SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT THROUGH EXEGESIS: ST GREGORY OF NYSSA AND THE SCRIPTURES

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Abstract: This article begins with a brief overview of the Patristic approach to hermeneutics, then locates the exegetical works and approach of St Gregory of Nyssa within that context. In a summary of these works, the main focus will be on those which gave rise to his spiritual and mystical insights, and in illustrating from them Gregory's particular combination of the methodologies he inherited from his patristic predecessors. Over and above, this paper will argue that Gregory's unique and enduring value as a scripture scholar is the way in which he drew upon the sacred texts to show how we are led through grace to perfect union with God.

Modern biblical scholarship tends to be presented in one of two ways: either as a large work that systematically investigates one or more books of the Bible, or as a shorter article on some theme or critical issue related to a particular book. On the whole, this was not the approach of the early Christian scholars.[1] Their primary focus was on the person of Jesus Christ and how to understand his identity and mission in light of the Scriptures. This Christological focus was largely determined by the theological debates of the time in which Gregory was a key player. Other influences on his choice of biblical texts were probably the work of scholars who preceded him and the frequency with which Moses was described as a pre-figure of Christ.[2]

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In this, their exemplar was Jesus himself, illustrated in the wonderful post-Resurrection story of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.[3] The reader will recall the scene from the Gospel of Luke. Two disciples are walking home to the village of Emmaus, downcast because of their recent experience of the death of Jesus in whom they had placed all their hopes. Without introduction, the risen Lord begins to walk beside them – although they do not yet know it is He. Having invited them to share the reason for their despondency, He proceeds to draw upon Old Testament passages that throw a shining light on His own life and mission. "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

Searching the Scriptures in this way for a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ is the key to reading the Fathers' contribution to biblical exegesis. Their whole purpose was to learn more and more about who Jesus is by constantly exploring the Scriptures for hints and clues.

One of the favourite patristic methods came to be known as typology, whereby scriptural scholars saw in people and events of the Old Testament 'types' or pre-figures of Christ. It is fascinating to note examples of this even in the New Testament itself, especially in the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul. For example, in John 3, Jesus says to Nicodemus: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

We will shortly see examples of this typology in the works of Gregory of Nyssa but, before we leave the scene in Luke's Gospel, notice how the story ends. After Jesus has left them, the two disciples, reflecting back on this experience, recognise its transforming power: "Were not our hearts burning within us when He spoke to us along the way and opened the Scriptures for us?" (Luke 24:32).

The patristic contribution to biblical interpretation can only be fully appreciated by recognising that it involved not only their heads, but their hearts as well. When articulating theological and creedal statements, often in the face of fierce opposition from their opponents, they carefully

drew upon all their intellectual resources and hermeneutical principles. These debates were grist to the mill in the early Church, starting with the Council of Jerusalem and only resolved at the great ecumenical councils, especially first Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451). It was at the second Council of Nicaea in the eight century that Gregory was given the posthumous title of 'Father of Fathers.'

But if this was the great theological fire that blazed across Christian Europe, what kept it alight were "the hearts that burned within" the great defenders: their deep interior lives of contemplative prayer. In Gregory of Nyssa in particular, plumbing the Scriptures for spiritual enrichment became the heart of much of his best work.

Let us now turn to his actual exegetical works and how he went about the task. First I shall provide a simple list, then take some of the major works and look at them more closely.

Gregory's Exegetical Works

The majority of Gregory's exegetical works focus on passages from the Old Testament: the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, 1 Kings, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. His few New Testament studies include the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and various exegetical homilies. This list is in the order in which the books appear in the Scriptures, rather than the order in which Gregory wrote them.[4]

1. *De hominis opificio, The Making of Man.* Both this and the related *Explicatio* were written to complete *In Hexaemeron*, Basil's monumental work on the six days of creation.

2. *Explicatio apologetica in Hexaemeron*. In this, his second work on Creation, and although he only refers to *De opificio* towards the end, Gregory corrects some misinterpretations of the biblical text and of Basil's exegesis.

3. *De vita Moysis, the Life of Moses.* In the *Life of Moses*, we have the major work that identifies Gregory as a master of the spiritual and mystical

life. It is essentially an idealised portrait of Moses as an exemplar of the virtuous and godly life, and how the soul moves through similar stages on the path to perfection.

4. *De pythonissa* (1 Kings 28:12f). In this brief tract on Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, Gregory contradicts Origen's interpretation that Samuel himself appeared to Saul, and says that it was not Samuel, but rather a demon who disguised himself as the prophet.

5. *In psalmorum inscriptiones, Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms,* in which Gregory develops the idea that the five books of the Psalms are like five steps on the ladder to perfection (ch.1-9), and the sole purpose of the *Septuagint* titles is to lead us to goodness (ch.10-25).

6. *Eight homilies on Ecclesiastes*. On Eccl. 1:1-3:13: an allegorical interpretation serving the same mystical purpose as above, in which he taught that the soul should rise above the senses, and that true peace is only to be found in contempt of worldly values.

7. Gregory's fifteen homilies on the *Song of Songs* incorporate the theory and application of his exegetical method as well as affording him the perfect opportunity to further develop his understanding of the soul's spiritual journey towards union with God.

8. *De beatitudinibus,* a series of eight highly rhetorical homilies on the Beatitudes.

9. *De oratione Domini,* a treatise consisting of five homilies on the Lord's Prayer.

10. *In illud tunc et ipse*, a treatise on 1 Corinthians 15:28 in which Gregory argues from the words of St Paul the true divinity of the Son.

Gregory's Approach to Exegesis

Virtually all of Gregory's theological reflections, sermons and spiritual insights take Scripture as their starting-point. There are also echoes of Plato, so that at least one scholar has seen Gregory's approach as "a subtle

blending of Platonism and Scripture."[5] At times he is inspired by the Jewish writer Philo as indicated in his parallel typological exegesis of the biblical accounts of his *Life of Moses*. Of course, he then goes way beyond Philo's interpretation by seeing Moses as a type of Christ. In his own words,

> Taking a hint from what has been said by Paul, who partially uncovered the mystery of these things, we say that Moses was earlier instructed by a type in the mystery of the tabernacle which encompasses the universe. This tabernacle would be *Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God* […]. Now the great Apostle says that the curtain of the lower tabernacle is the flesh of Christ. […] It would be well then by paying heed to the partial interpretation, to fit the total contemplation of the tabernacle to it. We can gain clarity about the figures pertaining to the tabernacle from the very words of the Apostle.[6]

Gregory employs a variety of exegetical methods. In his works on Genesis, he takes a traditionally literal approach; the first part of *De vita Moysis*, has been called "a haggadic exegesis" and the second "moral allegorism."[7] But the one that he championed was the use of allegory.

In his prologue to the Song of Songs, Gregory gathers together all his arguments in defence of allegorical interpretation.[8] At the heart of his exegetical method, he draws solidly upon Origen's hermeneutical principles, especially in looking for the spiritual, often 'hidden' meaning of the text. Here in the prologue, he refers explicitly to the Alexandrian father's commentary on the Book: "Although Origen laboriously applied himself to the Song of Songs, we too have desired to publish our efforts."[9] This indication that he will build upon Origen's earlier work but in his own way broadens into an explication of his exegetical method in general and his own version of Origen's *De Principiis*.[10] In essence, Gregory argues that if the spiritual meaning of a passage (its 'usefulness' or 'benefit', ὀφείλεια)[11] is clear from a literal reading, then that is sufficient. But, where the meaning is hidden or covered, then we must find other ways, searching "the divine Scriptures with every means at our disposal."[12]

An important contribution to scriptural methodology is Gregory's notion of ἀκολουθία, a term that occurs constantly in his writings and is most clearly exemplified in his work on the psalms. The term itself refers

to a logical sequence, be it chronological or in the development of ideas. For Gregory, its key significance is a theological one: the unfolding of God's plan for the salvation of the world and the way this is reflected in the Scriptures in general, and in individual books.[13]

It is linked closely with another frequently occurring term θεωρία, the actual searching (θεωρεῖν) for the connections between the literal and spiritual meanings through "loving contemplation."[14] Gregory sees as unfolding in parallel, both the literal and the theological meanings of the biblical text. As the text is being read, the Holy Spirit is guiding the reader's spiritual understanding.[15] Yet, for Gregory the exegete, the term also includes the notion of "the historicity of created being and the way in which God causes this being to unfold into an ordered history, into an *akolouthia*."[16]

In his use of both terms, Gregory builds upon the work of Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea, but there are important differences. Significantly, Gregory is the first to bring the terms together, viewing "ἀκολουθία as object to θεωρία, a connection not found in Eusebius, thereby giving to θεωρία a meaning different from that held by the Alexandrians or Antiochenes."[17] Again, where Origen, for instance, understood the sequence to be hidden, for Gregory this pattern is plain in the ordinary reading of the text. And where his predecessors had identified the principle of ἀκολουθία as applying to a scriptural passage, Gregory expanded it to be true of a whole book, and even to the entire biblical corpus.[18] The *locus classicus* for Gregory's application of these ideas is his *Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, to which we shall shortly return.

In effect, Gregory's sustained exegetical writings can be said to form a bridge between the works of those who went before him, especially Philo and Origen, and those who followed, even up to the pre-modern period of the great classicists.

In the overall shape of many of his exegetical works, Gregory first provides an exegesis of the scriptural text itself using one or more of the methods mentioned above. Then, in the second and often longer section,

he describes the passage's deeper spiritual sense. While this might sound not unlike sermons in any age, including our own, his careful exploration of the mystery 'hidden' in the text, is uniformly profound, and often uniquely so. Because we are primarily concerned with Gregory's gift to us of spiritual enrichment in his exegetical works, the rest of this paper will concentrate on some examples of precisely this pattern.

De Hominis Opificio

As noted above, *De hominis opificio* was written to complete Basil's *In Hexaemeron*.[19] Gregory's focus is the 'sixth day,' the creation of humankind as described in Genesis 1:27, "God made mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them."

As his purpose is to complete Basil's unfinished work, he takes for granted that readers are familiar with it. In fact, apart from a brief literal exegesis of the verse related to the creation of man, the rest of the work is largely a philosophical analysis, as can be discerned from the list of thirty short chapters which Gregory provides at the beginning. He writes: "For clearness' sake I think it well to set forth to you the discourse by chapters, that you may be able briefly to know the force of the several arguments of the whole work."[20] Gregory's main philosophical argument addresses the apparent enigma: If human beings are "made in the image of God," how does this reconcile with their animal desires and behaviour?

Gregory's answer is that these desires in fact, when properly ordered, lead ultimately along the spiritual ascent towards union with God. This affirmation leads us into what became the abiding focus of his major exegetical works, that their deeper meaning is God's call to human beings to ascend the spiritual ladder towards perfect union with God.[21]

De Vita Moysis

In the *Life of Moses*, we have the major work that identifies Gregory as a master of the spiritual and mystical life. It is essentially an idealised portrait of Moses as an exemplar of the virtuous and godly life, and a classical example of the two-part work mentioned above: the *historia* or narrative

account of Moses' life is followed by the *theoria* in which Gregory provides his spiritual interpretation of this account.[22]

Gregory was certainly not the first to see in Moses a key figure in the salvation history of Judaeo-Christianity. He is mentioned in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament character, and onwards through the Fathers especially Justin, Hippolytus and Cyril of Alexandria. However, the clearest parallel is with Philo whose own *Life of Moses* is also in two parts. The first is a straightforward account from the scriptural texts highlighting Moses' leadership; in the second, Philo presents Moses as a lawgiver, priest and prophet, and as a moral exemplar.[23]

In the first section of Gregory's own work, and following a short prologue, he mirrors somewhat Philo's literal or haggadic account of Moses' life as portrayed in Scripture. Drawing upon the Books of Exodus and Numbers, he paraphrases the story of Moses, outlining the key incidents in the prophet's life. His particular interest will be in the three theophanies or encounters with the living God: in the burning bush, in the cloud and on Mount Sinai.

Gregory then proceeds to provide his own spiritual interpretation of the story. Again, he was not the first nor the only scholar to do this, but his focus on the three theophanies and what they mean for the soul's spiritual ascent to God is unique and has earned him the title 'founder of the Church's mystical theology' from one of the twentieth century's patristic scholarly giants, Jean Daniélou.

In this second and much longer section (θεωρία), Gregory identifies Moses' experience as a symbol of the soul's mystical ascent to union with God. Taking each of the theophanies, he parallels them to the three main stages of growth in the spiritual life.

Moses' first encounter with God is described in Exodus 3:2-5. In the *historia* section (Book I, paragraph 20), Gregory emphasises Moses' experience of enlightenment, the material light that he sees and the interior light that enables him to hear the voice of God. He then expands on this in the corresponding *theoria* section (Book II, paragraphs 19-26) to show

how what Moses experienced was an illumination of his understanding that only in God does everything sensory depend and subsist (24). But this grace of inner knowledge is intended not only for Moses. It is also given by God to all those who "look to the light shining in the bramble bush, that is, to the Radiance which shines upon us through this thorny flesh and which is (as the Gospel says) the true light and the Truth itself" (26).

However, the grace of the first theophany remains at the level of an intellectual grasp of God; neither Moses nor the soul is yet in possession of an existential knowledge of God, one that goes beyond the rational. To move to further growth in perfection, one will have to pass through the darkness of unknowing in order to arrive at an understanding of God who is beyond all images and the limits of rational thought. These will be the second and third stages, parallel to Moses' experience of God in the cloud (Ex 33:7-11) and on Mount Sinai respectively (Exodus 34:29-35).

Gregory thus writes of three stages of the ascent to union with God using Moses' experience as an allegory of spiritual growth. Through grace and consistent fidelity to a holy and virtuous life, a person comes to understand that God cannot be contained within the limits of human perception; it is paradoxically only in surrendering these limited understandings through grace that one truly comes to see God.[24]

Gregory's contribution to apophatic theology and spirituality has been enormously important in the history of Christian spirituality and mysticism. In our own time, it is perhaps best known through the anonymous 14th century treatise *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a small work that has recently received an unusual resurgence of interest for Christian readers. This in itself suggests that, in spite of modern materialism and cynicism, or perhaps because of it, people continue to search for spiritual enlightenment in ours as in every age.

In Psalmorum Inscriptiones

Gregory's goal or σκοπός in his *Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*[25] is similar, but his exegetical approach is quite different. It has

been noted that, of all the Old Testament books, the one more often treated than any other by patristic exegetes is the Book of Psalms.[26] But whereas most of the Fathers studied the psalms themselves, Gregory's unique contribution is to focus entirely on the actual titles or inscriptions of the psalms. In doing so, and in the work itself, he shows himself to be a meticulous exegete who was able to recognise that every part of Scripture has something to offer for our spiritual enrichment.[27]

There had been previous attempts to explore the significance of the titles beyond the naïve reading of them as a chronology of the life of King David. About half the 150 psalms are attributed to David, and several refer to specific incidents in his life. Eusebius noted the connection between successive psalms but he did not treat the Book of Psalms as a whole. Likewise, Athanasius had identified spiritual pointers in some of the titles.[28] But what Gregory set out to do was to explore the theological essence of the whole Book by a detailed and systematic study of the titles, including the significance of their absence in Psalms 2, 8 and 9. In summary, he develops the idea that the five books of the Psalms reflect the five steps on the ladder to perfection (ch. 1-9), and the purpose of the titles is to lead the reader to this spiritual state (ch. 10-25). The end result was a unique contribution described by one scholar in the following summary.

> The exegetical contribution of the Bishop of Nyssa is decisive here because it presents, in a consistent and methodological way, the spiritual dimensions of the Old Testament Psalms [...]. His is an exegesis that focuses on the spiritual reality, but history, time and nature constitute a constant background. Here we encounter the combination of breathtaking vistas of spirituality and of sober views of human history, of astonishing attention to the details and of absorbing preoccupation with the grand scale theological themes. It is this combination of microexegesis and macroexegesis, of historical reality and spiritual vision that make the book *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* a truly fascinating volume for biblical exegesis.[29]

Homilies on the New Testament: the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes

While Gregory's writings on passages from the New Testament are very few, and commonly regarded as minor, they deserve at least brief

attention.[30] All were written in the context of homilies, but the one that comes closest to the pattern we have already seen in his writings is his work on The Beatitudes presented as eight chapters, one for each Beatitude.

Taken as a whole, Gregory shows how the Beatitudes succeed one another according to the principle of ἀκολουθία. He conceives of the progress from one to the next as ascending a mountain on which the soul is led upwards towards God on the path of perfection, "from superficial and ignoble thoughts to the spiritual mountain of sublime contemplation."[31] Beginning with the first: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of Heaven," he presents the initial challenge as divesting oneself of "earthly riches […] so that he may be lightly lifted into the air and be borne upwards [...] walking on high together with God (1 Thess 4:16)."[32] And so on for the remaining seven Beatitudes right up to the eighth where martyrdom, real or metaphorical, will be the supreme act of self-surrender to God and will be blessed accordingly: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

With each sermon, Gregory follows his pattern of providing a straightforward exegesis of the passage, followed by his reflection for what this means in the spiritual life of each person. Perhaps the most fascinating example is his sermon on the sixth Beatitude: "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." He teases out the apparent impossibility of our seeing God in this life since the Scriptures, especially "John, Paul and Moses" consistently claim that no one can see God.[33] But, when it is taken with the rest of the Beatitude, the pathway is clear and he concludes: "Let us become clean of heart, so that we may become blessed when the Divine Image is formed in us through purity of life, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."[34]

Gregory's Debt to His Saintly Sister, Macrina

Before concluding, I want to make a brief mention of the important part played in Gregory's life and scholarship by his elder sister Macrina (330-379). There are two primary sources, his *Life of Macrina* and *Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection.*

In 379, on his way home from a synod at Antioch, Gregory visited the dying Macrina in the monastery of which she was the founder and superior. They engaged in a profound conversation on life after death and the final restoration of all things in eternal beatitude with God. He later described this conversation in his work *Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection* where he named Macrina his teacher. Here, and in his *Life of Macrina*, also written after her death, Gregory praised his sister as "the glory of our family" and portrayed her as the ideal Christian teacher and philosopher who "lifted herself, thanks to philosophy, to the highest summit of human virtue." What is more, in the Dialogue, he compares her to Thecla, the companion of Paul in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*; even more significantly, he says of her in the Life that she is on a philosophical par with Socrates.

Our particular interest here is that Gregory accredits her as a master in the interpretation of Scripture. Indeed, he readily acknowledges himself as the one needing comfort and instruction from her. He presents her as a teacher of the Word who not only knows herself how to study the Scriptures but nurtures this understanding in others, including her brother. Moreover, this is no ordinary pious reflection, but she insists that Scripture must be interpreted with logic and sound principles if it is to be convincing in the face of theological adversaries. It has been well said of Gregory's portrayal,

> On an individual level, Macrina has been presented by her brother Gregory, in an historically plausible portrait, as a Christian philosopher equal to, and even superior to, Socrates. On a more general level, Gregory's portrait of Macrina is a strong and sensitive statement, with no exact parallel in patristic literature. It declares that in Christ there is neither male nor female, but that in him all are one.[35]

Conclusion

St Gregory of Nyssa has left a lasting legacy of theological and spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures. He understood our human knowledge and strivings after the living God to be the work of grace, a reflection of our being made in the image of God and drawn by God into ultimate beatific union. His particular insight was that, even on earth, a person can progress

in holiness through fidelity to the teachings of Scripture that is also imbued by an intuitive knowledge of God.

In the post-Enlightenment age of biblical scholarship, a great deal of effort has been expended on objective and systematic methodologies. These have been a gift to scholars themselves, and to those who benefit from reading the fruit of their work. None of this ought to be underestimated in value; it is all part of the providence of God in leading us to ever better understanding of the Word.

However, it seems that the interpretative tools for unlocking the Scriptures have sometimes become an end in themselves so that their ultimate purpose of leading us spiritually closer to the Word has tended to be sidelined, if not lost altogether. It seems timely to reclaim the treasures of Gregory's exegetical and theological insights as one way of restoring interest in this spiritual goal of exegesis and a fresh commitment to restoring the balance between sound exegetical methodology and spiritual enrichment.

> Communion with God is a constant ascent 'from glory to glory' [...]. Thus, in meeting God, there is never frustration or satiety, but only the discovery of true Love. It is on this point – more than on any other – that Gregory, while being Greek, transcends the Greek mind itself and indicates to his contemporaries and to future generations, including our own, the path to the Living God.[36]

Notes

1 Noted exceptions are the great commentaries of Origen, John Chrysostom and Augustine, among others.

2 See Mariette Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Études augustiennes, série Antiquité 99 (Paris, 1983), 85.

3 For this insight, I am indebted to John A. McGuckin, 'Patterns of Biblical Exegesis in the Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa,' in S. T. Kimbrough Jr. (ed.), *Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005): 37-54, esp. 38.

[4] As has been pointed out, the precise chronology of Gregory's exegetical works is not easy to establish. On this, see *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, introduction, translation and notes by Ronald E. Heine (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 8.

[5] Frances M. Young, 'Adam and Anthropos: A Study of the Interaction of Science and the Bible in Two Anthropological Treatises of the Fourth Century,' *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 110-40, 117.

[6] Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* (excerpts from Book II, paragraphs 174, 178, 179), translation, introduction and notes, Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 97-98.

[7] Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, Vol. 1: The Greek Fathers (Petersham, Mass: St Bede's Publications, 1993), 220.

[8] Ronald E. Heine, 'Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory,' *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 360-70.

[9] Gregory of Nyssa, *Song of Songs*, English translation by Casimir McCambley (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1987) of the critical edition of *Gregorii Nysseni in Canticum Canticorum*, Vol. 6, Werner Jaeger & Hermann Langerbeck (eds.) (Leiden, 1960), 13.

[10] McGuckin, 'Patterns of Biblical Exegesis,' 54, n.75.

[11] Manlio Simonetti, 'Exegesis,' in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, edited by Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco and Giulio Maspero, revised and expanded English edition, translation by Seth Cherney (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 331-38.

[12] Gregory of Nyssa, *Song of Songs*, 5.

[13] For a scholarly summary of the term, see Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo, ἀκολουθία, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, 14-20.

[14] Gregory adapted the neo-Platonic term as expounded by Plotinus to the experiential loving awareness of God that later grew into the common understanding of the word as referring to "contemplative prayer" in both East and West. Here it includes the not-unrelated but more specific idea of prayerful reading of Scripture by which the reader experiences with his/her whole person, the deeper, spiritual sense of the text. For a fuller discussion of the term, see Giulio Maspero, θεωρία, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, 736-38.

[15] De Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 217.

[16] De Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 218-19. De Margerie actually excludes the contemplative meaning as primary; I think it is more accurate to hold both together.

[17] Jean Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 13, my translation.

[18] De Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 215.

[19] The text of *De hominis opificio* is taken from Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series II, Vol. 5, Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Downloaded from: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf205.html. It was first translated into Latin by Dionysius the Exiguus (470-544), who is more famous for having invented the Gregorian calendar.

[20] *Op. cit.*, 607-609.

[21] For further scholarly discussion on this work, see Georgio Maturi, *De hominis opificio*, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, 544-45.

[22] See Giulio Maspero, ἱστορία, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, 390-96, at 390.

[23] Malherbe & Ferguson, *Life of Moses*, 5-6.

[24] Jean Reynard captures this spiritual ascent in the introduction to his work, *Sur les titres des psaumes / Grégoire de Nysse; introduction, text critique, traduction, notes et index* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2002): "d'une ascension vers le bien et le plan d'un cheminement spirituel en cinq étapes, depuis la séparation d'avec le mal jusqu'à la participation à la béatitude divine."

[25] Cf. Ronald E. Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, introduction, translation & notes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[26] For an impressive list of those written up to the end of the 6th century CE, see the preface to Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms,* translation & introduction by Casimir McCambley (Brookline MA: Hellenic College Press, 1999).

[27] See Tina Dolidze, *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, 429-31, 429.

[28] See Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 221-22.

[29] McCambley, Gregory of Nyssa, *Psalms*, x-xi.

[30] The text used here is that found in *St Gregory of Nyssa, the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes*, translated and annotated by Hilda C. Graef (New York NY: Newman Press, 1954).

[31] Graef, *The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes*, 85.

[32] Graef, *The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes*, 95.

[33] Graef, *The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes*, 145.

[34] Graef, *The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes*, 153.

[35] Patricia Wilson-Kastner, 'Macrina: Virgin and Teacher,' *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (1979): 105-117, 117.

[36] John Meyendorff, Preface to *Life of Moses*, Malherbe & Ferguson, xiii-xiv.

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