ANTHOLOGIA PALATINA 8 AS A HELLENISTIC BOOK OF POEMS: STRUCTURE AND MEANING IN GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS*

ABSTRACT

This article analyses Anth. Pal. *8 as a Hellenistic book of poems, i.e. as a collection artfully arranged by an author-editor and not as a mere gathering of sepulchral epigrams devoid of any reflection or literary aspiration. In common with modern poetry books,* Anth. Pal. *8 was conceived for linear sequential reading. A close study of its tripartite structure, of the thoughtful collocation of each piece and of their organizing principles in well-thought-out sequences reveals the ultimate eschatological meaning of the book. Finally, a comparative contextualization with other late antique poets indicates a late antique dating for the elaboration of this collection as such, whereas the strong numerological element and the religious transcendence sought by the distribution of the poems point to Gregory of Nazianzus himself as the author-editor of* Anth. Pal. *8.*

Keywords: *Greek Anthology*; *Palatine Anthology*; Gregory of Nazianzus; sepulchral epigrams; Hellenism; book of poems; Christian numerology; poetic collection

1. INTRODUCTION

Although *Anth. Pal.* 8 has attracted considerable attention in recent years, the traditional lack of interest in it compared to the remainder of the *Greek Anthology* has led to some misunderstandings. The Christian contents of *Anth. Pal.* 8 have made it less attractive to some readers, while all have been irritated by the monotony and endless repetition of the same themes and topics, often with slight alterations, which make the sequential reading of several epigrams truly boring. It is however this tedious sequence which incarnates the technical expertise and poetical excellence of its author, Gregory of Nazianzus, who succeeds for the very first time in constructing a Hellenistic book of Christian poems. The author-compiler's selection and arrangement of the epigrams constitute the real nature and significance of this collection and also the key to appreciating its beauty and real meaning.

2. THE *GREEK ANTHOLOGY* AND *ANTH. PAL.* 8

The *Greek Anthology* is a conglomeration of pre-existing poems and previous collections of poems which was compiled definitively at the end of the ninth century by Constantinos Cephalas (*c.* 890–900). His compilation (which begins with a florilegium of Christian epigrams consisting of *Anth. Pal.* 1) originally included *Anth. Pal.* 4 as the introduction followed by Books 5–7 and 9–14.[1] Cephalas' work as a compiler is

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[1] A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford, 1993), 121–59; M.D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Texts and Contexts* (Vienna,

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especially clear in Book 5, the five main parts of which respect the previous collections: the *Ruphiniana*, the *Crowns* of Philip and Meleager, the *Cycle* of Agathias and an epilogue. Immediately after that moment, Book 8 offering a collection of poems by Gregory of Nazianzus was inserted to follow *Anth. Pal.* 7 owing to their common funerary themes. In a third stage, Books 2 and 3 were added to the anthology, thus shifting all the pages to disrupt the initial page arrangement planned by Cephalas.[2]

Anth. Pal. 8 is definitely a non-Cephalan book as it omits the typical heading and prooemium present in the Cephalan books and contains the longest uninterrupted sequence of poems by one single author, which Cephalas did not respect in his anthology. The inclusion of the epigrams of Gregory of Nazianzus predates the copy of the earliest manuscript of the text: the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg codex, *Palatinus Graecus* 23, which together with BNF, Paris, *Supplementi Graeci* 384 was completed in the mid-tenth century.[3] The whole enterprise was supervised by a *maître d'œuvre* who—according to Alan Cameron—can be identified as Constantine the Rhodian.[4] The Rhodian and his group of scribes (dating from *c*. 940–50) must have found Gregory of Nazianzus' collection elsewhere and merely copied it without the need to anthologize a new book. This new book was *Anth. Pal.* 8, which was placed at this point of the collection owing to its funerary contents (epitaphs and verses against tomb raiders), i.e. between Book 7 devoted to 'pagan' sepulchral poems and Book 9 containing rhetorical and illustrative epigrams.

Book 8 was therefore a 'ready-made' construction with an original structure which was unchanged when included in the *Greek Anthology*. On the contrary, Book 7 presents (rationally compiled) 748 sepulchral epigrams which Cephalas drew from the previous compilations of Meleager, Philippus and Agathias maintaining some sequences unaltered.[5] The original alphabetical order (Α, Β, Γ, etc.) has been discarded in favour of a thematic grouping. Epigrams on celebrities of all periods (*Anth. Pal.* 7.1–150: initially poets and then philosophers) are consequently followed by groups of epitaphs dedicated to heroes, young women or even pets such as cats. In contrast, Book 8 consists of epitaphs of poet's contemporaries (relatives and friends) organized according to certain clear principles on Christian burial and its theology of death.[6] Its strong consistency indicates that it was not a simple compilation gathering every available poem, but a

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2003), 1.89–98; S. Beta, *Moi, un manuscrit. Autobiographie de l'Anthologie palatine* (Paris, 2019); F. Valerio, 'Anthologie Palatine', in C. Urlacher-Becht (ed.), *Dictionnaire de l'épigramme littéraire dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine* (Turnhout, 2022), 66–71.

[2] M.D. Lauxtermann, 'The Anthology of Cephalas', in M. Hinterberger and E. Schiffer (edd.), *Byzantinische Sprachkunst* (Berlin, 2007), 194–208.

[3] For this MS see P. Waltz, *Anthologie grecque. Anthologie palatine* (Paris, 1960²), 1.xxxviii–xlviii; J. Irigoin, 'L'Anthologie grecque', in J. Irigoin, *Tradition et critique des textes grecs* (Paris, 1997), 89–103, at 94–6; J.L. van Dieten, 'Zur Herstellung des Codex Palat. gr. 23/Paris. suppl. gr. 384', *ByzZ* 86–7 (1993–4), 342–62; F. Maltomini, 'Some poetic multiple-text manuscripts of the Byzantine era', in A. Bausi, M. Friedrich and M. Maniaci (edd.), *The Emergence of Multiple-Text Manuscripts* (Berlin, 2020), 201–14, at 202–4. For the different scribes of the manuscript see M.L. Agati, 'Note paleografiche all'*Antologia Palatina*', *BollClass* 5 (1984), 43–59; Lauxtermann (n. 2), 196.

[4] Cameron (n. 1), 300–28.

[5] *Anth. Pal.* 7.194–203, 207–12, 246–73, 296–303, 314–18, 406–529, 535–41, 646–55, 707–40 are from Meleager's *Wreath*, whereas 7.183–8, 233–40, 364–405, 622–45, 699–703 are from that of Philippus. Finally, 7.551–614 came from the *Cycle* of Agathias. On Book 7 see A. Gullo, *Antologia Palatina. Epigrammi funerari (Libro VII)* (Pisa, 2023).

[6] S. Goldhill and E. Greensmith, 'Gregory of Nazianzus in the *Palatine Anthology*: The poetics of Christian death', *CCJ* 66 (2020), 29–69, at 39–48; S. Goldhill, *Preposterous Poetics* (Cambridge, 2020), 242–50 and 111–13 on the formation of *Anth. Pal.*

coherent collection owing to a lavish editor who chose the most suitable material for his purpose. The title ἐκ τῶν ἐπῶν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου 'Selections from the poems of holy Gregory the Theologian' emphasizes this procedure. The note added by scribe A in the margin of the title: μέρος τι τῶν ἐπιτυμβίων ἐπιγραμμάτων, 'part of the funerary epigrams', explains that more epigrams are also present in other parts of Gregory of Nazianzus' production but were not included in this book.

The dating and authorship of *Anth. Pal.* 8 as a book has still not been satisfactorily addressed. For Cameron, the author was an anonymous compiler postdating Cephalas.[7] For Waltz the tenth-century copyist confined himself to copying a pre-existing epitome of Gregory's poetry,[8] but the question remains open: who selected the specific epigrams and arranged them in the current order in *Anth. Pal.* 8?

3. ARRANGEMENT IN THE BOOKS OF EPIGRAMS AND THE CASE OF *ANTH. PAL.* 8

The first books of epigrams known to us (fourth-third century B.C.: *sylloga i*) followed simple rules of organization (such as the alphabetical order of the first word of each poem, i.e. κατὰ στοιχεῖον), as their main aim was to bring together several pieces on the same theme. In the third century B.C. a new form became popular among the Hellenistic poets: the *libelli*, in which the authors themselves collected and edited their own material (again mainly arranging it by themes or genres). The *anthologiae* (from the second century B.C. onwards) juxtaposed recent compositions with original poems which could have been the source of inspiration. The appreciation of the imitative procedure allows the reader to compare different versions of the same theme and judge the merits of the new incorporations. In fact, the anthologist used to be the youngest poet in the collection as in the case of Meleager, who not only wishes to treasure an inherited literary legacy in his *Garland* but also to compete with his masters.[9]

Anth. Pal. 8 continues this tradition to a large extent by gathering over 254 sepulchral epigrams (first epitaphs: 1–165, and subsequently imprecations against grave desecrators: 166–254), and allegedly maintaining a double didactic function as literary models for other poets and useful examples for commissioners and engravers of

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[7] Cameron (n. 1), 146.

[8] Waltz (n. 3), 1.xxx. For the tenth-century cultural framework, very receptive to Gregory's work, see G. Rioual, *Lire Grégoire de Nazianze au X* siècle. Études sur Basile le Minime et ses Commentaires aux Discours 4 et 5* (Turnhout, 2021).

[9] K. Gutzwiller, 'The poetics of editing in Meleager's *Garland*', *TAPhA* 127 (1997), 169–200; L. Argentieri, 'Epigramma e libro. Morfologia delle raccolte epigrammatiche premeleagree', *ZPE* 121 (1998), 1–20; K. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley, 1998); K. Gutzwiller, 'The literariness of the Milan Papyrus, or "What difference a book?"', in K. Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: A Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford, 2005), 287–319; N. Krevans, 'The editor's toolbox: strategies for selection and presentation in the Milan Epigram Papyrus', in K. Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: A Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford, 2005), 81–96; L. Argentieri, 'Meleager and Philip as epigram collectors', in P. Bing and J.S. Bruss (edd.), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden, 2007), 147–64; R. Höschele, *Die blütenlesende Muse. Poetik und Textualität antiker Epigrammsammlungen* (Tübingen, 2010); K. Gutzwiller, 'Posidippus and ancient epigram books', in C. Henriksén (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epigram* (Hoboken, 2019), 351–70; F. Maltomini, 'Greek anthologies from the Hellenistic age to the Byzantine era', in C. Henriksén (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epigram* (Hoboken, 2019), 211–27; L. Mondin, 'Libellus, Livre d'épigrammes', in C. Urlacher-Becht (ed.), *Dictionnaire de l'épigramme littéraire dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine* (Turnhout, 2022), 896–9.

Christian epitaphs.[10] However, if this utilitarian purpose had been the primary objective of the compilation, an alphabetical sequence would have been preferred to facilitate their location and use. On the contrary, the arrangement of the pieces shows that the author aimed to create a more elaborated collection with an overall eschatological significance (religious hope in the afterlife by means of respect for the tombs and commemorating the deceased) transcending the individual meaning of each poem. This ideological goal is achieved thanks to the rhythmical distribution of the epigrams and the architectural assembling of the three main sections of the book.

In the same way as modern books of poetry, *Anth. Pal.* 8 was conceived for linear sequential reading, after which the correct conclusions can be drawn by the reader. Gregory's epigrams are not therefore in alphabetical order but initially grouped according to their common topics and literary subgenres. Let us carefully examine the arrangement of the book in order to expose the latent structures underpinning the anthological construction. Even if the original disposition had somehow become blurred over the years owing to later compilers and copyists who changed the location of certain poems, a very telling structural architecture is clearly discernible. Such a structure, heavily influenced by Hellenistic models, was intellectually uplifted by adding a religious meaning thanks to the poems' numerical distribution, which provides an esoteric purpose.

In the same way as the funerary epigrams of Gregory of Nazianzus represent the definitive fusion of Classical learning and Christian world view,[11] their careful arrangement in this book of poems involves the discarding of traditional patterns and themes to create a new means of highly sophisticated literary expression. It is based not only on the protagonist and metrical form of the epigrams but also on the number of compositions making up each logical group. The result is a tripartite division.

The following synoptic chart shows the underlying distribution of the pieces of the collection:

Epigram	Dedicatee	Epitaphs (number of)	
nos. 1–11	Basil of Caesarea	12 epigrams	
nos. 12–23	Gregory his father	12 epigrams	
nos. 24–74	Nonna his mother	53 epigrams	**81** epigrams < 3 x 3 x 3 x 3
nos. 75–6	both his parents	2 epigrams	
nos. 77–8	his nuclear family	2 epigrams	
nos. 79–84	to himself	6 epigrams	

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[10] C. Simelidis, 'Gregory of Nazianzus and the Christian epigram in the East', in C. Henriksén (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epigram* (Hoboken, 2019), 633–48, at 645.

[11] For the epigrammatic production of Gregory of Nazianzus, see A. Salvatore, *Tradizione e originalità negli epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno* (Naples, 1960); F.E. Consolino, 'Σοφίης ἀμφοτέρης πρύτανιν. Gli epigrammi funerari di Gregorio di Nazianzo (AP VIII)', *Athenaeum* 65 (1987), 407–25; F. Conca, 'Gli epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno', *Koinonia* 24 (2000), 50–60; U. Criscuolo, 'Sugli epigrammi di Gregorio di Nazianzo', in G. Lozza and S. Martinelli Tempesta (edd.), *L'epigramma greco: problemi e prospettive* (Milan, 2007), 19–52; R. Palla, 'Agli agapeti: un ciclo di componimenti di Gregorio Nazianzeno', in C. Burini De Lorenzi and M. De Gaetano (edd.), *La poesia tardoantica e medievale* (Alessandria, 2010), 119–44; Simelidis (n. 10); V. Vertoudakis, *Τὸ ὄγδοο βιβλίο τῆς Παλατινῆς Ἀνθολογίας. Μία μελέτη τῶν ἐπιγραμμάτων τοῦ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Ναζιανζηνοῦ* (Athens, 2011).

nos. 85–138	close relatives[12]	54 epigrams	
nos. 139–41	Nicomedes	3 epigrams	**81** epigrams < 3 x 3 x 3 x 3
nos. 142–53	distant relatives	12 epigrams	27 epigrams < 3 x 3 x 3
nos. 154–65	Basil's family	12 epigrams	
nos. 166–75	against the '*feasters*'	10 epigrams	

Epigram (nos.)	Form	Against grave desecrators	
176–95	2 sextains + 5 quatrains + 4 couplets + 10 quatrains + 1 tercet	22 epigrams	< 3 x 7 (+ 1)
196–208	1 sextain + 10 quatrains	11 epigrams	**81** epigrams < 3 x 3 x 3 x 3
209–19	1 sextain + 10 quatrains	11 epigrams	
220–54	1 quatrain + 36 couplets	37 epigrams	} < 3 x 12 (+ 1)

As can be seen, the author combines a generic organization (first epitaphs, then sepulchral invectives) with a thematic one based on an associative criterion (initially his parents and subsequently friends and relatives) and a formal distribution for the final section. As a result, we have three clearly defined parts with 81 epigrams in each, which are joined by two pivoting axes (the first including six epigrams and the second 10 pieces) to break the sequences thematically but also to allow a development of the contents. The ensemble can be considered as a triptych with leaves assembled by two nodes around which the leaves themselves revolve.

The first two parts consist of epitaphs dedicated to various members of Gregory's family and friends. The first section is for his immediate circle: his close friend/model of the ideal Christian, Basil of Caesarea (12 epigrams), his father (12 epigrams), his mother (53 epigrams), both his parents (two epigrams) and his nuclear family (two epigrams). These are followed by six epigrams (the first has 10 lines [*Anth. Pal.* 8.79] while the other five are sextains) dedicated to himself, which allow him to introduce a minor change by extending the focus to more and more distant family members. This central axis operates as a specular reflector which shifts the image from right to left so that the structure of the second part is a mirror image of the previous one. In response to the 12 initial poems[13] on Basil of Caesarea, the last 12 are concerned with Basil's

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[12] In this series, epigram 8.105 'against tomb raiders' should not be counted as it was clearly (mis)-placed by a later careless hand. In any case, the inclusion predates the extant manuscript tradition given that this piece is also included in the set of epitaphs to Martinianus of the *Carmina*: J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca* (Paris, 1857–66), vol. 38, cols. 30–7 (*Epitaph*. 40–53 = *Anth. Pal.* 8.104–17); Vertoudakis (n. 11), 103–4.

[13] Evidently the current opening epigram is not by Gregory of Nazianzus. It is an epitaph for the emperor Theodosius I (died 395) and John Chrysostom (died 407), who died after Gregory. It must have been added immediately afterwards by a compiler seeking a Constantinopolitan patronage. This intervention merely replaced one piece with another without changing the arrangement of the original collection, the initial part of which always had twelve epigrams as stated by the poet: Γρηγόριος, Βασίλειε, τεῆ κόνι τῆνδ' ἀνέθηκα | τῶν ἐπιγραμματίων, θεῖε, δυωδεκάδα 'Gregory dedicates, divine Basil, this dozen of epigrams to your ashes' (8.11b).

family. To balance the 12 epigrams on the father of Gregory of Nazianzus we find 12 others on distant relatives, while the 53 devoted to his mother Nonna are balanced by the 54 with close relatives as protagonists. As if there were a geographical criterion departing from the poet himself, the dedicatees become progressively more remote, going beyond his close circle to include more distant relatives and friends. The contrast between intimacy and remoteness is overcome thanks to emphatic language stressing the poet's deep feelings, as 8.147 shows.[14]

A third part is added to these two, also with 81 epigrams, but on a slightly different theme. They are not epitaphs extolling good Christians but warnings to the raiders of the tombs where the deceased lay, including those good Christians. The join consists of a new pivotal axis (8.166–75) with 10 epigrams attacking the 'luxurious feasters in the Churches of the Martyrs', who intended to honour the martyrs, but in fact embarrassed them by their behaviour.[15] This second node is a development of the first one, given that 8.79 is an autobiographical numerical poem which goes from one to ten, while this block consists precisely of 10 compositions.

The poems, mostly in elegiac couplets, making up this last sequence (8.176–254) are thematically very consistent and monotonous, almost immutable in their contents which always criticize gold-hunters (τυμβωρύχοι, 'tomb-robbers'),[16] although they show an intriguing formal design. This consists of four groups beginning with a longer composition: the first starts with two sextains followed by fifteen quatrains which are interrupted by four couplets[17] and closing with a tercet of hexameters. The second and third group are identical: ten quatrains preceded by a sextain.[18] The final part

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[14] 8.147.1–2: Βάσσε φίλος, Χριστῷ μεμελημένος ἔξοχον ἄλλων, | τῆλε τεῆς πάτρης ληίστορι χειρὶ δαμάσθης, 'Dear Bassus, the special darling of Christ, far from thy home thou hast fallen by the robber's hand' (transl. W.R. Paton).

[15] For these excesses see J. Quasten, '"Vetus superstitio et nova religio". The problem of *refrigerium* in the ancient church of North Africa', *HThR* 33 (1940), 253–66; R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven and London, 1997), 103–49; M.G. Moroni, 'Il culto dei martiri in alcuni epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno', in M.G. Moroni et al. (edd.), *Poesia tardoantica e medievale. Atti del VI convegno internazionale di studi* (Pisa, 2018), 45–63.

[16] M. Corsano, '*Tymborychía* e "leggi" in alcuni epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno', *VetChr* 28 (1991), 169–80; R. Palla, 'Gli epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno contro i violatori di tombe. I. Tra "raccolte metriche" e "raccolte tematiche"', in V. Zimmerl-Panagl (ed.), *Dulce melos II. Akten des 5. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Pisa, 2013), 33–46; M.G. Moroni, 'Gli epigrammi di Gregorio Nazianzeno contro i violatori di tombe. II. Aspetti esegetici e letterari', in V. Zimmerl-Panagl (ed.), *Dulce melos II. Akten des 5. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Pisa, 2013), 47–66.

[17] Namely 8.183 and 184, which should be considered as being four different epigrams according to the codex *Laurentianus pluteus* 7.10, fol. 125v, in which all these four elegiac couplets are preceded by the characteristic em dash (—) in the left margin, which indicates throughout the manuscript the beginning of a new poem.

[18] The first sequence (8.196–208) must follow the division of lines into epigrams provided by the remainder of the manuscript tradition and not by the *Palatinus graecus* 23 and its descendants. This division was edited by D.A.B. Caillau (ed.), *Sancti patris nostri Gregorii theologi, vulgo Nazianzeni, archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, Opera omnia* (Paris, 1840), vol. 2, reprinted in Migne (n. 12), vol. 38, cols. 117–19 (*Epitaph.* 69–72 = *Anth. Pal.* 8.196–201). According to this, verses 8.196 + 197.1–2 shape a sextain (*Epitaph.* 69), while the three following quatrains are as follows:
8.197.3–4 + 198 (*Epitaph.* 70)
8.199 + 200.1–2 (*Epitaph.* 71)
8.200.1–2 + 201 (*Epitaph.* 72)

(8.220–54) is a block of 36 couplets,[19] a group of very short epigrams to produce a lively and well-balanced final touch. It is initiated by quite an innovative mixed quatrain: two dactylic hexameters enclosing two iambic trimeters, a kind of formal metrical play on words with the elegiac couplet which characterizes the third section. This strophe, which has no parallel in the remainder of the book, introduces the final set and marks a milestone at which to stand back and consider the previous pieces.[20] 8.220 in fact recovers 8.195, the earlier hexametric 'strange' poem with which it frames the core of the imprecations against the looters. Both epigrams contain a striking repetition of the verb ὀρύσσω 'to dig, to bury'—not one of the most frequent in Gregory—in the same line, which emphasizes the idea of maintaining the dead buried in inviolate tombs.[21]

There is also a thematic development of the sections throughout the third part (although they are less interwoven than the sections of the two preceding parts): the initial sequence is dominated by the first person with common expressions such as ἐγώ(γε) or ἐμὸν τάφον, the second one begins with the formula καὶ σύ ('You also') and it is full of vocatives insulting grave desecrators,[22] while the third group stands out because of the third person (it starts with the interrogative pronoun τίς, 'who?') and because of the narrative character of its epigrams on generic or mythical themes.[23] The last section consists of 36 couplets, a meaningful number for a Christian author since it symbolizes God's punishment of the wicked after Psalm 36 in the Septuagint numbering.[24] Despite the existence of specific constitutions against tomb raiders in late-antique legislation,[25] the official penalties (deportation to the mines or exile on an island, see e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 9.17) would be rescinded to a fine, which was clearly insufficient for a poet who produced over eighty metrical invectives against such criminals. With these 36 epigrams, therefore, Gregory introduces an implicit plea to God for the dead to protect them from the assailant and to bless them with his justice.

It follows from the above that once a coherent selection of the material had been made (all are sepulchral compositions with Christian intentions), there was a subject-matter subdivision together with the generic criterion. In order to structure each part,

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[19] In line with the MS *Laurentianus pluteus* 7.10, fol. 127r, the poem 8.230 should be divided into three different epigrams, all of them elegiac couplets: 230a, 230b and 230c.

[20] Gregory employs iambic trimeters only on one other occasion (namely 8.85bis, a tercet). This exceptional abandonment of the hexametric rhythm has implications as to the level of content and tone, evoking the specific features of the invective and formally highlighting the change from one section to another (in fact 8.85bis initiates the section devoted to close relatives). See J. McDonald, 'The significance of meter in the Biblical poems of Gregory Nazianzen (*carmina* I.1.12–27)', in F. Hadjittofi and A. Lefteratou (edd.), *The Genres of Late Antique Christian Poetry* (Berlin, 2020), 109–23; G. Agosti, 'Metrical inscriptions in Late Antiquity: what difference did Christianity make?', in F. Hadjittofi and A. Lefteratou (edd.), *The Genres of Late Antique Christian Poetry* (Berlin, 2020), 39–58.

[21] 8.195.1 τοὺς ζῶντας κατόρυσσε. τί γὰρ νεκροὺς κατορύσσεις; 'Bury the living, for why dost thou bury the dead?' (transl. W.R. Paton).

8.220.3 ὄρυσσ', ὄρυσσε πάντας· ἢ τάχ' ἄν σέ τις, 'Dig them all up; perhaps some tomb will fall on thee' (transl. W.R. Paton).

[22] 8.200.1 τυμβοχόοι; 200.1 ἄγριε Τιτάν; 207.1 κακοὶ κακοκερδέες ἄνδρες; 207.3 κακοεργέ, κακόφρονος. The absence in this section of the word χρυσός, so common in the previous and the following one, is also significant.

[23] 8.210: ὁδίτης – γείτων; 8.212: οὔτις ἔτι αἰδώς – ἐλπὶς χρυσοῖο; 8.214: Κῦρος ἄναξ; 8.215: ὃς κακὸς; 8.217: ὁ λυσσήεις; 8.218: τις – ὁ δ' – ἄλλος = Pirithous, Icarus and Heracles.

[24] A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart, 1935), 2.36–8.

[25] É. Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY, 2009), 57–79 with previous bibliography.

the alphabetical principle was abandoned in favour of a formal arrangement which made the collection considerably more complicated and conceptually stronger. While the number of pieces is constant in the three parts (81) and the quantity of lines in each section is balanced,[26] the monotony of the repetition of the theme is prevented by means of formal resources. The poems are mainly in dactylic verses, but their varying length is used to create internal rhythm and rhetorical *variatio*. The different sections therefore alternate longer and shorter epigrams in a clear abridging trend: the longest pieces are at the beginning and the briefest at the end. As a consequence, the move from one block to other is emphatically highlighted owing to their varying length and not only by the different theme of the new poem. For instance, in the section dedicated to his mother Nonna the three sets contain progressively shorter epigrams up to the point of concluding with a final block of couplets ending with a monostich as a kind of *sphragis* or final seal (8.74). The collection continues with a sextain on Gregory's father. Another example is that in the series devoted to Basil's family the end of the second part is announced by the three pieces for Naucratius (8.156–8), each of a different length (six, four and two lines, respectively). Next come two compositions for Maxentius of six and four verses (8.159–60) and two other epigrams for Emmelia of six verses (8.161–2). At the end we have one quatrain for Macrina, one for Theosebia, and one for Gregory the Younger (8.163–5). This swift change of protagonist in each poem produces a vivid impression which accelerates the reading of the series and concludes on a high note.

4. THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES OF *ANTH. PAL.* 8

The structure of this book of poems takes the form of a tripartite division and is based on specific numbers with important religious Christian significance. Most of the ciphers of this numerical engineering can be ultimately reduced to the number 3, the true basis of the whole of the book's architecture owing to its Trinitarian meaning, thus creating a global architectural symbolism. According to Christian doctrine, there are three consubstantial divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For his part, the servant of the Trinity[27] Gregory of Nazianzus developed for the first time a systematic theology of the Holy Trinity as the polemical and soteriological foundation of his entire thinking.[28] Moreover, Early Christian intellectuals considered 3 to be the most perfect, productive and mystical number. In the words of the influential philosopher Didymus the Blind (*c.* 313–398):

Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. He had three sons, and this is the number of those Noah fathered; it was not mentioned before this, either, that he had further children. The literal sense is clear; if, on the other hand, you were to consider the anagogical sense, you would say that anyone fathering two children would produce the symbols of a materialistic attitude (two being a characteristic of matter, in that it is divisible), whereas the father of three is

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[26] The total number of verses in *Anth. Pal.* 8 is 1,027. Of these, 365 verses belong to the first part (333) and the first axis (32); 365 to the second part; and 297 lines to the second axis (50) and the final part (247).

[27] As he himself states in 8.81.2: τῆς ἱερῆς Τριάδος Γρηγόριος θεράπων.

[28] C.A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God* (Oxford, 2008); G. Thomas, *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 2019); O.B. Langworthy, *Gregory of Nazianzus' Soteriological Pneumatology* (Tübingen, 2019).

said to be perfect in that as one he is self-sufficient and bears the image of the Creator because he is productive, and yet with the removal of the number one he forms a two, so that clearly by addition a three is formed. Now, if to human things, suggested by two, reason is added, they no longer remain material and human because they are sharing in integrity; there is need not merely to act, but also with integrity, if one is to win commendation.[29]

Together with the many direct references to the Trinity, other underlying aspects confirm the importance Gregory attached to this divine concept, as for example his numerical choices in the arrangement of his classicizing epigrams, which always revolve around the number 3. Each part presents 81 epigrams, a relevant cipher since it is the result of exponentiating the number 3 four times ($3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 81$). The result of each previous elementary arithmetic operation is also employed by Gregory:

■ 27 is the cube of 3 ($= 3 \times 3 \times 3$) and there are 27 dedicatees of his epitaphs.[30] 27 is also the number of epigrams devoted to distant relatives and friends (8.139–65).
■ 9 is the square of 3 ($= 3 \times 3$), i.e. the times Gregory explicitly mentions the Trinity in his entire book of poems.[31]
■ 3 are, among many other aspects, the protagonists of the epigrams in the first part: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory the Elder and Nonna.

This numerical series (3, 9, 27, 81, etc. …) was previously characterized by the third-century bishop Anatolius of Laodicea, a renowned computist who wrote *About the Decade and the Numbers inside it* (Περὶ δεκάδος καὶ τῶν ἐντὸς αὐτῆς ἀριθμῶν), an essay on the first ten natural numerals following the Pythagorean and Neoplatonic approach by combining the description of their formal arithmetical properties with the interpretation of their mystical philosophical sense.[32] As Anatolius states: 'From the one, the seven numbers, multiplied each thrice, equal a number that is squared and cube, 729, squared of 27, and cube of 9. Thus 1, 3, 9, 27, 81, 243, 729'.[33] In his *Commentary on Genesis* Didymus the Blind, referring to this numerical

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[29] Didymus Caecus, *In Genesim* 6.10 (codex 165, lines 5–17): ἐγέννησεν δὲ Νῶε τρεῖς υἱοὺς τὸν Σὴμ τὸν Χὰμ τὸν Ἰάφετ. τρεῖς μὲν υἱοὺς ἐγέννησεν καὶ τοσούτων γέγονεν πατὴρ ὁ Νῶε· οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ τούτου εἴρηται ἐσχηκέναι ἄλλο τέκνον. καὶ τὸ μὲν ῥητὸν φανερόν· εἰ δὲ πρὸς ἀναγωγήν τις βλέποι, λέγοι ἂν ὅτι δύο τις γεννῶν ὑλικῆς ἕξεως ἂν εἴη σύμβολα τίκτων· τὰ γὰρ δύο τῇ ὕλῃ οἰκεῖα· διαιρετὴ γὰρ αὕτη· ὁ δὲ τριαγεννητικὸς τέλειος λέγεται πρῶτος ὢν ἄρτιος εἰκόνα φέρων τοῦ δημιουργοῦ, δραστήριος γάρ, καὶ ἔτι ἡ ἀφαίρεσις ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἑνὸς ἀριθμοῦ δυάδα ποιεῖ, ὡς δηλονότι κατὰ προσθήκην τὰ τρία γεγένηται· τοῖς δὲ ἀνθρωπίνοις, ἃ δηλοῦται διὰ τῶν δύο, εἰ προστεθείη λογισμός, οὐκέτι ὑλικὰ ἢ ἀνθρώπινα μένουσιν, ὀρθότητος μετέχοντα· οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς πράττειν δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγῳ ὀρθῷ, ἵν' ἔχῃ τὸν ἔπαινον. Edited by P. Nautin and L. Doutreleau (edd.), *Didyme l'Aveugle. Sur la Genèse* (Paris, 1976–8). English translation by R.C. Hill, *Didymus the Blind: Commentary on Genesis* (Washington, 2016). See also R.A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria* (Urbana, IL, 2004).

[30] Namely Basil of Caesarea: 8.2–11b; Gregory the Elder, his father: 12–23+75–6; Gregory's mother, Nonna: 24–76; his brother Caesarius: 77, 85–100; his sister Gorgonia 78, 101–3; Philagrius: 100; Alypius: 103; Martinianus: 104–17; Livia: 118–20; Euphemius: 118, 121–30; Amphilochius: 131–8; Nicomedes: 139–41+145; Carterius: 142–6; Bassus: 147–8; Philtathius: 149; Eusebia and Basilissa: 150; Eulalius: 151; Helladius: 151–3; George: 154; Eupraxius: 155; Naucratius: 156–8; Maxentius: 159–60; Emmelia: 161–2; Macrina: 163; Theosebia: 164; Gregory the Younger: 165.

[31] 8.3.2; 4.2; 12.3; 14.4; 15.2; 53.1; 79.9; 81.2; 140.6.

[32] J.L. Heiberg, *Anatolius. Sur les dix premiers nombres* (Macon, 1901), 5–16. On Anatolius see A.A. Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era* (Oxford, 2008), 130–61 and 422–38.

[33] Anatolius Laod., Περὶ ἑβδομάδος 15–20: ἀπὸ μονάδος ζ΄ ἀριθμοὶ ἐν τριπλασίονι λόγῳ προσαυξηθέντες ποιοῦσι τετράγωνον καὶ κύβον τὸν ψκθ΄, τετράγωνον ἐκ τοῦ κζ΄, κύβον ἐκ τοῦ θ΄, οὕτως· α΄ γ΄ θ΄ κζ΄ πα΄ σμγ΄ ψκθ΄.

series, added that σημαίνει μὲν τὸ τετράγωνον βεβαιότητα, 'the square symbolizes solidity'.[34]

Gregory substituted the arithmetical perfection of number 729 for that of 730, the exact quantity of verses contained in the collection of epitaphs (*Anth. Pal.* 8.1–165). In fact, 730 is the total of the sum of the 365 lines of the first part and the 365 lines of the second. This number (365) is hardly due to chance as it recalls the days of the year, creating a liturgical play which allows the reading of one or two lines on a daily basis in a kind of synaxarion *avant la lettre*.[35] This particular calendar would encourage the commemoration of the dedicatees of Gregory's epitaphs, another of his main objectives with the diffusion of this collection.[36]

The interest of Gregory of Nazianzus in arithmetical poetics is clear given his numerical autobiographical poem (8.79), which explicitly mentions in each line every number of the decade. Moreover, Gregory also used to include arithmetical considerations in his homilies so as to project a mystical sense to the events narrated in the Scriptures, in common with Didymus, Origen of Alexandria and Basil of Caesarea. One of these passages can explain the modification inserted here by Gregory from number 729 to 730. In his *Oration* 41, *On Pentecost*, Gregory delivered a long disquisition on number seven, from its Biblical values to the seven gifts from the Holy Ghost (chs. 1–5), seeking the significance of this number for Christians when celebrating Pentecost. At the end of the second chapter he states: 'Thus the veneration paid to the number Seven gave rise also to the veneration of Pentecost. For seven being multiplied by seven generates fifty all but one day, which we borrow from the world to come, at once the Eighth and the first, or rather one and indestructible.'[37]

The addition of one more unit to the mathematical result of the cubic multiplication of 7 x 7 = 49 to obtain 50 (the actual number of the days of Pentecost) gives a mystical sense and a transcendental significance which simple arithmetic lacks. In the same way in Gregory's epitaphs, the Pythagorean interpretation of 729 and its properties is surpassed by the addition of one more unit, the result of which (730) can be seen as a liturgical element with an otherworldly meaning, appropriate for the daily commemoration of the Christian deceased.

Another relevant cipher in Gregory's book of poems is 53, the number of pieces which make up the block devoted to his mother Nonna (8.24–74).[38] The significance

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[34] Didymus Caecus, *In Genesim*, codex 184, line 21 and codex 197, line 24.

[35] S. Métivier, 'Le Synaxaire de Constantinople, une autre manière de raconter et faire l'histoire', in A. Lampadaridi, V. Déroche, C. Høgel (edd.), *Byzantine and Medieval History as Represented in Hagiography* (Uppsala, 2022), 199–217; P. Odorico, 'L'histoire dans les synaxaires: de sa construction à la transmission d'un savoir', in A. Lampadaridi, V. Déroche, C. Høgel (edd.), *Byzantine and Medieval History as Represented in Hagiography* (Uppsala, 2022), 219–40. Gregory's festival orations contributed to the historical development of the liturgical calendar in Constantinople and Cappadocia: see T. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, MN, 1986), 137–8; H. Förster, *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphanias* (Tübingen, 2007), 180–215.

[36] V.M. Limberis, *Architects of Piety: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Cult of the Martyrs* (Oxford, 2011); Ó. Prieto Domínguez, 'Gregory of Nazianzus and the Origins of Verse Hagiography (*AP* 8.24–74 on his mother Nonna)', in N. Zito and M. Cariou (edd.), *Μάρτυρι μύθῳ. Poésie, histoire et société aux époques impériale et tardive* (Alessandria, in press).

[37] οὕτως ὁ ἑπτὰ τιμώμενος ἀριθμὸς τὴν τιμὴν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς συνεισήγαγεν. ὁ γὰρ ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ ἑαυτὸν συντιθέμενος, γεννᾷ τὸν πεντήκοντα, μιᾶς δεούσης ἡμέρας, ἣν ἐκ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος προσελήφαμεν, ὀγδόην τε οὖσαν τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ πρώτην, μᾶλλον δὲ μίαν καὶ ἀκατάλυτον (Greg. Naz. *In Pentecosten, Oratio* 41, ed. by C. Moreschini, *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours 38–41* [Paris, 1990], 312–55; English translation by V.E.F. Harrison, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Festal Orations* [New York, 2008]).

[38] The sequence includes epigrams 52b and 67b as separate pieces to reach the 53 poems.

of 53 in Christian numerology derives in fact from its Biblical meaning: the book of the minor prophet Zephaniah has three chapters and 53 verses, in which he heralds death and doomsday but also the Christian resurrection. Moreover, when Christ after his resurrection appeared to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee, they caught exactly 153 fish,[39] which again gives this number a salvific meaning which is truly appropriated for Christian epitaphs. According to Evagrius of Pontus (A.D. 345–99), the cipher 53 had a profound theological significance for early Christians, since it is the sum of the spherical (25), referring to the cycle of time, and the triangular (28), echoing the Trinity. Evagrius—a disciple and close friend of Gregory of Nazianzus—expounds in his treatise *De oratione* that twenty-five is spherical because it appears as the last digits of the resulting number when multiplied by itself (25 x 25 = 625; κε΄ x κε΄ = χκε΄), whereas twenty-eight is triangular because it can be represented by dots arranged in a triangle $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7)$.[40]

Gregory, however, did not divide his collection for Nonna into two parts but into three.[41] The value he attributed to number three and its special relation with 53 is apparent in the epigram *Anth. Pal.* 8.53, the only one in the whole book beginning with ἡ Τριάς, 'The Trinity'. When a tripartite scheme is applied to this group of poems, the formal features reaffirm Gregory's preference for the number 3. Among the whole set devoted to Nonna the last seventeen epigrams emerge as an autonomous section (8.59–74), given that all of them are elegiac couplets ending with a monostich which functions as a *Schlußgedicht* and indicates the end of the collection. When reading the remainder of the pieces, it is obvious that the previous seventeen poems (8.43–58) make up a different section, with most of them having four lines except for five compositions at the end: one sextain (8.53) and four tercets (8.54 and 56–8) which signal the immediate change of series. The breakup among the sections is highlighted by textual characteristics: the first poem (8.43) breaks the previous set by substituting Nonna as the syntactic subject for her husband the bishop Gregory (although she continued to be praised secondarily), while the last (8.58) takes the form of a dialogue in which two people speak about Nonna's death. Finally, the first section (8.24–42) includes the longer epigrams (19 in total), most of them of sextains, although they become shorter as the sequence progresses in such a way that the last five poems turn into quatrains.

Although they show strong coherence, the different contents of each part verify this tripartite structure. The first block (8.24–42) describes what Nonna was like and how she lived, proclaiming her sanctity at the beginning of the last poem (Νόνν' ἱερή, 'Holy Nonna'). The second set (8.43–58) focuses on the altar where she died, understanding her death as a religious sacrifice; whereas the last set (8.59–74) stresses that Nonna was taken up to Heaven where she is now.

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[39] John 21.1–14. The number 153 is the result of the mathematical addition of all the first 17 digits (i.e. 1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16+17), but 153 is also the result of 9 x 17. Moreover, if we add the cube of each of the individual ciphers of this number (i.e. $1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3$), we again obtain 153 (i.e. 1+125+27).

[40] Evagrius Pont., *De oratione, praef.*, *PG* 79.1165–8. English translation in G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, C. Ware (edd.), *The Philokalia* (London, 1979), 1.55–71, at 56–7. For the Christian theological significance of number fifty-three and its survival see A. Neméth, *The Excerpta Constantiniana and the Byzantine Appropriation of the Past* (Cambridge, 2018), 73, 77–81; Goldhill and Greensmith (n. 6), 43.

[41] For the reasons that make a tripartite division preferable to a two-membered one, see Prieto Domínguez (n. 36).

In this substructure, an initial section of 19 epigrams[42] is followed by two of 17, a meaningful number for a Christian collection of epitaphs owing to its eschatological symbolism. The Book of Genesis states that Noah's Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the month to start the regeneration of the Earth after the flood.[43] Moreover, the resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred on the seventeenth day of the month of Nisan. This mark of his complete restoration preludes the eventual afterlife of the faithful in Heaven, a wish Gregory eagerly desired for the protagonists of his epitaphs.

As has already been mentioned, the two main parts of Gregory's book take the form of a diptych in which epigrams 8.85–165 reflect 8.2–78. The long series of 53 poems to his mother is balanced by 54 pieces dedicated to Gregory's close relatives on his mother's side. In this set a similar tripartite division is also discernible. A visual display will make this clearer:

Nonna's collection (53 epigrams)	Epitaphs for close relatives (54 epigrams)
nos. 24–42 Nonna's life (19 poems)	nos. 85–102 Caesarius and Gorgonia (19 poems)
nos. 43–58 her place of death (17 poems)	nos. 103–20 Martinianus and Livia (17 poems)
nos. 59–74 Nonna is in Heaven (17 poems)	nos. 121–38 Euphemius and Amphilochius (18 poems)

Analogously to the first section of the collection about Nonna's life, the initial 19 epigrams of the set about close relatives are concerned with Nonna's two other children, Caesarius and Gorgonia, Gregory's siblings. The end of this first sequence is marked by two couplets (8.101–2). The second section, which is formed by the epitaphs for Martinianus and Livia (8.103–20), corresponds to the 17 poems[44] about the altar where Nonna died and the theological value of her death. Martinianus is an obscure person for us[45] but given the collocation of his epitaphs in the series probably had some connection with Livia, Nonna's sister-in-law. The last section, consisting of 18 poems (8.121–38) and closed once more by two couplets, is a reply to the most Christian compositions for Nonna, those devoted to Heaven—where Gregory hopes she is—and to the altar where she is celebrated after her death on the spot. The protagonists of the epitaphs corresponding to this set are Amphilochius, Gregory's maternal uncle who is married to Livia,[46] and

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[42] For the symbolic meaning of number 19 in the Nonna collection, see Prieto Domínguez (n. 36).

[43] Gen. 8:4.

[44] The epigram 8.105 must be left aside, as already explained.

[45] This major figure of Cappadocian origin reached the important positions of proconsul in Africa, *uicarius urbis Romae* and *praefectus praetorio Italiae*; see *PLRE* I, page 564, Martinianos 5; Basil of Caesarea, *Epist.* 76, pages 178–9; A. Filippini, 'Epigramma onorario per l'alto funzionario Martinianus', in L. Campagna (ed.), *Il Ninfeo dei Tritoni (Hierapolis di Frigia XI)* (Istanbul, 2018), 537–48. For the epitaphs dedicated to Martinianus see L. Floridi, 'The epigrams of Gregory of Nazianzus against tomb desecrators and their epigraphic background', *Mnemosyne* 66 (2013), 55–81.

[46] Amphilochius was a classmate of Libanius and a friend of the rhetor Themistius; see K.G. Μπόνης, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος, ἤτοι τὸ γενεαλογικὸν δένδρον Γρηγορίου τοῦ Ναζιανζηνοῦ καὶ ὁ πρὸς τὸν Ἀμφιλόχιον Ἰκονίου συγγενικὸς αὐτοῦ δεσμός* (Athens, 1953), 11–21.

his son Euphemius.[47] This cousin of Gregory's, as well as his father, were renowned for their literary qualities, cultural background and rhetoric capacity. Their epitaphs are accordingly classicizing epigrams full of Classical references (such as Hesiod, Homer, Theocritus and Pindar) and allusions to the pagan past to honour their sublime eloquence. The contrast between their qualities and those of Nonna is truly remarkable, as it emphasizes Gregory's preference for the (good) choice of his mother.

A final noteworthy observation: as we have seen, the longest section of the first part contains 53 epigrams while its counterpart in the second has 54. If the remainder of both parts is added (28 poems of the first + 27 of the second) the result again is precisely 53.

5. WHO ARRANGED THE EPIGRAMS OF *ANTH. PAL.* 8?

In the light of such lavishly technical collocation of the poems in the book, it is impossible to deny the existence of a poet-editor who consciously arranged the epigrams to build a collection which is intended to be read as a literary text. However, since the seminal edition of the text by Muratori in 1709 stated that Gregory 'did not pursue poetic elegance' in his epigrams and did not even intend to publish the majority of them,[48] the *communis opinio* has not considered this possibility: modern editors such as Waltz and Beckby concur that the poems were gathered at random after Gregory's death.[49] The idea of anonymous post-mortem compilers has survived to this day. Vertoudakis, for instance, in his in-depth monograph echoes it and considers the current collection to be the result of a gradual development over time of Gregory's epigrammatic cycles followed by a later anonymous ascetic practice rather than the authorial plan of the poet while he was alive.[50]

However, the pioneering exception of Consolino, who advocated considering Gregory to be the compiler of artfully arranged epigrammatic series,[51] must be taken as far as possible. The coherence, cohesion and the work involved in creating most sequences of poems prove the author's literary will. Moreover, the deliberated and deep reflection which was needed to organize the epigrams so as to make new sense and promote a richer and transcendental reading (even if to some they merely appear to be artless accumulations) cannot be a coincidence. The inner thematic correspondences in the collection are confirmed by the mathematical distribution and the formal aspects which highlight it, such as the shortening of the pieces as most sequences move forward or the initial and final epigrams (*Anfangs-* and

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[47] Salvatore (n. 11); M. Corsano, 'Eufemio, i parenti e le tombe di famiglia (Greg. Naz. *epitaph.* 28–36 = *Anth. Pal.* 8,121–130)', in V. Zimmerl-Panagl (ed.), *Dulce melos II. Akten des 5. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Pisa, 2013), 67–78; R. Palla, 'Anfilochio e famiglia (Greg. Naz., *epitaph.* 25–36.103–109 = *Anth. Pal.* 8, 118–138)', in M. Veronese and V. Lomiento (edd.), *Discendi studioso* (Bari, 2019), 291–8; M.G. Moroni, 'Anfilochio, Gregorio e la retorica (Greg. Naz., *epitaph.* 103–109 = *Anth. Pal.* 8, 131–8)', in M. Veronese and V. Lomiento (edd.), *Discendi studioso* (Bari, 2019), 299–322.

[48] L.A. Muratori, *Anecdota graeca* (Padua, 1709), in the preface.

[49] P. Waltz, *Anthologie grecque. Tome VI, Livre VIII* (Paris, 1944), 25; H. Beckby, *Anthologia graeca: Griechisch–Deutsch* (Munich, 1965), 2.446.

[50] Vertoudakis (n. 11), 77, n. 115.

[51] Consolino (n. 11). This proposal has been defended by Simelidis (n. 10) and by Goldhill and Greensmith (n. 6), 41–3, 46 and 51 with further corroborating observations.

Schlußgedichten). The verbal connections of the poems require sequential reading for the meaning of each text to be fully understood, and for the overall sense of the series and of the whole book of poems to be clear.

The conceptualization of such a book of poems has been very well thought out. Its guiding principles are those of the Hellenistic poets, who arranged their compositions in larger structures which multiply the possible levels of reading. The architectural division of the epigrammatic sets according to thematic, alphabetical or geographical criteria, or length, produced during the Hellenistic period a kind of *variatio* which avoids the reader's boredom and exhibits the technical expertise of the poet.[52] With the substitution of the roll by the codex, the new book format made it possible to develop the trends initiated by the Hellenistic poets when arranging the poems in a collection. The cross references between the pages became more and more numerous as it was now possible to open and read several pages of a book at the same time, comparing and multiplying the context of any verse.[53] Evidently, the forerunners of *Anth. Pal.* 8 are not only the Greek Meleager, Theognis, the *Sôros*, etc., but also the Latin Augustans (Virgil, Horace, Martial, etc.) who made possible a new 'spirit of the times' (*Zeitgeist*) which is typically late antique.[54]

In the case of our collection, the direct referents appear to have been Callimachus, the Alexandrian poet and scholar of the third century B.C., and his contemporary Posidippus of Pella, who was also one of the court poets of the Ptolomies. Callimachus authored one of the first books of literary epigrams, the *Epigrammata*, which was a true 'poetry book' as it was apparently author-arranged.[55] Unfortunately we do not know the distribution or the exact extent of this book, but it is estimated to have had around 1,000 lines (the standard length for a book of verse in Hellenistic times), like his *Hecale* or his *Hymns*. Intriguingly, Callimachus' *Hymns* have exactly 1,083 dactylic lines,[56] i.e. fifty-six more verses than the original number we have reconstructed for Gregory's collection of poems (most of which are also in dactylic rhythm). For his part, Posidippus produced an important quantity of epigrams, a number of which were arranged in a book of poetry of nine thematic sections preserved in the papyrus *P.Mil.Vogl.* VIII 309. Given that a Homeric *scholion* informs us that Posidippus edited

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[52] M. Fantuzzi, 'Typologies of variation on a theme in archaic and classical metrical inscriptions', in I. Petrovic, A. Petrovic, M. Baumbach (edd.), *Archaic and Classical Greek Epigram* (Cambridge, 2010), 289–310; N. Krevans, 'The arrangement of epigrams in collections', in P. Bing and J.S. Bruss (edd.), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden, 2007), 131–46; S.L. Tarán, *The Art of Variation in the Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden, 1979); R. Höschele, 'Variation', in C. Urlacher-Becht (ed.), *Dictionnaire de l'épigramme littéraire dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine* (Turnhout, 2022), 1471–3. For the distribution and arrangement of epigrams in a book see the bibliography quoted above in n. 9.

[53] J. Van Sickle, 'The book-roll and some conventions of the poetry book', *Arethusa* 13 (1980), 5–42.

[54] M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style* (London, 1989); M. Formisano, 'Towards an aesthetic paradigm of Late Antiquity', *AntTard* 15 (2007), 277–84; A. Pelttari, *The Space that Remains* (London, 2014); J. Elsner and J. Hernández Lobato (edd.), *The Poetics of Late Latin Literature* (Oxford, 2017); P. Hardie, *Classicism and Christianity in Late Antique Latin Poetry* (Oakland, 2019); W. Fitzgerald, *Variety: The Life of a Roman Concept* (Chicago, 2016); M.J. Carruthers, '*Varietas*: a word of many colours', *Poetica* 41 (2009), 11–32; S. Bjornlie, 'The rhetoric of *varietas* and epistolary encyclopedism in the *Variae* of Cassiodorus', in G. Greatrex, H. Elton, L. McMahon (edd.), *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2015), 289–303.

[55] For the third-century edition of Callimachus' epigrams see Gutzwiller (n. 9 [1998]), 183–5; Argentieri (n. 9 [1998]), 6.

[56] Van Sickle (n. 53), 8.

his own epigrams in at least two collections,[57] it is most likely that Posidippus himself was the compiler. In this book-roll, poems 42–61 AB constitute a coherent group of epitaphs (ἐπιτύμβια), the layout of which—in line with the abundant internal geometries of the other groups and of the whole—provides an intriguing precedent for Gregory's sepulchral compositions. There are twenty epigrams, all in elegiac couplets and arranged according to their dedicatee as if it were a 'theme with variations': three epitaphs for young women initiated into mystery cults, four for old women, seven for unmarried maidens, two for mothers who had died in childbirth, two more for old women and finally two epitaphs for men.[58] This is a programmatic collocation which sought a consolatory reading. In fact, the premature deaths of the central pieces are soothed by a religious eschatology since the female protagonists of the first three epigrams are initiates of the mysteries and those of the last four old people.[59] The *Ringkomposition* of the series suggests that the last two male deceased had also taken part in the mysteries. The autobiographical perspective of the poems perfectly agrees with Posidippus, who influenced by the Bacchic-Orphic mysteries envisaged his last journey on a mystic path.[60] This mysteric dimension is modulated by Gregory of Nazianzus, offering an alternative Christian mentality of the afterlife in his epitaphs while developing the architectural structure already shown by the Milan papyrus.

Following the achievement of Callimachus and Posidippus, single-author anthologies continued to be produced during the imperial age and Late Antiquity, as is borne out by the examples of Diogenes Laertius and Palladas.[61] In fact, Diogenes Laertius (*floruit* third century A.D.) claims in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* that he himself arranged in a book a collection of his own epigrams entitled *Pammetros* (1.39, 63).

Given the strong influence Callimachus and Posidippus had over Gregory of Nazianzus[62] and the commitment of the latter in merging Classical poetry and

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[57] Posidippus 144 AB = Σ A Hom. *Il.* 11.101. See Gutzwiller (n. 9 [2005]), 2–3, 287–319; S. Pozzi, 'Sulle sezioni *Iamatikà* e *Tropoi* del nuovo Posidippo (95–105 A.-B.)', *Eikasmos* 17 (2006), 181–202. For the sections structuring the roll, see D.E. Lavigne and A.J. Romano, 'Reading the signs. The arrangement of the new Posidippus roll (*P. Mil. Vogl.* VIII 309, IV.7–VI.8)', *ZPE* 146 (2004), 13–24.

[58] J.M. Bremer, 'Nieuwe grafgedichten uit een oude kist', *Hermeneus* 75 (2003), 125–35; M.M. Di Nino, 'Vecchiaia e *consolatio erga mortem*: la quarta sezione del *P.Mil.Vogl.* VIII 309', *Lexis* 23 (2005), 223–30; Gutzwiller (n. 9 [2005]), 293–9; V. Garulli, 'Posidippo e l'epigrafia sepolcrale greca', in M. Di Marco, B.M. Palumbo, E. Lelli (edd.), *Posidippo e gli altri* (Pisa and Rome, 2005), 23–46; B. Seidensticker, A. Stähli, A. Wessels (edd.), *Der Neue Poseidipp* (Darmstadt, 2015), 183–246. On Posidippus' interest in enumeration and counting as reflected in his sepulchral epigrams, see M. Leventhal, *Poetry and Number in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2022), 168–9.

[59] M.W. Dickie, 'The eschatology of the epitaphs in the new Posidippus papyrus', in F. Cairns (ed.), *Greek and Roman Poetry, Greek and Roman Historiography* (Cambridge, 2005), 19–51; B. Dignas, 'Posidippus and the mysteries: *Epitymbia* read by the ancient historian', in B. Acosta-Hughes, E. Kosmetatou, M. Baumbach (edd.), *Labored in Papyrus Leaves: Perspectives on an Epigram Collection Attributed to Posidippus* (Washington, DC, 2004), 177–86.

[60] Posidippus 118.24–8 AB. See M.W. Dickie, 'The Dionysiac Mysteries in Pella', *ZPE* 109 (1995), 81–6; M.W. Dickie, 'Poets as initiates in the Mysteries: Euphorion, Philicus and Posidippus', *A&A* 44 (1998), 49–77, at 65–76; L. Rossi, 'Il testamento di Posidippo e le laminette auree di Pella', *ZPE* 112 (1996), 59–65; Gutzwiller (n. 9 [1998]), 152–5; R.A. Rohland, 'Highway to Hell: AP 11.23 = Antipater of Thessalonica 38 G-P', *Mnemosyne* 72 (2019), 459–70, at 461–2.

[61] Gutzwiller (n. 9 [2019]), 364–5. Palladas' book is represented by a fourth-century papyrus codex containing some 60 fragmentary epigrams, see K. Wilkinson, *New Epigrams of Palladas: A Fragmentary Papyrus Codex (P.CtYBR inv. 4000)* (Durham, NC, 2012).

[62] F. Tissoni, 'Callimachea in Gregorio di Nazianzo', *Sileno* 23 (1997), 275–81; A.S. Hollis, 'Callimachus: Light from Later Antiquity', in F. Montanari and L. Lehnus (edd.), *Callimaque* (Vandœuvres, 2002), 35–54, at 43–9; C. De Stefani and E. Magnelli, 'Callimachus and Later Greek Poetry', in B. Acosta-Hughes, L. Lehnus, S. Stephens (edd.), *Brill's Companion to*

Christian contents, it is most likely that the bishop himself tried and adapted the Callimachean and Posidippean models not only to his language but also to his poetic structures for his own literary and theological ends. According to the razor of Occam, Gregory himself brought together his classicizing epigrams in one coherent book and arranged them following and developing Hellenistic poetics in order to create a collection with transcendental significance. The order of his epitaphs is programmatic and their distribution can be explained convincingly by means of Christian numerology. Even if certain poems date back to his early years, the composition of most epigrams within a specific period (after 380) certainly appears to follow an intentional plan, which obviously included an authorial edition. As an important basis for the argument: Gregory compiled his own letters into a book collection by selecting and editing all the existing material in order to offer a positive and specific representation of his literary culture and authorial image.[63] He is most likely also to have been responsible for other arranged editions of prose and verse, e.g. the theological orations, the *Poemata Arcana* and the *acoluthia* of the Biblical poems (*Carm.* 1.1.12–19).[64]

In the light of the ambitious programme Gregory had for his classicizing verses, it is plausible that he also wished to arrange his numerous iambs, which were certainly assembled all together but not artfully organized. At the end of his life, Gregory himself lamented that a good friend could not be found to finish his incomplete poems and arrange them, i.e. edit them properly.[65] In fact, evidence has been found that Gregory edited his *Carm.* 2.1.1, which was originally written in the 370s, during his retirement in the 380s.[66] Although it was clear that there was an editorial design, it could not be completed until four centuries after his death when in the eighth century Cosmas of Jerusalem, also a learned poet, edited Gregory's iambic poems and wrote *scholia* (commentaries) on them.[67] Inevitably, these editions were not well-planned books of

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Callimachus (Leiden, 2011), 534–65, at 554–7. Scholars had mainly focused on the Callimachean influence over Gregory, see B. MacDougall, 'Callimachus and the Bishops: Gregory of Nazianzus's Second Oration', *JLA* 9 (2016), 171–94; M.A.T. Poulos, *Callimachus and Callimacheanism in the Poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Diss., Catholic University of America, 2019); C. Simelidis, *Selected Poems of Gregory Nazianzus* (Göttingen, 2009); C. Simelidis, 'Callimachus, Epigram 9.6 G.–P. and Gregory of Nazianzus, Carmen I 2.14.101', *ZPE* 176 (2011), 60–2; P. Edwards, Ἐπισταμένοις ἀγορεύσω: *On the Christian Alexandrianism of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Diss., Brown University, 2003); T. Kuhn, *Schweigen in Versen: Text, Übersetzung und Studien zu den Schweigegedichten Gregors von Nazianz (II,1,34A/B)* (Berlin, 2014); P.A. O'Connell, 'Homer and his legacy in Gregory of Nazianzus' "On his own Affairs"', *JHS* 139 (2019), 147–71.

[63] B.K. Storin, *Self-Portrait in Three Colors. Gregory of Nazianzus's Epistolary Autobiography* (Oakland, 2019); N.B. McLynn, 'Gregory Nazianzen's Basil: the literary construction of a Christian friendship', in M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold (edd.), *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001), 4.178–93.

[64] J.A. McGuckin, *St Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY, 2001); A. Tuilier, G. Bady and J. Bernardi (edd.), *Grégoire de Nazianze. Œuvres poétiques. Tome I, 1re partie: Poèmes personnels (II,1,1–11)* (Paris, 2004), LXXIII–LXXVIII; G. Bady, 'Ordre et désordre des *Poèmes* de Grégoire le Théologien. À propos du *Laurentianus pluteus* VII, 10', in *Motivi e forme della poesia cristiana antica tra scrittura e tradizione classica* (Rome, 2008), 337–48, at 343–4 in which he states that the poems 'sont bien moins composés sur des motifs littéraires qu'à partir de calculs numériques'.

[65] Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 2.1.50.53–4 εὐρὼς δ' ἀμφὶ βίβλοισιν ἐμαῖς, μῦθοι δ' ἀτέλεστοι, | οἷς τίς ἀνὴρ δώσει τέρμα, φίλα φρονέων; 'Mould surrounds my books, my poems are unfinished, | to which what man will give an end, kindly minded?'. See Simelidis (n. 62), 154.

[66] Tuilier, Bady and Bernardi (n. 64), page li, and notes on lines 612–15. Cf. R. Palla, 'Ordinamento e polimetria delle poesie bibliche di Gregorio Nazianzeno', *WS* 102 (1989), 169–85.

[67] G. Lozza, *Cosma di Gerusalemme. Commentario ai Carmi di Gregorio Nazianzeno* (Napoli, 2000); R. Palla, '"Edizioni antiche" ed "edizioni moderne" dei Carmi di Gregorio Nazianzeno', in M. Cortesi (ed.), *Leggere i Padri tra passato e presente* (Florence, 2010), 127–43, at 132.

poems with an authorial design, but haphazard anthologies which aimed to accumulate all Gregory's extant verse.

A final argument by which to identify Gregorius of Nazianzus as responsible for the authorial edition of the *Anth. Pal.* 8 Book can be found in the numerological element which frequently characterizes late-antique literature and its poetry[68] more than the later periods of its compilers. From Orosius' *Historiae* to the *Homilies* of the Cappadocians and the writings of Augustine, all literary genres employ Biblical numerology. For Christians numerical symbolism was a common manner of interpreting the Bible[69] and this ever-growing interest in patterns and digits had a strong impact on poetic works. In the fourth century A.D. the Latin rhetor Ausonius (*c.* 310–94) constructed his celebrated poem *Mosella* according to the number 7, both at the level of the episodes and catalogues (which in themselves come to seven) and in the global architectural ensemble, which runs to 483, a multiple of seven $(7 \times 69 = 483)$.[70] Likewise, Ausonius also modelled his *Griphus Ternarii Numeri* on the number 3, building an exhaustive catalogue of entities which come in threes.[71] The *Greek Anthology* itself includes an important number of mathematical riddles in Book 14, many of them belonging to Late Antiquity, as is the case of the Metrodoran collection.[72]

A poet as committed to Christianity as Prudentius (348–after 405) structured his complete works (excepting the *Dittochaeon*) in 39 poems, a cipher with a theological significance because it represents the twelve apostles and the Holy Ghost, i.e. three times the number of the apostles since they (12) were enlightened by the Spirit (x 3) (= 36) plus three (the representation of the Trinity).[73] Moreover, Prudentius arranged his compositions in a symmetrical pattern proposing Christian alternatives to Classical literary genres in a similar way to how Gregory of Nazianzus in

[68] D.J. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1989); Leventhal (n. 58), 178–208; C. Kannengiesser, 'Numerology', in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Leiden, 2004), 1.242–8.

[69] W.G. Most, 'The Scriptural Basis of St. Augustine's Arithmology', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 13 (1951), 284–95; J.J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1968); J. Kalvesmaki, *The Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in Platonism and Early Christianity* (Washington, DC, 2013); L.F. Janby, 'Christ and Pythagoras. Augustine's early philosophy of number', in P.G. Pavlos et al. (edd.), *Platonism and Christian Thought in Late Antiquity* (London, 2019), 117–28; M. Amsler, 'The "Poetic Itch" and numerical maxims in the Talmud: an inquiry into factors of knowledge construction', in M. Amsler (ed.), *Knowledge Construction in Late Antiquity* (Berlin, 2023), 189–218.

[70] J. Hernández Lobato, 'A poet in seventh heaven: a new reading of the numerical construction of Ausonius' *Mosella*', in J. Hernández Lobato and Ó. Prieto Domínguez (edd.), *Literature Squared: Self-Reflexivity in Late Antique Literature* (Turnhout, 2020), 65–82; J. Hernández Lobato, 'Fisher of men: a new reading of Ausonius' Catalogue of Fish', in C. Burrow et al. (edd.), *Imitative Series and Clusters from Classical to Early Modern Literature* (Berlin, 2020), 53–75.

[71] M. Françon, 'Ausonius's riddle of the number three', *Speculum* 18 (1943), 247–8; J. Hernández Lobato, 'Ausonio ante el enigma de número tres: política y poética en el *Griphus*', in G. Hinojo Andrés and J.C. Fernández Corte (edd.), *Munus quaesitum meritis* (Salamanca, 2007), 455–62; D. Lowe, 'Triple Tipple: Ausonius' *Griphus ternarii numeri*', in J. Kwapisz et al. (edd.), *The Muse at Play* (Berlin, 2012), 333–50.

[72] F. Grillo, 'Too many Metrodoruses? The compiler of the ἀριθμητικά from *AP* XIV', *Eikasmos* 30 (2019), 249–64; Leventhal (n. 58), 178–208.

[73] W. Ludwig, 'Die christliche Dichtung des Prudentius und die Transformation der klassischen Gattungen', in M. Fuhrmann (ed.), *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident* (Vandœuvres, 1977), 303–72, especially 348–51 on numerology.

Anth. Pal. 8 fused Christian eschatology with well-established Classical sepulchral epigrams.[74] In this construction of a collection—or in other words in the edition of a poetry book by the author—, arithmetic was a key tool for educated poets to create sense, inviting listeners/readers to decode the verses of a book according to the new literary context and the religious significance, albeit expressed by means of traditional (Hellenistic) organization, thematic arrangement, and structural formal marks from which their true meaning derives.

6. CONCLUSION

Gregory of Nazianzus was an important ecclesiastical figure as well as a creative literary craftsman. The structural and arithmetical arrangements of the collection preserved as *Anth. Pal.* 8 make it likely that Gregory was the master compiler of it as a whole. Although the clever structural patterns here uncovered do not prove Gregory's author-editorship beyond doubt, it is very difficult to identify another feasible contemporary or subsequent editor who could have executed this procedure and aimed specifically to reproduce the numerological penchants and theological obsessions of Gregory himself. These readings do, however, certainly strengthen the case for the literary sophistication of the collection, in structure as well as in allusive range, which is in line with the capabilities and concerns of Gregory and reduces the possibility of an editor-impersonator.

The innovative yet formal design of this book of poems (*Anth. Pal.* 8), and the creative capabilities of its author/compiler made possible the production of a coherent collection of classicizing epigrams, which represent a continuation of Hellenistic poetics by adapting it to new literary and theological goals. This development of the Hellenistic book collections and their architecture, which is clearly visible in the *Crowns* of Philip and Meleager, will hopefully shed some light on the even more misunderstood main early Byzantine collection: the *Cycle* of Agathias (*c.* 567).[75] The *Cycle* only included poems composed by Agathias and his contemporaries and was divided into seven sections of specific epigrammatic subgenres, emulating poetry books such as that of the Milan papyrus. The tripartite prologue informs readers that the third section contains the funerary pieces (*Anth. Pal.* 4.3.121–3), almost all of which are now in the sequence represented by *Anth. Pal.* 7.551–614. Although it is uncertain to what extent this was the original structure, the alternation between Agathias' poems and those by other authors creates rhythmical patrons which recall the organizing principles of *Anth. Pal.* 8,

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[74] For a comparative approach to the literary productions of these contemporary authors see W. Evenepoel, 'The early Christian poets Gregory Nazianzen and Prudentius', in A. Schoors and P. Van Deun (edd.), *Philohistor. Miscellanea in Honorem Caroli Laga Septuagenarii* (Leuven, 1994), 87–101.

[75] A. Mattsson, *Untersuchungen zur Epigrammsammlung des Agathias* (Lund, 1942); Av. Cameron and A. Cameron, 'The *Cycle* of Agathias', *JHS* 86 (1966), 6–25; Cameron (n. 1), 69–75; F. Maltomini, *Tradizione antologica dell'epigramma greco* (Rome, 2008), 38–41; F. Valerio, 'Agazia e Callimaco', in D. Gigli and E. Magnelli (edd.), *Studi di poesia greca tardoantica* (Firenze, 2013), 87–107; F. Valerio, *Agazia Scolastico,* Epigrammi (Diss., University of Venice, 2014); S.D. Smith, *Greek Epigram and Byzantine Culture: Gender, Desire, and Denial in the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2019).

suggesting a possible numerological interpretation. In these dynamics, the inclusion of many epigrams purporting to be actual inscriptions on gravestones enhances the literary achievements of Gregory of Nazianzus and reveals his major impact on subsequent poetry.

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