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"I Will Speak to Those Who Understand": Gregory of Nazianzus' *Carmina Arcana* 1. 1-24.

Part of a larger Program infusing classical form with Christian content, the extensive corpus of poetry attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus (some 19000 verses, in all the regular quantitative meters) has yet to receive the attention it deserves from students of Christianity and Classical culture. The explanation for this fact lies partly in Gregory's great importance as a prose author, and in the fundamentally prosaic conception of theology that has prevailed in the west since the Enlightenment, but it is also a function of a gap between the disciplines of Patristics and Classical Studies whose origins lie in the separation of the faculties of Philology and Theology in the German University of the early nineteenth century. Modern Theologians, interested only secondarily in questions of literary form, find little in terms of theological content here that they cannot find in Gregory's prose works, while Classicists find it difficult to maintain a strictly formal interest in material whose content has been seen, until recently, to fall well outside the boundaries of their discipline. A literary study of Gregory's poetry provides an opportunity to bridge this gap, bringing our understanding of late antique literary culture in the Greek East abreast of recent developments in Latin studies.

Recent scholarship on Gregory's Latin contemporaries, Ausonius, Prudentius, and Paulinus of Nola, has given rise to the notion of the age of Theodosius, the "golden age" of Christian poetry in the Latin West, as a period of renewed literary "Alexandrianism". Scholarship on these Latin authors has naturally emphasized the mediating influence of Neoteric and Augustan poetry, the first wave of Roman Alexandrianism, upon these later-day Roman poets. Writing in Greek, Gregory needed no such mediation. Frequent allusions, in his poetry, to the works of Callimachus, Apollonius, and Theocritus (not to mention lesser authors like Aratus and Nicander) demonstrate his direct acquaintance with the literature of the Hellenistic period. My work attempts to take account of this fact, examining some of the ways in which Gregory's use of these and other literary "sources" elaborates upon Alexandrian precedent.

The present study will examine Gregory's handling of classical and biblical material in the prooemium to the so-called *Carmina Arcana* (Gk *Aporreta*, PG 37, 1. 1. 1-24). A close reading of literary "subtexts" here reveals a remarkable unity of purpose, as passages concerned in one way or another with the inexpressibility of God are brought to bear on one of the central preoccupations of Byzantine Theology: Apophaticism, or the necessity of speaking about God only in terms of what He is not. The ascent of Sinai was an established *topos* for the discussion of this kind of *apophatic* theology. Christian authors from Origen (*Contra Celsum*, 6. 17) to Gregory of Nyssa (*Vita Moysis*, ed. Jaeger, 84-85) read this section of Exodus as an allegory for the theologian, who ascends the mountain to learn "the secret things of God". A reading of the parallel passage from Gregory's second *Theological Oration* (28. 2-3), itself an elaborate allegory of the Exodus passage alluded to in the poem, will confirm this line of interpretation for the initial section of the *Aporreta*.