

Introduction

The Council of Chalcedon bestowed the title ‘Blessed Gregory, the Theologian’ upon Saint Gregory of Nazianzus in AD 451.¹ Along with Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Symeon the ‘New Theologian’, Gregory is one of only three theologians on whom the title has been conferred in the Eastern Christian tradition. Born circa AD 329 to Gregory the Elder, Bishop of Nazianzus, Gregory’s extensive education equipped him with the philosophical and rhetorical skills to theologise in a vast array of Greek literary forms. This led Gregory to become the most quoted author in Byzantine ecclesiastical literature, after the Bible.² His neologism ‘theosis’ continues to be applied in contemporary theology as the chief term used to describe deification.

Our theologian espouses a complex approach to the image of God, vis-à-vis the *imago Dei*, which spans his vast corpus of orations, poems and letters. Recognising the mystery of being an *imago Dei*, Gregory asks, ‘Who was I at first? Moreover, who am I now? And, who shall I become? I don’t know clearly.’³ Despite Gregory’s ambivalent response to his

¹ ACO 2.1.3, 473. For a full translation and commentary of the council, see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005). For Gregory’s comments on the two natures of Christ cited by the council, see Or. 30.8 (SC 250, 240–42); Ep. 101.19 (SC 208, 44). N.B. SC assumes a different section numbering for the *Theological Epistles to Cledonius* from those found in PG and the modern translations.

² Jaques Norét, ‘Grégoire de Nazianze, l’auteur le plus cité, après la Bible, dans la littérature ecclésiastique byzantine’ in Justin Mossay (ed.), *Symposium Nazianzenum 2* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1983), 259–66.

³ Carm. 1.2.14 (PG 37, 757, 17). In order to highlight the nuances in the texts, the translations are my own throughout the book, unless stated otherwise. See the Appendix for details of the editions and texts consulted.

2 *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*

rhetorical questions, a close reading of the texts reveals a cohesive narrative concerning humankind. Gregory's vision of the *imago Dei* differs from the predominant contemporary approach, which tends to view the *imago Dei* through a single lens, thereby reducing the *imago* to a single category of analysis. Traditionally, theologians have categorised the *imago Dei* as structural, relational, or functional, where 'structural' relates to the various capacities of the human person, for example, rationality or free will,⁴ 'relational' considers the *imago Dei* in light of the relationship within the Trinity,⁵ and 'functional' conveys how a human person achieves the task of being an *imago Dei*.⁶ These interpretations are not satisfactory in themselves, since independently they cannot encapsulate the summation of human persons as they image God. Moreover, they are subject to critiques of exclusion, theological abstraction, and biblical errancy. In light of this, vociferous discussions continue in contemporary systematic theology, theological anthropology, and biblical studies. Over the past few decades, a number of theologians have responded, quite rightly, by emphasising the importance of viewing the *imago Dei* through a christological lens.⁷ Added to this, those writing on the Christian doctrine of humanity have begun to attend to the need for a robust pneumatological account of the *imago Dei*.⁸

Gregory, on the other hand, not only incorporates all of these, but also describes the lived experience of being an *imago Dei*. His narrative offers contemporary theologians a fresh and comprehensive mode of discussing the *imago Dei*. Rather than viewing the *imago Dei* through a single lens,

⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *Scientific Theology: Nature*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 198–200. Following convention, I apply 'structural' and 'substantive' synonymously.

⁵ Alistair I. McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18; John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 15. For a critique of the relational approach, see Harriet A. Harris, 'Should We Say That Personhood Is Relational?', *SJT*, 51, no. 2 (1998), 214–34, 216–18.

⁶ J. Richard Middleton, 'The Liberating Image? Interpreting the Imago Dei in Context', *CSR*, 24, no. 1 (1994), 8–25, 12. For a critique of the functional view, see G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God, Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 71.

⁷ David Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 8–9; John Behr, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006); Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸ Marc Cortez, 'Idols, Images and a Spirit-ed Anthropology' in Myk Habets (ed.), *A Pneumatological Account of the Imago Dei* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 267–82.

Introduction

3

Gregory offers a nuanced account, which resembles a richly coloured tapestry into which he has woven myriad threads.⁹ He establishes his vision by narrating the *imago Dei* as a dynamic existence, which encompasses both the human person's life on earth and her telos. For Gregory, this relates to being and becoming a divine image (εἰκῶν θεία).¹⁰ Moreover, Gregory situates the drama of human experience in the biblical narrative of creation, fall, and restoration, thus presenting a worldview where human persons inhabit a conceptual world consisting of good and evil spirits. He describes at length the numerous problems created by evil spirits, which result from the fallen angel Lucifer's banishment from heaven. Journeying towards God entails the free will of the *imago Dei*, which renders the human person vulnerable to the world, the flesh, and the devil, with her divinity constantly at risk.

Forthwith, I will generally use the transliteration *eikon* in order to create space for an interpretation which incorporates visibility and relays Gregory's broad interpretation as much as possible. The usual descriptions, 'divine image', 'image of God', or '*imago Dei*', do not necessarily suggest physicality; consequently, they may be interpreted in abstract terms. In some instances, Gregory uses shorthand to describe the human person simply as 'the *eikon*', rather than the '*eikon* of God'. I follow his usage throughout the book in order to remain as faithful as possible to the texts. The final point regarding ἡ εἰκῶν is that it is a feminine noun. To reflect this, from herein, I use the feminine pronoun or possessive adjective throughout the book when referring to the human *eikon*. I also make this move because we may assume a 'she' as much as a 'he' when describing an individual human person.

On some occasions, Gregory explicitly describes the *eikon* quite literally as a physical, visible *eikon*. He achieves this by conflating the creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2:

... a mortal human (βροτός) was made from earth (χούς) and breath (πνόη), an *eikon* of the immortal One (ἀθανάτοιο εἰκῶν).¹¹

We will explore the implications of this move through the course of the book. Observe how, on other occasions, Gregory likens the *eikon* to the soul (ψυχή) or spiritual intellect (νοῦς), as that which is invisible:

⁹ For comment on Gregory's use of genre and rhetoric, see the Appendix.

¹⁰ Carm. 2.1.50 (PG 37, 1389, 61–62).

¹¹ Carm. 1.1.8 (PG 37, 452, 74–75); 1.1.10 (PG 37, 469, 58); Or. 3.7 (SC 247, 250); 40.10 (SC 358, 218); 40.14 (SC 358, 226).

4 *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*

... even though the greatest feature in the nature of the human person is that she is [created] according to the *eikon* (εἰκών) and [possesses] the capacity of spiritual intellect (νοῦς).¹²

Above, at first glance, the *eikon* equates to the spiritual intellect. In light of this, commentators generally conclude that Gregory understands the *eikon* as the soul or the spiritual intellect.¹³ On the one hand, this claim is correct since, following Origen,¹⁴ Gregory refers to the divine image as either the spiritual intellect (νοῦς) or the soul (ψυχή) on numerous occasions.¹⁵ This is important to note, since I am not contending that the secondary literature has, hitherto, misinterpreted Gregory's depiction of the human *eikon*; rather, scholars have not yet delineated the full breadth of Gregory's vision and the implications of his account.¹⁶ Possibly this is

¹² Or. 22.13 (SC 270, 248). Contemporary English translations often translate νοῦς as 'mind', 'intellect', or 'rationality', all of which suggest 'reason'. For Gregory, νοῦς is that aspect of the soul through which human persons experience and perceive God; it relates to the spiritual realm. Thus, by translating νοῦς as 'spiritual intellect', I mean to move away from a kind of intellectual exercise and towards the idea that human persons yearn for and apprehend God to varying degrees through νοῦς.

¹³ Manfred Kertsch, *Gregorio Nazianzeno: Sulla virtù, Carme giambico [I, 2, 10]* (Pisa: Edizioni Ets, 1995), 195; Michael Oberhaus and Martin Sicherl, *Gregor von Nazianz: Gegen den Zorn (Carmen 1,2,25) Einleitung und Kommentar* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1991), 75; Frederick W. Norris, 'Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ' (Ph.D. Diss., Yale, 1970), 69; Kenneth Paul Wesche, "'Mind" and "Self" in the Christology of Saint Gregory the Theologian: Saint Gregory's Contribution to Christology and Christian Anthropology', *GOTR* 39, no. 1–2 (1994): 33–61, 51; Peter Gilbert, 'Person and Nature in the Theological Poems of St. Gregory of Nazianzus' (Ph.D. Diss., Catholic University of America, 1994), 290; Jostein Børtnes, 'Rhetoric and Mental Images in Gregory' in Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg (ed.), *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections* (Chicago: Museum Tusulanum, 2006), 37–57, 56; Heinz Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen Gregor von Nazianz* (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1972), 72–74; Ben Fulford, *Divine Eloquence and Human Transformation: Rethinking Scripture and History through Gregory of Nazianzus and Hans Frei* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013), 80–81; Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body: Asceticism, the Body and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 194; Anca Vasiliu, *Eikôn* (Paris: PUF, 2010), 49; Hilarion Alfeyev, *La chantre de la Lumière: Introduction à la spiritualité de saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006), 251; Kirsten Koonce, 'Agalma and Eikon', *American Journal of Philology*, 109, no. 1 (1988): 108–10; Anna S. Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man: A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1981), 25; Joseph Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz. Die fünf theologischen Reden* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), 284.

¹⁴ Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* 1.13, trans. Ronald Heine, TFC (WA, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 63.

¹⁵ Or. 14.2 (PG 35, 860B–861A); 22.14 (SC 270, 248–49); 28.17 (SC 250, 134); 32.27 (SC 318, 142–44); Carm. 1.2.1 (PG 37, 529, 97).

¹⁶ Gregory's anthropology incorporates both di- and tri-chotomist ideas, where the human person is presented both as body (σῶμα) and soul (ψυχή), and as dust (χοῦς), spiritual

Introduction

5

because few full-length studies exist which consider in depth Gregory's approach; analyses on Gregory's account of the human *eikon* most often consist of a single chapter or paragraph in a study dedicated to broader aspects of Gregory's thought.¹⁷ Exceptions to this are scholars such as Philippe Molac, who provides an extensive account of key words and concepts linked to the *eikon*. He demonstrates that Gregory's description of the spiritual intellect (νοῦς) is inseparably linked with flesh (σάρξ) through the soul (ψυχή). Molac develops this in light of Christology; here we aim to explore the breadth of what this may mean for the human person as an *eikon* of God.¹⁸

An apparent discrepancy exists between the *eikon* described as the invisible soul within the human person and the visible *eikon* as the whole human person, creating a problem for interpreters. We shall see that Gregory weaves various interpretations into his overall account, in order to depict the complexity of human existence. Whilst it is customary amongst theologians to ask, 'What *Is* the *eikon*?' Gregory appears not to be so concerned with this particular question. Rather, he pays more attention to describing the mystery of human experience and what it is like to *be* an *eikon*. Added to this, if we consider the occasions on which Gregory speaks about the human person as a mixture (μίξις) of dust and *eikon*, we may observe that the *eikon* transforms the dust and renders it spiritual, following the mixture of Christ. Therefore, when Gregory speaks about the *eikon* as the soul or the spiritual intellect, it is possible

intellect (νοῦς), and spirit (πνεῦμα). For example: body and soul: Or. 2.17 (SC 247, 112); 7.21 (SC 405, 232); 18.3 (PG 35, 988B–990A); flesh and spirit: Or. 7.23 (SC 405, 240); 40.2 (SC 358, 200); dust, spiritual intellect and spirit: Or. 32.9 (SC 318, 104). On the dual nature of Gregory's anthropology, see Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man*, passim.

¹⁷ See for example, Børtnes, 'Rhetoric and Mental Images in Gregory', 56. The author comments on Gregory's approach to the human *eikon* with respect to Origen's anthropology, but does not develop the full breadth of Gregory's thought on the human *eikon*.

¹⁸ Molac, Philippe, *Doubleur et transfiguration. Une lecture du cheminement spirituel de saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006). Also see Andreas Knecht, *Gregor von Nazianz: Gegen die Putzsucht der Frauen. Verbesserter griechischer Text mit Übersetzung, motivgeschichtlichem Überblick und Kommentar* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1972), 71; Anne Richard, *Cosmologie et théologie chez Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2003), 265; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), 129. Whilst they observe the physicality of the *eikon*, their overall projects are not concerned with the implications of this.

6 *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*

that he has in mind the whole human person as a visible *eikon* because the *eikon* transforms the dust and the two form a unity.

Throughout the course of this book, I shall argue that Gregory's vision is inspired to a great extent by biblical and extra-biblical literature, beginning with Gregory's description of Christ as the 'identical *Eikon*'.¹⁹ To ascertain this, we will compare heuristically the biblical and extra-biblical narratives from which Gregory draws inspiration.²⁰ This is not to suggest that Gregory applies biblical concepts to the exclusivity of philosophical thought. I do not support a polarised approach, which posits early Christians as writing either biblically or philosophically.²¹ The trend, which posits Greek philosophy as the enemy of Christianity, stems from the late nineteenth century. Adolf Harnack made a vociferous attack on the early church fathers, accusing them of infiltrating the gospel with Hellenism.²² Harnack's Western post-Enlightenment worldview meant that he believed Scripture and philosophy to be incompatible. Ayres has critiqued this, offering a corrective view. He argues that whilst biblical texts provide the 'primary resource for the Christian imagination, [they] may be explicated through the use of whatever lies to hand and that may be persuasively adapted'.²³ Gregory speaks for himself when he refers to the Platonists as 'those who have thought best about God and are nearest to us'.²⁴ By making this claim, he acknowledges that there is a difference

¹⁹ Or. 38.13 (SC 358, 132).

²⁰ Numerous scholars have challenged the use of terms such as 'extra-biblical', 'apocryphal', and 'pseudepigraphal' as they are too 'intimately linked' with heresy: Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'Early Christian Apocryphal Literature' in Susan A. Harvey and David G. Hunter (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 521–48, 523; Evelyne Patlagean, 'Remarques sur la production et la diffusion des apocryphes dans le monde byzantin', *Apocrypha*, no. 2 (1991), 155–64. It is beyond the scope of this book to identify new terminology; therefore, I apply 'extra-biblical' interchangeably with 'pseudepigraphal', acknowledging that neither term is wholly adequate.

²¹ A number of Western scholars have responded by attempting to distance Gregory from Greek philosophy; for example, Jean Plagnieux concludes that in Gregory, 'we are far from Plato, Philo, Plotinus and Origen'; *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze théologien* (Paris: Éditions Franciscaines, 1951), 427.

²² Adolf Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. James Millar, vol. 3 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1897), 318. For a succinct overview of Harnack's criticisms, see William Rowe, 'Adolf Von Harnack and the Concept of Hellenization' in Wendy Helleman (eds.), *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 69–97.

²³ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 392.

²⁴ Or. 31.5 (SC 250, 282–84).

Introduction

7

between the Platonists and the Christians, whilst observing that the philosophers make an invaluable contribution to Christian theology.

Our theologian's dynamic approach to the *eikon*, which emphasises both divinity and vulnerability, unfolds throughout the following chapters. The book shadows closely the sequence of Gregory's own narrative in order to present his nuanced vision of the human *eikon*. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of Gregory's hermeneutics, arguing that Gregory interprets the whole biblical narrative in light of Christ and the salvation story. Therefore, if we are to present as faithfully as possible Gregory's vision of the human *eikon*, we must begin with Christ, the 'identical *Eikon*'. We move on to establish the predominant biblical themes which feed into Gregory's multifaceted account of the human *eikon*. These include beliefs about the divine presence manifested through images and idols, ethics, and an interesting thread which concerns the spiritual warfare between the human *eikon* and the devil. The title 'devil' is used interchangeably with 'Satan' throughout the book; these are two of the many common epithets used by Gregory to denote the concept of 'powers of opposition' within the Christian tradition.

In Chapter 2, we will establish that Gregory considers anthropology within the theological framework of his doctrine of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in particular the Son, who is the 'identical *Eikon*'. Gregory speaks of Christ as the *Eikon* in a way that denotes Christ's ontological imaging of the Father. Christ is a divine, living, and dynamic *Eikon*, which differentiates Christ from motionless images. Thus, for Gregory, *eikon* signifies 'likeness to' rather than 'difference from'. Secondly, Gregory goes to great lengths to argue that Christ is unified, which has significant implications on the way in which Gregory considers the physicality of the human *eikon*. Thirdly, Christ's kenosis makes possible the theosis of the human *eikon*. Finally, Christ battles with and defeats the devil, restoring the potential divinity of the *eikon* and securing the *eikon*'s victory over the devil.

Continuing the narrative of the existence of the *eikon*, Chapter 3 examines the creation of the human *eikon*, pointing to the significance of the materiality and visibility of the *eikon* when compared to the invisibility of angels. This relates to how Gregory depicts the *eikon* as divine. Due to his narration of how God mixes the spiritual *eikon* with the dust, and in light of the unity of the 'identical *Eikon*', I contend that Gregory portrays the *eikon* and the dust becoming a unity, thus a single, living human person. Drawing from Genesis 1, Gregory argues explicitly that God creates women and men equally as *eikones*. Moreover, he writes

8 *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*

about the female *eikon* in a manner which demonstrates further his view of the *eikon* quite literally as a physical, living, and divine *eikon* of God.

Chapter 4 moves on to explore Gregory's re-telling of the fall against the backdrop of the 'garments of glory' tradition. After being persuaded by the devil to eat the fruit in paradise, the *eikon* is banished and clothed in garments of 'thick, dull flesh', which equates to the *eikon* being shrouded in sin. This renders the human person at greater risk from the devil. Here, we examine the way in which Gregory discusses the devil, arguing that Gregory attributes to the devil a diminishing existence. The battles with the spiritual powers of darkness form a primary strand in Gregory's narrative of the *eikon*'s existence, in which the devil hovers behind conversations of sin, the flesh, the world, and the passions.

Having followed the wounding of the *eikon* through the fall, the closing chapter attends to the *eikon*'s restoration and theosis which, Gregory stipulates, begins at baptism. The argument proceeds as follows: if we consider together (a) Gregory's theological anthropology in which God creates the human person specifically to be vulnerable or porous (borrowing these terms from Charles Taylor) to the spiritual realm, (b) Gregory's high pneumatology, (c) his ideas about the sacrament of baptism, and (d) the interaction between the *eikon* of God and the devil, we can interpret the divinity of the *eikon* literally and in the broadest terms, since it incorporates the ontological, functional, ethical, relational, and experiential aspects of being a divine *eikon*.²⁵

Finally, I argue that Gregory's narrative of the human person as an *eikon* of God is summarised best as 'divine, yet vulnerable'. This reflects Gregory's multifaceted approach, which relates to both human nature and experience. My use of 'vulnerable' is not intended to suggest that God might wound the human *eikon* in any way; rather, it is applied to indicate a kind of openness which may be positive or negative. The *eikon* is positively vulnerable (or porous) to God, having been created with the purpose of becoming 'divine', but at the same time negatively vulnerable to 'the world, the flesh, and the devil'.

²⁵ I apply ontological to denote the first order of things from which the epistemological and moral stem, and as a means of describing the reality of the divinity of the *eikon*. In later chapters, when I refer to the transformation of the human *eikon* as ontological, I do not imply that she has crossed the gap (διάστημα) between herself and God. My argument is that the manner in which the *eikon* increases in divinity applies quantitatively and not qualitatively, since God alone is ontologically divine.

I

Being an Image of God

This chapter argues that Scripture forms the basis of Gregory's vision of the human *eikon*. As observed in the Introduction, the fourth century was a complex syncretism of philosophical trends and ideas; undoubtedly, Gregory absorbed a variety of beliefs. Gregory's work has been read traditionally in light of Plato,¹ Aristotle,² Stoicism,³ Plotinus,⁴ Philo,⁵ and Origen.⁶ Towards the turn of the last century, scholars began to explore more fully the way in which Gregory uses Scripture in order to make his claims about doctrine. Frances Young, Ben Fulford, Brian Matz, Paul Gallay, and Kristoffel Demoen provide a sample of those who have

¹ Henri Pinault, *Le Platonisme de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Essai sur le relations du Christianisme et de l'Hellénisme dans son oeuvre théologique* (La Roche-sur-Yon, France: G. Romain, 1925); Jan M. Szymusiak, *Éléments de théologie de l'homme selon saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1963), 29.

² Andrew O.P. Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124–51.

³ Susanna Elm, 'Inscriptions and Conversions: Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism (Or. 38–40)' in Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 1–35; Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen*, 57–60; Boris Maslov, 'οικειωσις πρὸς θεόν: Gregory of Nazianzus and the Heteronomous Subject of Eastern Christian Penance', *ZAC*, 16 (2012), 311–43.

⁴ Dayna Kalleres, 'Demons and Divine Illumination: A Consideration of Eight Prayers by Gregory of Nazianzus', *VC*, 61, no. 2 (2007), 157–88.

⁵ Francesco Trisoglio, 'Filone Alessandrino e l'esegesi cristiana: contributo alla conoscenza dell'influsso esercitato da Filone sul IV secolo, specificatamente in Gregorio de Nazianzo', *ANRW II*, 21, no. 1 (1984), 588–730.

⁶ Claudio Moreschini, 'Nuove considerazioni sull'origenismo di Gregorio Nazianzo' in Mario Giradi and Marcello Marin (eds.), *Origene e l'alessandrinismo cappadoce (III-IV secolo)* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2002), 207–18.

10 *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*

brought to the fore different aspects of Gregory's exegesis and made clear the extent to which Gregory draws on Scripture to form his arguments.⁷

Beginning with a brief overview of Gregory's hermeneutics, we shall see that Gregory approaches the Bible primarily in light of Jesus Christ as the 'focal centre of God's ordering of all of history'.⁸ Moving on from here, we explore the predominant biblical themes from which Gregory draws in order to form his vision of the human *eikon*. These entail Christ the visible *Eikon*, beliefs about images and idols in light of the creation narratives in Genesis, the ethical implications of being an *eikon*, and later pseudepigraphal interpretations which set the *eikon* in a cosmological battle with the devil. Like the church fathers before him, Gregory deploys *eikon* in a variety of ways, describing primarily the human person and Christ, but also referring to metaphors, paintings, and pagan statues.⁹ Gregory's broad application reflects the fact that *eikon* plays a substantial role in patristic theology, occupying over five pages in Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, compared with less than a page in Liddell, Scott, and Jones' *A Greek-English Lexicon*.¹⁰ Deriving from εἰκω, which translates as 'to be like, to seem', εἰκῶν can mean 'likeness' in the sense of that which is physical, such as a picture or a statue, or that which is immaterial, for example, a phantom or semblance. We shall see that this melting pot of interpretations feed into Gregory's overall vision of the *eikon*. Although Christian iconography began to be discussed by Christians in the fourth century, we do not move on to discuss this since Gregory himself mentions only pagan images.¹¹

⁷ Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 102–113; Fulford, *Divine Eloquence*; Brian Matz, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016); Paul Gallay, 'La Bible dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nazianze le Théologien' in Claude Mondésert (ed.), *Le monde greg ancien et la Bible* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1984), 313–34; Kristoffel Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996).

⁸ Fulford, *Divine Eloquence*, 1; Mario Baghos, 'St Gregory the Theologian's Metanarrative of History', *Phronema*, 26, no. 2 (2011), 63–79, 75.

⁹ For *eikon* being used to depict paintings, see Or. 2.11 (SC 247, 104); 4.65 (SC 309, 172); 4.80 (SC 309, 202); 11.2 (SC 405, 332); 14.32 (PG 35, 900D); 21.22 (SC 270, 156); *eikon* as metaphor: Carm. 1.2.24 (PG 37, 793, 37); *eikon* as pagan statues: Or. 11.5 (SC 405, 338); Carm. 1.2.27 (PG 37, 854, 8).

¹⁰ Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *PGL* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 410–16; Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th with supplement ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940; repr., 1973), 485.

¹¹ Also observed by Jostein Børtnes, 'Eikōn Theou: Meanings of Likeness in Gregory of Nazianzus' in Frances M. Young, Mark J. Edwards, and Paul Parvis (eds.), *Studia Patristica*, 41 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 287–91. For the beginnings of Christian worship