism of bishops and their inconsistency, dictated by political circumstances, going so far as to explicitly say that he, as bishop of Constantinople, had to adapt his predication of the fundamentals of the faith to political opportunity (75–80)²³⁸. The price of this immorality—this is Gregory's bottom line—is paid by the weak. The idea is expressed in two lines with important parallels with II, 1, 13. In II, 1, 17, 70 and 84–85, Gregory refers to the “hands” (παλάμαις, χέρα) ruining the property of others through theft. In the first instance the bishop himself is rapacious; in the second, the bishop fails to curb the rapaciousness of others—presumably powerful people²³⁹. This is paralleled by the άάπτους παλάμας in II, 1, 13, 79–80²⁴⁰, an expression more epic than Homer, since it rewrites the Homeric formula χεῖρες άάπτους with the more epic word for “hand”, παλάμη, which is also significant because παλάμη is the hand that grasps²⁴¹. The bishop, when he becomes an ally of powerful people, excuses their thievery towards the poor and even participates in the division of the spoils. Furthermore, in both II, 1, 13 and II, 1, 17 a string of attributes qualifies the bishops as violent: Νεκροβόρος, δολόμετης, άτάσθαλος... (II, 1, 17, 33) and Δημοβόροι, . . . / φθονεροί, δολόντες, άπιστοι (II, 1, 13, 79–80). The combination of δολόμετης and άτάσθαλος in II, 1, 17 strongly suggests Homer's references to Aegisthus, which would well symbolise the bishops' sins against Gregory: he has been metaphorically assassinated, even as he had to live his triumph during the council, and the murder served to commit an adultery, as they took away his church in Constantinople from him. The term νεκροβόρος requires some interpretation: in the *Patrologia Graeca*, it is taken as a reference to funeral banquets; I think that either it should be interpreted in a Cynic-ascetic fashion, as if disparaging food as

²³⁶ Cf. δούλια δαινύμενος... Ουδὲ χέρας φονίους προσπύζομαι, οὐδὲ γενείου / Δράζομαι, ὥστ' ὀλίγης ἀντιτυχεῖν χάριτος (II, 1, 17, 62; 65–66) with Θύρας κρατούντων ἐκτρίβοντες, οὐ σοφῶν (II, 1, 12, 341); Θῶπες ἐρισθενέων (II, 1, 13, 81). For the disgusting connotation of banquets in this passage, see §3.1.1.3.

²³⁷ Cf. οὐδ' ἱερὴν ἐπὶ δαῖτα... θέων... ἄλλην ἐπὶ δαῖτα παχεῖν / σπεύδων... θηρήτορα τιμῆς / θυμόν (II, 1, 17, 67–68; 73–74; 89–90) with Πάσης τραπέζης εὐφρεῖς ἰχνεύμονες (II, 1, 12, 340); Γάστορες... δημοβόροι (II, 1, 13, 76; 79).

²³⁸ See nn. 226–228. On 75–80: §2.2.4.9; §3.1.1.3; §5.1.1.

²³⁹ ἀρπαλαῖς Βριαρέω παλάμαις (II, 1, 17, 70); χέρα μαινομένην / παῖσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις (84–85).

²⁴⁰ κτεάτεσσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις άάπτους / Βάλλοντες παλάμας (II, 1, 13, 79–80).

²⁴¹ Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 1291, s.v. παλάμη.

something dead²⁴², or, as a consequence of the previous lines (31–32), the νεκροί should be understood as the victims of the bishop's violence or deceit, whence the bishop takes his material advantages. In this sense, since these victims are the weaker ones in the community, νεκροβόρος would be a paraphrase for δημοβόρος in II, 1, 13.

These apparently moral invectives have, therefore, a deeply political significance. Gregory laments the dependence of the episcopate on secular society and, indirectly, on political powers. It makes sense for him to insist on that point, since he was replaced by Nectarius. Such an election could well be construed as a self-defeat of the church, which had to resort to imperial power: the external conditions seemed perfect, with a favourable emperor (Theodosius) after years of persecution of the Nicene party and with East and West converging on the Nicene Creed; and yet, even in the absence of serious doctrinal problems, the Nicenes managed to reach a deadlock at the council, being divided on the Antiochene succession and on the relationship between Constantinople and Alexandria. Gregory's line was to solve these problems among bishops, which implies that everyone had to renounce something of his position. The other bishops found it more suitable to renounce Gregory. It is unclear how they came to Nectarius as a substitute, whether it was proposed by an anonymous person, by Diodore of Tarsus, or by the emperor himself, but the profile of the candidate implies reliance on the secular structure of powers to quench a crisis of the church. By choosing someone who was a stranger to the inner dynamics of the Nicene party, the bishops manifested inability to overcome the stalemate by themselves, and by choosing someone embedded in imperial institutions, they implicitly recognised these institutions as selecting people worthy of a spot in the limelight of church politics, mainly because such a person would not diminish the standing of the church before civil authorities (such as the emperor). The bishops had, in the eyes of Gregory, compromised a long-term, strategic advantage (self-government) in favour of the fleeting tactical result of not losing their entrenched positions. In this perspective, moral debauchery and political softness are inextricably linked.

Put in these terms, the whole affair deserves Gregory's invective, apart from the personal grudge due to his being replaced by an outsider. Naturally, this does not mean that his position is not deeply biased by that grudge and by his political vision of how things should be; but, alas, we do not have direct comments on the matter by Gregory's rivals to put against his account. Gregory's grudge is revealed by the more "political" insults he hurls at the bishops: his focus on inconsistency for the sake of politics and on bullying those weaker than them can be applied to his fate at the council. As regards inconsistency, the refusal of Meletius's party to honour the previous arrangement with Paulinus, as Gregory intimated, plays a major role, but one imagines also that in such synods the majority of bishops were whipped by the more prominent figures. If there were groups of opinion moving en bloc, Gregory might have resented the more gregarious bishops for not speaking up when the main figures of the Asiatic party abandoned

242 Cf. τάφον ἐμπνοον (II, 1, 17, 71); §3.1.1.3.

him in favour of Nectarius to quell the Egyptians, another case of inconsistency that must have incensed our poet. Finally, the insistence that the bishops had been willing to compromise faith in favour of politics might not be an exaggerated evaluation of their choice of Nectarius over himself; it might refer to their rejection of a high pneumatology even though they inwardly agreed with it. As regards the accusation of bullying weaker people, Gregory may be obliquely referring to himself, since, as we have already seen (§1.3.2; §5.1.2.4), he is wont to represent himself as weak; furthermore, he is supposedly an outsider to elite social networks too (§5.1.2.1), so that he is excluded from the power plays of these privileged bishops with their lay patrons.

Yet there is something deeper than personal resentment in the accusation of bullying. Variations of this idea are found throughout the texts. Here, the focus is on the negative ramifications that the subordination of bishops to earthly powers has for weaker people. At the beginning of II, 1, 12, instead, he throws the much more direct and heavy accusation of homicide: “my murderers; because they are murderers, who pervert judgement / and shed the blood of all those innocent souls / that they struck with their decisions” (15–17)²⁴³. This ties in well with the violent behaviour described in lines 349–354, where some bishops put down dissent and would be ready to use even bodily violence to preserve their authority. After all, even the metaphor of the lion (II, 1, 12, 339; II, 1, 13, 81; II, 1, 17, 31), which expresses violence, echoes that of the wolves employed in II, 1, 13, 141–142 (see §2.2.1.2). Facets of this idea have already been examined under the heading of “tyranny”, the perversion of episcopal leadership (and even of sacramental prerogatives) into the object of ambition and ownership (§2.1.2.1). The fact that this violence is partially directed at Gregory, the weaker bishop who was put down, does not exclude the possibility that it also affects the community of faithful. Indeed, as is purported by Gregory’s narrative (§5.1.2.3), the work of conversion at Constantinople was far from complete, so that his removal meant the loss of many souls. Furthermore, violence may be intended in a broader sense to mean that the political machinations of bishops arouse scandals which alienated people from the church—a practical instance of Gregory’s strong emphasis on the bishop as an example of morality, capable by his sole behaviour of teaching or destroying his community (§2.2.3.1). Finally, it is interesting to note that II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 13 are much more concerned with the relationship of the bishop with the community than II, 1, 17: the latter poem contrasted good and bad models of the bishop on the basis of their relationship with God, even regardless of their reputation with the people (§5.1.1); here, however, a good relationship even with the lower strata of the community seems to characterise good bishops, while bad bishops oppress the people and give a free pass to the powerful.

243 τοὺς ἐμοὺς . . . / Φονεῖς· φονεῖς γὰρ οἱ κρίνοντες ἔκτοπα, / Ψυχῶν τ’ἀθώων ἐκχέοντες αἵματα, / Πάντων, ὅσους ἐπλάττον, οἷς ὠκονόμουν.

5.2.4 Against Maximus

Besides violence, the attitude of bishops is marked also by deceit: the dichotomy is summed up in the expression *ψεῦσταί θ' ὑβρίζουσι τε* in II, 1, 13, 78, and the concept of deceit is at least implied by the bishops' inconsistency. Other passages, however, tackle the theme more directly: apart from a series of passing mentions of this vice, the beginning of II, 1, 13 and an invective in II, 1, 12 explore different facets thereof. This last passage is particularly interesting because it links the theme of deceit with the second of Gregory's rivals, Maximus.

As regards the passing mentions, duplicity and deceit are implied already in the declaration of the theme of II, 1, 12 (*Ἐν ἐκτρέπου μοι, τοὺς κακοὺς ἐπισκόπους... Τὸ κώδιον παρέλθε, τὸν λύκον βλέπε... Μισῶ διδάγμαθ', οἷς ἐναντίος βίος. / Τὰ χρώματ' αἰνῶν τοῦ τάφου, βδελύσσομαι / Τὴν ἔνδον ὁδὴν τῶν σεσηπότην μελῶν*, 35, 38, 40). The theme is repeatedly elaborated upon in the form of an opposition of outer and inner; as, for example, in II, 1, 13, 162–163 (*Διπλὸς ἐστὶν ἕκαστος, οἷς λύκον ἀμφικαλύπτων, / Καὶ χαλκὸς λοχῶν πικρὴν νεπόδεσσιν ἔδωδὴν*) and in II, 1, 17, 14 (*Ἐνδοθεν ἀδρανέων, ἔκτοθε κάρτος ἔχων*). Through the image of the wolf, both the passage in II, 1, 12 and that in II, 1, 13 combine duplicity with the violence of the *φονεῖς* (II, 1, 12, 15) who *Εἰρήνην βοῶντες, ἐφ' αἵμασι κυδιῶντες* (II, 1, 13, 148). Such duplicity is found in several expressions linked to the opportunism of bishops (see notes 242–244): for the poet it is not so important to specify if such a duplicity is the result of conscious deception or hypocrisy or conformism. However, he also refers to deception proper through keywords such as *ψεῦδος* and *δόλος*²⁴⁴.

Coming to the longer texts, the beginning of II, 1, 13 attacks the bishops of the council, referring to a detail of Gregory's narrative—namely, the bishops' false courtesy as he left them (see §5.1.2.4). The passage is worth quoting in full for its literary artistry and the many themes it touches:

- Ὡ θυσίας πέμποντες ἀναιμάκτους, ἱερῆς! (1)
 Ὡ ψυχῶν ταμίαι μεγακύδες! Ὡ μέγαλοιο
 Πλάσμα Θεοῦ χεῖρεςσιν ἐν ὑμετέρῃσι φέροντες!
 Ὡ Θεὸν ἀνθρώποισι μέγ' ἔξοχον εἰς ἐν ἄγοντες!
 Ὡ κόσμοιο θέμεθλα, βίου φάος, ἔρμα λόγοιο, (5)
 Μυστοπόλοι ζωῆς ἀτελευτήτοιο φαεινῆς,
 Χριστοφόροι, θώκοισιν ἐνεδριώνοντες ἀρίστοις,
 Ὑψηλοὶ, θεάτροισι γεγηθότες εὐπρεπέεσσι,
 Σκηνοβάται, κώλοισιν ἐφισταότες ξυλίνουσιν,
 Ἀδρανέως χάσκοντες ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις προσώποις, (10)
 Εὐσεβίης ὅσα δ' ἐντὸς, ὁμοίᾳ πᾶσιν ἔχοντες

²⁴⁴ *ψεῦστα* (II, 1, 13, 78); *δολόεντες* (80); *πλεκτῆς...κακίης* (II, 1, 17, 12); *Κεύθει κερδῶν ἐνδοθὶ δουλοσύνην, / Νεκροβόρος, δολόμητις, ἀτάσθαλος, ἄλλος ἐν ἄλλοις / Παντοδαποῖς κακίης εἶδеси κλεπτόμενος* (32–34); perhaps also *οὐ ψευδῆ κραδίης δόξαν ἀποσκεδάσας* (86).

Ὑμεῖς μὲν παίζετε, τὰ περ καὶ παίζειτ' ἀεικῶς,
 Καὶ σοβαρὸν φθέγγοισθε, τὰ δ' ἔρδετε ὡς μάλ' ἐλαφρά.
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν, εἰ καὶ με κακὸν καὶ ἀνάρσιον ἄνδρα
 Πάντες ὁμοῦ θεείτε, χοροῦ δ' ἄπο τῆλε δίοισθε (15)
 Ὑμετέρου, βάλλοντες ἐπασσύτεροισιν ὅϊστοις,
 Ἀμφαδίοις, κρυπτοῖς τε, τό περ καὶ φίλτερον ὑμῖν·
 (II, 1, 13, 1–17)

O priests, you who offer bloodless sacrifices! (1)
 O highly glorious ministers of souls, bearing
 in your hands the image of the great God!
 O you who the Supreme God with human beings together bring!
 O world's pillars, life's light, foundation of the doctrine, (5)
 initiators to the shining mysteries of life immortal,
 Christ-bearers, sitting on the topmost thrones,
 most high, rejoicing in comely shows,
 stage treaders, standing on wooden stilts,
 feebly yawning through alien masks, (10)
 for what pertains to religion, the very same as everyone else.
 Yea, you may play, although you play shamefully,
 and your speech may be haughty, yet what you do is really shallow,
 whereas I, even if all of you together may hold me
 an evil man and strange, and pull me far away (15)
 from your chorus, shooting one dart after another,
 openly and, what you love even more, secretly . . .

The poet expresses the duplicity of the bishops in different ways. First, the structure of the passage: it begins seemingly as a praise of bishops and devolves suddenly into a polemic²⁴⁵. The catalogic pattern at the beginning suggests an almost hymnic treatment of the prelates, but the sudden turn to polemics, maintaining the catalogic form, is reminiscent of comic and iambic catalogues²⁴⁶. The insistence, at the beginning, on the liturgical role of bishops highlights the contrast between the dignity of office and the base behaviour of the prelates (see §3.1.2). Second, the emphatic metaphor of theatre, already examined at §2.2.4.9, denounces the apparent goodness of the bishops as a pretence or a play, so that elements of good behaviour in the poet's rivals may not detract from his criticism, but aggravate it. Finally, the bishops' deception culminates in their treatment of Gregory: here we find again the mixture of general remarks and autobiographical narrative so typical of these poems. The bishops kick Gregory

²⁴⁵ For the way in which the two modes of expressions are linked through the ambiguity of line 8, see §2.2.4.9.

²⁴⁶ For this hymnic structure, the *Orphic Hymns* are particularly representative (e.g.: Ὡ Διὸς ὑψιμέλαθρον ἔχων κράτος αἰὲν ἀτειρές, / ἄστρων ἡελίου τε σεληναίης τε μέρισμα, / πανδαμάτωρ, πυρίπνου, πᾶσι ζωοῖσιν ἔναυσμα, / ὑψιφανῆς Αἰθήρ κτλ., *hymn. Orph.* 5, 1–4). Note also the rhyme in the first lines: *ιεῖρες/φέροντες/ἄγοντες* and *μεγάλοιο/λόγοιο* (on rhyme in Christian Greek literature: Averincev 1988, 301–320). For comedic *accumulation verbale*: Spyropoulos 1974. For the fondness of late antique Latin poetry for catalogues: Roberts 1989, 59.

out because of his alienation (see §5.1.2.1), and they “strike” him with darts (βάλλοντες ἐπασσυτέροισιν ὁίστοϊς, 16)—likely meaning with defamation—both in the open and behind his back. In conjunction with the metaphor of theatre, this accusation may be a throwback to the courtesy paid to Gregory once he had decided to step down from his position in Constantinople (§5.1.2.4): while they complimented him to his face, the bishops slandered him—or so Gregory thought—behind his back. Since, however, the poem seems to be fictionally set *during* the council (§1.1.1), and since it speaks also of “open” (ἀμφοδίους) attacks, it is more likely that Gregory alludes to the criticisms expressed against him during the council, both as open protests against his proposal for Antioch and as (suspected) behind-the-scenes agreements to have him removed for his inability to stabilise the situation, here under the label of ἀνάρσιον ἄνδρα (14): he is accused of being intractable because alienated from the dynamics of power. Another example of Gregory's dialectical self-portrait (§5.1.1): he appropriates the criticism of his rivals and turns it into apology, while applying its opposite (here, duplicity) to them.

The other passage, II, 1, 12, 647–708, is a prelude to the contrast between the ascetic and the “protean” bishop (§2.2.3.2), and, differently from II, 1, 13, 1–17, it is aimed at one person only²⁴⁷. In this text, as throughout II, 1, 12, Gregory employs the second person to criticise his rival; he did so also at the beginning of II, 1, 13, and this direct apostrophe may be meant to directly engage the bishops who hide behind deceit, to unmask them. Superficially, it seems like Gregory is simply excoriating his target for his falseness, but when closely read, the text reveals a shifting focus.

The first part (647–657) says that the bad bishop takes the appearances of a good one without having the inner features thereof²⁴⁸. This continues the previous discussion on the selection of bishops, a discussion that enjoined the church to choose trained and proven candidates (see §3.3.2.1). In a way, this passage closes the cycle opened by the invective at 395–433 (§5.2.3), where Gregory described these bad bishops as if they took on a mask at the moment of consecration. The images of 647–657 suggest the same kind of pretence. The contrived religious faith of line 650 (πιστὸς ἐσκευασμένος) echoes the apparent piety of 399 (πέφηνεν . . . εὐσεβής); the humble and solemn attitude of 649 (κατηφὲς ἦθος), characterised by the head down (αὐχένος κλάσις) and the slow pace (νώθρον βάδισμα, 651), echoes the decorum of 411 (νῦν εὐσταλὴς τις καὶ βλέπων αἰδῶ μόνον) and the mildness of 423 (ὥς ἡμερὸς μοι σήμερον); finally, the beard of the philosopher and ascetic (πώγων, 649) echoes the bishop's role as disciplinarian of the ascetics (σωφρονιστὴς παρθένων καὶ συζύγων, 428). Another interesting feature of this passage

²⁴⁷ See the use of the second-person singular at, e.g., II, 1, 12, 660–661 (ἐπίσχες ἢ τρυφὴν ἢ τὰς τρίχας. / Τί καὶ τὰ μὴ σὰ καὶ τὰ σὰ ζητεῖς ἔχειν;).

²⁴⁸ Ἐπειτα χαλκὸς χρυσὸν ἡμφιεσμένος / Ἡ καὶ χαμαιλέοντος ἑκστασις χροῖας / Πώγων, κατηφὲς ἦθος, αὐχένος κλάσις, / Φωνὴ βραχεῖα, πιστὸς ἐσκευασμένος, / Νωθρὸν βάδισμα, πάντα, πλὴν φρενὸς σοφός / Τὸ πρῶτον ἐν πρώτοις γε τῶν νυνὶ καλῶν, / Ἐφοῦδ' τὸ σεπτὸν ἢ Σαμουὴλ διπλοῖς / Σκίμπους ταπεινὸς οὐδ' ὅλως δεσμούμενος, / Τὰ πρὸς κάρηνα παρθένων κοσμήματα / Λίνψ περισφίγγων τε καὶ σακκούμενος, / Τὰ πρόσθεν εὐχῆς σύμβολα προκείμενα.

is its mixing of ascetic and priestly imagery: the bishop's pretence employs the attire of the biblical high priest or prophet (the ephod and Samuel's mantle) as well as the lowly attitude of the ascetic (beard, cot, and sackcloth). At this point in the poem, Gregory has already sufficiently established the identity between the ideal priest and the ideal ascetic.

The following passage (658–675) seems concerned with something different—namely, the presence in the same person of contradicting features²⁴⁹. The precise import of these lines is far from clear: Gregory begins by contrasting *τρυφή* with *τρίχες* (660), but at the end the idea seems to be that of an inferior trying to imitate his superior (671–675, in particular 673: *Αἰσχρὸν μεγάλων μίμησις ἐν μικροῖς λίαν*). This impression is reinforced by the detail that Gregory implies an innate tendency to these features (660).

The following section (676–695) is even more enigmatic²⁵⁰: Gregory admits that, even in deceiving, his rival may be good if he can deceive until the end, so that deceit becomes his second nature (676–678); otherwise, he should just try to stay in his place (679–681). In any case, the good features are innate to Gregory, and his rival can only feign them (682–685). Finally, in the last passage (696–708) Gregory sums up the concept of good imitation and exemplifies it with the fable of the cat dressed as a bride (cf. Perry 50 and §2.2.4.4)²⁵¹.

The overall theme seems to be the inadequacy of this candidate to reach the level set by Gregory's example. Whether the candidate should still pursue imitation hoping to reach it or should renounce the pursuit and engage in apter roles is not entirely

249 Πῶς μὴ τι ρήξω ῥῆμα τῶν ἐμοὶ ξένων; / Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μὴ τι καὶ θυμοῦ φέρειν / Κύβευμ' ἐπίσχες ἢ τρυφήν ἢ τὰς τρίχας. / Τί καὶ τὰ μὴ σὰ καὶ τὰ σὰ ζητεῖς ἔχειν; / Χωρὶς τὰ Μυσῶν καὶ Φρυγῶν ὀρίσματα. / Χωρὶς τὰ Μερρᾶς καὶ Σιλωᾶμ ῥεύματα· / Τὰ μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲ γευστά, τῶν δὲ καὶ νόσοι / Ἦττωντον πρῶτον ἀγγέλω κινουμένων. / Διπλοῦν φυτεύεις ἀμπελῶνα, δισσὰ δὲ / Σπείρεις, τὸ δ' ἐνδυμ' ἐκ δυοῖν ὕφασμένον, / Τὰ δ' οὐχ ὁμοζυγοῦντα συζυγῇ τίθης. / Αἰηγόρευτο δ', εἴπερ οἶσθα, τῷ νόμῳ / Τὸ πλεκτὸν ἐκκλίνοντι τὸν δισσὸν τρόπον. / Ἄλλος γυναικῶν κόσμος, ἄλλος ἀρρένων, / Ἄλλο κολοῖων ὕψος, ἄλλο δ' αἰετῶν· / Αἰσχρὸν μεγάλων μίμησις ἐν μικροῖς λίαν· / Μικροπρεπὲς γάρ· οἱ δὲ Φαραῶ φαρμακοὶ / Σαφῶς σε πειθέτωσαν ἱστορούμενοι.

250 Ἀλλ' εἴ τις εἶναι τῶν σοφῶν ἐσπούδακας, / Μὴ μοι μόνην τὴν ῥάβδον εἰς ὄφιν τρέπειν· / Ζητῶ τὰ πάντα σ' εἶναι τὸν μέγαν Ἀρῶν· / Εἰ δ' ἐντέταξαι σὺν μάγοις Αἰγυπτίων, / Εἰ καλὸν, ἐξάσκησον εὐθέως ὅλον· / Οὐδεὶς φθόνος σοι τῆς καλῆς μιμήσεως· / Εἰ φαῦλον, ἐκτὸς στήθι. Φεῖσαι τῶν ἐμῶν· / Ἐμὸν γὰρ ἴσθι, κἂν ὑποκρίνη σοφῶς. / Ἀποστρεφεῖς με καὶ σὺ τὴν μίαν ἀμνάδα. / Μοιχεύεται τὸ σχῆμα. Τίς Νάθαν φράσει; / Ρῆξω τὸ φαῖδον προσδραμῶν χιτῶνιον, / Εἴ σου λαβοίμην· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τούτοις ποτέ / Τρυφᾶτε, ὥσπερ βρωμάτων τοῖς χεῖροσιν, / Ὅταν πάθῃτε πλησμονὴν ἐν τιμίῳ; / Πῆξόν τι καὶ σὺ τῶν ἐμῶν, ἂν του λάβῃ / Τῶν μαλθακωτέρων τε καὶ νόθων ἐμοί. / Τούτων τί ἂν γένοιτο ἐνδικώτερον; / Ἔστω Λάβαν τὰ λευκά· τάπισμα δὲ / Τοῦ πολλὰ μοχθήσαντός ἐστι ποιμένος, / Νυξὶν παγέντος, ἡλίῳ κεκαυμένου.

251 Αἰσχροῶν μὲν οὖν αἰσχιστον ἢ τρόπου πλάσις· / Ὅμως φύλασσε καὶ μ' ἐπαινέτην ἔχεις· / Νῦν δ' οἶδόν ἐστι τοῦτο καὶ τῷ προσφερές· / Ἄρ' ἐστι καὶ παῖξάι τι τερπνῷ πλάσματι / Σπουδῆς μεταξύ; καὶ γέλως ἐν δακρύοις; / Γαλὴν καθίζει μῦθος εἰσω παστάδος· / Νύμφην γὰρ εἶχε νυμφικῶς ἐσταλμένη· / Ἔδνα, κρότοι, γέλωτες· ἦν λαμπρὸς γάμος· / Ἡ δ' ὥς ἴδεν μὲν διατρέχοντ' ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, / Νύμφη μὲν ἦν, γαλὴ δέ· τῷ φανέντι γάρ· / Ἐπιδραμοῦσα δεῖπνον εἶχεν, οὐ γάμον· / Τοιοῦτός ἐστι πᾶς νόθος διδάσκαλος, / Τὸ γὰρ πεφυκὸς οὐ ταχέως μεθίσταται.

clear, but it is also not the main point: the problem is that such people should not be chosen in the first place. However, the criticisms Gregory lays on this hypothetical candidate remain ambiguous: Why exactly is he inadequate for the job? In my opinion, this ambiguity is better understood if we hypothesise that the whole passage refers to Maximus instead of being a general reflection like the passages before and after it. A clue in this direction is the reference to Pharaoh and his magicians in 674–680, since Gregory frequently uses all things Egyptian to give away that he is talking about Maximus²⁵². Moreover, this interpretation explains the apparent contradiction between condemnation of luxury and of feigned asceticism, because Gregory reports that, under the pretence of Cynic asceticism, Maximus was more than happy to attain the luxury of Constantinopolitan society²⁵³. The two contrasting kinds of falsity denounced, inner inconsistency and usurpation of the prerogatives of another, apply to Maximus, in the sense that Gregory represented him as a liar, outwardly pious but internally perverse, and because Maximus was a concrete rival to Gregory's community in Constantinople: feigning asceticism was but a means for Maximus to get elected bishop of the city. Perhaps the biblical reference to τὴν μίαν ἀμνάδα at 684 is an allusion to the community in Constantinople. Certainly, the traits of simulation and ambition in the portrait of Gregory's copycat here are paralleled in the portraits of Maximus in other poems. The close link between simulation and ambition is drawn in *On His Own Life* (II, 1, 11, 780–788)²⁵⁴, together with a lament on the ability of human beings to feign a character different from their own in order to damage the honest ones (791–806). The story of Maximus's attempt to get appointed to the Constantinopolitan episcopate follows as an application of this wisdom, with Maximus compared to Proteus for his changing simulations (see also §2.2.3.2). The strong link between simulation and attempt in the description of Maximus in *On His Own Life* and the reference to the victimised status of the honest man in this context suggest that the double meaning of deceit in II, 1, 12 is linked to Gregory's apologetic strategy of as regards Maximus: Gregory presents his

252 E.g.: the Egyptian plagues at II, 1, 11, 740–751; Proteus at 808; Egyptian deities at 833–839; Egyptian fleas at II, 1, 39, 7.

253 Γράφειν σὺ τολμᾷς; εἰπέ μοι, ποῦ καὶ πόθεν / Μαθών; τίνος δὲ χειρὸς ἔργον τὸ γράφειν; / Ἀλλ' οὐ χθὲς οὕτως. Ἠγάπας δ', εἰ σοι στενὴν / Μάζαν πορίζοι τὸ λευκὸν τριβώνιον, / Τό θ' ὑλακόμωρον τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ τρόπου. / Λόγοι δέ σοι τότ' ἦσαν, ὡς ὄνω λύρα, / Καὶ βουσί κῦμα, καὶ ζυγὸς θαλασσίους. / Νῦν δ' Ὀρφεὺς ἡμῖν πάντα κινῶν δακτύλοις, / Ἦ τειχοποῖδς Ἀμφίων ἐκ κρουμάτων. / Τοιοῦτόν εἰσιν, ἦν τρυφῶσιν, οἱ κύνες. (II, 1, 41, 39–48); ξανθὸς μελάνθριξ, οὗλος ἀπλοῦς τὴν τρίχα—/ τὰ μὲν παλαιά, τὰ δ' ἀρτίως εὐρημένα / τέχνη γάρ ἐστι δημιουργὸς δευτέρα. / πλεῖστον γυναικῶν ἔργον, εἴτ' οὖν ἀρρένων, / χρυσοῦν, ἐλίσσειν τὴν φιλόσοφον σισόην. / τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐν προσώποις φάρμακα / σοφοὶ φερόντων... οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶχε βρῶμα τῶν εἰωθότων / ὅξυ βλέπων δὲ καὶ σοφῶς ὁσφρώμενος (II, 1, 11, 754–760, 778–779).

254 Σοφὸν γὰρ ἔστω καὶ τὸ πικρῶς συντεθεῖν, / τὸ δ' ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς τῆς καθέδρας ἐκβαλεῖν / τοὺς οὐτ' ἔχοντας, οὐθ' ὁλως τιμωμένους, / πλὴν τοῦ φυλάξαι καὶ καταρτίσαι λεών / σοφώτερον δέ, καὶ γὰρ οὐ διὰ ξένων, / αὐτῶν δ' ἀφ' ἡμῶν συμπλέκει τὸ δρᾶμ' ὅλον, / ὡς ἂν σοφιστῆς τῶν κακῶν καὶ συνθέτης, / τῶν ταῦτ' ἀήθων καὶ πλοκῆς πάντη ξένων, / ἄλλην δὲ τιμᾶν δεινότητ' εἰθισμένων (II, 1, 11, 780–788).

own political failure as the sign of his simplemindedness, which qualifies him—paradoxically—as a good leader.

Therefore, Gregory is strongly engaged in this passage, contrasting the first and second persons at more than one point: his strategy is to highlight the difference between himself and this alternative “model” (in reality, just Maximus) of bishop. When the poet suggests that his rival cannot even potentially match him, he seems to appeal to elite self-representation: he draws a boundary between himself and Maximus not on the basis of ascetic practices, but of the nature of those who practice them. Indeed, “the imitation of the great [μεγάλων] by the petty [ἐν μικροῖς] is very shameful” (673). Such a boundary is necessary to Gregory’s position, since Maximus claimed the throne of Constantinople on grounds similar to Gregory’s, in particular as regards asceticism. The treatment of Maximus’s asceticism is the countercheck of the principle I have already more than once stated: that renunciation per se is not sufficient; there must always be—according to Gregory—something to be renounced beforehand; the ascetic is really worthy only if he had an elite status and *paideia* before. Therefore, Maximus’s asceticism, being without *paideia*, is justly discredited.

The way in which the poet discredits this asceticism is also interesting, for he stresses the effeminacy of Maximus as an ascetic²⁵⁵. Here, the theme is less developed than in II, 1, 11, where effeminacy is a major trait of Gregory’s portrayal of Maximus and where Gregory demonstrates a true obsession with Maximus’s hair²⁵⁶. In II, 1, 12, this characterisation is partly required as an allusion to the other poems, but it also suggests that the *parvenu* had to overdo, so to speak, in order to qualify himself as more ascetic. The accusation of effeminacy may also tap into the spirit of the Synod of Gangra, which condemned ascetic practices that obliterate the difference of the sexes: canons 13 and 17 of Gangra prohibit the adoption of male dress and habits by female ascetics; the case is the reverse of Maximus’s and is much more subversive, since it would endow women with the same authority as men; however, the common trait is the ascetic-bending gender roles²⁵⁷. In other words, Gregory pigeonholes Maximus in a strain of subversive asceticism already condemned by the Great Church.

At the same time, Maximus is accused of hypocrisy since he uses this powerful position (of ascetic subversive) to reap material benefits. In this perspective, the fable of the bride-kitten may allude to Maximus’s failed ordination: asceticism is the bridal dress and the apparel of the wedding; the mouse is the material advantages of the powerful position of a bishop; the sudden leap (Επιδραμούσα, 706) of the animal paral-

255 Τὰ πρὸς κάρηνα παρθένων κοσμήματα / Λίνω περισφίγγων (II, 1, 12, 655–656); Ἄλλος γυναικῶν κόσμος, ἄλλος ἀρρένων (671).

256 E.g.: Ἦν τίς ποθ’ ἡμῖν ἐν πόλει θηλυδρίας, / Αἰγύπτιον φάντασμα, λυσσῶδες κακόν, / κύων, κυνίσκος, ἀμφόδων ὑπηρέτης, / ἄρις, ἄφωνον πῆμα, κητῶδες τέρας, / ξανθὸς μελάνθριξ, οὐλος ἀπλοῦς τὴν τρίχα (II, 1, 11, 750–754); Gregory goes on until line 772 stigmatising Maximus’ hair as effeminate; then there is the long invective on Maximus’ hair at 913–939.

257 On the implications of Gangra and the kind of asceticism it forbade: §3.2.2.1 n. 259.

lels Maximus's hectic consecration²⁵⁸. The upstart may conceal his lowly nature under any garment of asceticism, but ambition will always betray him. This class contempt from Gregory is evident also in the overall tone of the passage. When the poet criticised Nectarius, he, although biting, maintained a serious tone. When, however, he criticises Maximus, he resorts to animal fable, accusations of effeminacy, and even threats of physical violence (686-687), employing a more iambic and comic tone. The criticisms of the other bishops are somewhere in the middle: the accusation of violence at the beginning of II, 1, 12, as well as the passages examined in §5.2.3 and the biblical metaphor of the wolves, suggest a serious tone; passages such as those on the background of the bishops (§5.2.1), on the other side, have a strong iambic and comic tone. I take this different treatment as a signal that Nectarius, although unworthy of his office, was still considered a gentleman by Gregory, in the sense that they belonged to the same elite class, perhaps with Nectarius even being a social superior to Gregory. On the other side, both Maximus and several other bishops are social inferiors, and Gregory could afford to not only criticise but also ridicule them. Moreover, even if Maximus was still a contender to the throne, his support came mainly from the West, far from Gregory. Nectarius, on the other hand, reigned in Constantinople with the endorsement of the emperor; in the same period as he wrote these poems, Gregory wrote personally to the Constantinopolitan bishop in courteous terms²⁵⁹; there was indeed much more to be lost in treating Nectarius roughly than in treating Maximus so. This can also be seen in a structural difference between the criticisms of Nectarius and Maximus: while Nectarius was rarely addressed directly, and many criticisms against him are couched in the form of collective catalogues, in the case of Maximus, although the name is still lacking, Gregory addresses his rival directly, drawing a fairly cohesive portrait, which allows us to imagine a particular person *inside* the poem.

Finally, Gregory attributes to the bishops, taken together, the greatest responsibility, even accusing them of spiritual murder and violence. Gregory presumably considered the other bishops more or less on a par with himself. It is now time to leave Gregory's rivals and the problems of selection and behaviour of single bad bishops to tackle the poet's accusation against the bishops as a body politic and against their whole system of church governance—namely, the councils.

258 See: Νὺξ ἦν· ἐγὼ δ' ἔκαμνον· οἱ δ' ὥσπερ λύκοι / κλέπται φανέντες ἀθρόως μάνδρας ἔσω... (II, 1, 11, 887–888). Similarly to the fable, Maximus' consecration ends with a βάθος, the revelation that his hair was dyed, that the shepherd was indeed a dog: τομὴ δ' ὑπῆλθε βοστρύχους εὐφορβίους / λύουσ' ἀμόχθως τὸν πολὺν χειρῶν πόνον, / τοσοῦτον αὐτῷ καὶ μόνον δεδωκυῖα, / ὅσον γυμνώσαι τὸ τριχῶν μυστήριον... Ποιμὴν δὲ δειχθεὶς ἐκ κυνῶν ἐκ ποιμένων / πάλιν κύων πέφηνε· τῆς ἀτιμίας (915–918; 924–925).

259 McLynn 1997, 303.

5.2.5 Synodal Waywardness

The harsh words Gregory has for synods and councils in a letter are relatively famous: “This is my attitude, to write the truth: to flee any assembly of bishops, for I have never known a synod with a beneficial end, nor reaching a solution to the ills but rather an increase thereof” (*ep.* 130, 1)²⁶⁰. This attitude is far from isolated in Gregory’s corpus: in the *Letters* alone, there is an entire cluster of missives devoted to or touching upon this theme²⁶¹. It is also the only invective item repeated in all our poems, which always devote at least a couple lines to this theme. This repetition reveals how much Gregory was concerned by the collegial dynamics of the episcopate, a concern which is completely absent from the poems by Ephrem, for example. If Ephrem was concerned with the consensus of bishops in the expanse of time (the theme of *yubbālā*, §4.1), Gregory is much more concerned with consensus in the synchronous frame of space. In other works, Gregory shows a surprising awareness of the geographic or geopolitical nature of ecclesial strife. He correctly identifies two issues: first, the enmity between East and West²⁶²; second, the odd position of Alexandria, firmly allied with the West but linguistically, geographically, and politically in the Eastern sphere, and therefore stigmatised as an element of instability and discord²⁶³. These concerns are present in our poems, too.

The passages concerned with the theme are II, 1, 10, 16–24; II, 1, 12, 792–803; 820–825; II, 1, 13, 145–161; and II, 1, 17, 91–101. In the following pages, I will analyse the common language and imagery of these passages. Then, I will contextualise it in the different poems, with their fictive frame. Furthermore, I will consider Gregory’s general idea of councils emerging from the poems. Finally, through the analytic tools of Carl

²⁶⁰ Ἐχω μὲν οὕτως, εἰ δεῖ τάληθές γράφειν, ὥστε πάντα σύλλογον φεύγειν ἐπισκόπων, ὅτι μηδεμιᾷς συνόδου τέλος εἶδον χρηστὸν μηδὲ λύσιν κακῶν μᾶλλον ἐσχηκός ἢ προσθήκην.

²⁶¹ Storin 2019, 95. See especially: Παρακαλῶ δέ, ὡσπερ τὸν ἐξωθεν πόλεμον... οὕτω λῦσον καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον, ὅσα γέεστιν ἐπὶ σοί, εἰρηνικὸν γενέσθαι τὸ τέλος τοῖς συνελθοῦσιν νῦν ἐπισκόποις ἀγωνισάμενος. Τὸ γὰρ συνιέναι μὲν πολλάκις, μηδὲν δὲ πέρας εὐρίσκεσθαι τῶν κακῶν ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ προστιθέναι ταραχαῖς ταραχάς, μείζονος τῆς αἰσχύνης, ὃ καὶ αὐτὸς γινώσκεις. (*ep.* 136, 3–4); *ep.* 132, 3–4; *ep.* 133; *ep.* 173, 6–7. Note that all the epistles lamenting the shortcomings of the synodal method are addressed to secular officials, whereas letters with similar purposes and touching the matter of synods, but addressed to prelates, do not develop this discourse (e.g.: *ep.* 157).

²⁶² Ἐρρηξαν ἡδη τὴν ὅλην οἰκουμένην, / ὃ πρόσθεν εἶπον, ἡνίκ’ ἡρχόμην λόγου. / λῆξις δ’ ἐώρα καὶ δύσις λόγου πλέον / τομὴ νομίζεται’ ἢ τόπων καὶ κλιμάτων (II, 1, 11, 1558–1661; λόγος here is “doctrine”); ξένον γὰρ ἐστίν, ὡς ὁρῶ, νῦν ἡ δύσις (1637); Χαῖρέ μοι, ἀντολίη καὶ δύσι μαρνάμεναι (II, 1, 16, 96); Μόνος τολμηρὸς ἐγὼ, καὶ θράσους γέμων, ὡς ἔοικε: μόνος εὐελπίς ἐν τοῖς φοβεροῖς, μόνος καρτερικὸς, καὶ δημοσίᾳ προτιθέμενος, καὶ ἰδίᾳ καταφρονούμενος, καὶ Ἀνατολῇ καὶ Δύσει τῷ πολεμείσθαι γνωριζόμενος (*or.* 26, 18); τὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης τμήματα συμπεπονθότα τοῖς στασιάζουσιν, ὥστε καὶ εἰς ἀντίπαλον μοῖραν ἀποκριθῆναι τότε Ἐῶν καὶ τὸ Ἑσπέριον, καὶ κινδυνεύειν τῆς γνώμης οὐχ ἥττον ἢ τῶν περάτων ταῦτα γενέσθαι τμήματα (*or.* 42, 21).

²⁶³ ἦλθον γάρ, ἦλθον ἐξαπίνης κεκλημένοι, / ὡς δὴ τι συνοίσοντες εἰρήνης σκοπῷ, / Αἰγύπτιοι τε καὶ Μακεδόνες, ἐργάται / τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ νόμων τε καὶ μυστηρίων, / φυσῶντες ἡμῖν ἐσπέριον τε καὶ τραχύ. / τοῖς δ’ ἀντεπῆει δῆμος ἡλιοφρόνων. (II, 1, 11, 1798–1802, ferociously sarcastic).

Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, I will reflect on Gregory's description of church discord in his time.

Comparing the passages, one can observe that Gregory employs a consistent group of elements in the four poems, but combines them differently inside different framings. A recurring element is the feeling of hate and enmity running through the episcopate. At II, 1, 10, 17, the discord is defined as δῆριν στονόεσσαν, modifying Empedocles' δῆρις αἰματόεσσα²⁶⁴. The allusion to Empedocles may suggest a cosmic relevance of the enmity. I find it noteworthy that in II, 1, 12 Gregory describes his own rhetoric in Empedoclean terms as an instance of φιλία (§5.1.2.3), whereas problems in the church were paralleled by images of cosmic chaos in II, 1, 13 (§3.3.2.3 and below): this suggests a running theme among the poems, of Gregory as agent of love and order contrasting enmity and the ensuing chaos of the other bishops. The juncture δῆρις στονόεσσα also highlights the emotional content by referring to the groans. In the same II, 1, 10, on 23, Gregory uses the word ἀπέχθομαι, which could seem just a variation on the theme of φθόνος directed towards his person, but the term echoes another one from the same root in II, 1, 13, 161, ἔχθος ἄπιστον: it is not just hate towards Gregory, but a widespread atmosphere of enmity between bishops²⁶⁵. Similarly, II, 1, 17, 93–94 explains the ἔρις in the councils as the result of gathering together “enemies” (δυσμενέων)²⁶⁶.

This enmity explains the strife between bishops, which is sometimes even described in terms of a war, especially in the epic poem II, 1, 13. Already the term δῆρις, especially in the accusative, points to an Iliadic context²⁶⁷, but the poem is rife with Homeric words for battle and strife, such as μ῀θος (II, 1, 13, 153; II, 1, 17, 93) and μάρναμαι (II, 1, 13, 153; II, 1, 17, 92; 99). Furthermore, Gregory describes the participant in such disputes as a warrior (θρασύς ἀσιδιώτης, II, 1, 10, 19; ἀτειρέες εἰσὶ μαχηταί, II, 1, 13, 147)²⁶⁸, and he goes so far as to evoke blood spilled (ἐφ' αἵμασι κυδιώντες, II, 1, 13, 148). Sometimes, Gregory connects the strife to the geographic divide between East and West²⁶⁹. Interestingly, this broad geographic vision occurs together with the cosmic imagery of strife, as if the conflicts between bishops could materially tear the world apart²⁷⁰.

264 Ταῦτα νόσος στυγερή, ταῦτα Θεοῦ θέραπες, / Οἱ δῆριν στονόεσσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἔχοντες (II, 1, 10, 16–17); Empedocles *frag.* 122, 8 D.-K.; perhaps borrowed by Quint. Smyrn. 1, 408; 642; 2, 484 etc.

265 Ὡς καὶ κουφονόοισιν ἀπέχθομαι (II, 1, 10, 23); Καὶ πρόφασις Τριάς ἐστι, τὸ δ' ἀτρεκές, ἔχθος ἄπιστον (II, 1, 13, 161). A parallel of this line at II, 1, 11, 460: ψυχραὶ προφάσεις, τὸ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ φιλαρχία, referring to the Sasima affair.

266 Ἐνθ' ἔρις, ἐνθα μ῀θος τε καὶ αἰσχεὰ κρυπτὰ πάροιθεν / Εἰς ἓνα δυσμενέων χώρον ἀγειρόμενα.

267 See Liddell/Scott/Jones 2011, 388, s.v. δῆρις, and the famous epic poem of Demodocus at Hom. *Od.* 8, 75–78: νεῖκος Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ Πηλεΐδην Ἀχιλλεύς, / ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλεῖη/ ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν, ἀναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων / χαῖρε νόω, ὃ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο.

268 See also: συλλέγοντες συμμάχους (II, 1, 11, 1552).

269 Κλονέουσιν / Ἀντολίην τε δύσιν τε (II, 1, 13, 151–152), cf. with the passages listed at n. 262.

270 Πάντα στρεφούση, μικρὸν ἐκκλίναντά τι, / Πάντων ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω δονουμένων (II, 1, 12, 793–794); Κόσμος ὑμῖν εἰκέτω μέγας... Ὅφ' ὃν τὸ κοινὸν ἐκταράσσει' ἀθλίως (II, 1, 12, 800; 825); καὶ κόσμον ὅλον τέμνουσιν ἀθέσμως (II, 1, 17, 99).

Besides cosmic imagery and military metaphors, the poet also employs his favourite image of the storm at sea. This image runs through the second part of II, 1, 10, from the description of Gregory's independence from partisan politics, achieved through a naval metaphor, to his resignation and retreat, described as a ship's returning into a safe haven and thus escaping from a storm²⁷¹. In such a storm, implies Gregory, the "small ship", if it does not want to associate with bigger vessels, must head to the harbour. The idea is much the same as in II, 1, 12, 792–796, which uses the charged term ζάλη, already employed for the spread of heresies (ἐν ζάλη γλωσσαλγίας, II, 1, 12, 184; §3.1.3.1) and the society the ascetic leaves behind (Καὶ τὴν ζάλην, ἥ πάντα τὰν μέσῳ στρέφει, 599; §3.2.2): this metaphor for episcopal strife is employed preferably in those recurring passages, where the poet distances himself from his colleagues in favour of ascetic life (see §3.1.2). Some verbs in II, 1, 12 (δονουμένων, 794) and II, 1, 13 (κυμαίνοντες, 146; κλονέουσιν, 151) suggest the confused movement of winds or waves—in the case of II, 1, 13, 146 describing the emotional state of bishops rather than the external situation caused by them²⁷². As usual in that poem, the sequence κυμαίνοντες, ἐπασσύτεροισι suggests the Iliadic memory of κύμα θαλάσσης / ὄρνυτ' ἐπασσύτερον (Hom. *Il.* 4, 422–423).

Furthermore, a syntactic pattern recurs in the description of these divisions—namely, an asyndeton or coordination of contrasting elements, given as single points clashing against one the other outside of the customary syntactic order of the language²⁷³. When Gregory puts forward a cause for this enmity, it is mainly ambition, especially regarding the assignment of episcopal sees. This is expressed with parallel formulae involving the word θρόνος or θῶκος (see §2.2.4.6)²⁷⁴. II, 1, 13, 158–160 conveys the same idea of ambition, mentioning the material benefits (κτήσιος) of hierarchical offices. To this base desire for worldly goods may be connected the reference to vices and passions in II, 1, 12: οἱ τῶς ὁμόφρονες, / "Ἐως κρατεῖσθε τοῖς ἴσοις παθήμασιν (821–822); ἀφέντες τὰς ἰδίας ἀρρωστίας (823).

271 Μηδ' ὥς νῆς ὀλίγη φορτίδι συμφέρομαι... φθόνον ἔκφυγον, ἐκ μεγάλου δὲ/ Χείματος, ἐν σταθερῷ πεῖσμα βάλον λιμένα (II, 1, 10, 22; 31–32). The word χεῖμα is not epic in the sense of "storm", cf. σύ τ', ὦ τάλαινα· χείματος γὰρ ἀγρίου/ τυχοῦσα λιμένας ἦλθες εἰς εὐνέμους (Eur. *Andr.* 748–749).

272 Ἀντία κυμαίνοντες, ἐπασσύτεροισι κακοῖσι / Βαλλόμενοι (II, 1, 12, 146–147).

273 II, 1, 10, 21: adnomination (ἀμπλακίη/ἡμπλακον) and antithesis (ὁμοῖον/ἄλλοις); II, 1, 12: anaphora (πάντα/πάντων, 793–794), antithesis (ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω, 794; τοὺς μὲν κάτω / Βάλλοιτε, τοὺς δ' ὑψοῦτε, 801–802) and asyndeton with climax (Χαίροιτε, ὑβρίζοιτε, πατριαρχίας / Κληροῦσθε, Κόσμος ὑμῖν εἰκέτω μέγας, 799–800, with members of 3, 4, 8 and 9 syllables and the passage from optative to imperative); II, 1, 13: asyndeton and polyptoton (Βαλλόμενοι, βάλλοντες, 147), asyndeton, antithesis and rhyme (Εἰρήνην βοόωντες, ἐφ' αἵμασι κυδιώντες, 148), climax, parallelism and chiasmus (Παῦλος ἐμός, Πέτρος δὲ τοῦ, κείνου δέ τ' Ἀπολλῶς, 154 with members of 4, 5 and 6 syllables), enumeration, asyndeton and climax (Ἡ δόξης κενεῆς, ἥ κτήσιος, ἥ φθόνος αἰνός, / Τηκεδανός, κακόχαρτος, ἐναίσιμον ἄλγος ἔχουσι!, 159–160, with the members of line 160 of 4, 4 and 8 syllables).

274 Θρόνους μὲν οὖν ἔχοιτε (II, 1, 12, 797); οἱ μὲν θώκων ἱερῶν πέρι δῆριν ἔχοντες (II, 1, 13, 145, with the wordplay on ἔδρη at 149–150); θρόνων, ὧν πέρι μαρνάμενοι / Σχίζονται (II, 1, 17, 198–199).

To understand how Gregory employs these tropes in different contexts, it is worth keeping in mind the fictional settings of these poems. The text of II, 1, 13 employs the first-person plural, implicating the speaker in the behaviours of the bishops²⁷⁵. Gregory still talks of himself as part of the episcopal college, which should not surprise us, since other clues identify this poem with the last speech Gregory gave during the Council of Constantinople before resigning (§1.1.1). Naturally, II, 1, 13 is also an *a posteriori* reflection on that moment, so that its harsh tone serves not so much to “convince” the fictive hearers as to prove that Gregory was right given the result of the council and thus to cast him in an epic light²⁷⁶. All the other poems feature Gregory dissociating himself from the other bishops in favour of a humbler station, given also his old age²⁷⁷. An analogous passage can be found also in II, 1, 13, but it is placed after the invective against bishops has prompted a final exhortation to mend their ways (II, 1, 13, 196), and it is presented as an eventuality subordinated to his success or failure at the council²⁷⁸.

II, 1, 12, which should register Gregory's resignation speech, puts his project of retirement from public life front and centre, portraying him leaving with a last exhortation to the council in the second-person plural²⁷⁹. Here, Gregory is still partially committed to the other bishops, as demonstrated by the *κἀγὼ* in line 826, which registers a more conciliatory tone than the previous *ἐγὼ δὲ* (803). The last lines (831–836) go in the same direction.

The two elegiac poems are mostly in the first-person singular, because here Gregory reflects in retrospective on the council, and he can protest his complete difference from the bishops. At II, 1, 10, 18, invoking “Christ the Lord”, Gregory remarks on his difference from the other bishops and his innocence²⁸⁰. Shortly after, in line 20, Christ is addressed in the third person, while Gregory still writes of himself in the first person²⁸¹. This demonstrates that Christ is not the only interlocutor of the poem, which presupposes the presence of the community, too; the apostrophe to Christ and the first-person verbs give a sense of intimacy and truth. Thus, Gregory is addressing the Constantinopolitan community, explaining the reasons that had brought him to resign; this focus

275 καλεύμεθα, 156; ἡμετέροισιν, 158.

276 Examples of the epic nature of II, 1, 13: §3.1.4.1; §3.3.2.2; §5.2.5.

277 Ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ τὰς βραχείας ἡμέρας / Θέσθαι, τὸ γῆρας δ' ἐν καλῷ στήσαι τέλει (II, 1, 12, 795–796); Τῶνδε γὰρ εἵνεκ' ἔγωγε μέσος χθαμαλοῖσι κάθημαι / Ἰητρὸς παθέων, αὐτὸς ἄνουσος ἑὼν. / Οὐ γὰρ ἐμῆς πολιῆς παίζειν (II, 1, 17, 95–97). At II, 1, 10 the equivalent follows immediately the passage I have excerpted: Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν λήθης κεῦθοι βυθός. Αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε / Ἐνθεν ἀφορμηθεῖς, τέρψομαι ἀτρεμῆι, / Πάνθ' ἄμυδις, βασίλεια, καὶ ἄσπετα, καὶ ἱερῆας / Ἀσπασίως προφυγῶν (II, 1, 10, 25–28).

278 εἰ δὲ καλῦπτοι / μῦθον ἐμόν . . . μαρτύρομ' . . . οὐ μὲν ἐγὼ κείνοισιν ὁμόθρονος οὐχ ὁμοεργός . . . ἀλλ'οἱ μὲν περόφον ἐὼν ὁδόν, αὐτὰρ ἔγωγε / ζητῶ Νῶε κιβωτὸν (II, 1, 13, 198–199; 201; 203; 205–206).

279 ἐγὼ δὲ συστραφήσομαι Θεῷ, II, 1, 12, 803; Εἴητε, 820; ὑμῖν, 821; κρατεῖσθε, 822; στέργοιτ[ε], 824; κἀγὼ παρήσω τοῦμόν . . ., 826.

280 Χριστὲ ἀναξ, οὐ μοι ταῦτα νοοῦσι φίλα (II, 1, 10, 18).

281 Οὐδ' ἔθελον Χριστοῦ ἄλλο τι πρόσθε φέρειν (II, 1, 10, 20); first person: γενόμεν (19); ἔθελον (20); ἡμπλακον (21); συμφέρομαι (22); ἀπέχθομαι (23).

on the local community can be seen also in the fact that this is the only passage not mentioning the geopolitical implications of the strife.

Finally, II, 1, 17 has Gregory strongly dissociating from the bishops according to the model of dialectical self-portrait already studied (§5.1.1). Here, the description of the strife gains traits that go beyond the customary reference to war and sound an iambic note. The poet compares episcopal discord to the war between cranes and geese (Χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἀκριτα μαρναμένων, 92), the subject of an Aesopian fable (Aesop 256; Perry 228), in which, however, they do not dispute with one another. Of course, one could refer to the strange simile of the war of cranes and Pygmies in Homer (*Il.* 3, 2–6), but there the cranes fight against human beings, not geese. The metrical tile Χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων recurs twice in Homer (*Il.* 2, 460; 15, 692). The first occurrence, though not mentioning a dispute between these species, features the adverb κλαγγηδόν, which may have inspired Gregory. The Homeric simile describes the deployment of the Achaeans; however, Gregory employs it as a metaphor, giving a much more comic turn to the image. Finally, one of the comic works attributed to Homer in the *Life of Homer* of the Pseudo-Herodotus (24) is the Ψαρομαχία, “the battle of the starlings”, which may suggest something similar to the *Batrachomyomachia* but with birds. When, shortly after, Gregory compares church leadership to apes (101), he may be referencing another lost work attributed to Homer, the Κέρκωπες, a tale of mischievous men-monkeys²⁸². The poet of Old Comedy Hermippus composed a play with the same title. The word is attested in the Septuagint version of the Bible, too, in Prov. 26:22, where it refers to the flattering but false man. It is notable that Gregory had already employed this animal metaphor for the bad bishop in II, 1, 12, 771, contrasting his own *parrhēsia*, compared to that of a lion, with the character of the talkative political bishop, compared to an ape (§3.1.1.3). In any case, both animal references give a mock-epic or comic connotation to the passage, besides being very insulting. It is indeed interesting that II, 1, 17 would be more “iambic” than II, 1, 12 in this case. However, as we have seen, II, 1, 12 had its more iambic parts (§5.2.1–4), and it is just resuming its more serious frame—the official speech at the council—towards the end; besides, it still features violent attacks against colleagues, directly or sarcastically, except that the attacks are not couched in the humble images of the rest of the poem. II, 1, 17, on the other hand, began with the high tones of the *Priamel* and gradually descended more and more towards the iambus, especially in the description of Gregory’s life as bishop (§5.2.3). Here it goes towards its natural ending with *bathos*, using fable-images that are not wholly strange to the elegiac metre. This is, after all, one of the last poems treating explicitly the council before the cycle of the Lenten silence; therefore, the poet’s trust in public action is here at its minimum; he has never been so removed and estranged from the other bishops and their world.

282 *Harpocr. lex.*, s.v. κέρκωψ; *Suda* s.v. κέρκωπες.

Until now, I have considered only *how* Gregory stigmatises and criticises discord among bishops. Now I will analyse *what* and *why* he criticises the bishops as a collegial body. First, note that the word σύνοδος is used in relation to discord only in II, 1, 17, 91. This line is almost a poetic rendition of the incipit of *ep.* 130²⁸³. At least in their formulations, the other passages refer to the state of contemporary church hierarchy, not to the instrument of synods and councils. However, the setting of II, 1, 12 and II, 1, 13, evoked by the use of the first-person plural in 13 and of the second-person plural in 12, situates these criticisms of the episcopate in the context of the Constantinopolitan Council, so that the dynamics the texts describe must be brought in relation with Gregory's evaluation of councils and synods. After all, these dynamics are indeed the dynamics Gregory met in the Council of 381.

In II, 1, 13, 161, Gregory says that the Trinity was just an excuse (πρόφασις Τριάς ἐστὶ), an evaluation which—even leaving aside Gregory as a source—corresponds to the reality of that council: the bishops who convened in Constantinople were all Nicenes, and the dissenting Macedonians were ousted at the beginning. With a Nicene emperor, determined to bring his influence to bear, the consensus on the Nicene Creed must have been taken for granted by the council as a mere formality. What was really at stake were Antioch and Constantinople, the first because of the schism, the latter because of the deposition of the Arian Demophilus. Here, again, Gregory is right in pointing out that the real point of contention was the “thrones”, with all the material benefits they brought²⁸⁴. This should not have been a problem per se, because provincial synods and even wider councils were a customary practice in the church to sort out these hierarchical matters, so many that the canons required wide consensus of the relevant prelates for the consecration of a new bishop²⁸⁵. Gregory's bitterness and his presentation of this quite normal proceeding as an awful spoil system stem from his personal experience in Constantinople. Indeed, it was the question of Antioch that exploded in his hands, dividing the episcopate during a supposedly easy council and leading to his own downfall. The fact that such strife was caused by an administrative matter, and not a doctrinal one, contributes to the indignation of the poet.

However, his blaming the councils for discord in the church is partially justified by the development of the schism of Antioch. Before the Council of Constantinople there was a deal between the two factions to end the division. It was after the death of Meletius at the council that the deal was challenged and ultimately ignored. The opposing sides may have been insincere since the beginning, but the fact remains that the deal

283 Cf. Οὐδέ τί που συνόδοισιν ὁμόθρονος ἔσσομ' ἔγωγε (II, 1, 17, 91) with πάντα σύλλογον φεύγειν ἐπισκόπων (*ep.* 130, 1). τί που equals πάντα, συνόδοισιν equals σύλλογον (the latter is not attested in Homer), ὁμόθρονος with negation equals φεύγειν and, through the reference to the θρόνος, covers the specification ἐπισκόπων.

284 Τόσσοις ἔρωι φαέεσσιν ἐπήχλυσεν ἡμετέροισιν, / Ἡ δόξης κενεῆς, ἡ κτήσιος (II, 1, 13, 159).

285 See, e.g.: canons 4–6 of Nicaea; 2 and 6 of Constantinople. See the works on episcopal elections cited at §3.3.1 n. 209.

fell apart in the context of the council, with both parts attending and given ample opportunity to fight and, perhaps, to stiffen their positions. In retrospective, Gregory must have thought that it would have been better to avoid the encounter completely, and thus maybe the factions would have respected the deal: the council offered the occasion to exercise those ambitions and to harden those enmities that, in the day-to-day proceedings of the bishops, would have been hindered by distance and absence. This is the meaning of the following sentence: “Ἐνθ’ ἔρις, ἔνθα μόθος τε καὶ αἵσχεα κρυπτὰ πάροιθεν / Εἰς ἓνα δυσμενέων χῶρον ἀγειρόμενα (II, 1, 17, 93–94). He notes another shortcoming of councils in II, 1, 11, 1739–1744²⁸⁶: he excuses himself for his failure to govern the council, noting that during such assemblies there is not a definite chain of command, but that the majority imposes itself—which is, according to him, nothing short of anarchy.

This idea is linked to another problem Gregory acutely notes. He is conscious of the negative fallout of synods, beyond the fact that they do not find solutions to the problems; as he says in *Letter* 136, 4: “To assemble often, far from finding a limit to the ills, always adds confusion to confusion” (ταραχαῖς ταραχάς; see note 273). Our texts describe the confusion ensuing from synodal strife, too. In these descriptions, the poet seems to point to more widespread consequences than the simple confusion in the college of bishops, because he uses terms with a general value, such as κόσμος (II, 1, 12, 800; with ὅλος at II, 1, 17, 99), πάντα (II, 1, 12, 793–794), τὸ κοινόν (II, 1, 12, 825), and “the East and West” (Ἀντολίην τε δύσιν τε, II, 1, 13, 161). These terms, which are the object of verbs meaning “to upset”, “to shake”, are ambiguous, in that they do not pinpoint one precise community which is “upset” or “shaken”. These words convey an idea of totality. Such a totality may be interpreted on three different levels. The first, and the most restricted, is the totality of the episcopal college. In this sense, Gregory has noted something important: the format of the ecumenical council, bringing together bishops from (at least in theory) all over the empire, was liable to extend the problems affecting just one part of the episcopate to its totality. After all, he did experiment with something similar when the Egyptians reached the council in Constantinople, tilting the balance of the Antiochian dossier against him and thereby challenging his own position—which seemed sure before—by unearthing the Maximus affair. And so, different matters, canonically pertaining to different regions, got intertwined with one another, so that a piecemeal solution was not possible anymore, while the simultaneous presence of groups of bishops with opposite interests hindered any comprehensive solution. The synodal way, says Gregory, brings conflicts and ills of the church painfully to light, but it is also the worst method to solve them.

²⁸⁶ “σὺ δ’ οὐκ ἐπήνεις ταῦτα τὸ πρόσθεν; λέγε. / τῶν συλλόγων δὲ τίς ποτ’ εἶχε τὸ κράτος;” / οἱ σύλλογοι μὲν ἦσαν, ὧν ἦσαν τότε / (ὁκνῶ γὰρ εἰπεῖν αὐθις, οἷς αἰσχύνομαι), / ἦσαν δὲ πάντων, ἴσον εἰπεῖν οὐδενός / ἀναρχία γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ πλεισταρχία.

In a broader sense, the πάντα which the council disrupts may refer to the totality of church matters and especially to the rest of the faithful. A concern about the consequence that the bishops' discord will have for the faithful of is shown in particular in II, 1, 13, where the passage in question is followed by the following consideration: "Such are the leaders [ἡγητῆρες]. Then follows closely the people [λαός], / prone to wickedness, even without a leader" (II, 1, 13, 164–165). The turmoil caused by bishops introduces and explains the turmoil in the community, which lacks moral canons (see §3.3.2.2). This generalised turmoil in turn echoes the long description of the state of the church at the beginning of the poem²⁸⁷. The idea of chaos and confusion runs through all of II, 1, 13, and it is linked not only to the failure to select good bishops but also to the discord among existing bishops. This component is at work elsewhere as well, at least in II, 1, 17, where, after our passage, Gregory defends himself from the not-so-hypothetical accusation of having abandoned his community²⁸⁸. However, in this poem the perspective is that of the single bishop, whereas II, 1, 13 is much more interesting from this angle because it considers the church at large, as a κοινόν.

Finally, in their broadest sense, the references to κόσμος, πάντα, and τὸ κοινόν may involve also the secular sphere. Here, again, Gregory's experience is a fundamental guideline: each major step of his career in Constantinople, from his sending in 379 to his refusal to take part in the 382 council, had been determined by imperial policy, either as an endorsement of such policy or a reaction to it. For this reason, it must have been utterly clear to Gregory that the church's stability and unity were of the utmost importance for the emperor. The reason behind imperial care for church matters was equally clear: concerns of public order went hand in hand with religious disputes. This was especially true on an urban level, where schisms and hierarchical disputes could devolve into riots²⁸⁹. Moreover, many emperors and bishops were sincerely convinced that orthodoxy and a legitimate hierarchy contributed to the welfare

²⁸⁷ §3.1.4.1; cf. ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα / σείεται οἷα τε κύμα (29–30) with ἀντία κυμαίνοντες (146) and κλονέουσιν / ἀντολίην τε δύσιν τε (151–152). A group of echoes implies that the bishop's behaviour is a sacrilegious mock of Christ's Salvation: cf. Θεὸς ἦλθεν ἀπ' οὐρανίου τοῦ θωώκου (32) with οἱ μὲν θώκων ἱερῶν πέρι δῆριν ἔχοντες (145); κύδος ἐὼν θνητοῖσιν ἐνὶ σπλάγχνοις κενώσας... αἷμα τε θεῖον / ῥύσιον ἡμετέρης κακίης χέεν (33; 35–36) with ἐφ' αἵμασι κυδιώοντες (148) and κείνου καὶ χεیرهσσι καὶ αἵματι κύδος ἔχοντες (157). Cf. also: πῶς μήνη σκοτέεσσα τόσον κλέος ἀμφοκάλυψε; (42) with τόσσος ἔρωσ φαέεσσιν ἐπὶ γλυσεν ἡμετέροισιν (158); ὀλοῖον... ἔχθος (52) with ἔχθος ἄπιστον (161). Note the parallel between the mention of the cities of refuge of the Bible and the mention of the Temple as secluded spaces, emblematic of the order and purity of the church: καὶ χώρος τις ἦν ἀποπομπαίοις θυέεσσι... (60) and ἦν δ' ὅτε Μωαβίταις νηὶς μέγας οὐ βατὸς ἦεν... (184).

²⁸⁸ Cf. Εἰ δὲ κακὸν λαοῖο θεόφρονος ἡνία ῥῖψαι, / Ἰστωσαν κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἀποσεισμένων, / Ὅφρα κεν, ὡς θοὸν ἵππον, ἀποπτυστῆρα χαλινῶν, / Θυμὸς ἄγοι κρημνοῖς, ἢ σκοπέλοισι φέρων (II, 1, 17, 103–106) with Ἡ σκοπέλοισιν ἔαξε, κυβερνητῆρος ἄτερθεν. (II, 1, 13, 55) and Τοῖα μὲν ἡγητῆρες· ὁ δ' ἔσπεται ἐγγύθι λαός, / Πρόφρονες ἐς κακίην, καὶ ἡγητῆρος ἀνευθεν. (II, 1, 13, 164–165).

²⁸⁹ Two examples: the many riots in Alexandria (see Haas 1997, 245–330); the disorders in Rome surrounding the contested succession of Liberius between Damasus and Ursinus (Amm. Marc. 27, 3, 12–15; 9, 9).

of the empire, whereas heresy and illegitimate prelates were punished by God on a collective level²⁹⁰. We have already seen such an ideology in Ephrem (§4.1.2), and it is at work even here in Gregory. It is true that Ephrem is more explicit on this, since, thanks to the history of Nisibis, he has in mind the importance for the empire to win its wars. Gregory is more subtle, maybe because he took this notion for granted in his audience. For example, in II, 1, 13 the ongoing reference to ecclesiastical chaos is expressed with reference to the whole “cosmos”, as if to suggest that the upheavals of the church influenced the very structure of our world²⁹¹. Moreover, in the first description of chaos in the poem (II, 1, 13, 27–58), Gregory often repeats the word λαός, suggesting a collective dimension of the problems decried²⁹². These subtle hints signal that the bishops’ divisions reflect on the larger structure of the empire and, ultimately, of the world—even if that structure ought not to be the prime concern of the bishops: after all, at the beginning of that poem, Gregory called the bishops “world’s pillars” (κόσμοιο θέμεθλα, II, 1, 13, 5).

Given the political dimension of this strife, I want to conclude with a parallelism between these passages and Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*²⁹³. Gregory’s pessimistic analysis of the discord inside the episcopate has points of contact, in my view, with Schmitt’s generalisation of politics as the domain of the categories of friend and foe and with his close association of politics and war. I am drawn to this comparison by a detail of the enmity between bishops as described by Gregory—namely, its lack of real motives: Καὶ πρόφασις Τριάς ἐστι, τὸ δ’ ἀτρεκές, ἔχθος ἄπιστον (II, 1, 13, 161). As the analysis of the texts in this section has shown, Gregory excludes doctrinal motives for the conflicts between bishops and tends to connect the conflicts to an unspecified enmity. It is true that such enmities sometimes take ambitions of power and desire for riches as their triggers, but they are largely presented as a primitive, unaccountable fact. Gregory formulates this criticism after the traumatic experience of the 381 council, during which an apparent consensus of bishops, all belonging to the Nicene party and in the absence of doctrinal opposition, even with imperial support, shipwrecked on the matter of Antioch, leading to factions that were still divided and fighting up to the

290 Elm 2012, 2–3. The rest of the book demonstrates from the texts how much the *Fortuna Romanorum* was linked with correct worship and correct theology.

291 Λαὸς ὅλης γαίης βασιλῆϊος (II, 1, 13, 28); σπινθήρ δὲ λόγου, καὶ πυρὸς ἀερθεῖς, / Πᾶσαν ἐπέδραμε γαῖαν αἰδῖμος (48–49); Κιγκλῖδα τὴν μεσάτην κόσμων δύο, τοῦδε μένοντος, / Τοῦ τε παριπταμένοιο, θεῶν ὄρον, ἡμερίων τε. (70–71); Ξυνὸς μὲν πάντεσσιν ἀήρ, ξυνὴ δέ τε γαῖα, / Ξυνὸς δ’ οὐρανὸς εὐρύς, ἃ τ’ οὐρανὸς ὁμμασι φαίνει (96–97); Αὐτῶν κόσμος ἔοι, αὐτῶν θεὸς, ὅσα τ’ ἀρίστοις / Ἔσπεται ὑστατίοισιν ἐν ἡμασιν ἀμφιτάλαντα (171–172); Ἐν δ’ ἄρα πάντα πέλοι, Χριστὸς, βροτὸς, ἥλιος, ἀστήρ, / Φῶς, σκότος, ἄγγελος ἐσθλὸς, Ἐωσφόρος οὐκέτι λάμπων. (175–176); Πάντα δ’ ἅμ’ ἀλλήλοισι πεφυρμένα εἰς ἓν ἄγοιτο. / Ὅς ποτ’ ἔην, ὅτ’ ἄκοσμος ἔην πρωτόκτιστος ὕλη, / Κόσμον ἔτ’ ὠδίνουσα διακριδὼν οὐ βεβαῶτα. (181–183). On the cosmological imagery: §3.1.4.1; §3.3.2.2.

292 Λαὸς ὅλης γαίης βασιλῆϊος, ἔθνος ἄπιστον (II, 1, 13, 28); Λαὸς ὁδ’ (32); λαοῖο (58); ὁ δ’ ἔσπεται ἐγγύθι λαὸς (164); see also: Σῶμα μέγα Χριστοῦ (27); τόδε σῶμα (40); ὅλον γένος (47); στρατὸν (51; 53).

293 I quote from the synoptic edition of the different versions prepared by Marco Walter, Schmitt 2018.

time of the writing of the poems. Such an outcome of the council must have seemed so inexplicable that Gregory attributed it to none other than Satan (II, 1, 13, 43–58). Enmity acquires thereby a metaphysical foundation; it is not casual that the poet mentions Adam's expulsion from Eden as a demonic work before introducing the enmity between bishops. The current discord is therefore presented as a consequence of—or at least something similar to—the original sin. These elements—the arbitrariness of the division, its metaphysical nature, and the link with the original sin—resemble one of the key features of the friend/foe distinction according to Schmitt—namely, its irreducibility to other categories. The foe is such not because he is wrong or ugly, but simply because he is a foe: enmity is something primordial; it is cause, not caused²⁹⁴. Proceeding from his definition of “the political” (*das Politische*), Schmitt claims that those writers who could address what is authentically “political” were those with the presupposition of something intrinsically “wrong”, problematic, in human nature. Therefore, among Christian writers, the clear conscience of an original sin was the fundament of authentically political thought²⁹⁵. Thus, Schmitt draws a link between political thought and original sin and, more generally, metaphysics—a connection that is, in a way, analogous to what we find in Gregory, where arbitrary conflict is conceivable only in the framework of Adam's banishment from paradise and Satan's presence and activity in our world. It is perhaps significant that Gregory employs so many animal fables as examples in our poems, if Schmitt claims that the political interpretation of the animal fable is possible only when one believes men to be “naturally” evil²⁹⁶.

There are, however, significant differences between Gregory's representation of conflict and the requirements of the friend/foe distinction as put forth by Schmitt. First, Schmitt distinguishes between private rival and public enemy. He employs for the first the Greek word ἐχθρός, which is the word recurring the most in Gregory's poems for the bishops²⁹⁷. Even in the line quoted above (II, 1, 13, 161), enmity is called ἐχθος, meaning a private sentiment of hate more than a public relationship as required by Schmitt. Gregory consistently describes this enmity as a sentiment, something stemming from the inner mind of the bishops; for example, they are called δυσμενέων in II, 1, 17, 94, and their enmity against Gregory comes from their νοῦς in II, 1, 10, 18 (οὐ μοι ταῦτα νοοῦσι φίλα). Another important element of Schmitt's classification is the absence of a neutral third party—whether in the form of a regulation or of an adjudicating institution—that may resolve the conflict²⁹⁸. If church canons, though formally neutral and preordained,

294 Schmitt 2018, 76–79, 80–83. Van Dam's analysis of the strife between Eunomius and the Cappadocians (Van Dam 2003b, 15–45), although perhaps too cynic, stresses the personal and social enmity beyond and beneath doctrinal divergences of the participants. However, that conflict is entirely contained in the terms of a private rivalry and competition between provincial notables.

295 Schmitt 2018, 188–203, esp. 196–197.

296 Schmitt 2018, 180–183.

297 Schmitt 2018, 82–87.

298 Schmitt 2018, 78–81.

were irrelevant in resolving church conflicts, as the inconsistent application of canons 2 and 15 of Nicaea to Nectarius and Gregory demonstrate (see §5.1.2.2), the emperor was still capable of deciding church issues, at least for a while. In the end, the emperor had the power to declare or avoid war, whereas the bishops did not have it, so that their conflicts were not “political” in the full sense. This brings us to a third condition episcopal conflicts left apparently unmet: Schmitt requires that friend/foe conflicts entail the present, concrete possibility of death, either of the enemy or of oneself. Yet, since bishops could not raise armies or declare wars, their conflicts seem not to be capable of endangering the concrete, biological life of their participants.

Yet some of these differences are limited. The rivalries between bishops, for example, cannot be reduced to purely private issues. They have a collective character, first because the bishops did not act as individuals but were divided into groups and acted as *θρασεῖς ἀσπιδιώται*, to use Gregory’s expression (II, 1, 10, 19). Moreover, Gregory ascribes to them a significance surpassing the inner strife of a selected body of people. The meaning of his geographic references to East and West, as well as of the protracted cosmic metaphor implying that the conflict among bishops may tear apart the very fabric of the *κόσμος*, is precisely that these conflicts have a collective significance or at least that their effects trickle down to the whole church and the whole empire. The East-West divide is particularly unsettling, since its episcopal side could seem to reflect a much more important cultural and imperial dynamic—namely, the political division between *pars Orientis* and *pars Occidentis*, already played out many times during the civil wars of the fourth century, and the increasing linguistic divide between the Greek- and Latin-speaking church and between the Greek- and Latin-speaking empire. It is ironic that, at the very moment when the empire celebrated its last unification under Theodosius, the church revealed for the first time her East-West divide in the Council of Constantinople, and Gregory anticipated later developments when he highlighted this divide. Anyway, it is difficult to assess how far church conflict involved also the congregations, and, therefore, how much one is authorised to speak of collective conflicts as opposed to private grudges. In Antioch and Alexandria episcopal groups had communal footing, with conflicts sometimes devolving into violence, but the cases of these two gigantic cities are not to be translated throughout the Mediterranean lightly; perhaps this collective representation of the conflict is due more to Gregory’s poetic imagination.

As regards the threat of physical war looming above every authentic friend/foe distinction, although bishops could not declare war, physical damage was not completely excluded from church conflicts. As I have already said, such conflicts could devolve into violence, especially in bigger cities like Antioch, Alexandria, or Rome. One has only to remember the attempted stoning of Gregory at Constantinople, the controversial events leading to Damasus’s election to the see of Rome as recounted by Ammianus, or the

situation of Roman Africa in the time of Augustine described by Shaw²⁹⁹. Moreover, bishops were ordinarily exiled, persecuted, or incarcerated by the secular arm during the fourth century, as Gregory wrote in *or.* 42 (see §5.1.2.2, especially note 52). In many cases, the emperor and his officers were counselled by other bishops, so that one cannot strictly speak of a neutral (and neutralising) state in the same sense in which one speaks of the modern European states considered by Schmitt. State power was contestable, and indeed the competition to influence the emperor must have been one of the main components of the bishops' enmity. Thus, the violence one side could inflict on the other was still bound by irregularity of deployment (episodic outbreaks) or by the mediation of imperial power. For this reason, it is difficult to evaluate how much the communities backing the different groups of bishops perceived the threat of violence on an existential level.

These contradictory features of the enmity described by Gregory are explicated in Schmitt's idea that the friend/foe distinction can emerge gradually from other differences, as well as degenerate in grotesque instances of the same dynamic³⁰⁰. A full identification of the dynamics described by Gregory with the friend/foe distinction and Schmitt's definition of what is properly political can be safely dismissed. On the other side, there are undeniable analogies between the two, so that one could interpret the situation described by Gregory as one of those parasitic forms of enmity in which antagonism is expressed through tactics, intrigues, and rivalries. This situation, however, does not result from a previous full-fledged enmity; rather, it was first revealed—at least, in Gregory's perception—during the council. In the moment of their triumph, the Nicones found themselves divided. This did not bode well for the future: this, in my opinion, is the deep meaning of Gregory's insistent military metaphor, especially in II, 1, 13. The conflict has not yet escalated to a point where war is a concrete possibility of the ecclesiastical confrontation; however, the lack of a serious motivation (according to Gregory) in the conflict over Antioch and himself is the sign of a growing "politicisation" of ecclesiastical conflicts. After all, in the following two centuries christological controversies, with their East/West divide and the fundamental role of Alexandria, proved Gregory right. In a Schmittian perspective, to represent these conflicts with the language of war, alluding even to bloodshed, means to cast them as political conflicts; thereby, the poet tries to warn his audience of this growing "politicisation".

The modern interpreter may speculate on the reactions of Gregory's public to his warning. The warning must have been particularly relevant to lay audiences, especially to people close to the court: Gregory signals a weakening in the neutralising power of the secular arm. Although his ousting and the election of Nectarius may seem a victory from the point of view of the emperor, the poet argues that, coming from a deep divide in the episcopate and failing to address that divide, these actions serve merely to delay

299 Shaw 2011.

300 Schmitt 2018, 88–89, 92–93.

and exacerbate the problem, especially if the Egyptians and the Westerners had perceived Nectarius's and Flavian's elections as a defeat. History vindicated our poet: the problem repeated itself, exacerbated, in the case of John Chrysostom less than a decade later. On the other hand, the ecclesiastical audience is sternly recalled to a higher standard of conduct by Gregory's military metaphors. If they had been able to piece together Gregory's considerations on the political cost of electing Nectarius (§5.2.3) with the implications for the empire of their discord as represented by the poet, they would have understood the risk Gregory could only obliquely allude to: ecclesiastical infighting causes the emperor to encroach on the independence of the church in order to restore order; this in turn leads to less dignity and freedom for the hierarchy. For this reason, it is important to preserve concord as much as possible and to sort out conflicts internally, renouncing partisanship.

Until now, to compare Gregory to Schmitt's thought, I have relied mostly on II, 1, 13. Military imagery, the theme of enmity, and the arbitrariness of the conflict are less relevant in the other poems, and this is not a coincidence. II, 1, 13 is fictionally set during the council, but it is really supposed to denounce the behaviour of bishops. Fictionally, the description of the dynamic of the council makes the bishops aware, but in reality, it exposes the bad state of the church. Gregory's insistent reference to Christ, his blood, and the church as mystical body is an attempt to overcome the opposing factions appealing to a broader belonging; the devil has, in this context, the function of the "other" against which enmity should be directed. The other poems have a different stance, one of progressive removal of Gregory from the political arena. In II, 1, 12, Gregory has already decided to resign but still tries to influence—however weakly—his colleagues. His final *peroratio* in favour of peace insists on the moral qualities of the single bishops as a prerequisite for concord. This is in harmony with the real-life meaning of the poem, which is concerned with the selection and the traits of the good bishop. These extroverted proposals cease with II, 1, 10 and II, 1, 17, two poems already focused on the self-presentation of Gregory as an ascetic. Already in II, 1, 12 Gregory had expressed his isolation from the rest of the bishops³⁰¹; in II, 1, 10, however, his isolation turns to enmity. By refusing to "take arms" for either faction, Gregory has become the common enemy of both factions³⁰². This paradox is the perfect corroboration of the apologetic argument, according to which Gregory chose to sacrifice his position and reputation—in short, himself—for peace among the other bishops, without denying malevolence on their part. The retrospection of II, 1, 17 brings an even harder judgement against councils and an even stronger removal from the bishops: Gregory does not propose any unity anymore but, generalising the "us vs. them" dynamic of the Council of Constantinople

301 Εἴτ' οὖν πεπληγὼς ἐκ μέθης τὸν νοῦν μόνος / Μέθῃ τετρωσθαι τοὺς ἀοίνους οἶομαι. (II, 1, 12, 829–830). Note the word μόνος in the middle of the distich. The passage has been analysed at §5.1 and §5.1.2.4, where Gregory's isolation and difference from the others is directly thematised.

302 οὐ μοι ταῦτα νοοῦσι φίλα. / Οὐ γὰρ ἦς γενόμην μοίρης θρασὺς ἀσπιδιώτης... Μῆδ' ὡς νῆς ὀλίγη φορτίδι συμφέρομαι. / Ὡς καὶ κουφονόοισιν ἀπέχθομαι (II, 1, 10, 18–19; 22–23).

to every possible assembly of bishop, he declares renunciation to politics the only viable solution. Read in this *corpus*, II, 1, 13 works as the premise of the other two poems, as it explains the danger of the ecclesiastical politics Gregory will renounce. Naturally, what these texts witness is but a conditioned renunciation of politics: the poems themselves are proof that Gregory has not ceased to make his voice heard in church matters; he has just chosen a new way to do it: through poetry.