Jerome composed his letter to Oceanus (Epist. 69) at some time after 395 and before 401. Here he addresses the question whether someone who had married before baptism and again after it should become a bishop. Jerome’s answer is in the affirmative; several years earlier however the same question had received a negative response from both Siricius and Ambrose. In the second half of his letter Jerome then moves on to consider the qualities which St. Paul requires of a bishop in 1 Timothy 3.1–7. When he comes to the apostle’s penultimate prescription (‘non neophytum, ne in superbiam elatus in iudicium incidat diaboli’; 1 Tim. 3.6), Jerome expresses himself in the following terms:

mirari satis non quo, quae hominum tanta sit caecitas de uxoribus ante baptismum disputare et rem in baptismate mortuam, immo cum Christo vivificatam, in calumniam trahere, cum tam apertum evidensque praeceptum nemo custodiat. heri catechumenus, hodie pontifex; heri in amphitheatro, hodie in ecclesia; vespere in circu, mane in altari; dudum fautor strionum, nunc virginum consecrator (Epist. 69.9.4).

In his important study of the relations between Jerome and Ambrose, Paredi identified the series of antitheses in the second of these sentences as an allusion to Ambrose’s election as bishop of Milan. Recently Nauroy has questioned whether the reference is in fact to Ambrose. However the identification has also been reaffirmed by Testard. It is not the aim of the present note to consider the possible relevance of this passage to Jerome’s relationship with Ambrose. Jerome’s words also merit examination from a different angle: hitherto no commentator has enquired whether Jerome might have had a literary source for the very striking formulation which he employs here. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest one.

This particular antithesis of ‘heri’ and ‘hodie’ is rare. Thesaurus Linguae Latinae supplies only one example that is in any degree similar (6,3,2657, lines 80–81). The passage in question is Ulpian, Dig. 47.10.7.2: ‘nec enim
ferre praetor debet heri servum, Hodie liberum conquerentem, quod domi-
nus ei convicium dixerit ...\textsuperscript{1}. In view of this rarity it is accordingly noteworthy that Jerome’s mentor Gregory Nazianzen should have employed the antithesis in exactly the same way; moreover the general context is identi-
cal to Jerome’s. Like the letter to Oceanus Gregory’s twenty-first \textit{Oration}
is concerned with bishops and their qualifications for office. In particular Gregory denounces those bishops who are unworthy of their calling. Here he exclaims: \textit{x\theta\epsilon\varsigma \iota \epsilon \rho \omicron \sigma \upsilon \omicron \lambda \iota \omicron, \kappa \alpha \iota \sigma \mu \mu \epsilon \rho \omicron \nu \iota \epsilon \rho \epsilon \omicron \varsigma \chi \theta \epsilon\varsigma \tau \omicron \nu \alpha \gamma \iota \nu \alpha \nu \varepsilon \omicron \omega, \kappa\alpha \iota \mu \acute{o} \sigma \tau \acute{a} \gamma \omega \gamma \omicron \omicron \sigma \tau \mu \mu \epsilon \rho \omicron \nu} (\textit{Orat. 21.9}).

In later life Jerome refers frequently to Gregory Nazianzen as his ‘praee-
ceptor’ during the years when both of them were in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{6} Gregory’s twenty-first \textit{Oration} belongs to this period. Sinko proposed 2nd May 379 as the date of its delivery.\textsuperscript{7} More recently however Mossay has argued that the oration could have been composed in either 379, 380 or 381.\textsuperscript{8} At all events it is likely that Jerome was present in the audience when the oration was first delivered. In view of his remarkable propensity to pick up and reuse other people's arresting formulations it would be no surprise if Jerome had appropriated Gregory’s brilliant antitheses about upstart bishops in his own letter to Oceanus.\textsuperscript{9}

There would seem to be reason for thinking that Jerome has in fact devoted special attention to this particular oration. In his notice on Gregory in \textit{De viris illustribus} it is one of the half dozen which Jerome selects for specific mention from Gregory’s very large \textit{oeuvre} (ch. 117).\textsuperscript{10} The oration is a eulogy of Athanasius: Jerome took a keen interest in this panegyrist of virginity and drew extensively on his works.\textsuperscript{11} Finally the point was made above that this oration also deals more generally with a bishop’s qualifications for his calling: Athanasius is depicted as a paradigm of what a bishop should be.\textsuperscript{12} In particular the circumstances of Athanasius’ own election lead to a long reflection on this topic (chs. 8–9); it is here that the antitheses which Jerome appears to borrow occur. Gregory then refers to the Pauline prescriptions for the episcopate in 1 \textit{Timothy} 3.1–7 (ch. 10). Athanasius is said to have been a living embodiment of them: his career as a bishop is then described at length. In view of such content it is quite possible that Jerome should have consulted the twenty-first \textit{Oration} of his former mentor immediately before composing his own letter to Oceanus on the same topic.

Jerome improves on Gregory’s formulation.\textsuperscript{13} He doubles the number of antitheses to four. It is true that Gregory had employed an \textit{adnominatio}: \textit{x\theta\epsilon\varsigma \iota \epsilon \rho \omicron \sigma \upsilon \omicron \lambda \iota \omicron, \kappa \alpha \iota \sigma \mu \mu \epsilon \rho \omicron \nu \iota \epsilon \rho \epsilon \omicron \varsigma}. Jerome does not attempt to reproduce this striking feature. He merely retains the second half of Gregory’s antithesis: ‘hodie pontifex’.\textsuperscript{14} Jerome then prefixes a very specific opposite of his own: ‘herei catechumenus’. The term of course fits Ambrose perfectly. The remainder of Jerome’s antithetical pairs are similarly concrete.
and vivid: ‘heri in amphitheatro, hodie in ecclesia; vespere in circo, mane in altari; dudum fautor strionum, nunc virginum consecrator’. Gregory by contrast tends to be rather vague and generalized. Nonetheless it is perhaps possible that Jerome’s final antithesis comes from another passage of Gregory. 

Gregory was given to self-repetition. In particular he was accustomed to repeat in his poems striking formulations which had already occurred in the Orations. In his poem On the Bishops (Carm. 2.1.12) Gregory again deplors the unsuitability of many bishops for their charge in terms reminiscent of Oration twenty-one. In this connection he employs the following antithesis: χθές ἐν χορευταῖς ἑστρέψασθαι θηλυκρίας . . . νῦν σωφρονιστής παρθένων καὶ συζύγων (lines 425-428). Gregory’s statement bears a certain resemblance to the last of Jerome’s antitheses: ‘dudum fautor strionum, nunc virginum consecrator’. The poem On the Bishops was composed soon after Gregory’s own resignation as bishop of Constantinople in 381. Meier suggests however that it may have been published posthumously: Gregory died around 390. Accordingly the poem had plenty of time to reach Jerome before he wrote his letter to Oceanus; again Gregory’s striking formulation may well have stuck in Jerome’s extraordinarily receptive mind. At the same time it is quite conceivable that Jerome made a special point of consulting this work of his former ‘praeeceptor’ as well as Oration twenty-one before undertaking a disquisition on the subject of bishops himself. In this connection it may be noted that appropriation of arresting material from two different works in the same passage would be entirely in character.

Jerome’s final antithesis is in fact much closer to the passage of Gregory’s poem than at first appears. In the first half Jerome speaks of ‘strokes’, while Gregory refers to χορευταί θηλυκρίας. In late antiquity however ‘(hi)stro’ generally designated the ‘pantomimus’; the performance of the ‘pantomimus’ in turn was regularly described by the Fathers as a ‘dance’. This dance was notoriously effeminate. There is accordingly a close parallel between Gregory’s ‘effeminate dancers’ and Jerome’s ‘strokes’. If the first half of Jerome’s antithesis is very close to Gregory’s, the second halves are virtually identical. Both are introduced by the adverb ‘now’ (nuv / ‘nunc’); this word is then followed by an agent noun (σωφρονιστὴς / ‘consecrator’), to which the same dependent genitive is attached (παρθένων / ‘virginum’). Again however Jerome achieves a formulation that in stylistic terms is an improvement: whereas Gregory had tended to diffuseness, Jerome’s phrasing is marked by an impressive concision. In particular he introduces a striking chiasmus (‘fautor strionum . . . virginum consecrator’) which follows Behaghel’s law and is also characterized by twofold homoeoteleuton (‘-tor -num . . . -num -tor’); at the same time an especially choice clausula is created. Jerome’s formulation accordingly provides a
fitting climax to a very impressive series of antitheses. The combination of formal elegance and derivativeness of content which they exemplify is entirely typical of Jerome.27

NOTES

9. On Jerome’s partiality for lifting clever phrases from elsewhere cf. the present writer, ‘*Some Features of Jerome’s Compositional Technique in the Libellus de virginitate servanda (Epist. 22)’*, *Philologus* 136 (1992) 234–255. Besides a magpie mind Jerome also possessed a phenomenal memory; cf. P. Antin, ‘*Touches classiques et chrétiennes juxtaposées chez saint Jérôme’*, *RPf* 34 (1960) 58–65, at 63: ‘*le cratère qu’est la mémoire de Jérôme’*. He was accordingly able to retain such formulations for years.
11. For Jerome’s debt to Athanasius in the *Libellus de virginitate servanda (Epist. 22)*, which was written after Jerome had moved on from Constantinople to Rome, cf. the present writer, ‘*Athanasius’ Letter to Virgins and Jerome’s Libellus de virginitate servanda’*, forthcoming in *RFIC*.
12. His life is a δομος ἐπισκοπῆς (ch. 37).
13. Such stylistic enhancement of material that Jerome has appropriated from elsewhere is characteristic; cf. the present writer (above, n. 9) 235–236.
14. Mossay (above, n. 8) 127 (ad loc.) mistranslates ἵπεριτος as ‘prêtres’. It is however clear that Gregory is here referring to bishops: half a dozen lines earlier he has mentioned a βυζόνος (for the reference to bishops cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961–8, 655 [s. v.]), while the immediately preceding chapter dealt with Athanasius’ elevation to the episcopate. ἵπεριτος and ἲπερωνῖον are regularly applied to bishops; cf. Lampe, *op. cit.*, 669–670 and 672 (s. v.). On ‘pontifex’ cf. C.

15. He continues with the following pair of opposites: παλαιοί τῆς καθής, καὶ σχέδιοι τῆς εὐσέβειας.

16. One last observation may be made concerning the present passage of *Oration* twenty-one. Here Gregory also states: ὑπὸ τε μαθητῶν καὶ διδάσκαλων τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀναδείκτηκεν. Some fifteen lines later in the letter to Oceanus Jerome himself makes the following comment: 'in puncto horae neodium discipuli iam magistri sunt' (9.6). Testard (above, n. 5) 249 suggests that with these words Jerome is alluding to the preface of Ambrose's *De officiis*: 'ego enim raptus de tribunalibus atque administrationis infulis ad sacerdotium, docere vos coepi quod ipse non didici. itaque factum est ut prius docere inciperem quam discere' (1.1.4 [pp. 96–97 ed. Testard]). Testard’s article in fact professes to uncover a number of references to this ‘confession’ throughout Jerome’s œuvre. The antithesis of ‘discere’ and ‘docere’ was however exceedingly common; cf. the present writer, ‘Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory Nazianzen (Jerome, *Epist.* 52.7–8)’ *Vichiana* 22 (1993) 166–172 at 169–170. It is therefore necessary to be extremely wary about positing an echo of Ambrose in Jerome’s statement in the letter to Oceanus. Nor can it be taken for granted that Jerome is here borrowing from Gregory.


18. There is no comment on Gregory’s antithesis in B. Meier, *Gregor von Nazianz: Über die Bischöfe (Carmen 2,1,12): Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Paderborn 1989. On the corresponding passage in *Oration* twenty-one Mossay (above, n. 8) 126–127 compared a number of texts from Gregory; only the one in *On the Bishops* has any relevance to Jerome’s series of antitheses in the letter to Oceanus.


24. The first half of his antithesis is subjected to some elaboration (lines 426–427).

25. On this feature cf. (e.g.) M. von Albrecht, *Masters of Roman Prose from Catu to Apuleius: Interpretative Studies*, Engl. transl. by the present writer, Leeds 1989, index s.v.


27. Cf. the present writer (above, n. 9) passim.
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