

“This is an important book which makes a real contribution to the field of church history and historical theology, with a depth of research enough for scholars but very accessible so that anyone can read it. I found the book very satisfying and enlightening. Well worth the time of anyone interested in the history of doctrine and spirituality, but the book also demonstrates why the study of Gregory is relevant and worthwhile in our time. I especially appreciated the way the author connects christological implications to artistic depictions of Christ, demonstrating that all art teaches something about its subject.”

—Jim L. Papandrea
Professor of Church History and Historical Theology
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

“In *The Doctor of Mercy*, Papazian makes a distinctive contribution by providing the most comprehensive introduction to St. Gregory of Narek, a medieval mystic who experienced and expressed a reality not easily comprehended. The book touches upon everything conceivable about the Saint and his works and does so in an appealingly clear fashion. Papazian acts as a guide who takes the reader on a tour to meet the Saint in his time and place, explaining all along the things encountered on the way and those to be expected upon arrival. Then comes the embrace.”

—Abraham Terian
Emeritus Professor of Armenian Theology and Patristics
St. Nersess Armenian Seminary

Michael Papazian

The Doctor of Mercy

The Sacred Treasures of
St. Gregory of Narek



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In memory of Robert W. Thomson (1934–2018)
Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian (1992–2001),
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Acknowledgments

The seed of this book was planted in 2003 at a symposium at Harvard University dedicated to the millennium of the completion of the *Book of Lamentation* of St. Gregory of Narek. I had been asked by Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, at that time prelate of the Eastern US Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, to contribute a paper. My topic was Gregory's theology of salvation. Today, having read and learned much more, I would probably question many of the paper's conclusions but the favorable responses from other participants encouraged me to continue my efforts to articulate the theology that informs Gregory's writings. This book is in many ways the fruit of my first very modest attempt to read the saint's works theologically.

But a confluence of events would be needed for that fruit to grow. The most important of these was Pope Francis's declaration in April 2015 of St. Gregory as a Doctor of the Church. That event was for me a powerful impetus that made me recognize the need for a book in English that would introduce Gregory's life, writings, and spirituality to broad readership. The great Armenian *vardapet* was now recognized as a universal doctor whose works belong to the world and not just to Armenian Christians. There are already many very good translations of Gregory's writings in modern languages. But I did not see any book-length work in English or other major languages that addressed the relevance of the monk's theology and spirituality to contemporary world concerns. There is no doubt that Gregory's prayers are powerful medicine, remedies for the spiritual afflictions still present in the twenty-first century as much as in the tenth.

By a happy coincidence, the pope's declaration occurred just before I was eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave by Berry College. I could not have written this book without that generous grant and I

am especially grateful for colleagues' assistance beginning with my dean, Thomas Kennedy, and chair, Jeffrey Lidke, who wholeheartedly endorsed my project. I am immensely grateful for the support of all my department colleagues and the faculty of the Evans School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, who encouraged me and also graciously assumed the duties I was freed from during the sabbatical. A special note of gratitude is due to Peter and Rita Lawler, my best friends at Berry. Peter, who was Dana professor of government, sadly did not live to see this book published. But the influence of his brilliance and devotion to the Catholic intellectual tradition abides in and inspires every page here.

Nor could I have accomplished anything without my family. They nurtured and raised me to love the culture and language of the Armenian people. My maternal grandparents, Krikor and Veronica Pilbosian, my paternal grandmother, Hripsime Papazian, and—though I never met him—my paternal grandfather, Barour Papazian, embodied for me the strength and resilience of this nation that has produced even in times of hardship a rich spiritual and intellectual heritage that includes Gregory's singular achievements. My parents, Pierre and Iris Papazian, made every sacrifice to support my education. My mother taught me with extraordinary devotion to read the Armenian alphabet and modern Armenian and she continues to inspire me. She is the foundation of the learning that led to this book. They along with my aunts and uncle, Margaret Papazian, Elizabeth Pilbosian, Rosely and Wally Stronski, have steadfastly supported my studies. My wife, Andrea Lowry Papazian, was my ever devoted companion and supporter throughout my research and writing. This book is an expression of my profound love for them all.

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I dedicate this book to my teacher, Professor Robert W. Thomson. When I went to Oxford in the mid-1990s to study classical Armenian under him, he encouraged me to extend my interests beyond philosophy to theology and biblical exegesis. His initial encouragement led me ultimately to the study of St. Gregory, and his kind yet exacting instruction in classical Armenian made me into the inquisitive if imperfect Armenian scholar I am today.

Michael Papazian

July 6, 2019

Feast of the Discovery of the Relics
of St. Gregory the Illuminator

Abbreviations

- BL *Book of Lamentation* (section numbering based on MH 12, 49–605)
- CSCO *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliū* (Paris-Louvain, 1903–)
- GCS *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1897–)
- JSAS *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*
- JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
- MH *Matenagirk' Hayots' [Armenian Classical Authors]* (Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia)
- NBHL *Nor Baṙgirk' Haygazean Lezui [New Lexicon of the Armenian Language]* (Venice, San Lazzaro Press, 1836)
- OCA *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome, Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1945–)
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca* (Paris: Migne, 1841–64)
- REArm *Revue des Études Arméniennes*
- SC *Sources chrétiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1941–)
- TLG *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*

Armenian Transliteration

Based on the Library of Congress system

<i>u</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>η</i>	<i>t̄</i>	<i>ւ</i>	<i>տ</i>	<i>ը</i>	<i>թ</i>	<i>ժ</i>
a	b	g	d	e	z	ē	ě	t'	zh
<i>հ</i>	<i>լ</i>	<i>խ</i>	<i>ծ</i>	<i>կ</i>	<i>հ</i>	<i>ձ</i>	<i>ղ</i>	<i>ճ</i>	<i>ւ</i>
i	l	kh	ts	k	h	dz	gh	ch	m
<i>յ</i>	<i>ն</i>	<i>շ</i>	<i>ո</i>	<i>չ</i>	<i>պ</i>	<i>ջ</i>	<i>ռ</i>	<i>ս</i>	<i>վ</i>
y	n	sh	o	ch'	p	j	r	s	v
<i>ւ</i>	<i>ր</i>	<i>ց</i>	<i>ւ</i>	<i>փ</i>	<i>ք</i>	<i>օ</i>	<i>ֆ</i>	<i>ու</i>	
t	r	ts'	w	p'	k'	ō	f	u	

Introduction

Saint Gregory of Narek, an extraordinary interpreter of the human soul, offers words which are prophetic for us: “I willingly blame myself with myriad accounts of all the incurable sins, from our first forefather through the end of his generations in all eternity, I charge myself with all these voluntarily” (*BL* 72). How striking is his sense of universal solidarity! How small we feel before the greatness of his invocations: “Remember, [Lord,] . . . those of the human race who are our enemies as well, and for their benefit accord them pardon and mercy. . . . Do not destroy those who persecute me, but reform them, root out the vile ways of this world, and plant the good in me and them” (*BL* 83).

—Pope Francis¹

On April 12, 2015, during a mass in St. Peter’s Basilica commemorating the centennial of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, Pope Francis formally pronounced the tenth-century Armenian monk, poet, and theologian St. Gregory of Narek a Doctor (from the Latin word for teacher) of the Universal Church. Gregory thereby became the thirty-sixth of these acknowledged great masters of Catholic faith and spirituality. Among the doctors are renowned theologians like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas;

¹ Pope Francis, 2015, Message on the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and Proclamation of St. Gregory of Narek as a Doctor of the Church, accessed January 1, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150412_messaggio-armeni.html.

mystics and visionaries like St. Teresa of Ávila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Hildegard of Bingen; and Gregory's fellow poet from the East, St. Ephrem the Syrian. Books, both scholarly and popular, about the most prominent doctors easily fill many library shelves. A reader knowing little about any of these august figures would be able to find readily at least one and often many books that would introduce their teachings. Just recently, a new English translation of Augustine's *Confessions* has been published, joining scores of other English translations of this classic.² Many books will gently guide anyone desiring to learn more about Aquinas's philosophy. There are several popular translations and presentations of Hildegard, the most recently proclaimed Doctor of the Church prior to Gregory.³

Many of Gregory's works have been translated into English in recent years. But, unlike most of his fellow doctors, there has been to date no English language monograph presenting his life and theology to a broader audience. The present book seeks to fill that void. Apart from his now being in very elite company, Gregory also deserves to be better known because of his unusual circumstances. Outside of his native Armenia he is little known and rarely studied. He is perhaps the most obscure of the doctors. Even more remarkably, he lived his entire life outside of visible communion with the Catholic Church. He was a priest and monk of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which had by the sixth century rejected the Council of Chalcedon of 451, the fourth of the great ecumenical councils that defined orthodox doctrine, thus taking his church out of communion with most of the rest of the Christian world. On a number of websites, people responded to Pope Francis's declaration with the question "Is the new Doctor of the Church a Catholic?" The quick answer to this question is negative: Gregory

² Augustine, 2017, *Confessions*, trans. Sarah Ruden, New York: Modern Library.

³ For example, Brian Davies, 1993, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford: Clarendon, but much earlier also G. K. Chesterton 2014, *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*, New York: Image (first published in 1933). Interest in Hildegard, declared a Doctor in 2013, has generated numerous translations and original books. For a good introduction to her life and works, see Sabina Flanagan, 1998, *Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179: A Visionary Life*. London: Routledge.

was never during his earthly life a member of a church in communion with Rome. Consequently, the declaration of Gregory as the first “non-Catholic” Doctor of the Church is an extraordinary development in ecumenism and a gesture of charity by the Catholic Church toward another Christian church that it once deemed heretical and schismatic.

Gregory’s addition to the ranks of the doctors thus has a significance that goes beyond just his writings, as impressive and important as they are. The pope’s address at the beginning of the mass made clear that, beyond its ecumenical significance, his declaration was also meant as a message relevant to contemporary world affairs. Gregory bears witness to the presence of a once vibrant and flourishing Christian culture in the Middle East that today is on the verge of extinction. His monastery was abandoned during the 1915 Armenian Genocide and subsequently demolished, as were so many other churches and religious institutions in recent years in nearby countries torn apart by war. Gregory is a witness for us of an earlier period in Middle Eastern history, a time that was certainly not ideal, but when the region was more pluralistic, with members of various Christian communions as well as other religions coexisting and working together. The various ethnic and religious communities were not closed off to each other but interacted both socially and economically, and they inspired each other culturally. Gregory’s native land today looks very different. The once prominent Christian presence in eastern Anatolia is almost completely nonexistent today as a result of the genocide that killed over a million Armenians and other Christians, and scattered the survivors into a diaspora that extends throughout the world. The monasteries and churches that filled the landscape of the Lake Van basin are today unused and in ruins. Gregory’s life reveals to us today that the destruction and religious intolerance that has engulfed much of the world—and especially the Middle East—in recent history is by no means inevitable.

But besides testifying to a possibility of a different reality in the Middle East and other places where intolerance appears to flourish, Gregory focuses in his writings on a number of themes that are important to Francis’s papacy. Among these themes is God’s mercy, which Gregory illustrates and celebrates throughout his

works. The prevalence in Gregory's thought of mercy, which Francis has remarked on in several of his homilies and addresses, makes him a fitting choice as the first Doctor of a papacy in which God's mercy has been a leading theme. Because mercy is so central to Gregory's works, I have thought it appropriate to refer to him as *Doctor of Mercy*.

In the last few decades, there has been a burst of new scholarship that has brought to light more details on Gregory's background, as well as on his works. This book aims to present some of the results of that scholarship, much of which is currently only available in Armenian. Now that he is a Doctor of the Universal Church, Gregory's wish that his works would reach all the people of the world has begun to be realized. My hope for this book is that it will make a modest contribution toward his goal of composing spiritual poetry to inspire and heal all the nations of the world.

This is a book primarily of theology rather than a biography of its subject. We know very little about the details of Gregory's life, an ignorance that he would encourage due to his monastic humility and his desire to represent, through his penitential prayers, not just himself but all of humanity in its reconciliation with God. Nor is this book a history. Of course, we cannot understand Gregory and his writings apart from the history and culture that shaped him, so there will be considerable attention to the history of the church and monasticism in Armenia. But the purpose of this historical information is to allow us to understand Gregory's teachings and to apply them to our lives and spiritual journey. The only reason he wrote was to offer solace and peace in the light and love of God to an agitated and alienated world. Accordingly, I will try as best I can to honor his wish that his voice may give to all people "tender inspiration, sweet embraces so that the grace of the Lord's light may enter and dwell among us."⁴

I wrote this book not strictly for specialists. Its purpose is to introduce Gregory's poetry and thought to any interested reader having some familiarity with Christian history or theology. To that end, I have attempted to keep details of a more specialized schol-

⁴ *BL* 3.3; *MH* 12:67.89–93.

arly nature in the footnotes. Armenian and Greek words will occasionally intrude into the body of the text, but details of a more tangential nature are left in the footnotes. Armenian words are written according to the Library of Congress system of transliteration. However, I use common English equivalents of names whenever they exist. This is in keeping with the custom followed in the cases of names in other linguistic traditions. For example, we are used to encountering in English books not *Iōannēs* but *John* Chrysostom. So, too, it seems appropriate to refer to the subject of this book not as *Grigor Narekats'i*—the transliteration of his Armenian name followed by the name of his monastery's location appended with the Armenian place name suffix *ats'i*—but to the English equivalent, *Gregory of Narek*. In the case of names with no common English equivalents—for example, Gregory's father, *Khosrov Andzewats'i*—I keep to the Library of Congress transliteration.

The footnotes contain references to editions of the primary sources in the original languages. For Armenian authors, most of the texts are taken from the *Matenagirk' Hayots'*. I cite passages by volume, page number, and section number (or in the case of the *Book of Lamentation* and hymns, the line number). So *MH 12:178.20* refers to volume 12, page 178, line 20. For the *Book of Lamentation*, I also cite the prayer number and section according to the *MH* arrangement. When English translations are available, I give the page reference to the translation, although my translations will often differ, usually not significantly, from the cited version.

Biblical citations and verse numbering (including the numbering of the psalms) are based on the New Revised Standard Version. The only exception is that I translate Gregory's version of biblical passages in those cases in which his text differs significantly from the NRSV.

Reading St. Gregory in Translation

Those readers wanting to read Gregory's writings in English translation now have available to them a number of good translations. His great poem, the *Book of Lamentation*, was translated by Thomas J. Samuelian under its alternate title, *Speaking with God*

from the Depths of the Heart.⁵ The most recent editions of this translation include revisions made with the Armenian-American poet Diana Der Hovanessian. For those who know French, the translation by Annie and Jean-Pierre Mahé has the advantage of a detailed introduction and extensive annotations.⁶ Translating Gregory is a difficult task. Virtually every page of his great poem contains neologisms and obscure expressions. He introduced a large number of words into Armenian, for we find hundreds of entries in the monumental Armenian lexicon *Nor Baḡirk' Haykazeaḡ Lezui* (*New Lexicon of the Armenian Language*) that cite just a single passage from Gregory's corpus. When I discuss any such words in this book, I designate them as *hapax legomena* or simply a *hapax*, which means that they are words that occur only once in the known body of ancient and medieval Armenian literature.

Beyond just the presence of these singular words in Gregory's poetry, his style is also highly complex and demanding. He makes use of wordplay and equivocation that often defies translation. Although I consulted both of these translations in the course of writing this book, I generally offer my own translations from the Armenian text of the *Book of Lamentation*.⁷ When I deviate from other translations, whether of this work or Gregory's other writings, I do not mean to suggest that the other translations are in error. Usually my revisions are done to emphasize a point I wish to make or to bring forward the theological or historical context of Gregory's text. Samuelian and the Mahés have both produced fine translations that allow the reader to get a good sense of Gregory's poem.

For Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs there is an excellent and elegant English translation by Roberta Ervine.⁸ Ervine's

⁵ Thomas J. Samuelian and Diana Der Hovanessian, eds., 2016, *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart: The Armenian Prayer Book of St. Gregory of Narek*, fifth edition, Yerevan: Vem Press.

⁶ Annie and Jean-Pierre Mahé, 2000, *Tragédie: Matean Oḡbergut'ean*, CSCO 584, Louvain: Peeters.

⁷ Grigor Narekats'i, 2008, *Matenagirk' Hayots' [Armenian Classical Authors]* 12, Antelias: Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia.

⁸ Roberta R. Ervine, 2007, *The Blessing of Blessings: Gregory of Narek's Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

introduction also provides important insights on the historical and theological background of the work. The French translation by Lévon Pétrossian is a valuable resource that includes a detailed set of introductions and notes.⁹

Abraham Terian's skilled and inspiring translations of the festal hymns and encomia make available to English readers even more of Gregory's corpus.¹⁰ The hymns show that Gregory's poetic genius extends beyond the *Book of Lamentation* to his liturgical compositions, while the encomia are important sources of Gregory's theology and his perspective on church history. Tamar Dasnabedian's French translation and more extended treatment of the encomium on the Virgin Mary is also highly recommended especially for those interested in Gregory's Mariology.¹¹

It is hoped that more translations and studies, especially of his enormous body of hymns, will soon appear now that Gregory is gaining a wider profile within the universal church.

⁹ Lévon Pétrossian, 2010, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, OCA 285, Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute.

¹⁰ Abraham Terian, 2016, *The Festal Works of St. Gregory of Narek*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

¹¹ Tamar Dasnabedian, 1995, *Le Panégyrique de la Sainte Mère de Dieu de Grigor Narekac'i*, Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Chapter Three

The Monastery and School of Narek

The Monastery of Narek

Gregory's monastery was founded about a decade before his birth during the height of the renaissance of Armenian monasticism and spirituality that followed the recovery of political autonomy in the latter half of the ninth century. It was named for the town of Narek, located about five kilometers from the southern shore of Lake Van and in the principality of ʔshtunik', which by this time was under the jurisdiction of Vaspurakan and its Artsruni princes. Its founding was most likely supported financially by the Artsruni family, especially its monarch Gagik I, who had a strong interest in reviving the church and the monastic institutions within its realm. The Artsruni may have heard of the reputation of a monk named Anania who had been active in two monasteries of Bagratid, Armenia.¹ A relative of the Artsruni, a learned patrician by the name of Khosrov Andzewats'i, whose wife was Anania's cousin, perhaps recommended Anania as a suitable abbot for the proposed new monastery at Narek. Anania together with his brother monk Peter, a noted biblical scholar, settled there and began the work of building the institution.

One might suppose that after Gregory's death around 1003 and the abdication of the last Artsruni king in 1021, Narekavank' would have entered a state of decline, especially after having lost its royal patronage. But the manuscript tradition reflects continued

¹ Lévon Pétrossian, 2010, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, OCA 285. Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 57.

activity even into the later Middle Ages. The art historian Thomas F. Matthews reports the discovery of a couple of pages of an illuminated vellum codex with an inscription indicating the manuscript was produced at Narekavank' in 1181. This was a century after the Seljuk invasions that, coupled with Byzantine pressure on the Armenian nobility to evacuate their lands and move westward away from the frontier, brought to an end Artsruni rule over Vaspurakan.² Matthews notes the artist's borrowing of Islamic themes: the dedicatory prayer written in Armenian imitates the foliate Arabic script found in contemporary manuscripts of the Qur'an. There are also a number of folios of a book produced at Narekavank' in the fifteenth century depicting Christ's miracles. The illuminations reveal the influence of the prevailing political situation at the time, with Christ wearing the fur cap of a Mongol prince while at the wedding at Cana.³ These and other surviving manuscripts show that Narekavank' maintained an active scriptorium many centuries after its founding.

Anyone visiting Narek today (it is in the district of Gevaş, in southeastern Turkey's Van province) will find little if anything above ground that remains of the monastic complex. Starting in the 1960s, Jean-Michel and Nicole Thierry, both of them physicians and art historians, made numerous expeditions to historic Armenian lands to observe and study the state of the monuments. They noted in 1989 that almost nothing of the monastery of Narek remains.⁴ The Thierrys describe the buildings that made up the

² T. F. Matthews, 1998, "The Genius of the Armenian Painter" in T. F. Matthews and R. S. Wieck, *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 163–175, especially 163–64.

³ Matthews 1998, 164.

⁴ J. M. Thierry, 1989, *Monuments Arméniens du Vaspurakan*, Paris: Orientaliste Paul Geuthner. The description of Narekavank' is on 327–30. Thierry states that the founding monks were fleeing Byzantine territory, where they faced Chalcedonian persecution. But if Anania was among the founders that seems unlikely given that his monasteries were within the territory of the Bagratuni and thus relatively isolated from Byzantine interference. Thierry also notes that despite the alleged origins of the monastery, there was a strong Chalcedonian influence. As we will see below, that claim needs to be at least qualified. Anania wrote a strongly worded critique of Chalcedonianism at the request of

monastery based on written accounts from the nineteenth century. At that time, the monastery consisted of two churches: the church dedicated to St. Sandukht, the princess-martyr of the first generation of Armenian Christianity, and the smaller church of the Mother of God adjoining its south wall. The former, which dates to the beginnings of the monastery, was a triconch cross-in-square while the layout of the latter included a domed nave. Gregory's mausoleum, covered by a small domed drum, was connected through a vestibule to the northern apse of the church of St. Sandukht. The tomb that was erected in 1867 had a stele with an inscription. The large *gawit'* or narthex served both churches. Relics of St. Thomas and St. James of Nisibis were housed there along with the graves of Anania and John, Gregory's brother. The churches were built at about the same time as the monastery's founding, but substantial renovations were made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A bell tower built in 1812 stood in front of the narthex. The complex also included auxiliary buildings along the courtyard wall that housed a school and rooms for monks and pilgrims, though it is not certain when these were built. Abandoned during the 1915 Genocide, the monastery was completely destroyed in 1951.⁵

The School of Narek

Gregory's achievements are unique, but they emerged against the backdrop of a vibrant intellectual and spiritual life fostered by

the Armenian catholicos, while, as I will argue, Gregory seems to have adopted a conciliatory stance similar to his father's that recognized the orthodoxy of both the Chalcedonian formula and the miaphysite doctrine of the Armenian church.

⁵ Thierry 1989 includes a photograph (plate XLVIII.3) of the complex taken in 1910 with the domes of the two churches as well as Gregory's sepulcher clearly visible. Thierry says it is a view from the north, but Christina Maranci, 2006, "The Built World of Grigor Narekac'i," *Hask: Armenological Yearbook*, Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 51–58, especially 52n9 notes that it is actually taken from the south.

his abbot, Anania. As the impressive body of work produced by the late scholar Hrach'ya T'amrazyan has demonstrated, one can speak of a veritable school of Narek that comprised not only Gregory and his abbot and mentor but also the cofounder of the monastery, Peter, whose exegetical works unfortunately have not survived.⁶ Though never a member of the monastery, Gregory's father, Khosrov, had a great interest in and surely contributed to the community's formation. Among Gregory's peers, there is of course his brother, John, who assisted in the compilation of the *Book of Lamentation*, and Ukht'anēs, also a student of Anania and the author of several historical works.⁷ As a result of T'amrazyan's scholarship we no longer have to treat Gregory as an isolated figure but can better understand the intellectual and spiritual milieu from which he emerged.

Though we should not forget that the school of Narek consisted of many talented figures, some no doubt unknown to us, in theology, music, biblical studies, or any of the other arts studied there, our interest here is in Gregory and the major influences in his life and on his work. Thus we will focus on the two men who had the greatest effect on his development.⁸ These are Khosrov, his father by birth, and Anania, his spiritual father and master. The large and interesting body of work that we have from them will help us to understand better Gregory's formation and the context in which he wrote.

Gregory's Father: Khosrov Andzewats'i

After his wife's death, Khosrov was consecrated a bishop by catholicos Anania of Mokk'. It is not known if he was already ordained as a married priest and then assumed the rank of a celibate priest when he was widowed, or if he was a layman who was

⁶ Hrach'ya T'amrazyan, 2010, "L'école de Narek et la littérature arménienne du X^e siècle" in Mahé et al. 2010, 125–33.

⁷ For Ukht'anēs, see *MH* 10.2:441–45.

⁸ A comprehensive study of the school is: Hrach'ya T'amrazyan, 1999, *Narekyan Dprots'ē (The School of Narek)*, Erevan: Hayastan.

ordained to the priesthood and to the episcopate concurrently.⁹ There are precedents in church history for both scenarios. His extensive knowledge of the liturgy and theology would suggest that he already had clerical training, but on the other hand his aristocratic privileges would have afforded him the opportunity to acquire an education usually unavailable to laypersons and also would have made him a natural candidate to serve as bishop of his native Andzewats'ik'.

Once installed in his office as spiritual leader of his diocese, Khosrov began to meet his clergy and to assess the conditions of the churches in his jurisdiction. His writings make it very clear that he was not pleased with what he found. The married priests who served in the parish churches suffered from serious intellectual and spiritual deficiencies that prevented them from understanding the very words of the liturgy that they celebrated.¹⁰ The situation of the laity was even worse. For many, the liturgy and the sacraments had become empty rituals that were witnessed without any sense of participation or inner transformation. Khosrov insisted that mere thoughtless mouthing of prayer had little value:

For if the tongue strikes the air without thought following it, it produces no benefit. For God who knows the heart looks at the heart and mind, not the tongue. Therefore, let us render prayer to God with alert mind, undistracted thoughts and soul fully aware, to be of benefit to ourselves and others and thus gain from others' prayers.¹¹

⁹ Pétrossian 2010, 37, cites the example of catholicos Zak'aria Dzagets'i (r. 855–76), who, according to the historian of the Armenian church and patriarch of Constantinople Maghak'ia Ōrmanean (1841–1918), was a layman before being elected and consecrated catholicos. See M. Ōrmanean, 2001, *Azgapatum* [National History] 1, Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, cols. 950–52.

¹⁰ S. Peter Cowe, 1991, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*. New York: St. Vartan Press, 28–29. Cowe's book is an English translation with the Armenian text and comprehensive study of Khosrov's commentary on the liturgy of the Eucharist. As far as I know, there is no English translation of the first part of Khosrov's commentary, which is on the liturgy of the hours. See also Pétrossian 2001, 44.

¹¹ Khosrov Andzewats'i, *Bats'ayaytut'iwn kargats' ekeghets'woy k'arozut'eants' ew aghawt'its'* [Explanation of the Prayers and Liturgy of the Hours], in *MH* 10, 225–6.602–603; Cowe 1991, 225.

Khosrov also implies that beyond mere ignorance, there were many instances of clerical abuse and corruption, most notably the buying and selling of pardons and other ecclesial privileges. Such corrupt practices are called simony after Simon Magus of Acts 8:18-24, reproached by St. Peter for offering money to the apostles to gain the power of transmitting the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Though it was recorded more than 200 years after Khosrov's death, a fable in the compendium of the priest and jurist Mkhit'ar Gosh (1130–1213) suggests that simony was neither isolated nor uncommon. According to the fable, one Easter all of the birds in a certain village gathered together before the priest to confess their sins before partaking of the Eucharist. Among the birds were a raven and a cormorant (both unclean birds according to the law of Moses) who stated that they were not aware of having committed any sins other than that they hunted and ate mice and frogs. The priest declared the two birds to be unclean, denied them the sacrament, and sent them away. They later returned with clean fledglings that they offered to the priest. Seduced by their bribe, the priest absolved them and gave them communion. Mkhit'ar ends the fable by noting that he told this tale as a parable of avaricious priests who expel prostitutes and other sinners by terrifying them, but that later when they accept their bribes, they find an excuse to allow them to receive communion.¹² This kind of corruption that Mkhit'ar's fable depicts may also have infected some of the clergy in Khosrov's diocese.

Based on his observations of the poor condition of the clergy and laity in his diocese, Khosrov concluded that he would have to write a commentary on the liturgy of the hours and the Eucharist that would be read and studied in the monasteries. The monks would then visit the parish churches of the diocese and expound the meaning of the rite for the faithful:

¹² Mkhit'ar Gosh, 1854, *Aṙakk' (Fables)*, Venice: San Lazzaro, 122. An excerpt of a portion of this fable in French translation is in Mahé 2000, 125n406. For English translation of the fables, see Robert Bedrosian, Elise Antreassian Bayizian, and Anahid Janjigian, 1987, *The Fables of Mkhitar Gosh*, New York: Ashod Press.

When it fell to my lot to become bishop and, on taking office, I perceived ignorance was rampant in everyone and, realizing the impossibility of communicating all this to everyone myself verbally, I deemed it appropriate to commit it to writing to alleviate the task of those eager to learn.¹³

Immediately after this, Khosrov asks those who happen to hear his commentary being read to pray for him.¹⁴ So most likely he intended the book to be read out loud in the monastic schools of his diocese.

The guiding idea of Khosrov's commentary—that the mind and heart, the inner person and the deepest thought and feelings, must be engaged with the body in worship—is a major theme of the school of Narek. We will find it emphasized throughout the works both of Anania and Gregory. To be genuine and effective, faith must not only involve our external actions but penetrate into the deepest levels of our being. As Khosrov states in the very first sentence of the commentary, when we speak with God and about God we must consider the words that we say attentively and cautiously.¹⁵ He presciently began his major work with the same phrase—*speaking with God*—that would begin almost every prayer of his son's *Book of Lamentation*.

Another major theme of Khosrov's work that Anania and Gregory also emphasized was the universality of the church. Commenting on a verse from the liturgical hours that speaks of the Church as "catholic and apostolic," Khosrov expounds on the meaning of *catholic*:

What does *catholic* mean? It means *universal*. For all the orthodox churches, which exist throughout the universe, are one. There is one Christ in all the churches that are founded on the apostolic faith, which is why we also call the church *apostolic*. Although the churches are distinguished according to place, they are not separated by nationality. For from one end of the earth to the other, wherever the true faithful may arrive at an orthodox church, it is

¹³ MH 10:36.14–15; Cowe 1991, 229.

¹⁴ MH 10:227.625.

¹⁵ MH 10:35.1.

their church and neither the strangeness of the country nor the language separates it [from them], but like a mother it accepts them into its bosom with fervent love. Thus it is called *universal* everywhere because its doors are open and its bosom embraces all the faithful of the universe.¹⁶

This passage highlights a couple of remarkable features of Khosrov's ecclesiology. First, Khosrov must have considered the Chalcedonian churches to be orthodox. For he knew that the non-Chalcedonian churches did not extend throughout the inhabited world. And yet he exhorts his faithful to accept the embrace of the orthodox church wherever they may find themselves. It is also interesting to note his understanding of the church's apostolic character. It is not the fact that the bishops are successors of the apostles *per se* that defines the church as apostolic but that they teach the apostolic faith. Finally, the jurisdictional divisions of the church are determined not on the basis of the composition of the population that inhabits the region but by location. Khosrov thereby rejects what has more recently been termed *phyletism*, the association of a church with a particular ethnic group, a problem that continues to beset many of the Eastern churches.

Khosrov's broad-minded ecumenism and openness to the world beyond Armenia would have a profound effect on his son but it would also provoke the suspicion and anger of his superior, the catholicos Anania of Mekk'. The nature of Khosrov's offense is hidden behind a number of errors that Anania attributed to him. Khosrov's real affront was to challenge the authority of the Armenian patriarch both over neighboring sees and the Armenian episcopal college. Anania resorts to bizarre innuendos that suggest Khosrov held pro-Byzantine and Chalcedonian sympathies. The charges are provided in Anania's brief letter of explanation of the anathematization.¹⁷

¹⁶ Khosrov, *Explanation*, MH 10:107.765–79.

¹⁷ Anania Mokats'i, *Teaṛn Ananayi Hayots' Kat'oghikosi Patchar yaghags zKhosrov Nzoveloyñ zAndzewats'ioy episkoposn* [Justification of the anathematization of Khosrov, bishop of Andzewatsik' by Lord Anania, catholicos of the Armenians] MH 10:275–76. English translation in Cowe 1991, 10–13.

Anania's letter, written in 954, justifying his condemnation of Khosrov notes that he had entrusted to him the Diocese of Andzewats'ik when he was a "modest and learned man, white-haired and advanced in old age." But Khosrov suddenly began to act as though possessed by a "demonic spirit" and pronounced the words for *Sunday* and *Jerusalem* in the manner of the Greeks.¹⁸ Moreover, Khosrov apparently ordered that the hair of youths be cut until their beards began to grow, after which they were to let their hair grow plaited down to their legs. Khosrov supposedly justified this practice through a dubious etymology of the words *ktrij'* ("brave, youth")¹⁹ and *manuk* ("child, boy"), which he takes to be related to the verbs *ktrem* ("cut") and *manem* ("braid"). This criticism reveals two features of Khosrov's thought. One is his interest in etymology and developing arguments from what he takes to be the origins of words, a habit he shared with Anania of Narek. The other is his wish to conform the practices of the Armenian church more closely with those of the Greeks. Although Anania of Mokk' does not make it obvious, one may infer that the dictates on hairstyle were meant for monastics and not intended as a general rule of grooming for the males of his diocese. As bishop, Khosrov had direct authority over the monasteries in his diocese. Armenian monks kept their hair shorn, unlike their Byzantine counterparts who grew their hair long. Khosrov, so Anania implies, wanted the monks in his diocese to adopt something more like the Greek cus-

¹⁸ The Armenian word for Sunday, *Kiraki*, is obviously derived from the Greek *Kuriakē* (the Lord's day), but Anania's ire was aroused by Khosrov's alleged attempt to bring the Armenian pronunciation closer to the Greek: *Kiur̄iaki*, with the Armenian diphthong *iu* corresponding to the Greek upsilon, restoring the iota lost in the Armenian spelling and pronunciation, and replacing the untrilled *r* with the trilled *ṙ*. Likewise, he said *Eṙusaghem* instead of *Erusaghem*. Although this effort at hellenizing Armenian pronunciation suggests an eccentricity of Khosrov's personality, it is otherwise consistent with the school of Narek's meticulous attention to the details of language, including phonetics and etymology.

¹⁹ See entry in R. S. Ghazaryan and H. M. Avetisyan, 2009, *Mijin Hayereni baṙaran* [*Lexicon of Middle Armenian*], Yerevan: EPH Hratarakdzut'yun, 391.

tom.²⁰ Beyond his general Byzantine sympathies, though, Khosrov's interest in hairstyle provides us with evidence of the influence of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings, another feature he shares with the other members of the school of Narek. The Dionysian treatise known as the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* includes advice on the importance of the proper tonsuring of monks.²¹

These two accusations are consistent with Khosrov's universal vision of the church and his openness to learning from and adopting the traditions of other churches. But the third allegation at first glance appears puzzling and anomolous. Anania charged Khosrov with teaching that a cross blessed by a priest and an unblessed cross are equally worthy of veneration. The belief that a blessed cross is of equal worth as a plain piece of wood at first may seem to associate Khosrov with the T'ondrakeans, who rejected veneration of the cross.²² Anania of Narek was accused of being a T'ondrakean and, according to some scholars, Gregory himself may also have been the object of such suspicions. But Anania of Mokk' is equivocal about whether Khosrov believed the cross generally unworthy of any veneration or instead that a priestly blessing was not necessary to make the cross an acceptable object of reverence. It is more likely that the dispute here was whether a priest had to anoint a cross before its veneration. It seems the Greeks thought it sufficient for an icon or object of veneration to bear the name of God or a saint, while the Armenians insisted on

²⁰ There is some confusion in the sources on the details of Khosrov's rule. See also Pétrossian 2001, 41, as well as Cowe 1991, 6, for details. Pétrossian suggests that Khosrov introduced tonsure on ordination but supported monks wearing their hair long during their novitiate. In either case, Anania's objection was to Khosrov's importation of a Byzantine custom.

²¹ G. Heil and A. M. Ritter, 1999, *Corpus Dionysiacum II: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 6.536A. English translation in Luibheid 1987, 536A, 247.

²² Pétrossian 2001, 41, believes Anania of Mokk' is accusing Khosrov of T'ondrakean sympathies, but Cowe 1991, 7, is certainly correct that here too the objection is to Khosrov's affinity for the Byzantine approach to sacred objects.

anointing in order to avoid the appearance of idolatry.²³ Here too Khosrov's error was his wish to conform Armenian practice closer to that of the Byzantines.

Anania of Mokk' conceded that these three errors are relatively minor matters and says that he would be willing to ignore them but for the final affront, which he claims introduced a new schism into the church of God.²⁴ Anania alleges that Khosrov, basing his argument on the equal honor given to archangels and angels in the Pseudo-Dionysian writings, asserted that the catholicos and other bishops enjoy the same privileges and honors.²⁵ In the Pseudo-Dionysian *Celestial Hierarchy*, which describes the orders of the heavenly beings, the archangels are said to "join with the angels to form a single hierarchy and rank."²⁶ Furthermore, in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* there are only three orders: hierarch, priest, and deacon, and the hierarchs, who are the bishops, "fully possess the power of consecration."²⁷ This was also another point on which the Armenian church differed from the Byzantines, for the Armenian catholicos receives a distinct anointing upon assuming office.²⁸ The final accusation of Anania of Mokk' coheres with the general charge against Khosrov of Hellenization, since the patriarch of Constantinople, unlike the Armenian catholicos, did not undergo a second anointing after his consecration as a bishop.

There were clear ramifications for church governance, with Khosrov advocating a decentralized administration led by the synod of bishops in Armenia, with the catholicos simply presiding rather than having sacramental powers beyond those of the other bishops. If all bishops had the right to ordain bishops without needing the approval of the catholicos, then the dioceses could function relatively independently.

²³ For the Armenian sources, see Cowe 1991, 7–8.

²⁴ *MH* 10:276.13–14.

²⁵ *MH* 10:276.17. La Porta 2010, 245, also draws this connection with the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus.

²⁶ Heil and Ritter 1991, 36.12–13.

²⁷ Luibheid 1987, 236.

²⁸ *MH* 10:276.17.

Anania could abide the idiosyncrasies of Khosrov's tonsure policies and prescriptions on proper diction, but he could not tolerate the challenge to his authority as catholicos. Khosrov's ecclesiological theories were not simply theoretical; they set him against Anania in a crisis in which the catholicos was concurrently embroiled. The catholicos of neighboring Caucasian Albania had been consecrated and installed in the presence of three bishops, but without Anania's approval. The ordination was consistent with the original Nicene canon, which stipulates that when it is not possible for all the bishops of a region to be present, three validly ordained bishops will suffice to consecrate the new bishop. The Armenian version of the fourth canon of Nicaea, however, specifies that the catholicos, rather than a metropolitan bishop, must ratify the installation. Anania invalidated the consecration because of this canon, but Khosrov argued that since the ordination was done in accordance with the original Greek canon it was valid.²⁹ This dispute about the jurisdictional authority of the Armenian catholicos over the see of the Albanians seems to have been the real source of Anania's animus and why he took particular umbrage at Khosrov's claim that patriarchs do not enjoy any special authority beyond a primacy of honor.³⁰ Khosrov, writing four years before being anathemized, anticipates what was to happen to him:

When they quarrel with Christians of other nations, they justify themselves in an ignorant way as if only Armenians possess the truth . . . and they treat anyone who shows that other nations are correct

²⁹ For the Armenian version of canon four, see Vazgēn Hakobyan, 1964, *Kanonagirk' Hayots' [Armenian Book of Canons]*, Yerevan: HSSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 119. The bishop of the diocese of Siwnik' was a metropolitan, so his ratification of the consecration would have sufficed if the letter of the Greek rather than Armenian version of canon four were followed.

³⁰ Control of the hierarchy of the Albanian church and its Chalcedonian inclinations was a particular concern of the Armenian church, especially given the Armenians' bitter memories of the defection of the Georgian church to the Chalcedonians. At the same time as the conflict with the Albanian church, the situation of the see of Siwnik' was also in question. Siwnik' had a semiautonomous status and its incumbent bishops also often supported Chalcedon. See Mahé 2000, 34-5.

on some matter out of love of truth as if they were heretics [*tsayt'*] deficient in their faith. They are ridiculed, persecuted, and threatened with death to the point that they escape with barely a hair.³¹

The term translated here as “heretic” is an epithet normally applied to people suspected of being Chalcedonians.³²

If Anania’s intent was to remove Khosrov from office, his anathema was a failure. Khosrov continued to serve as bishop of Andzewats’ik’ for the rest of his life. The catholicos was relatively weak at this time and he had incurred the hostility of the Artsruni royalty, who resented the transfer of the patriarchal see from their capital in Aght’amar back to Bagratid territory. Furthermore, Vaspurakan was pursuing a pro-Byzantine policy and had little interest in enforcing an excommunication order against a bishop who favored reconciliation with the Chalcedonians. Nor would the Artsruni be inclined to act against their own kinsman.

In any event, Khosrov’s writings reveal that his teachings were not heretical. His main offense was to carry out bold new measures to revive the spiritual life of his faithful. He was a committed reformer, and people who set out to reform the church often face the opposition of hierarchs threatened by change. But in doctrinal matters, Khosrov consistently affirmed the received Armenian teachings on all matters of theology and Christology. He clearly articulates the standard Armenian Cyrillian or miaphysite formula:

[The Word] united with the flesh without confusion for He effected no change or diminution to either the divine or human nature. Rather he united the natures to be both God and man, so that God the Word might be flesh and that which was incarnate of the Virgin might be God, and He Himself both God and man, and Mary, who bore God the Word, might be the Mother of God and Virgin.³³

³¹ Khosrov Andzewats’i, 1840, *Meknut’iwn Zhamakargut’ean* [Commentary on the Office], Constantinople (Yort’agiwgh): Erits’ Ordwots’ Poghosi arapean apuch’ekhts’woy, 199.

³² See James Russell, 1987, *Yovhannes T’lkuranc’i and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 151n4. Tamar Dasnabedian, 1995, *Le panégyrique de la sainte Mère de Dieu de Grigor Narekac’i*, Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 16–17, connects the term with Arabic *ġâhid*, “renegade.”

³³ *MH* 10:201.218–19; Cowe 1991, 161.

And he clearly rejects any Julianist tendencies while explicitly affirming the real suffering of Christ:

Christ lived out his life but committed no sin, bearing all of the passions of the flesh, i.e. He was born, nourished, hungered, thirsted, grew tired, ate, drank, felt, became anxious, sorrowed, wept, and took upon himself all else entailed by flesh.³⁴

While remaining faithful to the traditions of his church, he also looked for inspiration from other communions and adopted a conciliatory approach to other Christians. We cannot know for certain how often he saw Gregory after his son was dedicated to his monastery, but there is little doubt that Khosrov's teachings had a profound effect on his son. Like his father, Gregory remained committed to Armenian orthodoxy while also upholding the universality of the church and possessing a passion for a reform that would turn the hearts of the clergy and the laity from lukewarm indifference to a deep and heartfelt love of God and his church. In this program to revive spiritual life in Armenia, he was joined by another gifted clergyman, the abbot of Narekavank'.

Gregory's Abbot and Teacher: Anania of Narek

Though we cannot say anything with confidence about Gregory's relations with his father, we can be certain that Anania of Narek was with Gregory throughout his formative years as his abbot and teacher. Thanks to Hrach'ya T'amrazyan's scholarship, we now have available to us a large body of Anania's writings and we are in a position to speak confidently about his teachings and his influence on his most famous pupil.

Anania's year of birth is unknown but most likely was in the first decade of the tenth century.³⁵ Unlike Khosrov, he was not a native of Vaspurakan but came from northern Armenia, most likely the province of Ayrarat.³⁶ Of his early life we only know that he

³⁴ *MH* 10:201.221–223; Cowe 1991, 160–161.

³⁵ Hrach'ya T'amrazyan, *Anania Narekats'i* [*Anania of Narek*], *MH* 10:311.

³⁶ Mahé 2000, 40.

Chapter Four

Gregory's Life and Prose Works

Gregory's Life and Legends

One occasionally reads comparisons made between Gregory and other medieval authors. For example, Gregory has been called Armenia's version of Dante or Augustine. But these comparisons do not do justice to any of these writers. There are of course some superficial similarities. Dante wrote an epic poem in three parts describing the successive stages of his journey from hell to paradise, culminating in the beatific vision of God. Gregory's great poem also appears to have a tripartite structure describing his journey toward God. Beyond these common features, though, there are significant differences. Dante is a secular poet engrossed in the political and ecclesial intrigues of his time, and these worldly concerns pervade the *Divine Comedy*.

Augustine seems closer to Gregory, since he is also a cleric and, although not himself devoted to a cloistered life, he admired and influenced monasticism and asceticism. Comparisons between Augustine and Gregory focus on Augustine's *Confessions*, which is in part an autobiographical account of Augustine's conversion to Christianity.¹ A self-reflective attention to the soul's condition and the struggle against sin runs throughout both Augustine's *Confessions* and Gregory's *Book of Lamentation*, but here again there are significant differences. Augustine narrates for us very exacting

¹ See, for example, N. Kebranian, 2016, "Armenian Poetry and Poetics," in Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman, eds, *Princeton Handbook of World Poetries*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 34–38.

details of his life. The reader learns about the famous episode of the stolen pears, mirroring in Augustine's own life the primal sin that also involved the stolen fruit of a tree, and his relations with his mother St. Monica as well as his concubine and his son. After reading the *Confessions* we feel that we have come to know its author very well.

Gregory's *Book of Lamentation* is also very personal and expresses a deep contrition and desire to know God and seek God's love, but autobiographical details are brief and elusive. Gregory seems not to want the personal details of his life to distract us from the purpose of his work, which is to guide his readers to pray for God's forgiveness and proceed on the path of reconciliation and union with God. While Gregory gives some hints in the *Book of Lamentation* about his life, we must turn elsewhere to learn more about him.

Our main sources on his life, in addition to the few autobiographical references in his works, are the colophons (a typically brief statement at the end of a manuscript giving details of its production) of his works, a short biography written by St. Nersēs of Lambron (1153–98), the twelfth-century bishop of Tarsus and a gifted scholar and ecumenist, the Armenian synaxarion or collection of the lives of the saints, and a rich tradition of folklore surrounding the saint.

Two of our sources identify Gregory's father as Khosrov. In the colophon to his commentary on the Song of Songs, Gregory states that the bishop of Andzewats'ik was his father. Saint Nersēs also identifies Gregory's father as Khosrov, adding that Gregory's mother, whose name does not appear in any of our sources, was the first cousin of Anania, whom Nersēs calls "the diligent tutor and abbot of the monastery of Narek."² Gregory does not mention his father in the colophon to the *Book of Lamentation*, an omission that has induced some scholars to question whether Gregory was Khosrov's son. These doubts were first raised by the Armenian

² An English translation of Nersēs's biography is in Terian 2016, 373–74. Terian's translation is ultimately based on the oldest extant manuscript of the *BL* copied in 1173 with Gregory's biography written in Nersēs's hand. Terian notes that over time the biography was augmented and became the basis for the account in the synaxarion.

Catholic priest Kiwregh K'iparean,³ who argued that the omission of Khosrov from the colophon suggests that Khosrov's son must have been another Gregory, perhaps a parish priest of Narek who copied Khosrov's commentary on the liturgy and also authored the commentary on the Song of Songs.⁴ In the colophon to the Canticle commentary, the author identifies himself as "Gregory, a priest (*k'ahanay*) of Narek," which need not imply that he was a monk of Narekavank', since Narek was the name of the town where the monastery was located. In contemporary Armenian usage the term *k'ahanay* is usually applied only to married priests. K'iparean also notes an age discrepancy based on Khosrov's description in Anania of Mokk's letter of excommunication. The letter, composed in 954, describes Khosrov as already white-haired and advanced in age, which would make him too old to be the husband of Anania of Narek's cousin. Apart from these personal details, the supposed "pedantic" style of the commentary in contrast to the brilliance of the later *Book of Lamentation* suggests different authorship.

These objections to Gregory's authorship are not compelling. It is true that in modern Armenian the word *k'ahanay* refers to a married priest, but the premodern usage is generic and may refer to celibate priests as well. Indeed, in his colophon to the *Book of Lamentation* Gregory says that he is a *k'ahanay*, albeit a religious (*krawnawor*) one. Pétrossian proposes also that Anania's letter of anathema was written later than 954, perhaps as late the early 960s, which would significantly reduce the age difference between Khosrov and Gregory's mother.⁵ Finally, the commentary on the Canticle is a work of Gregory's youth, perhaps written while still in his twenties. Though obviously the work of a gifted scholar, Gregory's commentary need

³ K. K'iparean 1961, "S[ourb] Grigor Narekat'si ew Erg-Ergots'i Meknut'iwne [St. Gregory of Narek and the commentary on the *Song of Songs*]," in *Bamzavēp* 1–2, 1–10.

⁴ See discussion in Pétrossian 2010, 121–26.

⁵ Pétrossian 2010, 125. Further support for this dating is provided by Gregory's reference in the *Book of Lamentation* (51.1; MH 12:325.11–12) to his father's age and failing health. Gregory must have written this verse much later than 954.

not possess the same spiritual depth as his *Book of Lamentation*, which received its final form just prior to his death. As well, the commentary genre places limitations on the author; even the best of exegetes at least occasionally falls into pedantry. By contrast, the poetic medium of the *Book of Lamentation* gives the author greater freedom to express his genius. The commentary on the Canticle should be read along with the rest of Gregory's work to reveal how it coheres with the general tenor of Gregory's mystical theology. For now, though, we can conclude in agreement with the overwhelming majority of scholars that the commentary on the Canticle and the *Book of Lamentation* are the products of one author, Gregory of Narek, the monastic priest and son of Khosrov Andzewats'i.

The precise year of Gregory's birth is unknown but it must have been sometime during the 940s. Khosrov had three sons. The eldest, Sahak (Isaac), remained with his father and appears to have served him as a secretary. At any rate, he is the scribe of the first copy of his father's liturgical commentary, completed in 950.⁶ After their mother's death, John, the middle brother, and Gregory were entrusted to the care of Narekavank', where they would remain for the rest of their lives. The circumstances and date of their mother's death are unknown. One may suppose that she died after complications from giving birth to the youngest child, Gregory, but the one reference to her in the *Book of Lamentation* suggests that Gregory has memories of her. There, he writes of "my mother, who suffered labor pains [and whose] compassion declined as her life receded."⁷ The mention of her labor pains implies that her death was connected to her pregnancy, though it need not have been a complication of Gregory's birth but a later stillbirth. In any event, her death must predate 950, when Khosrov was ordained a bishop. At Narekavank', Gregory came under Anania's tutelage and distinguished himself promptly as a gifted and pious student. He and his brother excelled in particular in the study of the Bible. Anania's colleague, Peter, known for his biblical studies, must have been their instructor in scripture. Unfortunately, none of Peter's writings

⁶ *MH* 10:227n1. There is an English translation of the colophon in Terian 2016, 365, appendix A.

⁷ *BL* 51.1; *MH* 12:325.13–14 .

have survived. If they had, they would doubtless have provided important insights on the formation of Gregory's thoughts on biblical interpretation. Gregory must already have been recognized for his exegetical abilities, for he was commissioned by an Artsruni prince to compose the commentary on the Canticle. One might have thought that Peter, as the monastery's senior biblical scholar, would have been the prince's first choice, but he must have either died or been too infirm to write by this time. Gregory completed the commentary in 977. It would be the first of many works of poetry, hymns, encomia, and theological treatises, all culminating in his masterpiece, the *Book of Lamentation*.

Nersēs of Lambron says that John predeceased Gregory, but the colophon to the *Book of Lamentation* states that John, who succeeded Anania as abbot, assisted Gregory in the book's compilation toward the end of Gregory's life. Nersēs notes that Gregory died while still young, not having completed the course of life. If he died soon after the compilation of the *Book of Lamentation*, his death would have occurred around 1003, so he may still have been in his fifties, well short of his biblical allotment of three score and ten as stated in Psalm 90:10, if that is what Nersēs means by the "course of life."

Gregory divided his time between the monastery and his retreat overlooking Lake Van where he led the life of a hermit, undergoing the rigorous spiritual exercises that Anania taught. It was in this cave that one of the many miracles ascribed to him occurred. According to various accounts, Gregory had a vision of the Virgin Mary standing above an island in the lake, enthroned in the clouds, and holding the infant Christ. She spoke to Gregory, saying, "Gregory, come to the Lord (aṛ Tēr)." On hearing these words, Gregory ran along the waves of the lake to this island where he venerated the Mother of God. The island, located about four kilometers to the northwest of Aght'amar island, was from then on known as Aṛtēr.⁸

⁸ Mahé 2000, 41. According to Thierry 1989, 292, a monastery was later built on the island to commemorate Gregory's vision and miracle. Thierry reports that at the time of his visit only the walls of the monastery and one of the original two churches on the island were still standing. In modern Armenian the island is called *Arti* (see R. H. Hewsen, 2001, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 57).

Given Gregory's renown, it is not surprising that there are a host of stories and legends about him and his miracles. James Russell enumerates some of these in his monograph on the fourteenth-century lyric poet John (Yovhannēs) T'lkurats'i.⁹ One legend states that Gregory herded sheep for seven years to provide for the children of a deceased shepherd. In another story, he helps a villager in the city of Mush who had incurred an onerous debt by working for him for free as long as the debtor agreed to attend church regularly. While visiting another village, he supposedly resurrected a groom who had died on his wedding day. A curious poem recounts the visit of two priests to Narek. When they requested water from the monk, Gregory made the sign of the cross and, like Moses, struck a dry rock from which water proceeded to flow. This was not ordinary water but a fountain of youth, for the poet recounts that "[the priests'] old white beards became young . . . they became immortal there."¹⁰

Tales of visiting priests occur in a number of sources. The Armenian synaxarion may be the source of all these tales, since it begins with the credible claim that Gregory was accused of heresy, as both his biological and spiritual fathers were. But unlike in their cases, Gregory was able to acquit himself of the charges by performing a miracle in the presence of the monks ordered to bring him to trial. The synaxarion for February 27 reports that when Gregory occupied himself with the task of reforming the institutions and rituals of the church that had fallen out of use, several jealous people accused him in front of the bishops and prince, saying that he was a heretic and a schismatic. The term translated as heretic here is *tsayt'*, the very same word that Khosrov says is the epithet used for those who show an interest in learning from other Christian traditions. Because the term is normally applied to those suspected of Chalcedonian sympathies, if Gregory was accused of heresy, he was most likely charged with dyophysitism. When the monks ar-

⁹ For these legends see Russell, 1987, 149–50, and Aram Ghanalanyan, 1969, *Avandapatum* [*Armenian Traditions*], Yerevan: Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakch'ut'iwn, 306–20.

¹⁰ Russell 1987, 150.

rived at his cell, Gregory requested that they eat something together before embarking on the journey. After he brought out two doves and began to roast them, his would-be captors protested and said, "Teacher (*vardapet*), isn't it Friday?" a day of fasting and abstinence from the consumption of animal products. The saint responded, "I beg your forgiveness, my brothers, I acted out of ignorance." Then he spoke to the doves: "Arise and return to your nest and your flock, for today is a day of abstinence." Immediately the birds came back to life, flapped their wings, and flew away. The men were astonished; they threw themselves at Gregory's feet and asked for forgiveness. Later they returned to the bishop without Gregory and recounted what they had witnessed. Gregory's accusers, seized with fear, no longer spoke out against him.¹¹

Was Gregory actually accused of heresy? He prays that God forgive his accusers in Prayer 83 of the *Book of Lamentation*, asking that God not be angry at them for his sake but "forgive their sins/as though they rebuke my evil deeds/ and rightly reproach me."¹² Apart from appealing to the veracity of the miracle, though, how can we explain his ability to escape excommunication and punishment? This episode most likely occurred late in Gregory's life when the catholicos was Sergius (Sargis) of Sewan (r. 992–1019). Sargis favored asceticism and most likely admired Gregory. He would have been loath to prosecute Gregory and probably dismissed the charges against him quickly.¹³

These fanciful tales that have entered into Armenian folklore reveal the extent to which Gregory's person and reputation for piety had penetrated the Armenian collective imagination. Gregory's

¹¹ G. Bayan, 1980, *Le synaxaire arménien de Tēr Israyēl*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 106, Turnhout: Brepols, 110, and Ghanalanyan 1969, 318. The miracle of the revived birds recalls the miracle of the clay pigeons attributed to Christ in the apocryphal Infancy Gospel. See Abraham Terian, 2008, *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy: With Three Early Versions of the Protevangelium of James*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 88. Also, Gregory's feigned ignorance of the day of abstinence is reminiscent of the accounts of Desert Fathers who disregarded the fasting disciplines in deference to hospitality toward guests. See Ward 2003, 134.

¹² *BL* 83.1; *MH* 12:515–16.18.

¹³ Pétrossian 2010, 84.

place in Armenian popular piety is not just a medieval phenomenon but has persisted to the present. Prayer 18 of the *Book of Lamentation* is a popular prayer read still today over those who are ill, and the entire book, even if not regularly read or studied, occupies a place of honor in most devout Armenian homes. Even during the period of Soviet repression, Armenians looked to Gregory for comfort and spiritual nurture. Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan cites the example of a woman named Margarit Alexanian, living in Shushi, at the time part of Soviet Azerbaijan but today in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh under Armenian control. Alexanian produced an illuminated gospel with depictions of Gregory and his vision of Christ at the beginning of each gospel book. An unnamed woman attributed her survival through the hardship of the gulag to her activity of transcribing Gregory's words during her imprisonment.¹⁴ Through all the tragedies and disruptions that the nation suffered, Gregory's life and works remained an inspiration and consolation for his people.

The Prose Works

Though best known for his *Book of Lamentation*, Gregory expressed himself in a variety of formats and genres not only through his poetry and hymns but also encomia, biblical commentaries, and theological treatises.¹⁵ Here, I will provide a survey of his prose literary corpus before turning to his better known poetic works in the next chapter.

¹⁴ Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan, 2006, "Veneration and Reception of Surb Grigor Narekac'i in Armenian Culture and Spirituality," in Mahé and Zekiyani 2006, 57–66, esp. 64.

¹⁵ Besides the commentary on Song of Songs, the only other strictly exegetical work attributed to Gregory is a brief commentary on chapters 38 and 39 of the book of Job (*MH* 12:884–910). It survives in a single damaged manuscript housed in the library of the Mkhit'arean congregation in Venice. The attribution of this work to Gregory has been questioned, though a cursory study of its contents and language suggests to me that Gregory's authorship is plausible. Job was a favorite book of the early Armenian commentators, as we have today fragments of the commentary of the eighth-century bishop Stephen of Siwnik' as well as the commentary on Job 38–39 by the obscure ninth-century author Hamam Arewelts'i.

The Commentary on the Song of Songs

In the colophon to the commentary, Gregory reports that the Artsruni prince, Gurgēn—one of the three sons of Abusahl Hamazasp (king of Vaspurakan, r. 953–72)¹⁶ and who, after Abusahl's death, reigned in the principality of Andzewats'ik'—commanded him to compose a commentary on the “awesome words of Solomon and to make clear the things hidden deep within it.”¹⁷ Gregory provides some clues for the prince's interest in the Canticle. He notes the erotically charged nature of the book, which never mentions God but does praise the “breasts and reddened lips, the beautiful cheeks and desirable eyes” of the bride. Gregory observes that when people “with uncomprehending minds” hear these words, they fail to comprehend the spiritual dimension of the book.¹⁸ To correct this tendency for people to focus on the literal and carnal sense of these romantic verses, Gurgēn asked the young monk to write a commentary. The people who do not understand the book properly may include the T'ondrakeans with their dissident views on marriage and sexuality. The T'ondrakeans may have pointed to the Song's lack of any explicit mention of God as evidence for their belief that marriage was not a sacrament nor did it require the blessing of the church, but that the physical bond of love between the couple was enough to validate their marital relation. The Artsruni rulers were always solicitous of the church, seeing its health as essential to the stability of their state, and so concerns about the threat posed by T'ondrakism would be reason enough for Gurgēn to order the young monk to compose a commentary that would affirm the church's teachings on marriage.

Although the T'ondrakean crisis may have precipitated Gurgēn's behest, the scope of the commentary goes well beyond the threat that the heresy posed. Gregory's work is not merely a defense of the church's teachings on marriage. Although it may have been

¹⁶ It is not certain if Gurgēn at this time was considered a king or simply a prince, as his domain was restricted to the province of Andzewats'ik' and not all of Vaspurakan. Gregory refers to him in the colophon as both *ark'ay* (“ruler”) and also *t'agawor* (“king”).

¹⁷ *MH* 12:760–883. The excellent English translation is Ervine 2007. The French translation with extensive and illuminating introductions is Pétrossian 2010.

¹⁸ *MH* 12:882–3.2; Ervine 2007, 209.

occasioned by Gurgēn's interests in suppressing T'ondrakism, in Gregory's hands the commentary becomes much more. Keeping with the traditional Christian allegorical approach to the book, Gregory interprets the expressions of erotic desire between the bride and the groom as symbols of the love of God that impels the individual soul to union with Christ as well as the love between Christ and his church that Paul in Ephesians 5:32 already understood as the model and archetype of all earthly love. Accordingly, the commentary is especially relevant to the pursuits of the monks and ascetics who devote themselves to spiritual exercises of purification and illumination, leading ultimately to a union with Christ.¹⁹ But the commentary also pertains to the lives of the faithful and presents the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as foretastes of the heavenly and eternal union of the soul with God. In this way, the book is a defense of the necessity of the church and its sacraments for salvation.

With characteristic modesty, Gregory initially demurred from accepting Gurgēn's request, considering it beyond his abilities and entailing a boldness on his part that would expose him not only to ridicule from his fellow monks but even to God's punishment for his pride. But alluding to Romans 13:1, he says that Christ enjoined obedience to kings as well as to God, and so he must comply with Gurgēn's order. In composing the work, he made use of and sometimes explicitly refers to previous commentaries on the Song, most frequently Nyssen's commentary.²⁰ Occasionally he will refer the reader to Nyssen's commentary for further elaboration. He is well aware that Nyssen did not complete his homiletic commentary on the Song and despairs of finishing the work himself, for compared

¹⁹ Dom Jean Leclercq has highlighted the significance of the Song of Songs in the Western monastic tradition and noted it was the biblical book most frequently read and commented on in the cloisters. The book's theme of "searching and hiding" and the dragging out of the quest for God seem to LeClercq to be apt descriptions of a monk's life. See Jean Leclercq, 1982, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, New York: Fordham University Press, 84–85.

²⁰ For the parallels with Nyssen's commentary, see Robert W. Thomson, 1983, "Gregory of Narek's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*," *JTS New Series* 34 (2): 453–96.

to the Cappadocian father, who was “a perfect teacher . . . in whom the Spirit dwelt,” he is ignorant and devoid of grace.²¹

For Gregory and all who adopt the allegorical approach to reading scripture, not only is the written word a symbol of a higher reality, but all of creation is saturated with meaning. Everything in the physical world proclaims the glory of its creator, and the skilled interpreter uncovers all the splendor hidden within even the most mundane of things. Taking the author of the Cantic to be Solomon, Gregory writes:

Solomon, wishing to relate the ineffable, did it by means of an allegory in carnal form, that is, by means of a groom and bride, nephew and maiden, daughter and dove, breasts and myrrh, and oil poured out, apples and mountain goats, Solomon, a king, Jerusalem, a garden, and all such things that the eyes desire to see, the ears enjoy, and the mind longs for.²²

These images and figures all point to something greater:

All this the Song of Songs recounts: the splendid adornment of the Church with the cross and altar, with the flesh and blood of the Lord, the holy font and holy oil, the Old and New Testaments, the apostles, prophets, and teachers, priests and ascetics, virgins and martyrs, Christian kings, and all of the people of purity planted in the Church.²³

The very name of the book reveals its rank and importance in the biblical canon:

Now first it is worthy to say how “Song of Songs” is interpreted and thereby learn about its endless dignity. The song of songs is a blessing of blessings. In the same way, we call the holy apse where the holy altar stands the *holy of holies*, as the apostle says [Hebrews 9:3]. That is, if the church is holy, then the altar is doubly holy. So too this book is above and beyond all songs and blessings. Just as the Gospel is holier than the other books of the New Testament, so too this book

²¹ MH 12:760.2; Ervine 2007, 77.

²² MH 12:763.19; Ervine 2007, 79.

²³ MH 12:764.27; Ervine 2007, 80.

is holier than [the other books of the Old Testament]. About it one should know that it was sung aloud in the temple with greater suitability and prophetic spirit than David's psalms, for the mystery concealed within its awesome words is beyond words. None of the carnal beings can understand it except those who are in spirit like Paul . . . for our ears cannot bear to hear the mysteries of God, just as our eyes cannot bear to see God [2 Corinthians 12:3-4].²⁴

Gregory here follows Origen of Alexandria, the great Christian biblical scholar of the third century, in reading the title "Song of Songs" as a superlative that expresses the superiority of the Song to the other songs of scripture. Origen himself lists the subordinate songs of the Bible in his commentary and explains why the Song of Songs is greater than them.²⁵ But Gregory says he does not want to prolong his commentary by filling it with such detail. He goes on to the expression *holy of holies* and compares the book to the holiest part of the temple and by extension to the altar of the church. This comparison of a book to the structure of a church is a characteristic feature of Gregory's writings. We will see it again in the *Book of Lamentation*. Gregory's interest in structuring his literary works in the architectural form of a church is in part a response to the T'ondrakean rejection of the physical or incarnate church and preference for worship in private houses or outdoors. In his commentary on Song 6:8, he cites Psalm 57:4—"sinners are alienated from their mother; from the womb they are led astray"—as a reference to the church and those estranged from it.²⁶ Gregory writes:

They detested and removed themselves from the confession of faith and oath they took at their birth at the font to love God the Father and their Mother Church. For Satan, like a slave merchant who

²⁴ MH 127:62.13–18; Ervine 78–79.

²⁵ Extant in the Latin translation of Rufinus, W. A Baehrens, 1925, *Origenes Werke* 8, GCS, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 78–79. English translation in Rowan A. Greer, 1979, *Origen, An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, New York: Paulist Press, 236–39.

²⁶ The wording of the psalm in Gregory's Armenian version differs from the NRSV, which reads, "The wicked go astray from the womb; they err from their birth, speaking lies."

steals children whom he finds separated from their parents, imprisons anyone whom he finds estranged from their mother, the Church. One must make prayers in the church before the altar where the Holy Trinity dwells, but they [the T'ondrakeans] make their offerings in the roads and marketplaces and profane places; they give the honor due to the church over to the vulgar and the streets. They will find not mercy but condemnation because of this sin of holding the church in contempt and worshipping outside her.²⁷

The T'ondrakean practice of worshipping outside the church was based on their belief that worship is a private matter and may be conducted anywhere.²⁸ In contrast, Gregory continually reminds us of the importance of sacred spaces. He compares books and prayers in their construction and form to the built and established structures of the church. In the *Book of Lamentation*, he asks God to grant him strength that he may “construct an edifice of faith” through his book of prayers.²⁹ He intends by this analogy between linguistic and architectural structures to illustrate the essential connection of prayer to the house of prayer and to emphasize that proper worship is always conducted within the confines and maternal care of the church. The point is not just that one must worship indoors in a sacred space to shield oneself from the profanity of the streets, but that the church building is itself symbolic of something greater, the one holy catholic and apostolic church of Christ that is the foundation of proper worship of God and the source through which all graces flow. The heretics have separated themselves from the house of God and to them, Gregory says, “we must offer words of lamentation and grief.”³⁰

But it is not only the physical structure of the church that points to something that transcends its constituents of stone and wood. The richness of the Song's images provides Gregory with an abundance of opportunities to display his allegorical imagination. All the elements of creation offer themselves up to interpretation. The

²⁷ *MH* 12:842–43.77–79; Ervine 2007, 169.

²⁸ See Garsoïan 1967, 162.

²⁹ *BL* 10.2; *MH* 12:104.24.

³⁰ *MH* 12:843.80; Ervine 2007, 169.

pomegranate is a fruit but also an emblem of the hardships and reward of virtue. Commenting on the groom's words to the bride in Song 4:3—"As the rind of a pomegranate are your cheeks behind your veil," Gregory writes:

In their visible nature, pomegranates are unpleasant, but their invisible natures are appetizing and the cause of health. Now the Bride of Christ, which is the Church, has hidden her face behind a veil of virtuous habits and a rough and tired manner; these are on the outside like a pomegranate's skin. But what is stored up inside is hope, faith, and love (1 Cor 13:13) toward God. It is through this hope that she endures all things. For just as the things stored up in the pomegranate can be very desirable to eat, in the same way the works of virtue are filled with sweat and with great labor but the fruit of virtue is extolled in all its glory. As the prophet has said—*all her glory as the king's daughter is within* (Ps 44:14).³¹

Here, Gregory follows Nyssen and uses the pomegranate to illustrate the difficult process of cultivating the virtues.³² Anyone who has tried to cut apart the rough outer shell of a pomegranate will appreciate the analogy. But once the difficult task is complete, one can enjoy the fruits of one's efforts, the sweetness of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. In expectation of this reward we persist in our labors.

Even the parts of the lovers' bodies possess meaning, sometimes even multiple meanings. The bride's breasts are interpreted not only as the two testaments of scripture, which nourish the faithful with spiritual food (commentary on Song 6:9, "my dove is one, she is perfect") but also the bride's purity of heart, which is all that God seeks from humans (commentary on Song 4:5, "The bride says to the groom, there I will give my breasts to you") as well as the soul and the mind which are "perpetually attached to the heart, where the breasts are located" (commentary on Song 7:4, "your two breasts are like two fawns of a gazelle"). Gregory explains that

³¹ *MH* 12:800.23–25; Ervine 2007, 126.

³² Gregory of Nyssa, 2012, *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, ed. Richard A. Norris, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 240–43.

gazelles possess keen sight that enables them to avoid hunters' traps, just as the vigilant soul and mind evade Satan's snares.

These readings of the pomegranate and breasts are not original and follow the same lines of interpretation found in the earlier commentary tradition. But there are some peculiarities in Gregory's commentary that set it apart from the rest of the tradition. The most glaring of these is that the Armenian text of the Song of Songs has six extra verses that are not found either in the Hebrew text or the Septuagint or in any other translation of the Old Testament. In most versions of the Armenian Bible these six verses are appended to the end of the book. But Gregory comments on these verses at the beginning of his commentary and gives them the title "Ecclesiastes" (*Eklestatēs*), indicating by this perhaps that he thought them to be part of the second book of the Solomonic trilogy comprised of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.³³ The expression *blessing of blessings*, which Gregory offers in his introduction as an alternative title for the Song, is in fact found in one of these additional verses as it appears in the commentary:

The Lord made you and established you; he prepared you from the womb; your mother is most beautiful among women; a body will be born for him without fault or blemish from another providence, for He has prepared such, and it was the blessing of blessing.³⁴

Gregory takes this verse to be a reference to baptism, through which fallen humanity is restored to the original state of paradise from the font represented here as the womb of the church, the

³³ Treating these books together and in this order as well as attributing the works to Solomon is ancient and based on Origen's interpretation. On the connection between Origen's ordering of the three Solomonic books and Dionysian initiation, see Andrew Louth, 1981, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 54–61.

³⁴ This is the last verse of the Armenian version of the Song of Songs (in the Zohrapean edition it is Song 9:6), but for Gregory it is the last verse of the preface to the Song. *MH* 12:771.43–52; Ervine 2007, 88–89. For the Armenian Bible, see Yōhannes Zohrapean, 1805, *Astuatsashunch' Matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranats' [Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture]*, Venice: San Lazzaro, reprinted 1984, Delmar, NY: Caravan.

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