

“Alex Abecina’s study of baptismal transformation in Gregory of Nyssa is thorough, meticulous, and convincing. Through a detailed analysis of Nyssen’s homilies on the *Song of Songs*, Abecina shows that Gregory’s contemplation of Scripture aims at the reader being baptized with the Spirit into union with the Father and the Son. Abecina’s book is a major achievement—the benchmark for any future study of pneumatology in Gregory of Nyssa.”

—Hans Boersma, Saint Benedict Servants of Christ Professor in Ascetical Theology,  
Nashotah House Theological Seminary

“Abecina has produced a very helpful close reading of Gregory’s pneumatology in his homilies on the *Song of Songs*, showing how deeply Gregory’s vision of the Spirit draws together his understanding of the Christian’s transformation in the body of Christ and his Trinitarian theology. This book models for us how we must attend to the theological dynamics of Gregory’s texts.”

—Lewis Ayres, Professor of Catholic and Historical Theology, Durham University and  
Professorial Fellow, Australian Catholic University

This study provides a comprehensive literary and theological analysis of Gregory of Nyssa's theology of union with God, culminating in a fresh reading of his final written work, *In Canticum Canticorum* (c. 391), a collection of fifteen allegorical homilies on the *Song of Songs*. Part I gives the essential background for the study of *In Canticum Canticorum* by analysing several of Gregory's earlier works (c. 370–385), tracing the main contours of his account of the human transformation and union with God. Author Alexander L. Abecina explores topics such as Gregory's theology of virginity and spiritual marriage, his theology of baptism, his Trinitarian theology, and his Spirit-based Christology. In Part II Abecina builds on his key findings in Part I to structure a detailed analysis of *In Canticum Canticorum*.

Engaging with the latest contemporary scholarship on Gregory of Nyssa, the author shows how Gregory's allegorical interpretation of the *Song of Songs* represents a corresponding account of human transformation and union with God from the perspective of subjective experience of this reality. Rather than marking a new development in Gregory's mature thought, Abecina demonstrates that the subjective experience gained from Gregory's reading of the *Song of Songs* recapitulates the key elements of his objective account and therefore renders coherent his earlier soteriological doctrine.

Alexander L. Abecina holds a PhD in Theology and Religious Studies from the University of Cambridge where he completed a doctoral dissertation on Gregory of Nyssa. His publications include *Time and Sacramentality in Gregory of Nyssa's Contra Eunomium* and articles in *Modern Theology*, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, and *International Journal of Systematic Theology*.