Rhetoric and the Instigation of Violence in Late Antiquity: Cyril of Alexandria and His "Authorizing Practices"

by

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Abstract

Wendy Mayer's "Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuro-science, and the Jews" describes the effect of rhetoric on cognitive function, and the ways in which metaphor and conceptual framing operate to form intuitive moral frameworks. Her work creates a line of causation between rhetoric and violence, yet lacks direct, dated evidence between the homilies containing this rhetoric, and the acts of violence against Jews in Antioch. This thesis intends to demonstrate these connections through the festal letters of Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria in the early fifth-century, tying dated homiletic letters to acts of anti-Jewish and anti-Pagan violence for which there are dates from contemporary sources.

The violent rhetoric espoused by Cyril utilizes metaphors of non-Christians as criminals, corrupting and infecting the body with their impiety. These 'crimes' demand retributive justice, and therefore a conceptual frame of the other as requiring retribution forms a moral intuitive framework, whereby the sub-conscious framing becomes physical action. These frames can also be mapped on to the socio-political discourses described by Bruce Lincoln, which use classification as a means of generating sentiments of affinity and estrangement. This process of developing moral intuitive frameworks and classification strategies to beget violence can be seen as "authorizing practices," where an authoritative individual sanctions violent acts through both psychological and social pressures via rhetorical discourse. Within this framework, a connection can be demonstrated between Cyril's rhetoric and the violent acts of the early fifth century in Alexandria.

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Dedication

To Emma, without whose constant support and companionship I would have never had the courage to set forth on this path, and whose dedication supported our family through this journey.

For my son Gryffin, whose endless source of inquisition leads me ever on a pursuit for knowledge, always seeking to start with the “why.”

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1. Introduction

In August, 2009, an article appeared on the Catholic website Catholic-Bridge.com entitled "Did Saint Cyril Kill Hypatia? Professor Edward Watts of the University of Indiana Rewrites History."[1] The titular statement illuminates the opinion of the author "Hugh," a pseudonym of David MacDonald,[2] who seeks to defend the reputation of Cyril, the archbishop of Alexandria from 412 – 444 CE.[3] The article was prompted by criticism that MacDonald received over whether Cyril deserved his sainthood due to his part in instigating the violence that resulted in the death of the infamous fifth-century scholar Hypatia. The critic wrote: "A group of [Cyril's] followers - stirred up by him - were responsible for the gruesome murder of the Alexandrian scholar Hypatia. He does not deserve sainthood. On that point, history has made its judgment - I doubt there is anything that could be said in his defense."[4] MacDonald endeavored to rebut these claims through use of primary source documents, attempting more than just a redemption of Cyril but also a defense of Catholic authority. MacDonald writes of the received email:

> The implications of this email are that the Catholic Church does not have integrity in its choice of saints and that its claim of infallibility on these matters is invalid. The accusation here is that Cyril, who is a canonized as a Catholic saint, assembled a mob of monks and had Hypatia dragged into a church where the monks tore her flesh with

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[1] David MacDonald, "Did Saint Cyril Kill Hypatia? Professor Edward Watts of University of Indiana Rewrites History," *catholic-bridge.com*, last modified, August 7, 2009, http://www.catholicbridge.com/catholic/cyril_hypatia.php.

[2] Nowhere on *catholic-bridge.com* does "Hugh" mention he is utilizing a pseudonym, nor does he offer up his name in the copyright or contact details. The site, which operates to promote understanding between Catholics and Protestants, is named after a music group the author is part of. "Hugh" is named in a performance and interview on the Canadian evangelical talkshow *100 Huntley Street*. See: "David of Catholic Bridge on 100 Huntley Street, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIhL-IB5PJI. He currently runs a company providing accessibility software solutions for members of the disabled community. See: www.davidmcd.com.

[3] Cyril's place in the Catholic canon was cemented in 1883 when he was made a doctor of the church by Pope Leo XIII. J. Chapman, "St. Cyril of Alexandria," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), last modified, 2017, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04592b.htm.

[4] MacDonald, "Did Saint Cyril Kill Hypatia?"

> potsherds 'til she died. The story he is advancing is that Hypatia was a young and beautiful woman, a magnet of the people and that Cyril had her murdered out of jealousy. This theory was advanced by Mangasar Mugurditch Mangasarian (1859-1943) a man who admired pagan religions, and pretty much dismissed Christianity. He was also hung up on the beautiful Hypatia. The story was picked up by Evangelicals to demonstrate the Church's lack of integrity when canonizing Saints.[5]

MacDonald goes on to defend the Catholic Church against these accusations by noting that it was a lector named Peter who spearheaded the attack, as documented in the primary sources.[6] These same sources do not place Cyril at the scene of the crime during the attack, at least in the way in which MacDonald chooses to interpret the writing of Socrates Scholasticus.

MacDonald decided to correspond with Dr. Edward Watts for clarification of certain aspects of the late antique accounts due to Watts' then recent publication of a monograph on late antique Alexandria. In his letter to Watts, MacDonald plays favorites with the source material, drawing on Socrates Scholasticus, arguably the most contemporary of the writers on the incident.[7] He asserts that Socrates is the most accurate in not implicating Cyril directly in the murder of Hypatia, while negating the writing of John of Nikiû, a Coptic writer of the seventh century who borrowed heavily from earlier accounts. Watts' response points to the bias of both writers, noting that John's account is actually more pro-Cyril due to the socio-political and religious realities of seventh-century Egypt, and that his insinuation of Cyril's involvement was not criticism but rather praise. Alternately, Socrates was attempting to promote a certain ideal of what Christian leadership should be and due to Cyril's explicit political motivations, he was the

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[5] Ibid.
[6] Socrates, *HE* 7.15. This is attested to in many of the derivatives, even as late as John of Nikiû, *Chronicles* 84.100, who expands upon Peter's role of riling the mob on as holy vigilantes. John's account also has the people gather around and celebrate Cyril, although his description is ambiguous as to whether Cyril is present at the murder or not.
[7] Theresa Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997): 13-41.

anti-hero in Socrates' larger narrative on the churches of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria.[8] Watts' most important statement comes at the end of his first correspondence:

> What is different about these two accounts is not whether Cyril was somehow responsible (both texts agree that he was, at least indirectly) but how this act of violence is viewed. Socrates generally did not like religious violence and saw Cyril's involvement in it as bad. John of Nikiû, though, saw this sort of thing as good if directed by Christians against non-Christians. For him, Cyril's invovlement (*sic.*) was a testimony to his virtue as a Christian. We must remember that, in the later Roman world, successful attacks on paganism were seen as signs of divine favor by many Christians. *We need to be careful that we interpret these actions according to the standards held in antiquity and not in contemporary terms.*[9]

Ultimately, the outcome of this online correspondence is predictable. MacDonald argues a lack of evidence for a direct implication of Cyril in the violence, while Watts counters with the historical context, noting that both implicate Cyril, at least indirectly. Eventually, the correspondence with Watts is abandoned and a new and sympathetic voice is found in the Catholic apologist Mark Bonocore, who similarly argues that Cyril's actions should be taken contextually, although they should be viewed as "quite charitable and loving [...] *most of all toward the Church* that he was protecting from its enemies."[10]

What is most compelling is the fact that over fifteen centuries after the events in question, there are still individuals interested in defending the actions of powerful actors who instigated acts of violence. For Cyril's defenders, the pristine image of an orthodox hero must be preserved, and any plausible deniability is exploited to that end. As a result, the role of authoritative voices in either instigating or mitigating violent activities among those who they inspire is often written off as rhetorical flourish, with no ramification on real world action. This thesis will view the

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[8] For a more in depth discussion of Socrates' motivations see: Edward Watts, "Interpreting Catastrophe: Disasters in the Works of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Socrates Scholasticus, Philostorgius, and Timothy Aelurus," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2, no. 1 (2009): 79-98.
[9] MacDonald, "Did Saint Cyril Kill Hypatia?" Emphasis mine.
[10] Ibid.

events of early fifth-century Alexandria demonstrating exactly how potent these metaphors can be in prompting acts of violence.

1.1. Thesis Inquiry

This thesis will focus on the framework Wendy Mayer set out in her paper "Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuroscience, and the Jews," which depicts violent rhetoric as a cause of violence in the ancient world.[11] Mayer's paper draws heavily on the impact of metaphor on cognition and the development of moral intuitive judgments, whereby subconscious classifications lead to categorizing individuals as deserving of violence. Mayer's paper concludes that John Chrysostom's letters do in fact promote acts of violence, despite the fact that there is little direct evidence of such violence in Antioch that can be directly linked to Chrysostom's sermons.

I will seek to demonstrate that while her framework has little direct evidence of violence in the Antiochian context she studies, there is direct evidence of violent rhetoric espoused by the archbishop Cyril of Alexandria which became acts of physical violence in the early fifth century. To make this connection, Mayer's framework will first be explored to demonstrate how the relationship between rhetoric and violence is constituted. For dated evidence of violent rhetoric in Alexandria, Cyril's first three festal letters will be examined within the context of the primary metaphors laid out by Mayer, to determine whether there are similar modes of conceptual framing to what came from Antioch. These metaphors generate conceptual frameworks of moral intuitive judgements which allow for the sub-conscious formation of classifications. This pairs

[11] Wendy Mayer, "Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuroscience, and the Jews," in *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches and Perspectives*, eds. Chris de Wet and Wendy Mayer (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 58-136.

well with Bruce Lincoln's theory on the use of classification as a discursive strategy for constructing, maintaining, or deconstructing societies, and it proves useful as a lens to view the violent events that occurred during the first few years of Cyril's reign, describing them as "authorizing practices."[12] If a connection between Cyril's rhetoric and a series of authorizing practices can be drawn, this will provide support for Mayer's thesis that violent rhetoric can lead to physical violence, and will help to provide a framework for analyzing violent events occurring throughout the increasingly Christianized world of Late Antiquity.

1.2. Primary Written Sources for Fifth-Century Alexandria

The source material for Cyril's life and the events of fifth-century Alexandria come from several sources, some roughly contemporary, and others from several centuries later. For many contemporaries of Cyril, including fellow Church elites, he was cast as over-reaching, grasping, and too-worldly in his quest for politico-religious domination in Alexandria.[13] His reputation underwent a renovation in the early Medieval period, with the likes of John of Nikiû writing favourably of his actions. His theological staunchness was also praised for its contributions to Chalcedonian orthodoxy.[14] With the enlightenment and Protestant reformation Cyril once again gained notoriety. The rise of interest in neo-Platonic philosophy led him to be cast as a villain for his role in the death of Hypatia, while the Reformers saw his part in the construction of Catholic

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[12] Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7-8.
[13] Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3, This is the view espoused by Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen and Theodoret.
[14] Pius XII, *Orientalis Ecclesiae* [On St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria], Vatican website, April 9, 1944, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius12/p12orien.htm, sec. 1. Pius XII highlights specific encyclicals dating to the rule of Pope Agatho (d. 618), and the first Lateran council (1123) which uphold Cyril as one of the great progenitors of orthodox Marian theology and a prime mover in the foundation of orthodox Catholic thinking.

orthodoxy and a part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as enough to discredit him.[15]

Important source material for the events in fifth-century Alexandria can also be found in Cyril's own writing. His letters have exposed some of his more sordid behavior throughout his campaign against Nestorius, outlining his willingness to elicit favor through almost any means necessary, particularly bribery.[16] It is Cyril's festal letters that will provide the basis for our examination of violent metaphor, particularly the first three letters, corresponding to the years 414 to 416 CE.[17] These addresses were presented to Cyril's Alexandria congregations, and they were distributed throughout North Africa and the Mediterranean as a means to set the date of the Easter season.[18] While this far reach may have incited violence in other regions, this paper will only examine their impact within the context of Alexandria.

Several ecclesiastical historians of the period are also notable for their various presentations of the Christian elites, such as Cyril, as well as Imperial portraits which have provided a window into the way in which the actions and policies of various elite voices were viewed by varying Christian groups in this period. Socrates Scholasticus, otherwise known as

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[15] Edward Watts, *Hypatia: The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher* (New York: Oxford University Press 2017), 135-147. Watts notes several important productions of early modern sentiments toward Hypatia that scandalize Cyril. Notably, John Toland's essays *Tetradymus*, which operates as an anti-Catholic presentation in turn inspired others, such as the French philosopher Voltaire to praise her for the her martyrdom for the cause of reason, as well as praise by Edward Gibbon along similar lines.

[16] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 15-17. Peter Brown's description of events highlights the clandestine nature of Cyril's plot as a means to further the thesis that Cyril is crafting a form of *auctoritas* for himself. This is in contrast to the very real presentation of *potentes* that Cyril brought with him in the form of a standing militia (102-3).

[17] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1-4. The third festal letter is missing, but does not correspond to a missing year, it is instead and error in the manuscript tradition (Pierre Évieux, *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales I–VI*, SC 372, eds. L. Arragon, et. al. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 113).

[18] John O'Keefe, "Introduction," in *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 11-12*, trans. by Philip R. Amadon, S.J. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 5-7.

Socrates of Constantinople, is one of the few historians of the period who mentions Cyril and the events surrounding the death of Hypatia directly. His writings were designed to continue the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius, and cover the period of the beginning of the fourth to the middle of the fifth century.[19] Scholars have debated whether or not Socrates was a Novatian, as he presents them in a favorable light, however, he also defends his presentation of Arianism and other sects, which by this time were deemed anathema.[20] The largest source for Socrates was the work of Rufinus of Aquileia (Tyrannius Rufinus) whose translation of the *Historia Eccelsiastica* of Eusebius, as well as many of Origen's works, into Latin made him an important and notable figure for later Patristic writers. Rufinus' portrait of several of the monks of Nitria also served to elevate the stature of the monastic communities south of Alexandria, promoting pilgrimage to these sites and aided in recruiting adherents to the monastic life.[21] Salminius Hermias Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, of which the second volume was written between 440-443 CE while Sozomen worked in the court of Theodosius II, covers the period from the conversion of Constantine I to the ascension of Valentinian III in 425 CE. This work is unfinished, and the sections relevant for understanding Theophilus' role in Alexandria are covered in the eighth book.[22] Helmut Leppin draws a clear relationship between Sozomen's and Socrates' work. He notes that Sozomen often opted to use Socrates as a guide, rather than directly copy his work - often using Socrates' work as a sourcebook to point out primary source documents. His quotation of Rufinus is equally extensive, and as such his work is viewed as a unique history,

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[19] Socrates, *HE* 1.1.
[20] A. C. Zenos, "Life of Socrates," in *A Selected Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, vol. 2, eds. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887-1900), x-xi.
[21] Hartmut Leppin, "The Church Historians (I): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus," in Gabriele Marasco, *Greek & Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 227.
[22] Sozomen, *HE* 8.11-19.

rather than a copy of his contemporaries.[23] Sozomen also drew upon Athanasius, Rufinus, and Palladius' *Lausaic History* to complete a broader survey of the monastic world.[24]

Theodoret, the bishop of Cyrrhus, provides another perspective on the history of the church in this period. He was in direct defiance of Cyril, writing several apologies on behalf of Nestorius and producing a document to counter the twelve anathemas Cyril had produced to depose Nestorius.[25] Theodoret's continued antagonism against Cyril caused his expulsion from the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 CE. Theodoret's church history provides a more detailed view of the Arian controversy, citing many lost or otherwise unknown sources, as well as original material of Antiochian origin.[26] His work *Historia Religiosa* is a portrait of ascetic monks, notable for its promotion of ascetic authority, and providing important details on monastic life, much like the work of Rufinus.

1.2.1. Later Byzantine, Medieval and Islamic Accounts

Two more works present another, later history of the events in Alexandria, offering unique lenses on the events of Cyril's rule. John Malalas (d. 578) was a chronicler from Antioch who moved to Constantinople in the mid-sixth century and wrote a Chronicle in eighteen books, beginning with the mythical history of Egypt and ending in 563. Malalas' account provides three items about Cyril: the erection of the Great Church by emperor Theodosius in the early 400s, the murder of Hypatia, and the deposing of Nestorius by Cyril.[27] John of Nikiû, writing a century

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[23] Ibid., 223-5, 228.
[24] Ibid., 228.
[25] Istvan Kupan, *Theodoret of Cyrus* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10-11.
[26] Leppin, 228-9.
[27] John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.11-12, 14.25, trans. Elizabeth Jefferys, Michael Jefferys and Roger Scott (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 196, 200. For a discussion on the validity of Malalas' writings see: Warren Treadgold, *A History of Byzantine State and Society* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 267; Warren Treadgold,

later, produced an account of events under Cyril's reign in his *Chronicle*, depicting the aggression between the Jewish citizenry of Alexandria and the Christian populace, culminating in rioting and violence.[28] His edificatory language for Cyril and his practices begins with an announcement of the patriarch's birth. He writes, "It was there the holy Cyril was born, the great star which lighted up all places by his doctrine, being clothed with the Holy Spirit."[29] John's presentation of the murder of Hypatia echoes much of the writings of Socrates, however, it casts a seventh century lens over the events. Cyril's actions are praised by John, highlighting the retributive justice and staunch monophysite heroic role that John crafts for the Patriarch.[30] While John's account provides a window into seventh-century attitudes to the Christianization of the pagan empire after the Islamic conquest, it serves as a derivative and largely secondary source for events in fifth-century Alexandria, framing attitudes and polemics that may be revisionist history.[31]

Cassiodorus contains what became the source-text for Medieval understandings of Patristic history.[32] The translation of the fifth-century *Historiae Ecclesiastica* into Latin in the early sixth century was undertaken by Epiphanius Scholasticus under the direction of Cassiodorus. The *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Tripartitae Epitome* draws directly from the works of Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Theodoret, with certain omissions that de-emphasize the

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"The Byzantine World Histories of John Malalas and Eustathius of Epiphania," *The International History Review* 29, no. 4 (2007): 709-45.

[28] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84. John based early portions of his account largely on the work of John Malalas, reinterpreted through a seventh century lens.

[29] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 79.12.

[30] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84.

[31] Watts, *Hypatia*, 131-3. John serves more as an indicator of attitudes and theological narratives present within the beleaguered North African church under Fatimid rule than historical elucidation.

[32] Cassiodorus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*, Ed. W. Jacob and R. Hanslik, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 71 (Vienna: Brepols, 1952).

imposition of imperial power into church politics, and like John of Nikiû's text, it tells us more of the state of sixth-century political/ecclesiastical ideology than the events and their interpretations in the fifth century.[33]

The accounts above form a body of primary source material for understanding the tumultuous political and social landscape of Alexandria at the turn of the fifth century. There were also communications between bishops, which sometimes provide important source material as well, however, the intention is to focus specifically on Cyril's impact on the violent events in Alexandria under his leadership, and this will inform the scope of source material.

1.3. Chapter Summaries

In order to provide a thorough analysis of the rhetoric of Cyril and its role in inciting violence, I will first lay out a chapter defining the issues around attributing causation to violent rhetoric, what constitutes violence, and the concept and context of authority in Late Antiquity. These definitions allow for the theories of Mayer and Lincoln to be used in a particular way that analyses conceptualization of violent acts and authoritarian structures.

The next chapter with delve into the theoretical framework Wendy Mayer has laid out in her thesis on John Chrysostom's violent rhetoric and its instigation of violence. This will involve an overview of her survey of the cognitive science of metaphor and its influence on the conceptual frameworks which lead to a delimiting of possibilities in the decision making

[33] Susan Wessel, "Socrates' Narrative of Cyril of Alexandria's Episcopal Election," *Journal of Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (2011): 102. Wessel posits that the omission of the more violent, and or overtly political aspects of the writings from fifth-century historians was due to the scribes' displeasure with the subversion of proper ecclesiastical process. This involved direct subversion of the original intent and context of the source texts.

process.[34] These limitations operate upon the sub-conscious, forming what are called intuitive moral judgements, from which an individual responds to their environment through action.[35] It is this process that provides the causal link between metaphor and action. Using this framework, an analysis of Cyril's first three festal letters, from the years 414-416 CE, will determine the extent of the archbishop's anti-Jewish and anti-Pagan rhetoric, and how the particular metaphors he employs relate to the moral intuitive frameworks presented by Mayer.

To draw connections between moral frameworks and discourses within late antiquity, we will devote a chapter to the theoretical work of Bruce Lincoln, where he demonstrates how classification operates as a discursive tool employed by individuals to authorize their position, allowing for the construction, maintenance, or destruction of power structures.[36] This entire process, from rhetoric to classification, will be understood as an authorizing practice where authoritative individuals create the conceptualization of categories, the delegitimization of certain groups, and the instigation of violent action through moral intuitive judgments. Drawing on this framework, we will look at the context within which Cyril developed his metaphorical frames, and see the way in which his uncle Theophilus' example led to Cyril's particular way of constructing and exerting authority.

The final chapter will examine in detail the life of Cyril, demonstrating how he drew upon his influences and environment. This will lead to a synopsis and analysis of the major violent events of his early reign as archbishop. The violent expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria, the attack on the praefect Orestes by the monk of Nitria, and the murder of the philosopher Hypatia will provide examples of violent events for which concrete dates can be

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[34] Mayer, 84-7.
[35] Ibid., 93-102.
[36] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 7-11.

determined, and as such can be directly linked to the dated festal letters of Cyril. These events will be analysed for the role Cyril played, both in direct accusations of his involvement by ecclesiastical historians, and by demonstrating a causal link through Cyril's enactment of authorizing practices leading to violence.

Finally, some conclusions will be drawn as to the impact of this analysis. How this research affects our understanding of Cyril's role in violence, and the ramifications of using Wendy Mayer's framework of rhetoric begetting violence as a tool for a wider re-interpretation of violence in Late Antiquity.

2. Violence and Society in Late Antiquity

Wendy Mayer's paper, "Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuroscience, and the Jews," is a study of the connection between violent rhetoric propagated by authoritative voices and the acts of violence perpetrated by those they influence. Her argument challenges prior notions that violent rhetoric was largely an ornamental flourish in the late antique sermon that was not interpreted by the audience as an invocation to violent acts. Her work focuses heavily on the sermons of John Chrysostom, notable for his strong anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic stance, which regularly advocated violent reprisals against Jews within the Antiochian community. Due to a lack of direct correlation between Chrysostom's sermons and violent outbreaks in Antioch, Mayer instead focusses on the interaction between rhetoric and human cognition, particularly in the manner in which it generates conceptual frames, which in turn delimit the scope of available thought that drives action.[37] If this process is successful, there a strong tendency of a brain affected by the consistent trauma of violent rhetoric to frame violence against the intended target as natural, and the manifestation of physical violence becomes an expected outcome.[38]

When studying ancient violence there are two large issues that arise, the first being that ancient cultures have a lot of inherent violence built both into the fabric of their social structure, and within the discipline of the familial unit.[39] The second issue being lack of evidence correlating the actions of a group and any particular individual who may have prompted the violence. This problem is compounded by primary source documents where the concept of

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[37] For a critique of the use of cognitive science as an effective tool in the field of religious studies, see Matthew Day, "The Ins and Outs of Religious Cognition," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 16, no. 3 (2004): 241-55. The questions raised here are not questions of "thinking religiously," but rather about the particular neurological pathways between rhetoric and action.
[38] Mayer, 90.
[39] Ibid., 107.

objective history (in our modern sense of the term) was not a goal of the author, and they often contain a particular bias supporting or denigrating historical figures.[40] The first issue is answerable by research into the nature of human cognition, drawing on Wendy Mayer's research to develop a pathway whereby violent action becomes thinkable in the minds of those influenced by violent rhetoric. The second issue will be addressed by highlighting the primary source material from fifth-century Alexandria which links known violent reprisals against both the Jewish and Pagan communities with the festal letters of Cyril. Using Bruce Lincoln's framework for understanding how categorization is used as a tool for constructing and maintaining authority, the violent events depicted in the ancient sources will be viewed through taxonomic strategies at play. This will help to tease out the connection between the classification of the victims of violence and the violent metaphor being employed in Cyril's festal letters, drawing a connection between Cyril and the violent acts.

2.1. Defining Issues of Causation, Violence, and Authority

Before delving into Wendy Mayer's framework on metaphor as an instigating factor in violent acts, it is imperative to first define what sorts of acts can be deemed violence. Understanding who has the means to cause violence demands an examination of authority in Late Antiquity, and how that authority is woven into authorizing practices. Since this thesis delves into the rhetoric of Cyril and his instigation of violence, it is important to understand why proving that Cyril was the cause of violence is imperative.

2.1.1. Cyril's Instigation of Violence

[40] See Watts' response in MacDonald, "Did Saint Cyril Kill Hypatia?"

The contemporary sources do not generally link the words or actions of Cyril to the violent events they describe during his tenure as archbishop. Despite this, a causal relationship can be developed between Cyril and the violence perpetrated by his followers if a connection can be established between his rhetorical speech and the acts of violence. This mechanism of this connection will be explored below in the analysis of Wendy Mayer's thesis on the neurological pathways between rhetoric and violence.[41] Mayer questions whether the rhetoric employed by John Chrysostom operates neurologically on its audience, which could elicit similar responses across history, or whether the impact is culturally specific and rooted in contextual frames or classifications.[42] Her focus is primarily on proving the causal relationship between rhetoric and violence through the neurological pathways, generating moral intuitive judgements via the use of metaphor which built are used conceptual frames.[43]

Despite this, the argument is not that rhetoric acts either in a culturally specific way, or that it operates across history - rather that it does both. Mayer demonstrates that the scholarship on Chrysostom's violent rhetoric of the *Adversus Iudaeos* has steered away from questions of impact and moved towards contextualizing and providing authorial motive.[44] While this context is important, it has spawned the argument that due to differences in cultural responses the violent outcomes of this rhetoric was negligible in Chrysostom's day, and has no correlation to later anti-Semitism found in Medieval European Christianity or in modernity.[45] Robert Wilken defends this premise by pointing to a lack of direct evidence for violence as a result Chrysostom's rhetoric in Antioch:

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[41] See pp. 30-36.
[42] Mayer, 66.
[43] See pp. 33-36.
[44] Mayer, 60.
[45] Ibid., 62, cf. 17.

> One would think that such language would incite passions and lead an angry crowd to storm the homes of one's enemies. There are some indications that this did happen… yet this seems to be the exception rather than the rule, at least in the fourth century… There is no indication that his homilies prompted violent actions on the part of Christians toward the Jews in Antioch… Nor did he envision any.[46]

Mayer notes that the majority of this scholarship points to a supposed relationship between Jews and Christians that was "commensurate."[47] By this logic, the paucity of evidence for anti-Jewish violence in Antioch must mean that the homilies had minimal impact. Yet Mayer notes that this thesis proves less tenable as we move to later periods where the same rhetoric leads to violent action, but writes that the conflict is "readily resolved for the majority of scholars by appeal to the individualising role of culture."[48] Mayer counters this with her research into the relationship between rhetoric and neurological pathways, arguing that the moral foundations that operate at the pre-conscious level are likely pan-historical, and therefore the argument of cultural difference is not irrelevant but less dominant.[49] If anything, Mayer notes, the "cultural filters specific to late-ancient Graeco-Roman society made it more likely, not less, that the particular intuitive moral judgments that the language of these homilies triggers in the listener's brain would have encouraged hostile anti-Jewish behavior."[50] We shall see below that the same holds true for the socio-political factors the provided fertile ground for Cyril's violent rhetoric.[51]

Moving from Chrysostom to Cyril, the argument that no violence occurred, or that the archbishop was somehow not involved is highly untenable. Primary sources place him either at

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[46] Robert Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth* Century (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 123.
[47] Mayer, 64.
[48] Ibid., 65.
[49] Ibid., 66. Mayer notes that scholars such as D prefer the term "deep-historical" to pan-historical. See: Luther Martin, *Deep History, Secular Theory: Historical and Scientific Studies of Religion* (Berlin: De Guyter, 2014), 254-71.
[50] Mayer, 67.
[51] See pp. 45-46.

the events or seek to implicate him in the violence, with different perspectives depending on the biases of the writers.[52] Implicating Cyril as the instigator of this violence is important for two reasons, which operate in tandem to both provide support for Wendy Mayer's thesis, and provide support for its extrapolation. Proving Cyril's causation of violence through rhetoric provides support for Wendy Mayer's thesis of the neurological impact of John Chrysostom's rhetoric in Antioch, generating a framework that can be seen as "pan-cultural," and can therefore work as a theoretical lens to viewing a broader range of violent rhetoric espoused by Christian leaders in late antiquity. The second reason is related, in that this framework might be broadened to understand this type of violent rhetoric in a larger pan-historical context. This ability to inspire violence is not entirely culturally specific and can allow for a reanalysis of the legacy of those who espouse violent rhetoric. In the case of Cyril, we have seen how the continued role of apologists of such as David MacDonald or Marc Bonocore choose to defend an individual they view as a 'hero of the faith' by selectively labelling the problematic aspects of their teaching, such as anti-Semitic or other hate speech, as culturally specific and purely metaphorical.[53] Wendy Mayer demonstrates this relationship has larger implications for challenging the localizing claims of those who would argue for the cultural specificity of rhetoric:

> Must we leave the past in the past, as has been argued? This question is of particular significance in light of the recent rise in hate speech across the world, particularly within the context of morally-framed – if, overtly, religious or political – conflicts. It is of interest that the case in favour of the (culturally) specific original impact of these homilies is centred on precisely this – a local context of Jewish-Christian (or, alternatively, intra-Christian) conflict. We will argue that, when current neuroscientific research is invoked, the conclusion that the homilies tap into modes of thought that are basic to the human brain and thus to at least some degree common across cultures and history is inescapable.[54]

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[52] See pp. 6-9.
[53] See pp. 1-3.
[54] Mayer, 66.

By viewing the particular metaphors at play, which may be culturally specific or play on broader moral foundations, we can see how cognitive pathways form between the rhetoric of authoritative individuals and the outcome of physical violence. These individuals use rhetoric to authorize acts of violence, to produce a set of authorizing practices which both categorize and frame individuals within a framework of affinity and estrangement. Proving Cyril's causation of violence through rhetoric would provide an important test case for this theoretical framework, and help to establish his role in the violent events of early fifth-century Alexandria. Utilizing Mayer's framework, we can rely primarily on Cyril's own words found in the rhetoric of his festal letters, rather than on contemporary accounts that provide us with a presentation of Cyril as an actor playing out the biases of his authors. Once this causal connection is established, it will then allow for a reassessment of the presentation of Cyril by his contemporaries, thus making it an integral project to understanding more about this important figure from late antiquity.

2.1.2. Violence

The link between rhetoric and violence is only relevant if we can determine that violent events actually took place. There can be significant variation in the definitions of what entails violence, particularly when examining different time periods with different social expectations. Late antique Christianity often valued a pneumatocentric view of the person, valuing the soul above physical reality, and praising the experience of suffering as spiritually purifying. Peter Brown writes:

> Only a thin veil separated the world of the seen from the unseen realities that glowed beneath its surface. It was possible to use the body in a far more dramatic manner. The ascetic could assert, through singularly austere self-mortification, the visible, physical freedom of the body from the restraints of normal human living. By so doing, the ascetics were thought to have brought the vibrant energy of the angels through the half-

translucent curtain that separated the unseen hosts of Heaven from the present world.[55] Self-mortification could be enacted through the negation of desires (many of which we now view as necessities) such as food, drink, and sexuality to remind the individual of the ever present physical reality that is to be overcome. This act of violence may have been seen as good, as a means of purging or having power over the weakness of flesh. Despite this, not all acts of violence were used as impositions of power, or for the spiritual benefit of the perpetrator. In the case of fifth-century Alexandria, it is likely that some of the individuals acting violently where acting purely retributively, or were caught up in a form of mob mentality. However, we will see how the instigation of the events that fomented the angry mob, and the need for retribution, can be traced back to the actions of Cyril.[56]

In some cases it can be helpful to view violence as a means of expressing differentials of power, just as Hector Avalos defines violence as "the act of modifying and/or inflicting pain upon the human body in order to express or impose power differentials."[57] In Cyril's rhetoric, we see the employment of the metaphor of criminal, which he casts the Jews as transgressors for not accepting the Christ.[58] Cyril equates belief in the Christ with keeping God's law, and so this framing generates categories of individuals: those who are estranged from the law, and therefore worthy of violence, and those who have an affinity with the law, and are tasked to uphold it. This provides a means for understanding the motivations of the inflicted bodily harm as a way of expressing the categorization of individuals or groups through the imposition of the power over them. Cyril's congregants are tasked with being the force apparatus of his state, operating to

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[55] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 330-1.
[56] See pp. 48-50, 73-78.
[57] Hector Avalos, *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005), 19.
[58] See pp. 36-38.

impose the power of the law upon those who disregard it.

Violence can also be done through the destruction of property, perpetrating a form of psychological violence that can have similar impact to physical harm. Avalos notes this by referring to the destruction of Jewish property by Nazi Germany before the actual physical killings, writing that this is an "instrument to cause harm to the livelihood or sociopsychological welfare of any individual or community."[59] An example from early in Cyril's reign, somewhere between 412-415 CE, occurred when a mob of Christians pillaged Jewish homes as retribution for flogging of the grammaticus Hierax. He had publicly applauded an imperial edict limiting dancing performances favored by the Jews, and their furor over Hierax's response led the praefect Orestes to flog him for exciting sedition. [60] Socrates Scholasticus notes that Hierax was an avid attendee at Cyril sermons, alluding to the archbishop as the possible inspiration for Hierax's public display. John of Nikiû claims this destruction of property escalated into mob violence, leading to the almost total eviction of the Jewish community from Alexandria.[61] This event would have most definitely impacted the sociopsychological welfare of the Alexandrian Jewish community. These particular reports of property destruction are paired with accounts of physical harm, and so while destruction of property is often a precipitating factor in the escalation to physical harm, the primary focus will remain on acts against people and not property.

Brett Ingram demonstrates that rhetoric itself can be a form of violence, acting pre-consciously as, "rhetoric affects and alters the brain and body, and thereby influences the nature

[59] Avalos, 20.
[60] Socrates, *HE* 7.13.
[61] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84.99.

of thought before it is mentally apprehended by the subject in linguistic form."[62] According to Mayer this understanding is not entirely new, as the concept of embodied language has it origins in Gorgias and Aristotle, and would have been widely accepted in the Graeco-Roman world.[63] Ingram demonstrates that violent rhetoric consistently stimulates a particular pattern of thought, causing the truncation of other modes of thinking or being, which in turn limits our responses to violent rhetoric. He writes:

> While in rhetorical studies the immediacy of the event is often devalued in favor of the representation of the event, it is my contention that the potential for trauma that inheres in the force of the event has neurological effects that may diminish a subject's capacity to represent and resignify violent experiences. We need a critical rhetorical theory that engages with affective registers of experience "below" the intellectual apprehension and regulation of the self-aware subject, because this is often the level at which rhetorical violence moves us. If we only address violent representation in terms of what they mean (linguistically), we miss what they do (affectively), and what things mean is always correlated to how they make us feel, and not the other way around.[64]

He argues that the brains of those exposed to violent rhetoric exhibit similar damage patterns to those who have experienced physical or emotional trauma.[65] By drawing a connection between Judith Butler's conception of the self as being constantly rewritten through the use of language, and Damasio's conception of a pre-conscious proto-self, Ingram argues that humans are neuronal subjects, described using the language of Catherine Malabou as a "pre-conscious biological precedent" from which our sense of self develops.[66] He claims that "social events that excite or inhibit… *physically* wound the plastic brain. These wounds, in turn, influence our capacity to emotionally withstand or appropriately respond to other social events."[67] The neuronal subject

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[62] Brett Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience," PhD diss. (University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2013), http://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/690/, 3; Mayer, 88.
[63] Ibid., 88 cf. 107.
[64] Ingram, 136.
[65] Ibid., 158-160.
[66] Ibid., 152.
[67] Ibid., 156.

"can be damaged both by physical and symbolic injury—both may be considered forms of violence, as both are materially manifested in neural matter."[68] For the purposes of understanding the connection between Cyril's rhetoric and its instigation of violence, we will view violence as speech or acts which modify or inflict harm on the human body. The majority of these acts will be perpetrated for the purpose of expressing or imposing the power differentials inherent in the authorizing practices of Cyril of Alexandria.

2.1.3. Authority

Authority, a term derived from the Latin *auctoritas*, denotes the capacity to issue binding commands which are to be adhered to based upon the stature of an institutional office, embodied in Late Antiquity by the Roman senate.[69] Unlike the use of *potentes* (power), which could be held by the people, or *imperium*, its analogue in magisterial office, *auctoritas* is the juridical power to authorize some action. The term authority often has a distinctly political context, speaking to the ways in which institutions and individuals engage in speech acts of control that are legitimated by their position, charisma, coercive or persuasive power, or symbolic objects and locations which have a socially formulated authority of their own.[70]

Peter Brown's research focuses on the use of *auctoritas* and appeals to *paidea* that are important to understanding the complex relationships and fraternity developed among the men of learning in Late Antiquity.[71] This aids our understanding of the ways in which appeals to power

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[68] Ibid., 157.
[69] Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6-10.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Brown, *Power and Persuasion,* 14-18. For a discussion of the Cyril's development of his own *auctoritas* within the ecumenical council, and the fostering of *devotio* with the imperial court, see pp. 39-41.

between the episcopate and the imperial state functioned, as well as the means by which power-brokers could elicit support from those outside of their normal sphere of influence. Averil Cameron asserts that the bishops took over the existing role of the philosopher in the state, 'speaking truth to power' as it were – providing another avenue whereby the episcopate could negotiate its agenda within an imperial artifice that it had little formal function.[72] In antiquity, this led to a highly stratified class system which existed with layers of authority that could be in competition with one another. Within the upper classes, forms of institutional authority based on common instruction and education, such as appeals to *paidea*, would engender ones authority in relation to members of ones class and below.[73] Members of the highest political and social stations utilized the authority of devotion, *devotio*, earned through acts of patronage and prestige to ensure support of their necessary attendants.[74] The poor rarely had any form of institutional authority, and many were slaves and had no rights as citizens, rather falling under the totalizing authority of the *paterfamilias*. The populace was ruled by the *auctoritas* of the judicial state apparatus, imposed through the *potentes* of the governors and military instilled in the *imperium*.

This authority would come to be challenged by Christian leaders in the third- and fourth-centuries, as imperial leaders would need to increasingly rely on the influence of bishops to enact policy. Ambrose of Milan is most notable for his role in turning back the invasion of Gallic troops under Magnus Maximus, and being a thorn in the side of emperor Valentinian II, due to his staunch rejection of Valentinian's Arianism. He also chastised emperor Theodosius I for his

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[72] Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 30.
[73] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 30.
[74] Ibid., 3. A prime example of this sort of instigated or purchased authority is in Brown's description of Cyril's denouncement of Nestorius, purchasing his right to speak authoritatively on matters theological through a campaign of *devotion* (fostering devotion, in this case through bribery), leading to Nestorius' anathema (14-17).

massacre of the inhabitants of Thessalonica by excommunicating him, issuing months of penance before allowing the emperor to retake the Eucharist.[75] By the fourth-century, a new avenue of achieving a form of institutional authority arose as individuals could retreat into the ascetic life of a "holy man," gaining notoriety and authority through eschewing the civilized life. While previously the power of elite clergy had been limited to those men who had achieved their positions through ranking appointments that mirrored their imperial counterparts, these new desert leaders could come from all layers of society, and challenge the civic hierarchy of late antique Roman society by becoming leaders of a different world, that of the wild desert.[76]

While these paradigms of authority are mutable, and can rise and decline, they are legitimized and reinforced by members of the society either by tacit acceptance or the imposition of force. Bruce Lincoln provides a series of helpful questions to guide an inquiry into exactly why, how, and to what end any authority functions:

> Who is able to speak with authority? Where and how can one produce authoritative speech? What effect does such speech have on those to whom it is addressed? What responses does such speech anticipate? What responses does it allow? And what consequences can unanticipated and disallowed responses have for the construction, exercise, and maintenance of authority.[77]

In seeking to answer these questions, the socially contingent nature of authority must be addressed. The answers to why an actor is granted the power of influence, under what conditions, and what sort of anticipated responses or consequences of the imposition of that influence will provide an understanding of the social conditions that imbue an individual with authority. These conditions provide a given actor with the conditions for producing motivations or generating binding commands, operating to legitimize the actor's authority. Lincoln argues that this

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[75] Ibid, 103-113.
[76] Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, 214-224.
[77] Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

authority is not the legitimation itself, but rather the power to impart binding commands. Authority constitutes the means by which actors produce authorizing practices, which are the particular conditions necessary for constructing desired responses. He writes, "discursive authority is not so much an entity as it is (1) an effect; (2) the capacity for producing that effect; and (3) the commonly shared opinion that a given actor has the capacity for producing that effect."[78] The "effect" is the creation of these authorizing practices, which we will see are the fusion of both conceptual frames founded upon broader cross-cultural metaphors employed in the rhetoric of the authoritative individual, and the culturally specific classification strategies that are employed to limit the responses of the hearers through sentiments of affinity or estrangement.

Cyril reinforces his own authority by basing it within the authority of the biblical texts which are contingent upon the acceptability of citations and their placement within the canon. Cyril also draws upon the institutional authority vested in him by his office as archbishop, carrying with it the weight of apostolic and papal sanction. This authority only exists within the social grouping for which the biblical text and ecclesiastical offices hold weight. Challenges to both the credibility and authority of these two strands of authorization are evident in the reactions of the Jewish populace of Alexandria to Cyril's support of theatre sanctions, as well as the actions and reactions of Orestes who, despite claiming Christian beliefs, operates as an arm of the imperial office.[79] Socrates' depiction of events demonstrates that Orestes is reticent to elevate one mythic framework over another in the application of law.

2.1.4. Authorizing Practices

[78] Lincoln, *Authority*, 10-11.
[79] Socrates, *HE* 7.13-14.

Authority established in myth and institutionally reinforced is often left unchallenged in discourses that accept the *sui generis* or self-evident nature of social organizations, particularly in the case religious of organizations. Myths are a form of language decoupled from historical and social realities so that they take on new meanings, and have the effect of making the contingent seem natural.[80] Roland Barthes defines myth "as a second-order semiotic system, that is, a form of metalanguage in which preexisting signs are appropriated and stripped of their original context, history, and signification only to be infused with new and mystificatory conceptual content."[81] Russell McCutcheon discusses institutional authority as a form of social formation, tying together both practices and rhetoric into a shared identity:

> When used to redescribe religion, 'social formation' refers to a specific and coordinated system of rhetorical acts and institutions that constructs the necessary conditions for shared identities. By coordinating discourses on such things as nonobvious beings, absolute origins, and ultimate endtimes within highly rule-driven systems of practice, we create a system of sociorhetorical strategies that facilitate the development of enduring social and self-identities.[82]

These sociorhetorical strategies are the authorizing discourses such as categorization, or the metaphor and conceptual frames whereby we make our moral intuitive judgements, or act upon sentiments of affinity/estrangement. Burton Mack frames these strategies within the context of social interests:

> Social interest is a real factor in the construction and maintenance of social formations. It is also the real result of the construction of social formation. It is always already taken for granted in any given social formation as a principle of mutual recognition, reflexive identity, behavioral constraint, and motivational allowance.[83]

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[80] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 5.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Russell McCutcheon, "Redescribing 'Religion' as Social Formation: Toward a Social Theory of Religion," in *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 25.
[83] Burton Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic and Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 88.

In this context, authority both comes from societal formations and aids in their construction and maintenance. Mack asserts that social interests are not personal interests, but we might see how personal interests can come to invade and construct or corrode social interests.[84] However, choosing not to bind our will to social interests leads to a radical break with authority, creating a rebellious or revolutionary authority which strives to legitimate itself through acts of subversion, anomaly or outright iconoclasm vis a vis the prevailing myths, rituals or classifications by which society is constructed.[85]

The term "authorizing practices" is derived from Russell McCutcheon's work, highlighting the important process of historicizing claims to authority:

> As scholars of social authorizing practices, we fail to fulfill our role as public intellectuals when we decline to demonstrate consistently that such a thing as society, text, nation, ethnicity, tradition, intuition, gender, myth, or even religion, is "not a natural or god-given entity, but is a constructed, manufactured, even in some cases invented object, with a history of struggle and conquest behind it."[86]

It is precisely because of the socially contingent way in which these authorizing practices are developed to suit the needs of a certain situation in place and time that requires these practices to be justified or theorized after-the-fact to authoritatively legitimize the desired outcomes. To engage in a critique of society that highlights the socially contingent nature of authority, Jonathan Z. Smith provides a model whereby such an analysis can occur that seeks to move beyond mere description to redescribe data, with the goal being a rectification of categories. [87]

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[84] Ibid., 87.
[85] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 5-12. Lincoln breaks down each of these actions of revolutionary authority by drawing on a host of both modern and pre-modern exemplars.
[86] Russell McCutcheon, "A Default of Critical Intelligence? The Scholar of Religion as Public Intellectual," in *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 140.
[87] Jonathan Z. Smith, "The 'End' of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in a Postmodern Age*, ed. by Benjamin Ray and Kimberly Patton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 239.

In the context of this thesis, we will be viewing the events of fifth-century Alexandria through a sociological lens to see how a discursive strategy of classification was used to first undermine existing authority, and then construct and maintain a new authority vested in Cyril. Running parallel to this, we can look at the neurocognitive impact of Cyril's violent rhetoric, which espoused the metaphor of non-Christians as criminals, corrupting and polluting the body politic, who must be rooted out and destroyed. These metaphors operate within a conceptual frame, strengthening the classification strategies, which can then recall this broad metaphoric framework through linguistic shortcuts. Both processes generate sentiments of affinity/estrangement, which influenced violent reprisals which were an attempt to disrupt the existing status quo. The moral intuitive judgements which derived from this conceptual frame are informed by the language Cyril used, and the Strict Father moral framework, which demands retributive justice for the lawbreaker. As such, these two threads work in tandem to form a set of authorizing practices whereby violence against an estranged individual or group is incited through violent rhetoric and the reclassification of these targeted individuals or groups as deserving of violence. The psychological impact of rhetoric, via the conceptual frames formed by metaphor, and the sociorhetorical strategies at play in the classification of individuals or groups can form within a singular descriptor of an authorizing practice, as both strategies are often employed to legitimize violent or anti-social behavior against the other.

3. Rhetoric and Violence

Wendy Mayer's thesis centres on the idea that rhetoric can be used as a tool to promote violence, and that it does so by exploiting particular cognitive pathways.[88] The following discussion highlights elements of Mayer's argument by following the neurological roadmap laid out between the influence of rhetoric on the brain to the imposition of violence on the external world. Expanding upon her source material, the following sections will examine the relationship between rhetoric and violence, the way it frames modes of thinking, and how language and thought operate to produce action. Mayer seeks to resolve whether violent rhetoric has a place in moulding the cognition of the listener, or whether responses to it are purely socially conditioned:

> What we are seeking to resolve here is thus, in essence, whether due to the embodied nature of both moral cognition and language these homilies impact the listener/reader at the neural level (and therefore there are likely to be commonalities in what their language does to the listener/reader across history) or whether their impact is culturally specific.[89]

Mayer's statement is probing the question of whether the impact of violent rhetoric on the hearer might have broader neurological commonalities, and therefore may elicit violence in those beyond the culturally specific frame to which the rhetoric belongs. This does not limit culturally specific responses to violent speech, or other forms of socially contingent means of instigating violent. The argument is that violent rhetoric does not only have the power to instigate violence in its own cultural frame, but by drawing on moral foundations and common metaphors, it can operate across cultural divides. To form these connections, we must first unpack the justification Mayer utilizes for stating that violent rhetoric is itself a form of violence against the hearer, and prolonged exposure to said violence begets violent acts.

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[88] Mayer, 63-7.
[89] Ibid., 66.

Regressive and violent polemic of harnesses the fear of loss, which can be a powerful tool in the development of sentiments of affinity and estrangement.[90] By exploiting weaknesses, authoritative actors utilize divisive rhetoric to enhance these anxieties, and build a base of conceptual frames which utilizes group identity as a means to achieve actions sanctioned by the rhetoric, what I call authorized practices. By metaphorically framing actions counter to a limited set of orthodox behaviors as "polluting", the practice of forcibly dealing with polluting forces without and rooting out problematic entities within is sanctioned. These conceptual frames form a mechanism for violent maintenance of the hegemony of the sanctioning authority.[91] The starting point of this inquiry is rhetoric, a skill Cyril, like any educated young man in antiquity, would have been extensively trained in.[92]

Rhetoric was revered in the ancient world, and its persuasive power was thought of as a type of magic, one powerful enough to mould the minds of those within earshot. Laurent Pernot writes of this persuasion:

> *Peitho* ("persuasion") was regarded as a goddess. From the beginning of Greek thinking on rhetoric, persuasion was recognized to be a prodigious phenomenon. He who is able to persuade others, who is master of the art of persuasion, thus holds supernatural and almost magical power.[93]

Pernot goes on to note, that those who could wield this power effectively became increasingly important members of local cult and community praxis in Late Antiquity. Ancient teachers utilized rhetoric as a tool for spreading knowledge, exemplary living, and to set the boundaries of

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[90] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 9-10.
[91] See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966).
[92] Ilaria Ramelli, "Late Antiquity and the Transmission of Educational Ideals and Methods: The Western Empire," in *A Companion to Ancient Education*, ed. W. Martin Bloomer (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 267. See also, Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 43.
[93] Laurent Pernot, "The Rhetoric of Religion," *Rhetorica* 23, no. 3 (2006): 245.

what were acceptable modes of thinking and living. Peter Brown draws on Libinius' work on training rhetors to highlight the sort of power wielded by a successful orator:

> Words were supposed to exercise power over people. His pupils, even if they did not become star performers like himself, were expected to carry into the public world an uncanny ability to 'charm,' even to 'overawe,' through speech. A man of *paideia* was a man who knew how to command respect, not by violence (as those who wielded official power might do), but through the potent "spell" of his personal eloquence.[94]

While Brown is romanticizing the work of a rhetorician, the schools of rhetoric in late antiquity followed a rigorous and proscribed regime for educating young learners in the art of persuasive speech. Quintilian's *Instituto Oratio* provides evidence of the difficult training that a pupil would undergo in learning to devise, refine, and persuasively deliver an argument.

By the fifth century, Christian leaders were fusing their rhetorical training with evangelism and exegesis, such as in the fourth book of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. Yet despite this highly codified education system and the stylistic structures that accompanied rhetoric in Late Antiquity, the fundamental nature of rhetorical speech remains unchanged today. Rhetoric is still the use of language to organize and maintain social groups, construct meanings and identities, coordinate behavior, mediate power, produce change, and create knowledge. Kevin DeLuca writes that rhetoric is deployed in a post-modern or non-culturally specific manner as "the mobilization of signs for the articulation of identities, ideologies, consciousnesses, communities, publics, and cultures."[95] The signs are the metaphors employed to achieve the aims of the speaker, which draw on a set of limited concepts that Mayer argues are likely pan-historical:

> Because they are often rooted in common human experience, however, some of the most basic, such as moral concepts (e.g., Morality is Light, Immorality is Darkness; Morality is

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[94] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 44.
[95] Kevin DeLuca, "Articulation Theory: A Discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 32, no. 4 (1999): 346.

> Purity, Immorality is Rottenness) or ones the derive from how we perceive our body (Body is Container) are more likely to be common across history, language, and culture.[96]

Rather than being the "spell" that some who wield rhetoric would have their audience believe, rhetoric draws on the metaphors by which people construct their understanding of reality, and the social organizations of which they are a part, and thus can be exploited to elicit a desired response by those who know how to construct this persuasive speech.

Rhetoric has the power to locate individuals and ideas within a structure that determines who/what is in or out, and justifies certain responses to those outside of the accepted sphere of influence.[97] Mayer demonstrates how rhetoric codifies and constructs moral structures that develop empathy or fear. She draws on Joshua Green's thesis, which posits the role of empathy and empathy-deficit in moral decisions, where those outside of our sphere of empathy are reacted to in significantly different ways through a "moral commonsense."[98] These moral actions take place before conscious awareness, and although they can be reflected on by 'the interpreter' in seeking to generate a rationale for action, a primary decision for action has already been made.[99] Utilized in this way, rhetoric is the primary tool of those who seek to develop an authorizing discourse, which proposes a framework whereby the lens through which one views the world is narrowed, and treatment of others is contingent upon their place within or without the frame. Mayer cites Ingram's examination of emotional rhetoric, describing how repetition and emotional affect are a powerful combination to inciting sentiments that can lead to violence:

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[96] Mayer, 82.
[97] Mayer, 93-102.
[98] Joshua D. Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).
[99] Mayer, 93-6; Michael S. Gazzaniga, "Not Really," in *Does Moral Action Depend on Reasoning? Thirteen Views on the Question, A Templeton Conversation* (Spring 2010), last modified, March 26, 2016, https://colburnjusticeleague.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/templetonreason.pdf., 4–7

> Human beings make rational judgments less often than we might think, being compelled as much, if not more so, by affect as logic, while endless repetition (of language, thought or action) inhibits "the critical faculties of the prefrontal brain regions." At the same time, the whipping up of emotion via rhetoric creates an audience that is especially receptive. Anger, fear and pleasure, for instance, all induce a state of "mindlessness, because they all involve a reduction and concentration of communication between neurons. We become childlike and less sophisticated in our thinking while under the influence of affective intensity… An emotional audience is an audience neurologically formatted to be uniquely attuned to rhetoric, and receptive to persuasion."[100]

Mayer argues that these three emotional states promote different behaviors, as anger is "confrontational and collectivizing," fear induces "complacency or paralysis," and pleasure "fosters ingroup intimacy" and "communal bonds."[101] So via prolonged exposure to violent rhetoric, violence as physical modification or harm becomes thinkable, even routine, when this consistent, affective pressure is exerted on an individual.

3.1. Conceptual Metaphors

Wendy Mayer highlights influential work in the field of cognitive linguistics, and draws conclusions about the overall affect of John Chrysostom's violent anti-Jewish rhetoric on the population of Antioch. Mayer draws heavily on the use of metaphor in rhetorical speech, highlighting the effect on neural processing, and its impact on pre-conscious moral foundations:

> Within a neuroscientific framework, *why* someone says what they say about the Jews proves less relevant than *what* they have to say about the Jews and how Jews themselves are in consequence affected.[102]

Metaphor plays a significant role in this process due to mapping difficult and abstract concepts that we encounter daily to concrete objects or stimuli we experience. This goes beyond understanding rhetoric to our everyday experience. Mayer makes use of the work of George

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[100] Mayer, 91; Ingram, 64.
[101] Mayer, 91; Ingram 62-3.
[102] Mayer, 124.

Lakoff and Mark Johnson on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). They write, "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature."[103] This theory promotes the idea that much of our conception of the world is rooted in mapping source-to-target metaphorical linguistic constructs, meaning we take ideas from concrete domains of experience and map them to more abstract domains.[104] While these are sometimes metaphors that make a direct connection between the source and target domain, there is often a blending of domains and targets.[105] These metaphors operate as a sign-system, creating a semiotic system for understanding abstract concepts through concrete symbols. This provides a framework for viewing metaphor within the context of Critical Discourse Analysis.

The field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), born out of systemic functional linguistics pioneered by Michael Halliday, is the study of discourse structures in the formation of social inequalities.[106] Chilton writes of this work, "'Halliday's systemic functional grammar has supposedly provided the toolkit for deconstructing the socially-constructed (and thus linguistically constructed) machinery of power."[107] Language operates as a socially constructed semiotic system, where symbolic representations present a range of culturally specific understandings. There is a limited set of these symbols, and the range of available means of

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[103] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3, qtd. in Mayer, 81.
[104] Raymond Gibbs, "Evaluating Conceptual Metaphor Theory," *Discourse Processes* 48 (2011): 531-3.
[105] Gibbs, 531. He notes that common metaphors for love in English draw from a source of natural forces, i.e. "She swept me off my feet," "engulfed by love," etc.
[106] Christopher Hart, "Critical Discourse Analysis and Metaphor: Toward a Theoretical Framework," *Critical Discourse Studies* 5, no. 2 (May 2008), 91.
[107] Paul Chilton, "Missing links in mainstream CDA: Modules, Blends and the Critical Instinct," in *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*, eds. R. Wodak & P. Chilton (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 21.

understanding the symbols are therefore dependant on the social construction.[108] For Halliday, these symbols are interpreted grammatically in a culturally specific way, yet the symbolic representations they present can have broader cross-cultural meaning. In this way, the language employed in rhetorical speech may have specific cultural impacts, yet the metaphors employed may be broader and form similar conceptual frames across cultures.[109] This can help provide a link between the cognitive analysis of the impact of rhetoric and Lincoln's structuralist theory of discursive strategies. By understanding which how discursive strategies are being employed to construct or maintain societies, it can aid in understanding to what degree a metaphor is socially contingent, and in what ways it operates across cultures.

Metaphors become a powerful tool for those generating authorizing practices or discourses.[110] Mayer points out that while these metaphors provide evidence of the way we think, they also have a bi-directional component whereby language also influences thought.[111] This process occurs at a pre-conscious level, leaving us unaware of its impact, even while we may believe we are making decisions on a rational or substantive basis at the conscious level. Mayer

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[108] Michael Halliday, "Systemic Background," in *Systemic Perspectives on Discourse, Vol. 1: Selected Theoretical Papers from the Ninth International Systemic Workshop*, eds. James D. Benson and William S. Greaves (New York: Ablex Publishing, 1985), 192-3.

[109] Zoltán Kövecses, "Metaphor: Does it Constitute or Reflect Cultural Models," in *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics: Selected Papers from the Fifth International Cognitive Linguistics Conference*, eds. Raymond Gibbs and Gerard Steen (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1997), 167. Kövecses argues here and in other publications that there is a large body of basic conceptual metaphors, and these are pervaded by cultural models that affect much of our cognition, even reasoning.

[110] For a broader conceptualization of the relationship between cognition and cultural specificity see Maurice Bloch, *How We Think They Think: Anthropological Approaches to Cognition, Memory, and Literacy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998). For a detailed discussion of the problems encountered when discussing social change theoretically see Maurice Bloch, "The Past and the Present in the Present," *Man,* New Series 12, no. 2 (1977): 278-92. Bloch challenges the Durkheimian notion that cognition is socially determined, noting that it is true of only certain aspects of cognition, and is therefore only part of the picture.

[111] Mayer, 84-5.

points to a 2011 study where participants were faced with the details of criminal activity framed metaphorically as either Crime as Virus, or Crime as Beast. Paul Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky write of this process:

> Interestingly, we find that the influence of the metaphorical framing effect is covert: people do not recognize metaphors as influential in their decisions; instead they point to more 'substantive' (often numerical) information as the motivation for their problem-solving decision. Metaphors in language appear to instantiate frame-consistent knowledge structures and invite structurally consistent inferences. Far from being mere rhetorical flourishes, metaphors have profound influences on how we conceptualize and act with respect to important societal issues.[112]

By drawing on this research, Mayer is asserting that language's ability to mould and shape our forms of cognition indicates a causal link between rhetoric and thought.

Looking specifically at the use of metaphor in violent rhetoric, Mayer points to Conceptual Framing as a rich foundation for understanding language's influence on thought and action. Conceptual Framing is a specific concept within cognitive linguistics whereby cognitive shortcuts are used to interpret the world, highlighting certain aspects and delegitimizing others.[113] Mayer writes that these frames lie behind our conceptual metaphors, and that words can evoke these frames, resulting in the evocation of either a metaphor or a series of metaphors.[114] The linguistic frame directly influences thought, as opposed to being constitutive of our thoughts. Put in another way, the frames are an exterior social function acting upon our cognition through which our range of thoughts are truncated, thus delimiting the scope of

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[112] Paul H. Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky, "Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning," *PLoS ONE* 6, no. 2 (2011), 1.
[113] Francesca Ervas, Elisabetta Gola and Maria Grazia Rossi, "Metaphors and Emotions as Framing Strategies in Argumentation," in *Proceedings of the EuroAsianPacific Joint Conference on Cognitive Science / 4th Conference on Cognitive Science / 11th International Conference on Cognitive Science, Torino, Italy, September 25–27, 2015, CEUR Workshop Proceedings 1419*, eds. Gabriella Airenti, Bruno G. Bara, Giulio Sandini, and Marco Cruciani, http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1419/paper0107.pdf, 645-50.
[114] Mayer, 84-6.

possible modes of thinking. These frames then result in intuitive moral judgements, influencing our range of decision-making.[115]

Judith Butler analyses the framing of groups for the purposes of committing violent acts in wartime, offering the view that these solicitations can either be accepted at face value, or challenged to produce nuanced viewpoints:

> When populations become implicitly framed as targets for destruction within ordinary discourse, then the frame solicits our complicity with this practice of the visual and discursive normalization of war. But another form of solicitation is also at work in such a frame, one that would lead us to an understanding of the equal value of life from an apprehension of shared precariousness. Can we discern the way the frame normalizes destruction, and can we be solicited both ethically and politically by the lives whose precarious conditions are suspended or shut out by the frame, or whose traces the frame cannot quite efface?[116]

As Butler's comments demonstrate, these frames can be used to promote sentiments of affinity and estrangement, sometimes in ways unintended by those promoting these frameworks, but nonetheless, the social realities of these frames lead to categorizations which will result in shifts in power structures and ultimately to actions.

3.1.1. Neurological Effect of Rhetoric

Mayer summarizes the neurological effect of rhetoric through the work of Ingram, describing both historical viewpoints, and contemporary research:

> Of particular significance for our argument is Ingram's point that this understanding of language as embodied is not new, but originates with the ancient Greek rhetoricians

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[115] Mayer cites several studies in support of this process: Paul Thibodeau, Peaco Iyiewaure and Lera Boroditsky, "Metaphors Affect Reasoning: Measuring Effects of Metaphor in a Dynamic Opinion Landscape," in *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, ed. D. C. Noelle *et al.* (Austin, TX: Cognitive Science Society, 2015), 2374-79; George Lakoff, *Moral Politics; The Political Mind; id., Whose Freedom? The Battle Over America's Most Important Idea* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006).
[116] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2010), xvii.

> Gorgias and Aristotle and is constitutive of how Graeco-Roman rhetoricians, philosophers and physicians (John Chrysostom included) viewed the world.[117]

These effects are triggered neurochemical responses, "pre-conscious dispositions that prompt the brain to fit them within linguistic structures rhetorically constituted through cultural experience (language ⇔ thought)."[118] In regards to violent action, Ingram recognizes that due to the plasticity of the brain, continual triggering of these neuro-chemical responses will mould the brain and limit it within these patterns. This continual violent rhetoric may be an act of violence itself, "that is, by reducing the listener's capacity for conscious critical thought by stimulating the constant activation to the point of habituation of one pattern of thought with concomitant loss of another, violent rhetoric inflicts literal trauma on the brain."[119] A mind moulded in this way by violence and trauma has significant potential to act out in a violent manner against its pre-disposed enemies.

Mayer also examines Moral Foundation Theory (MFT), which provides neuro-cognitive support with fMRI evidence. Pre-cognitive moral judgements are catalysts of social-binding that produce sentiments of affinity or estrangement through binary formulas (i.e. care/harm; loyalty/betrayal, etc.).[120] Mayer surmises that "the logic or rational content of a preacher's argument is likely to be less memorable or effective in stimulating action than the basic concepts, frames and emotions that are activated at the pre-conscious level in the brain of the listener."[121] It

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[117] Mayer, 88, cf. 107.
[118] Mayer, 89. Mayer makes careful note that this is not an emotional response, but rather a correlate to the intuitive moral judgements. While theoretically it looks similar to CMT theory, it places a larger role on the cultural impetus, rather than an individual's embodied experience (89, cf. 111).
[119] Mayer, 90-1.
[120] Mayer, 93-99.
[121] Mayer, 101.

can be argued that the effects we perceive today from experiencing this ancient rhetoric would be similar to the impact on its original audience:

> Since the moral foundations themselves are pan-human, while the degree to which each receives emphasis is variable and culturally informed, we should expect that there will be some commonalities between how the homilies affected their original and subsequent audiences. We should also expect some differences. What we should not expect is that, if they have a strong visceral or intuitive impact on the reader/listener today, the same language will have evoked indifference in its original audience. […] The more emotional and violent the rhetoric, the more difficult it will have been to resist.[122]

These moral foundations form the basis of our moral intuitive judgements, the sub-conscious decision making process whereby our actions are determined. Authoritative voices tying commonly held norms to the conceptual frames formed by metaphor elicit powerful motivation for sanctioned actions, an outcome that can be used for the instigation of violence.

3.1.2. Primary Metaphors for Classification

Mayer points to two primary metaphors at play in the homilies of John Chrysostom that she notes are "by no means benign," and encourage "the ingroup to view as pro-social a way of conceiving of Jews […] that has distinctly anti-social behavioral attachments."[123] Mayer demonstrates John's strong emphasis on fairness/cheating in reference to the Jews, casting them as criminals needing to pay for their crimes.[124] John's sermons consistently point to the Jews as murderers, a crime that "tainted the offender with blood pollution; pollution required expiation; and thus, in contradistinction to other categories of crime, in the case of acts that rendered the offender polluted the penalty tended towards retributive rather than restitutive or compensatory justice."[125] A retributivist approach to justice places moral culpability on the perpetrator of a

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[122] Mayer, 101.
[123] Ibid., 102.
[124] Ibid., 102-3.
[125] Ibid., 106.

crime, and thus the criminal "deserves" punishment. This framework was coined by George Lakoff as a "strict father" morality, with the invoked moral foundations of loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation.[126] This framework, while it stands at times in contradistinction to a view of God as a nurturing parent, was culturally dominant in Late Antiquity. Mayer writes that preachers in late antiquity were "preaching from the perspective of, and to an audience immersed in Graeco-Roman cultural norms. This is not a contractualist (liberal democratic) society. It is a hierarchical patriarchal society in which, along with the maintenance of civic and Roman loyalty, the concept of male authority in every sphere is normative, and in which concepts of pollution and purity are an explicit part of everyday life."[127]

The concept of criminality as pollution is a pervasive metaphor, particularly in antiquity where ideas about health and religious purity were sometimes conflated. Mayer writes, "In both the ancient Near-Eastern and Graeco-Roman world the categories 'infection' and defilement' were not just conflated; religious pollution, like misfortune, was conceived of as literally contagious."[128] This has significant cognitive implications, as methods of treatment such as segregation, inoculation, or surgical action could become viable options against the Jews who, Mayer writes, were conceived of as carrying "the contagion," and hence are "sacrilegious and impure."[129] Within this moral intuitive framework there is justification for removing the contagion or illness from the body politic, and so violence becomes a conceivable option against those who are negatively categorized. As Mayer puts it, "native to this moral framework is the concept of justifiable homicide. The killer remained pure, for instance, if the internal social

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[126] Lakoff, *Moral Politics*, 78-81.
[127] Mayer, 108.
[128] Ibid., 104.
[129] Ibid., 104-5.

threat was transformed into an enemy… the enemy becomes a hostile pathogen that it is necessary and justifiable for the health of the Body to exterminate."[130] Just as in fourth-century Antioch, this is the powerful metaphor one finds at play in categorizing individuals deserving of violence in fifth-century Alexandria. We will see how Cyril utilizes similar metaphors to that of John Chrysostom's, presenting non-Christians as deserving of judgement, as those fit for punishment due to their pollution of the body politic of the city. Drawing on the metaphors of Purity and Contagion, and Crime and Punishment, Cyril links the concept of justice to that of purity, and to cheat justice is to bring contagion, and therefore must be rooted out and punished.

3.1.3. Correlation between Cyril's Rhetoric and Violence

In Wendy Mayer's research on the effect of John Chrysostom's violent anti-semitic rhetoric on his congregations, she is clear that there is a lack of evidence proving the direct correlation between Chrysostom's sermons and violent action:

> When it is intuitive moral judgements that are activated, these can in turn have social and behavioural entailments (thought ⇒ action). This is a rich area of investigation with a number of implications for the question of the homilies' impact, but which, since we have no empirical evidence of how those who heard the homilies subsequently acted, is difficult to exploit.[131]

The reality of the Alexandrian context is that there are significant correlations between rhetoric and violence, between these intuitive moral judgements and action, with the ability to trace the specific dates of violent activity to the delivery of a dated festal letter. It is apparent that not everyone exposed to the trauma of violent rhetoric will exhibit violent tendencies.[132] As Brett

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[130] Ibid., 110-111.
[131] Ibid., 86-7.
[132] The correlation of violence and genetics is one of much research and debate, and unfortunately, little consensus. See: Elisa Pieri and Mairi Levitt, "Risky Individuals and the Politics of Genetic Research into Aggressiveness and Violence," *Bioethics* 22, no. 9 (2008): 509-18. The authors cite a study of Monoamine Oxidise A (a mitochondrial enzyme for the

Ingram notes, the argument has generally been made that rhetoric itself cannot be a form of violence, but rather an instigating factor in violence:

> If rhetorical violence influences the actions of those to whom it is directed, it does so by persuasion, albeit a form of persuasion that is ominously shadowed by the specter of coercion. And if we accept these criteria, then it follows that rhetoric cannot be literally violent itself, since it does not directly or immediately move corporeal matter. Violent rhetoric can only inspire violent action, after it has passed through the mediating screen of the "mind." The question of how violent rhetoric compels action in some people and not others remains unanswered.[133]

By drawing a connection between Judith Butler's conception of the self as being constantly rewritten through the use of language, and Damasio's conception of a pre-conscious proto-self, Ingram argues that humans are neuronal subjects, described using the language of Catherine Malabou as a "pre-conscious biological precedent" from which our sense of self develops.[134] He claims that "social events that excite or inhibit… *physically* wound the plastic brain. These wounds, in turn, influence our capacity to emotionally withstand or appropriately respond to other social events."[135] The neuronal subject "can be damaged both by physical and symbolic injury—both may be considered forms of violence, as both are materially manifested in neural matter."[136] Put into full perspective, there are similarities in the brain matter of those who have experienced physical trauma and those who have faced marginalization or social affects of violent rhetoric. Ingram's argument is that rhetorical violence cannot be placed in a different

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breakdown of dopamine and serotonin) deficiency in maltreated children as an indicator of increased violent and aggressive behavior. A. Caspi *et al.*, "Role of Genotype in the Cycle of Violence in Maltreated Children," *Science* 297, no. 5582 (2002): 851–854, noted the genetic cause of deficiency are rather rare. Childhood maltreatment has been linked to altering the sensitivities of Norepinephrin, 5-hydroxytriptamine (serotonin), and dopamine receptors, but they do not attribute a direct causal link to violent or antisocial behavior, as the deficiency can only affect males, and the correlation does not always result in causation (851).

[133] Ingram, 133.
[134] Ibid., 152.
[135] Ibid., 156.
[136] Ibid., 157.

category, or excluded from definitions of violence, but is itself a form of violence on the hearer. He makes this connection explicit when he writes:

> The congruencies between people who have suffered brain injuries, and those who have suffered social marginalization, could be attributable to the fact that, at the microscopic level, emotional distress caused by rhetorical or symbolic affronts to one's social standing is manifested in neurological injuries—a deformation of the neural circuitry with which the brain represents itself to itself that effects what amounts to an ontological change in the subject's conscious thought. This could shed new light on the reasons some individuals commit acts of physical violence by helping us to overcome the reductive dichotomies of rhetorical and physical violence. It may be that rhetorical violence is not an incitement to physical violence: rhetorical violence is physical violence.[137]

If violent rhetoric can be seen as a form of violence upon the hearer, then continued exposure generates not only physiological damage upon neuro-receptors tied to aggressive or violent behavior, but also operates to form an optimal rhetorical environment for the formation of a social impetus to violent and anti-social behavior. Therefore, with the evidence of continued anti-Semitic and anti-Pagan rhetoric, coupled with specific dated invocations to violent social upheaval and rhetorical motivation to commit violence, it is no surprise that violent acts are recorded by Alexandrian Christians against their Pagan and Jewish counterparts within a relatively short time span.

3.2. Metaphor and Violence in Cyril's Festal Letters

Drawing a connection between the violent actions of Christians and the rhetoric of Cyril during his early tenure as archbishop in Alexandria requires the consideration of public discourses which can be tied to specific dates which correlate with violent acts. The primary intersection of authoritative discourse and lay participants in the Patristic period was the sermon. Despite the growing and developing liturgy, the basic elements that existed within ecclesiastical

[137] Ibid., 162.

practice were prayers and hymns that facilitated the sharing of the sacraments along with the homily.[138] The homily, the basic teaching unit of the church gathering, had taken on many forms and methods of delivery in the Patristic period, and while designed for oration, it was often composed as a written text which could be widely disseminated. These discourses could be designated as a *sermo*, an expository or exhorting discourse about some point of belief or law, or a *homilia*, which Origen differentiated from the *sermo* as a commentary on a scriptural reference.[139] As early as the 2nd century, Justin Martyr describes Christians within the city and countryside gathering to hear readings from the prophetic and apostolic texts, followed by an *admonitio* or *adhortatio* delivered a leader in that Christian community.[140] The homily developed out of synagogue traditions based upon two delivery methods: *midrash haggadah,* a form of translation and interpretation of moral, historical or allegorical significance; and the *midrash halakhah*, an application of the text to concrete life events.[141] Cyril wrote of this process in the introduction to his *Glaphyra* (on the Pentateuch):

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[138] E. E. Finn, "Alexandrian Liturgy," *New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd ed.,* vol. 1 (Farmington Hills, MI: Catholic University of America, 2003), 273. Some much earlier examples of liturgical practice can be found in Clement and Origen, such as their symbolically laden hymns. Athanasius' early festal letters highlight the growing importance of the Easter celebrations, and Epiphanius of Salamis demonstrates the growth of epiphany and Christmas as festal dates in the Egyptian church. The 4th century has several fragmentary sources of liturgical prayer, notably the *Strasbourg Papyrus*, which demonstrates the still extant use of the *Anaphora of St. Mark*. The *Canons of Hippolytus* and Sarapion's *Sacramentary* both demonstrate similar prayer-based liturgies which seem to be common and based upon the apostolic liturgical traditions extant in Rome and other centers.

[139] R. Gregoire, "Homily," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, vol. 2 (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 280-3; Patrick Beecher, "Homily," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07448a.htm.

[140] Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 67.

[141] Gregoire, 282; Russell, *Cyril,* 16; F.M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 262–3. Young describes how Cyril interprets the Jewish/Christian divide within the theme of the Fall/Redemption, thus generating a "totalizing discourse largely drawn from the Bible, and reflects the assumption that 'types' were represented in literature as patterns to be followed" (263).

> First we shall set out the historical events in a helpful fashion and explain these matters in a suitable way. Then lifting this same narrative out of type and shadow we shall refashion it and give it an interpretation which takes account of the mystery of Christ, having him as the goal— if indeed it is true that the end of the law and the prophets is Christ.[142]

This bi-fold exegesis/application model would prove useful for expounding on more complex matters of theology while creating a practice for those beliefs in the life of the community. This model also provides fertile ground for the creation of categories and the establishment of affinity/estrangement within the context of their community and their interactions without.

While being delivered orally, homilies also began to take on another life as written texts, disseminated to both a local audience and throughout the wider Christian world. In subsequent centuries, these would become *homiliarium*, collections of homilies arranged around the liturgical year. The homilies would sometimes be intermingled with *sermones*, edifying or *parenetic* address, and hagiographical works.[143] The boundaries between homily and sermon became quite fluid, and many of Cyril's homilies exemplify stylistic elements of sermons. For our purposes, the relevant body of extant homilies from Cyril that have survived in written form, and used in a liturgical setting were the festal letters. Functionally, the purpose of a festal letter was to announce the date of Easter to the wider Church, a duty of the Alexandrian See since at least the episcopate of Dionysius (248-264 CE).[144] Camplani describes the letters as a literary genre unto their own, containing homiletic elements while also incorporating elements of

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[142] Cyril, *Glaphyra*, Prooem. (PG 69, 16A).
[143] R. Gregoire, "Homiliary," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, vol. 2, 279.
[144] A. Camplani, "Festal Letters," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, vol. 2, 30-33: 30. The first mention of a festal letter is in Eusebius, writing about the episcopate of Dionysius (247-64) (HE 7, 20). Later attestations by John Cassian present the possibility it goes back to Demetrius (188-230). The announcement of the Lenten season begins with Athanasius (328-373), as does the collection of the letters into a *corpus* after the bishop's death, a tradition that seems to end with Cyril.

community business and a special exposition on Easter. The formal structure that emerged follows this paradigm:

1. Noting the beginning of Easter and the prophecies referencing it.
2. A main body composed of a message of catechetical, theological or polemic nature.
3. Exhortations on the observance of Easter and embodying the Christian virtues.
4. The announcement of the date of Easter, mentioning the Pentecost and a doxology.
5. Other organizational information if necessary, such as episcopal nominations.[145]

The homiletic elements are found within the message and exhortations, highlighting scriptural elements through an exposition of the text on allegorical grounds, and an interpretive application rich in rhetorical flourish. It is within these portions that the majority of Cyril's anti-Jewish and anti-Pagan polemic is found, however this sometimes bleeds over into the announcement of Easter, as well as ecclesiastical matters.

3.2.1. Audience of Homilies and Festal Letters

Festal letters provide us with a unique glimpse into the life of the ecclesia due to their multi-valent nature, speaking on matters of the social structure and patterns of behavior for the community, theological concerns, as well as performing the particular function of announcing the date for Easter. Few preachers of the ancient world had a platform such as this to deliver their sermons to an audience as vast as the reach of Christianity within the empire itself. Wendy Mayer's work on John Chrysostom's sermons points out the impact his vitriol against the Jewish community may have had on a limited audience.[146] Much like Cyril's Alexandria, schisms within Antioch's Christian community meant a competition for presbyters between three prominent sects. Mayer points to Ramsey MacMullen's estimates for the number of people packed into the large cathedrals of Antioch to reach an upper limit of 500 for the larger basilicas with diameters

[145] Ibid., 32.
[146] Mayer, 70-74.

of thirty to forty meters.[147] Lacking the specific floor plans and scale of the Alexandrian churches it is hard to generate an estimate as to the size of the congregations, and therefore the sphere of influence the homilies of Cyril, and particularly the festal letters may have had. It may be safe to assume that the buildings would have been consistent with those found in the other large imperial centers, such as Antioch and Constantinople. Drawing parallels with other Egyptian centers of worship may prove to be helpful as well, and the closest comparison would be the White Monastery of Shenoute, founded in 442. Judith McKenzie notes the size of the fifth-century chapel of the White Monastery, at 37m by 75m to be consistent with other large-scale church buildings from the period built throughout the empire. She speculates, "As these Egyptian churches are of similar scale to those of other major cities of the empire, it is not unreasonable to assume that churches of this size were found in Alexandria in the first half of the fifth century, as well as even larger ones, and with the rich variety of plans seen elsewhere in Egypt."[148]

For our purposes, what is most relevant is capacity, as the size of the building is directly correlated to the number of congregants able to gather to hear the messages spread by Christian leaders. As Mayer has argued for John Chrysostom during his tenure in Antioch, leading a church of similar size to that of the church of Shenoute, the upper limit of attendance was around 500.[149] When considering the distribution of homilies, and particularly the festal letters

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[147] Mayer, 70.
[148] Judith McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt: c. 300 B.C. to A.D. 700* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2011), 233; See also: Yale in Egypt, "The Church of St. Shenoute," *Yale Monastic Archaeology Project South (Sohag),* https://egyptology.yale.edu/expeditions/current-expeditions/yale-monastic-archaeology-project-south-sohag/white-monastery*;* Peter Grossmann, "Dayr Anba Shinudah, Architecture" *The Coptic encyclopedia,* vol. 7*,* ed. Aziz S. Atiya (New York: MacMillan, 1991), 2038-2040.
[149] Mayer, 78.

throughout the Alexandrian region and wider Egypt, we can safely assume the sphere of influence of Cyril's sermons was thousands of Christian adherents.

While the influence of Cyril is most apparent in due to his direct sphere of influence, it is important to note that his writings were distributed to an even wider audience than the Alexandrian See, and may have had more wide ranging impact on the Eastern empire.[150] These letters fall within a larger rhetorical project that may have influenced the preaching of other church leaders, as well as motivated a rigorous imposition of orthodox theological frameworks and anti-Jewish sentiment. Cyril's ability to procure the agreement of a large body of delegates during the council of Ephesus (431 CE) demonstrates his firm ties to other power brokers within the ecclesiastical and state spheres. Whether through the fraternity of church elites, the *paidea* of their shared education, or his sponsorship of *devotio* through fostering relationships and monetary supplementation, Cyril managed to generate agreement on controversial positions at several points in his career.[151] How the anti-Jewish rhetoric would be received by another local audience is largely dependant upon the preparation of their own local elites. Wendy Mayer has demonstrated the effects of continued anti-Jewish rhetoric upon the Antiochian See under Chrysostom, and similar messages coming through the letters of other elite Christian voices could cement such ideology.

3.2.2. Promotion of Anti-Jewish Violence in the Festal Letters

Cyril's letters provide an example of focused, vitriolic language against specific targets, aimed to promote a general distrust, and possibly violent tendencies towards the individuals or

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[150] Évieux, 73–118; Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410-590 CE): A Survey of Evidence from Episcopal Letters* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23.
[151] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 15-17.

groups he is targeting. Cyril indicts the Jews as corrupt and criminal in their behavior, deserving of judgement due to their access to, but rejection of God. He writes:

> The Jews, however, not only disregarded the commandment given them, but even descended to such a degree of stupidity as to think it almost a matter of dishonor to be seen practicing the things according to which they would have had to be judged to enjoy the best way of life, and hastened instead to walk the same path as the others.[152]

Cyril was clearly laying the groundwork for a classificatory system that would allow for his grouping of individuals into those either deserving or undeserving of mercy and fellowship. Cyril regularly draws on a particular reading of Paul, highlighting the hostile relationship of the (sinful) physical body to the (holy) spiritual self, equating the Jews and law to the flesh, and the Christian community to the spirit:[153]

> For between those for whom friendship is impossible because they are so contrary in outlook and incompatible in manners, one may gain the advantage by being able to prevail over the other. But victory, I think all will agree, belongs to those who are superior. For what we will gain from the one would match the harm caused by the other, were the better side vanquished.[154]

This conceptual frame of the Jewish corruption of the body politic is intertwined in the festal letters with Jewish rejection of prayer and fasting, and the rejection of special revelation given to them through the prophets and the law.[155] This leads to the vitriolic statements of punishment and exclusion seen above, preparing the groundwork for a classification of community boundaries, delineated along the lines of acceptance of the special revelation of the Judeo-Christian god and the soteriological intervention of his divine son.

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[152] Cyril, *Ep. fest. 1.6*, 49.
[153] Rom 8.
[154] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.3, 42. This allegory of flesh and spirit as being at war with one another is a common motif in Christian though right up to the present. It is largely predicated in Pauline theology, notably Gal 5.16-24.
[155] Exod 32.

In his first festal letter of 414 CE, after beginning with an announcement of the repentant spirit of the Easter season and a lengthy treatise on the benefits of fasting, Cyril launched into his first of many tirades against the unrepentant nature of the Jewish populace. Using exempla from the prophet Jeremiah, Cyril illustrates the actions of the Jews that purport to their faithlessness, and therefore justifies harsh treatment or the intention of ill-will towards the Jewish populace:

> For those who do not like being saved hate what is to their advantage, and they do not avoid the chance for pleasure who do not refuse to be hedonists. They are always bent on what is worse who do not know how to be temperate. The harsh, obdurate propensity of the Jews bears this out; they never, from the outset, have tried to avoid such lapses, and have disdained the honor due their Master. When they have the chance to repent and be saved, but make light of what would be to their advantage and take no account of such great kindness, *do they not justly confirm that they should be shown no mercy?* Have they not surpassed all effrontery when, being given the chance to escape punishment by absenting themselves from sin, they call down upon themselves a heavier penalty by adding yet greater transgressions to those already committed? *To characters such as these, being punished more severely is more fitting than not suffering badly at all. One would not go wrong in advising that they be shown no mercy.* This is not my idea; the Master of all says as much when he rebuffs the prophet who prays for them.[156]

Drawing a parallel with Mayer's analysis of Chrysostom's sermons, we can see the similar metaphor of the Jews as criminals.[157] Cyril draws upon the fairness/cheating moral foundation when he states, "being punished more severely is more fitting than not suffering badly at all."[158] It is the Jews' scorning of the honor due their master, an extension of the Strict Father framework, which brings this judgement upon themselves due to their denial of Jesus' sacrifice for them. This echoes sentiments laid out by the author of Hebrews, providing a basis for Cyril's invocations of retributive justice:

> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance

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[156] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.6, 48. Emphasis mine. Cyril follows this with references Jer 7.16-18, Hos 4.6.
[157] Mayer, 102-111.
[158] Cyril, *Ep. Fest* 1.6, 48.

> is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.[159]

Cyril makes clear that the Jews' behaviour is not only criminal, but constitutes a form of pollution. He writes:

> For the mentality of the Jews is really quite full of every uncleanness, nor is there any wickedness which is not held by them in high esteem. They do not want to know the divine Law, and they even reject the commandment given them, and so they continue disobedient and unbelieving. It is for these reasons that God accuses them.[160]

This disbelief in the crucifixion and its subsequent salvation is framed by the author of Hebrews as an act of violence against the Christ, metaphorically condemning him to a cycle of re-crucifixion, equating disbelief with murder.[161] For Cyril's audience, calls to purity and cleansing become a moral duty, both internally within their own self, and externally to the Christian body and city as a whole.[162] Cyril's closing exhortation for the year of 414 CE enjoins his adherents to get rid of defilement, encouraging this as an honor to their savior. The Strict Father demands retribution and purity to make the community fit for his affection. The archbishop writes:

> These are the tokens of our Savior's Advent; in their presence let us proclaim him Benefactor and Savior. And since our legitimacy is to be seen in our deeds themselves, and through them a fitting recompense is to be offered to our Master, let us obey Paul when he says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God."[163]

This call carries the connection to cleansing the corruption that has infected the body, legitimating violence against those who have brought the corruption through criminality. Cyril is very clear that the restoration of legitimacy comes through removal of this defilement.

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[159] Heb 10.29-31.
[160] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.5, 46.
[161] Heb 6.6.
[162] Mayer, 109-110.
[163] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.6, 51. Cyril quotes 2 Cor 7.1.

In the following two years of festal letters, Cyril seeks to delineate the Jews from their Christian peers, highlighting their deficiency in seeking salvation, and thereby bringing judgement upon themselves. In 415 CE, the year of the significant rioting and the death of Hypatia, statements about the Jews are notably lacking. He does make a telling dig at the Jewish practice of announcing festivals with the blowing of horns, an image he uses to urge zeal in his Christian audience:

> Now it would seem to me the height of absurdity, if the Jews, who take such pride in Law and shadow and type, were to announce their own feasts with trumpet blasts, while we, who prefer what is better than what they have, and who have rightly and justly decided to place the truth above figures, as is meet, would appear far less eager in this respect than they, by sitting tranquilly and telling each other to keep quiet, and thus relegating to silence the feast which is so famous.[164]

While this lacks the vitriol of Cyril's other statements, it provides context for the response of Hierax, who applauded Orestes' restriction of the raucous dancing shows popular with the Jews of Alexandria.[165] The imperial edict restricting these shows acted as reinforcement of Cyril's assertions that hedonism was a significant cause of corruption, and the previous year the archbishop had made allusions to the Jews as being particularly fond of hedonistic behavior.[166] This demonstrates how small statements may have had larger ramifications within the conceptual frame of the Jews as criminals.

Cyril rejoins his attacks on the Jews in the letter of the following year, continuing to cast them as unrepentant law-breakers, due for the meting out of justice. This letter is erroneously labelled the fourth in the manuscript tradition, but Évieux notes that there is no break in the dating of the letters, and so the missing letter does not correspond to Cyril missing a year.[167] In

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[164] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 2.1, 52.
[165] Socrates, *HE* 7.13.
[166] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.4, 43.
[167] Évieux, 113.

the festal letter for 416 CE, the archbishop spends over half the letter outlining the transgression of the Jews against the God they claim to follow, for their rejection of both his prophets and the Son of God.[168] The Jews impiety, in terms of their willful ignorance of the Messiah, provides fodder for Cyril's condemnation:

> The Jews, that is, who practice impiety to the last degree, are scandalized at the cross of Christ our Savior, and exceed the madness of the pagans to such an extent, that I believe that if anyone were to sit as judge of the two peoples, he would, I think, condemn the former and declare the practices of the latter less evil. …[The Jews] although they are instructed in piety by the Law and the prophets, have outdone the pagans in unreasonableness to the same degree that the excuse for the others' ignorance may be thought reasonable; they are without any defense which might present their stupidity as an unavoidable illness.[169]

Cyril's use of the metaphor of illness, the Jew as a contagion that must be stopped, can be related back to Mayer's assertion that health, contagion and purity were interrelated concepts in Late Antiquity. Cyril claims this illness caused the Jews to have "shaken off their spirit of reverence for him in disobedience and contradiction," which made them "deeply distressed in their roots" and they "finally dried up completely through disbelief in Christ."[170] The most significant indictment Cyril makes of the Jews comes when he challenges the discontinuation of blood sacrifice, claiming that within the revelation they have been given by God, they are guilty as law-breakers regardless of their intentions. He writes:

> Tell me why it is that you do not offer the sacrifices according to the Law. If you say that your negligence is deliberate, you stand convicted as a law-breaker, and thus, having used you as a witness in your own indictment, I will need no others. But if you hold that your inactivity in these matters is involuntary, and yourself agree that you are hindered by the bond of some necessity, then beware lest you be charged with lack of consideration, when your disobedience has lasted so long. Who is it, I mean, that is strong enough to make subject to necessity someone who is helped by God (for I know that you pride yourself highly on this point)? There is no one. It is, then, God's wrath—that is all that remains—which has fallen upon those from Israel and deprived the nation of all joy, not

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[168] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.3-6, 74-82.
[169] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.4, 75.
[170] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.5, 77.

> allowing it to boast any more of the Law, and exacting satisfaction for the impiety shown to Christ from those who mistreated him.[171]

This rather odd indictment by Cyril casts the Jews as doubly transgressors, both for their transgression of the Jewish law mandating a blood sacrifice for the propitiation of sin, and for their neglect of what Cyril would categorize as the "true" sacrifice of Jesus.

What is clear from the excerpts from the first three festal letters is that Cyril engaged in a campaign of violent rhetoric against the Jews. Like John Chrysostom's sermons, there is a consistent use of the metaphor of the Jews as criminals, a corrupt group who risk contaminating the larger body politic, who deserve the condemnation and punishment of retributive justice. By the consistent use of this metaphor, Cyril crafts a discourse that operates as an authorizing practice, creating an environment which not only cognitively inspires his audience to violence through conceptual metaphors, but encourages it through classifying the Jews as deserving criminals and sanctioning their punishment.

3.2.3. Anti-Pagan Rhetoric in the Festal Letters

Cyril did not overlook the pagan community of Alexandria, although for their part he belittles their capacity to understand God, which places them in the pathetic posture of people to be pitied, not hated:

> Now the Greeks, for their part, slipped into polytheism out of complete thoughtlessness, and, exchanging "the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles," they hastened to the realm of death as though sailing there under the urging of a fair wind.[172]

For his part, Cyril sometimes paints all those who are not Christians with the same brush. While encouraging fasting during the Lenten season, Cyril rebukes the Jews for their denial of God

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[171] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.6, 79.
[172] Cyril, *Ep. Fest* 1.6, 49. Cyril quotes Rom 1.23.

through the pursuit of pleasure and idolatry, comparing them to the Greeks in their polytheism and hedonism. He writes, "For those who do not like being saved hate what is to their advantage, and they do not avoid the chance for pleasure who do not refuse to be hedonists. They are always bent on what is worse who do not know how to be temperate."[173] Cyril invokes the metaphor of contamination in relation to the group he calls "the Greeks," but does not indict them of willful criminality in the way he does for the Jews.

As is the case with his critique of the Jews, Cyril avoids any sort of disparagement or negative framing of the pagan community in his letter from 415 CE.[174] This is a curious and notable exception, especially in light of the conflict with Orestes he was embroiled with during the period in which the letter would have been delivered. Socrates Scholasticus also gives us a rough date for the mob violence that resulted in the death of Hypatia, falling in the month of March during the Lenten season of the fourth year of Cyril's episcopate.[175] Cyril does offer a possible commentary on the reaction he or his adherents had received for promoting their ideas publicly. At the beginning of the letter, Cyril embarks on a defense of proselytization where he argues the benefits they have received through Christ demand verbalization and to be spread to

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[173] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 1.6, 47-8.

[174] John O'Keefe notes that the letters were often written in the preceding autumn to provide time for the scribal copying and shipment of the letters throughout the empire. They letters tending to be delivered around the feast of Epiphany, an equally problematic dating, as the feast day had likely not been formalized by the early fifth century. Saxer points to the Stromata of Clement as an early exemplar of the festival being celebrated by the gnostics of Basilides on January 6th or 10th, placing it in line with the modern feast of Epiphany. The feast takes on alternate significance throughout the east as a celebration of the miracle at the wedding, and Jesus' baptism, among others. In the East it tended to grow in significance after the introduction of the Roman celebration of the nativity on December 25, which came to Alexandria in 423; V. Saxer, "Epiphany, feast of," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity,* 2nd ed., eds. Angelo Bernardino et al. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2013), 830.

[175] Socrates, *HE* 7.15.

the world.[176] Cyril compares himself with Moses, who claimed to stutter or be slow of speech, arguing that he lacks the oratory skills to compete for attention and rather speaks out of compulsion.[177] Cyril writes, "It should be added that we are unpracticed in contests of speech, and we do not undertake to mount a display of Attic style. Let others busy themselves with such things, and with the display of oratorical brilliance; for our part, beloved, our discourse is brief, and we write because we must."[178] Cyril's referral to 'Attic style' is an attempt to downplay his skill in, or use of rhetorical speech, and it may reference altercations that occurred where Cyril was completely outmatched by his pagan counterparts, or faced censure by Orestes. Cyril is not forthcoming about what events he is specifically referring to with this statement, and it may merely be an encouraging homiletic on proselytization for his less educated audience. The unusual lack of condemnation of the pagans and, more surprisingly, the Jews may also be evidence Cyril was seeking to distance himself from the events that were rapidly spinning out of control within the city. This, however, is only a commentary on the evidence of absence, and there are no explicit or metaphorical statements in which Cyril enjoins violence toward the pagan populace in the festal letter of 415 CE.

The most damning critique Cyril gives of his pagan contemporaries comes in his third letter in the year 416 CE. Here again he does not cast the pagans as criminal, but rather guilty of the crime of pride, impudence, and foolishness:

> The cross is ridiculed by the Greeks, who are wise as far as speech goes, and whose finery consists of bare words, but who are so slow when it comes to finding the truth, that the very thing they seem to resemble is nothing other than pack-asses, who waggle their ears at those accustomed to making the loveliest music, but who understand nothing of the art of playing the lyre. They ought to be ashamed of their own thoughtlessness and seek to be benefited by the instruction of those who could teach them the truth, but

[176] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.1-2, 52-3.
[177] Exod 4.10.
[178] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.2, 53-4.

> instead they laugh at those they should envy, and flee from those whom it behooved them to imitate thoroughly, were they wise. But those who import into the world however many gods each person wants, apart from him who "is" by nature, and who reject our words, would do well to listen to what in fact they say one of their poets said: "The rule of many is not good; let there be one lord, one king," the One who is in all and through all and over all.[179]

Within the overall Strict Father framework, this sort of behaviour is a critical transgression where disrespect of an authority can elicit censure and punishment.[180] In the rhetoric of Cyril, the pagans occupied a space that was corrupting, and yet did not bear the same level of censure or risk to the body politic as the Jews. This is likely due to the fact that Cyril did not consider the Pagans as belonging to the same "family" in the sense that they did not claim belief in the same God, or hold to the same authoritative myths or shared history. For Cyril, the Pagans are wrong and corrupt, but unintentionally so, and while motive does not lessen guilt, it may lessen the harshness of the punishment.

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[179] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.3, 74-5. Cyril quotes Homer, *Iliad* 2.204.
[180] Geoffrey Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity*: *The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 143-5.

4. Bruce Lincoln's Classificatory Framework

Wendy Mayer has demonstrated that the use of metaphor within rhetoric provides a rubric for categorization that can lead to acts of violence. External experience, framed in linguistic metaphor moulds our moral intuitive judgements to form action responses to external stimuli. Using Bruce Lincoln's post-structuralist theory of classification we can begin to frame violent acts through the use of a taxonomic framework. Lincoln writes that his work "pursue[s] the question of how certain specific modes of discourse—myth, ritual, and classification—can be, and have been, employed as effective instruments not only for the replication of established social forms (this much is well known), but more broadly for the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of society itself."[181] These discourses are divorced from history, making them appear to be 'natural', and thus reinforce an individual's belief in their reality. This in turn creates sentiments of affinity or estrangement with those who hold like or unlike moral intuitive judgements. Lincoln writes:

> Groups and individuals note similarities and dissimilarities of whatever sort between themselves and others, they can employ these as instruments with which to evoke the specific sentiments out of which social borders are constructed. These I refer to as affinity and estrangement, meaning to include under the general rubric of these terms, on the one hand, all feelings of likeness, common belonging, mutual attachment, and solidarity whatever their intensity, affective tone, and degree of consciousness - and, on the other hand, those corresponding feelings of distance, separation, otherness, and alienation.[182]

Lincoln has demonstrated that this theory can apply to both modern and pre-modern societies, providing a helpful model to understanding the forces at play in fifth-century Alexandria. [183]

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[181] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 3.
[182] Ibid., 9-10.
[183] Lincoln's post-structual theses have been worked out across several monographs, highlighting a variety of modern and pre-modern exemplars as supporting evidence. For some of his more broad ranging analyses see: Bruce Lincoln, *Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia, with an appendix on Abu Ghraib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

Classification is an effective and highly valuable rhetorical tool to authorize who or what is of importance or acceptable, as well as for creating an hierarchical taxonomic structure whereby aspects of society can be encoded.[184] These taxonomies form part of the authorizing practices within which individuals understand their place in the authorized mythic societal framework, the roles and rituals expected of said station, and who or what is to be avoided, punished, or destroyed. Lincoln writes that the hierarchies created by the taxonomies at play require persuasive legitimation, but prove significant factors in social change:

> The constituent subgroups of any society are encompassed within hierarchic orders and enjoy differential rank and privileges, including (most importantly) differential access to, and control over, scarce resources of a material and nonmaterial nature. Such hierarchies and the inequities they engender are always subject to contestation. They are defended, above all, through those discourses that legitimate or mystify their structures, premises, and workings. Insofar as such discourses remain broadly persuasive, hierarchic orders are able to sustain most challenges. Those discourses that disrupt previously persuasive discourses of legitimation and those that mobilize novel social formations by evoking previously latent sentiments of affinity or estrangement are among the most powerful instruments of social change.[185]

The basis upon which these classifications are formed is through the use of myth. Lincoln offers one description of myth as "that small class of stories that possess both credibility and authority."[186] Credibility may be established by reference to certain historical elements within the story, but also by the sentiment of credibility granted by the society to the individual actor. This is a sort of feedback loop, where credibility may be reinforced with every successful iteration of the story, even as the discourse changes. Authority becomes granted to an individual through their reinforcement of these credible myths, thus granting them the right to

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2007); *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A Study in the Ecology of Religions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

[184] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 7-8.

[185] Ibid., 174.

[186] Ibid., 24.

authoritatively interpret them.[187] This in turn moulds society to the interpretation of those who have been granted authority, developing a robust system of social expectations and norms, rituals, as well as a framework of what is inside/outside. Lincoln describes this process through his analysis of revolutionary slogans from Russia and retribution myths from North Africa, writing of a narrative's authoritative power:

> A narrative possessed of authority is one for which successful claims are made not only to the status of truth, but what is more, to the status of *paradigmatic* truth. In this sense the authority of myth is somewhat akin to that of charters, models, templates, and blueprints, but one can go beyond this formulation and recognize that it is also (and perhaps more important) akin to that of revolutionary slogans and ancestral invocations, in that through the recitation of myth one may effectively mobilize a social grouping. Thus, myth is not just a coding device in which important information is conveyed, on the basis of which actors can then construct society. It is also a discursive act through which actors evoke the sentiments out of which society is actively constructed.[188]

These stories can be recalled by authoritative voices to justify modes of thought and behavior that would otherwise be contrary to societal norms, or operate as a form of revolutionary authority to replace the pre-existent institutional authority.[189] The use of myth to justify violence is most apparent in Cyril's festal letters, where he tunes his rhetoric to a particular mythic presentation of Jewish history. This act removes historical contingency of the texts he is citing, making his interpretation acceptable to his audience. Lincoln provides a classification framework for the relationship between truth-claims, credibility, and the resulting authority of different types of discourses. The following figure demonstrates the hierarchy of discourses, reinforcing what is found in Cyril's practice of reinforcing metaphor through the use of myth.

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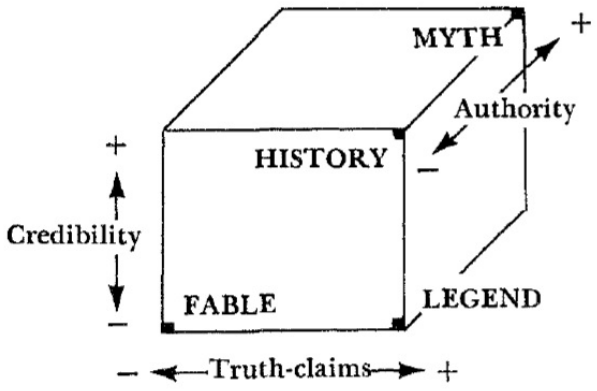
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid., 24-5.
[189] Ibid., 26.



	Truth-claims	*Credibility*	*Authority*
Fable	–	–	–
Legend	+	–	–
History	+	+	–
Myth	+	+	+

Figure 1. *Lincoln's Classification of Narrative Discourses*[190]

Cyril's writing draws its source material primarily from Christian myth through Biblical quotation, and as we can see from Lincoln's framework this would form the strongest claims to authority for those who adhere to those myths.[191]

Taxonomies emerge as a function of these myths, assigning sub-classes to those categorized by these foundational stories. In the case of fifth-century Alexandria, we can see a hierarchy emerge which first institutes a taxonimizer of Christian / Non-Christian, and further categorizing those individuals within categories such as Orthodox / Novatian, or Pagan / Jew. These hierarchies not only categorize, but also place a value on the given group and establish their respective right to freedom from violence. Figure 2 demonstrates the hierarchical nature of these social relationships. The taxonomizers are derived from the social groupings, and the

[190] Ibid., 25, *fig.* 1.3.
[191] Cameron, 79-80.

perceived value of those groups within the hierarchy is determined by the authorizing practices at play. The first layer categorizes how closely a group adheres to truth-claims for legitimacy, and the second views them through the cognitive frame of purity, relating how they are encoded relative to Cyril's metaphor of unbelief as impure and criminal.

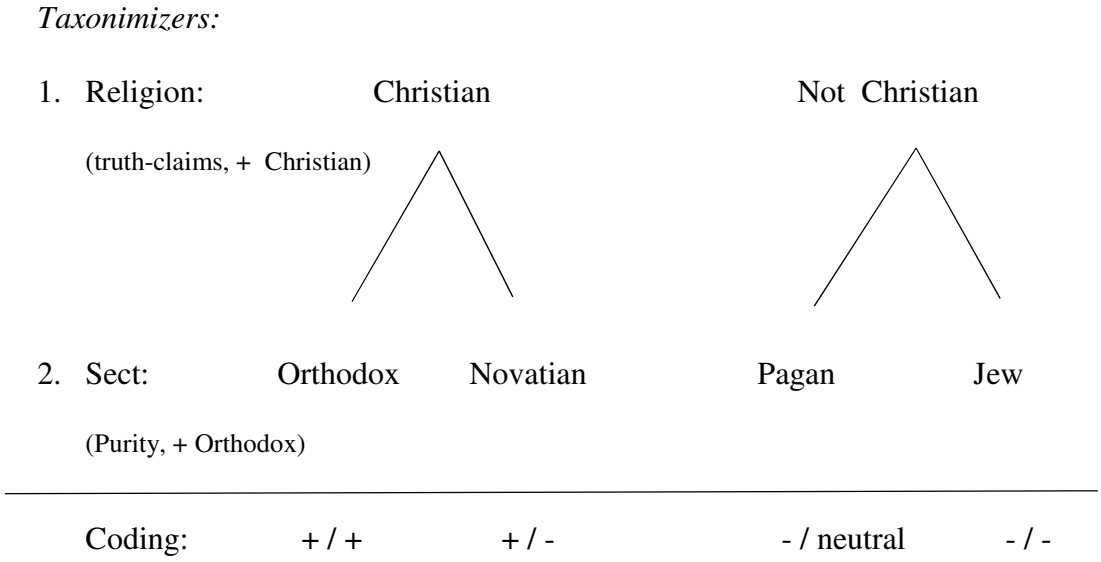


Figure 2. *Taxonomy and Hierarchy in Fifth-Century Alexandria*

The so-called Orthodox Christian grouping is coded as doubly positive, in that they adhere to a particular legitimized form of belief in Christ, and their acceptance of this soteriological narrative falls within the bounds of Cyril's interpretation. The Novatian sect under Cyril's rule gains a mixed position, and were faced with forceful eviction of its churches and a dismantling of its ecclesiastical apparatus. This was due to the group being coded as lacking legitimacy for its rigorist response to lapsed Christians, and lack of recognition in the Church's ability to grant absolution.[192] The pagans are coded negatively, but are cast by Cyril as merely misled rather than willfully disobedient. This is in opposition to his presentation of the Jews, who are coded as

[192] P. H. Weyer, "Novatian (Antipope) and Novatianism," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 10 (Detroit: Gale Cengage, 2003), 464-5.

doubly-negative for their adherence to the scriptures but deniers of the message of Christ. Cyril stated this blatantly in his Festal Letter of 416 CE:

> The Jews, that is, who practice impiety to the last degree, are scandalized at the cross of Christ our Savior, and exceed the madness of the pagans to such an extent, that I believe that if anyone were to sit as judge of the two peoples, he would, I think, condemn the former and declare the practices of the latter less evil. For since they have not yet read the holy Scriptures, he would doubtless say, it is hardly surprising if they have failed to attain to true doctrine. The others, although they are instructed in piety by the Law and the prophets, have outdone the pagans in unreasonableness to the same degree that the excuse for the others' ignorance may be thought reasonable; they are without any defense which might present their stupidity as an unavoidable illness.[193]

This statement echoes Paul's sentiments toward the judgement visited upon the Jews for their active 'denial of the law,' rather than those non-Jews who Paul writes are a "law unto themselves."[194]

Cyril's use of destabilizing rhetoric helped in forming taxonomizers founded upon conceptual frames of purity and criminality, which joined with mythic discourse to form authorizing practices condoning violence. This construct of authorizing practices, which links the metaphor => conceptual frame => moral intuitive judgements of Mayer's thesis with the taxonomic classification framework found in Lincoln's work provides a rubric for understanding Cyril's involvement in the instigation of violence in Alexandria. It is important to understand the social context in which these events occurred, and influence of Cyril's uncle Theophilus on the development of this form of rhetorical discourse.

4.1. The Context for Cyril of Alexandria's Rule as Archbishop

Cyril of Alexandria is among the most important individuals in fifth-century Christianity. His role in the controversies surrounding Nestorius, and his firm stance on a *theotokos*

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[193] Cyril, *Ep. fest.* 4.4, 75.
[194] Rom 2.1-24.

formulation in discussions about the incarnation placed him at the center of events that paved the way for later Christian orthodoxy. Despite this, little is known of Cyril's early life until his appointment as archbishop in Alexandria in 412 CE. The primary sources for his life are varied and derive from several historical periods and present differing biases.

The Christian community of fifth-century Alexandria was dominated by Cyril and his troop of loyal *parabalani,* with their sphere of influence radiating outwards to the smaller churches, and martyria, and monastic complexes.[195] The main church complex in the early fifth-century was most likely the "Great Church" built on the site of the defunct Caesareum. Commissioned by emperor Constantius II as gift for the Arian bishop Gregorius (c.339-345 CE), it took pre-eminence over the Church of St. Dionysius after the reinstatement of bishop Athanasius I from his second exile (c. 345 CE).[196] Theophilus had also expanded the church holdings, building another church on the Serapeum site dedicated to emperor Theodosius, and consecrating a church to saint Rafael on the island of Pharos, likely from a seized temple to the navigation deity Isis Pharia.[197] The closing of the Novatian churches, and their likely confiscation and repurposing for orthodox means, points to the fact that there must have been a number of other centers besides the few significant structures mentioned by Socrates, John of Nikiû, and the other ecclesiologists. Around the Mareotic Lake and up the canals which connected to the Nile there were a significant number of small communities, many of them monastic settlements which would have fallen under the jurisdiction of Cyril. Enaton, the settlement at the ninth mile post to the west of the city was one such community. This larger

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[195] Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 206-214.
[196] Heinz Heinen, "Alexandria in Late Antiquity," in *Coptic Encyclopedia,* vol. 8 (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 102.
[197] Ibid.

community hosted a significant number of monks, who were the main source of unrest during the patriarchate of Peter Mongos in the late 5th century, being incited to violent anti-pagan reprisals by the bishop.[198] Across the Mareotic Lake, a canal stretched into the desert tying the monastic communities of Nitria, Kellis, and Scetis to the vital inland and coastal ports. John O'Keefe posits that Cyril may have spent as much as five years living in Nitria during his training as a young man, cementing this relationship between the Bishop and the distant monastic communities that engaged the "wilderness" in what were the un-urbanized tracts of marginal land set back from the watercourses.[199]

The actual numbers of Christians in the Alexandrian region during Cyril's reign is difficult to estimate, with even the population of the city remaining at best an educated guess. These modern estimates range from 500,000 to 1,500,000.[200] Studies on onomastic shifts, meaning the changing nature of given names, in the communities surrounding Alexandria demonstrate a shift in names on the tax rolls from a parity of distinctly Christian and pagan names in the 320s, to a hegemonic 90% of Christian names by the fifth-century.[201] Similar evidence of the shift from pagan to Christian names is lacking within Alexandria, and so it is

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[198] Haas, 328-9. Haas cites the first hand accounts of Zachariah of Mytilene, whose accounts from his period studying in Alexandria during the 480s CE demonstrate significant Christian reprisals against pagan communities and temples in Canopus and Menouthis.
[199] O'Keefe, 8.
[200] Diana Delia, "The Population of Roman Alexandria," *Transactions of the American Philological Society (1974-2014)*, 118 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 275. See cf. 2 for a bibliography of the various modern attempts at estimating Alexandria's population throughout its Roman period.
[201] R. Bagnall and B. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 54; R. Bagnall, "Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change m Early Byzantine Egypt," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 19, no. 3-4 (1982): 105-24; E. Wipszycka, "La valeur de l'onomastique pour l'histoire de la christianisation de l'Egypte," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 62 (1986): 173-81.

difficult to support a comparison from outside the city to the population within.[202] A cosmopolitan center such as Alexandria with one of the most important ports in the Mediterranean would have boasted a diverse population, in contrast to the surrounding rural environs. Whatever the population distribution was, the beliefs and practices of individuals were likely not hegemonic. Syncretistic practices were likely present within all sectors of the society across religious boundaries.[203] Meyer and Smith have compiled a body of Coptic magical texts dating largely from the fourth century onward to the eleventh century depicting a thriving trade in magical paraphernalia and apotropaic devices, many invoking old Egyptian, as well as Greco-Roman deities alongside the names of Christ and angelic beings.[204] It is clear the various authorities in Alexandria were in a state of competition for an audience, both with the ad hoc ritual practitioners who were both generating and propagating syncretic practices, as well as with each other for the conceptualization of urban spaces and the constitution of authority over those spaces.[205]

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[202] Haas, 188-190.

[203] For a detailed discussion of the extent and scope of syncretic practices in Egypt between the fourth and seventh centuries, see David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[204] Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[205] Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt,* 44-63; For a discussion of the competition for authority and its relationship to violence and the conceptualization of public space, see Catherine M. Chin, "'Built from the Plunder of Christians': Words, Places, and Competing Powers in Milan and Callinicum," in *Religious Competition in the Greco-Roman World, eds. Nathaniel P. DesRosiers and Lily C. Vuong* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016): 63-78. Chin examines Ambrose's use of the conceptualization of authority over urban space to equate the authority of the basilica and the palace, thus allowing providing him with platform to authorize anti-Jewish violence in Callinicum.

4.2. Theophilus' Influence on Cyril

Cyril's style of leadership developed during his tenure under his uncle Theophilus' command. Cyril followed in his uncle's footsteps in encroaching on the authority held by the state, and using his own form of militia to dole out punishment or enforce his commands. The young archbishop also acquired from his uncle an understanding of how to use classification strategies to generate sentiments of affinity or estrangement, helping to encourage a more vigorous response from those he had authority over. These strategies generated the kind of hostility towards Jews in Cyril's day that was evidenced against Pagans during the storming f the Serapeum by Theophilus. Similarly, the campaign by Theophilus to depose John Chrysostom from his see in Constantinople will play out again when Cyril successfully deposed Nestorius from the same position decades later. Cyril's tactics of utilizing group identities couched in theological rhetoric was a staple of his uncle's reign in Alexandria, and was a skillset the young Cyril certainly learned while a subordinate of the archbishop.

Theophilus appears to have expanded the political influence of the bishop's role, wading into inter-sectarian conflicts with the Origenists, and superseding the traditional bounds of a bishop's power by the violent censure of pagan cult, and the repatriation of cult shrines into churches.[206] The storming of the Serapeum, was by Sozomen's account, a just retribution for an armed pagan insurrection. Sozomen's depiction contains several details of importance that show acts of classification that both incite and justify violence. Theophilus had been granted, by the emperor, the right to convert the temple of Dionysus into a church, and instead of engaging in

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[206] J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 191-3. Theophilus made an about face from his previous support for Origen's interpretation of an incorporeal God, and after criticism from the monastic communities of Nitria and Scetis he took on an anthropomorphic viewpoint.

mere iconoclasm, created a public exhibition of the sacred *phalli* of the Dionysian cult.[207] Unable to bear the outrage, a group of militant pagans stormed the Serapeum, allegedly killing Christians, and forcing others to offer sacrifices on pain of execution. They rallied around a man named Olympias, who attired himself in the garments of a philosopher, vowing to die rather than neglect their old gods.[208] Once the local authorities realized the situation was out of control, they appealed to the emperor, who declared the pagans guilty, and elevated the status of slain Christians:

> When the emperor was informed of these occurrences, he declared that the Christians who had been slain were blessed, inasmuch as they had been admitted to the honor of martyrdom, and had suffered in defense of the faith. He offered free pardon to those who had slain them, hoping that by this act of clemency they would be the more readily induced to embrace Christianity; and he commanded the demolition of the temples in Alexandria which had been the cause of the popular sedition. It is said that, when this imperial edict was read in public, the Christians uttered loud shouts of joy, because the emperor laid the odium of what had occurred upon the pagans.[209]

This edict caused a dissolution of the pagan revolt, and they fled the Serapeum, leaving it free for Theophilus' forces to occupy and claiming it as a church named for the emperor Arcadius.[210]

The entire situation surrounding the violence at the Serapeum involves a discourse of public classification by the majority power as an act of delegitimization of a minority group. Theophilus' initial public presentation of cult items classified them as base objects, stripped of their position within a religious semiotic system and removed from their sacred space. They were

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[207] Sozomen, *HE* 7.15.
[208] Sozomen, HE 7.15. Olympias' rhetoric is preserved in Sozomen, "Perceiving that they were greatly dispirited by the destruction of the idolatrous statues, he assured them that such a circumstance did not warrant their renouncing their religion; for that the statues were composed of corruptible materials, and were mere pictures, and therefore would disappear; whereas, the powers which had dwelt within them, had flown to heaven." His classification of corruptible substance vs. incorruptible form can be compared to Lincoln's description of clerical bodies in revolutionary Spain (Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society,* 106-8).
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

reclassified from objects of veneration to objects of scorn, rewriting their symbolic value. This served to call into question the veracity and power of the cult that held them in esteem. Sozomen writes:

> About this period, the bishop of Alexandria, to whom the temple of Dionysus had, at his own request, been granted by the emperor, converted the edifice into a church. The statues were removed, the adyta (hidden statues) were exposed; and, in order to cast contumely on the pagan mysteries, he made a procession for the display of these objects; the phalli (ritual symbols of Dionysus), and whatever other object had been concealed in the adyta which really was, or seemed to be, ridiculous, he made a public exhibition of.[211]

Lincoln discusses this form of iconoclasm by examining the exhumations of bodies of the clergy during the Spanish revolution. He states that the purpose was to destroy symbolic representations of sanctity or holiness by displaying the mummified corpses of 'incorruptable' nuns. As Lincoln writes:

> But we must also consider what exhumation did to those against whom it was performed, for there can be no mistaking the aggression implicit in the act. That aggression, of course, was not directed principally against the individuals actually exhumed, but against the religious institution they represented and, beyond that, against the social order that institution served. Like the widespread burning of churches, decapitation and disfigurement of religious statues, parodic appropriation of religious images and ecclesiastic paraphernalia, and acts of symbolic violence against the same, the exhumation of the religious may be considered—in a broad sense, at least—as an act of iconoclasm.[212]

Iconoclastic violence reverberates deeply into the symbolic structures which hold a *status quo* in check, and act as a radical fissure in that reality, thus operating as a powerful motivator to the reconstruction of society.

Emperor Theodosius' edict also had the effect of classifying actors within the events, and despite Sozomen's account noting that his intercession came on behalf of Evagrius the praefect and Romanus, the general of Egypt, it is likely Theophilus had a hand in eliciting the edict as

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[211] Ibid.
[212] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 117.

well.[213] The edict classified the Christians who died at the hands of anti-Christian violence to be presented as martyrs. Norman Russell notes that Theophilus had the space rededicated as a martyrium to St. John the Baptist, placing some the saints relics within, in what Russell describes as an act of the power over the traditional Egyptian religion.[214] This powerful branding had an immediate effect, and despite the clemency offered to the pagan revolters, it served to delegitimize any form of anti-Christian action. Finally, the act of iconoclastic reclassification of both the Serapeum and the temple of Dionysus into church buildings provided fuel for the metaphoric purification Theophilus was performing on the city. This process must have had a profound impact on Cyril's development as an authoritative figure, as we see him seek to continue this process through the destruction of the Novatianist sect, the expurgation of the Jews, and delegitimization of the pagan populace.

The most influential events during Cyril's tenure working under his uncle was the extended controversy over Origenist conceptions of God, which found Theophilus mounting an attack against the monastic communities of the Alexandrian See. Their appeal to John Chrysostom brought Theophilus into direct conflict with the archbishop of Constantinople, and escalated to the point of Chrysostom's expulsion from the episcopate. The incident provides an interesting example of how an authoritative individual can delegitimize the authority of certain myths and elevate others to redraw the classificatory hierarchy within a community.

Theophilus had maintained a positive relationship with the monastic community at Nitria, and had sent Cyril to be educated there for a period of several years.[215] Two important exegetes, Didymus and Evagrius, had spent much of their lives in the community, and both had developed

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[213] Ibid.
[214] Norman Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2006), 10-11.
[215] O'Keefe, 8.

nuanced interpretations based on Origen's writings, asserting that the God is incorporeal spirit, and the journey to God is one of assent from human to divine, until deification equal with Christ, participating in the true *Gnosis*, found in the *Logos*.[216] It is uncertain what impact their teaching had on Cyril, as the events at the turn of the fifth century deemed all such teachings anathema. Sozomen claims that Theophilus incorporated an Origenist message of an incorporeal God in his lost festal letter of 399.[217] This incited furor and censure from the monastic communities surrounding Alexandria, with the monk Serapion claiming, "They have taken my God from me, and I have now none to lay hold of; and whom to worship and address I know not."[218] Sozomen accounts that Theophilus mollified them by flipping sides:

> Theophilus, however, presented himself to the insurgents immediately, and said to them, When I look upon you, it is as if I beheld the face of God. This address sufficiently mollified the men; yielding their wrath, they replied, Wherefore, then, if you really hold orthodox doctrines, do you not denounce the books of Origen; since those who read them are led into such opinions? Such has long been my intention, replied he, and I shall do as you advise; for I blame not less than you do, all those who follow the doctrines of Origen. By these means he deluded the brethren, and broke up the sedition.[219]

Sozomen's account led to a standard interpretation of Theophilus as one willing to change sides for personal and political preservation.[220] In 399 CE, Theophilus recalled Cyril to Alexandria and began his campaign against a group of monks nicknamed the "Tall Brothers."[221] Sozomen equates the start of Theophilus' campaign against the Origenists with a personal grudge he held

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[216] Russell, *Theophilus*, 24.
[217] Susan Wessel, *Cyril and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24.
[218] Cassian, *Conferences* 10.3.
[219] Sozomen, *HE* 8.11
[220] Russell, *Theophilus*, 22.
[221] E. M. Harding, "Origenist Crises", in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. by John Anthony McGuckin (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 162–167. For evidence of Theophilus' Origenist roots, see Wessel, *Cyril*, 24; Socrates, *HE* 7.7; Russell challenges this view, arguing Theophilus' Origenist statements were rather challenges to a more extreme anthropomorphist belief, see: Russell, *Theophilus*, 22-3.

against a certain Isidore. Isidore had been Theophilus' agent during previous crises in Palestine, and Theophilus had tried to install him in the bishopric of Constantinople after the death of Nectarius. The particular dispute arose between them when Isidore refused to acknowledge an inheritance directed towards Cyril's mother, as well as when he declined to hand over donations given to aid the poor, which Theophilus purportedly wanted for the erection of churches.[222] The expulsion of Isidore led a group of Nitrian monks to protest the bishop's actions and despite promises to reinstate Isidore, Theophilus did nothing.[223]

This eventually led to escalating tensions, and culminated in the bishop throwing one of the monks in prison as an example. The remaining monks staged a sit-in in the prison, and refused to leave until Theophilus had dropped charges.[224] He eventually gave in, unwillingly, and rather than leave it be, he brought charges of Origenist belief on at least four of the monks of Nitria. This led to a crisis of identity within the monastic desert communities, and the four accused, fled to Palestine while Theophilus sent complaints against them to John Chrysostom, then bishop in Constantinople. The monks went and defended their case to Chrysostom, who sent a letter to Theophilus stating their innocence and asked that they be restored to communion.[225] They also received the support of the emperor's wife, who promised to call an ecclesiastical

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[222] Sozomen, *HE* 8.11-12. Russell notes that the Alexandrian Church until the late fifth century held little in the way of institutional wealth, and maintenance of ecclesiastical land was from the bishop's own treasury, or imperial grants, a possible justification for Theophilus' desire for the donations (*Theophilus,* 6). Other accounts of the events: Theophilus, "The Synodical Letter of Theophilus to the Bishops of Palestine and of Cyprus," in *The Letters of St. Jerome: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series,* vol. 6*,* trans. by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893), http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001092.htm; Palladius, *Dialogus* 6; Socrates, *HE* 6.7-9.

[223] Palladius, *Dialogus* 6.

[224] Sozomen, *HE* 8.12.

[225] Sozomen, *HE* 8.13; Palladius , *Dialogus* 7;

synod to which Theophilus would be summoned. This sparked a larger chain of political events which led to Theophilus managing to convince a body of bishops to denounce Chrysostom as an Origenist and depose him from the Constantinopolitan See.[226]

Theophilus' mastery of the situation is seen in his ability to manoeuver through the partisan debates relatively unscathed, ultimately achieving his goals through the relationships he fostered, and the ability to command the authority to draw new classificatory boundaries. In the late fourth century, the acceptance of interpretations on the teachings of Origen could be more or less acceptable to Orthodox Christians. Theophilus began with an ambiguous, and somewhat Origenist stance on the nature of God's being. When pressed by non-Origenist monks, Theophilus' response was both vague and non-committal, yet achieved the goal of setting the monks at ease that the bishop was in their camp.[227] Rather than attempt an assault on the monks himself, Sozomen notes that Theophilus sowed the seeds of discord between the Origenists and Anthropomorphists:

> He was in doubt, however, as to how he could ill-treat them, as they had no possessions, and despised everything but philosophy, until it occurred to him, to disturb the peace of their retirement. From his former intercourse with them he had gathered that they blamed those who believe that God has a human form, and that they adhered to the opinions of Origen; he brought them into collision with the multitude of monks who maintained the other view. A terrible contention prevailed among the monks, for they did not think it worth while to persuade one another by flaming arguments for themselves in an orderly way, but settled down into insults. They gave the name of Origenists to those who maintained the incorporeality of the Deity, while those who held the opposite opinion were called Anthropomorphists.[228]

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[226] Sozomen, *HE* 8.16-17; Palladius, *Dialogus* 8; Photius, *Bibliotheca* 59. Photius recounts the various accusations against Chrysostom by which Theophilus, with the aid of bribery and political intrigue, managed to depose the Constantinian archbishop. Palladius, *Dialogus* 6, gives Theophilus the nickname of "weather-cock," (ἀμφαλλάξ, lit. "alternating") a term derived from the turn of a tragic actor, referring to the bishop's moving with the winds of political change.
[227] Sozomen, *HE* 8.11. Theophilus' response to criticisms that he believed in a non-anthropomorphic, non-corporeal God was to state, "When I look upon you I, it is as if I beheld the face of God."
[228] Sozomen, *HE* 8.12.

Theophilus reframed his theological stance through use of language that was acceptable to his target audience, thus reclassifying it within an authoritative discourse. When paired with Theophilus' institutional authority, this put him in a unique position to reclassify individuals through the legitimacy he held by virtue of appealing to authoritative myths and institutions. This is the case when he branded the monks as heretical Origenists, when before their more esoteric views on the nature of God had been tolerated.

In order to entrench the classification of Origenism as a dangerous and potent heresy, Theophilus engaged in a large-scale campaign to exploit empire-wide anxiety over the threat of Origen's teachings.[229] Surviving letters demonstrate that the bishop drew on like minded individuals to advance his cause, implicating Jerome, Epiphanius, Dionysius, and the bishops of Palestine and Cyprus in his drive to cast Origen as heterodox.[230] As can be seen in the letters, Theophilus sought to encourage men in the powerful bishoprics around the Mediterranean to engage in an anti-Origenist campaign and delegitimize those who would not engage within his authorizing discourse. John Chrysostom is classified as an Origenist for his forgiveness and acceptance of accused Origenist monks, rather than for any defence of Origenist theology.[231]

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[229] For a detailed exposition of the breadth of the Origenist Crisis see Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). For a favorable presentation of Theophilus' role as a shepherding, solicitous bishop guarding against the Originest heresy see Krasta Banev, *Theophilus of Alexandria and the First Origenist Controversy: Rhetoric and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[230] For Theophilus' correspondence leading up to the Synod of the Oak, see Jerome, *Ep.* 63, 82, 86, 87, 90, 91, 94, 96, and 98.

[231] Peter Van Nuffelen, "Theophilus Against John Chrysostom: The Fragments of a Lost Liber and John's Deposition," *Adamantius* 19 (2013): 139-155. Van Nuffelen outlines the five major accusations against Chrysostom, noting that four were disciplinary violations, and one was a theological dispute. The synod also gave four summons to John, one more than legally required for the right to have a trial *in absentia*, thus displaying some form of leniency. While this may be a defence of Theophilus and his camp, it could be seen that accepting a summons to the synod would have meant Chrysostom accepted their accusations as holding any validity.

Whatever larger purpose Theophilus had in his political anti-Origenist movement, his reclassification of Origenism as the primary threat to Christian orthodoxy, and the use of the classificatory rubric to generate a socio-political body aimed at destroying it through forms of social, emotional and physical violence was instructional for Cyril. Similar sorts of practices can be seen employed by Cyril against the Jews and Pagans early in his reign as archbishop, and are more effectively executed in his campaign against Nestorianism. Theophilus' actions leading up to and during the Synod of the Oak can be seen as a masterclass for the young Cyril as his uncle prepared him for the role of running the Alexandrian see. His campaigns against the Novatianists and the local Jews show a similar strategy and application of classificatory tactics aimed at delegitimizing opposition and engaging a rubric of estrangement.

5. Cyril

Cyril of Alexandria was born in the late 360's CE in the town of Theodosiou, his father's hometown in lower Egypt.[232] According to John of Nikiû, Cyril's mother was orphaned when she was a child, and was raised by an Ethiopian nurse and her teenage brother Theophilus in Memphis for several years before fleeing persecution to Alexandria.[233] Cyril's education was under the supervision of his uncle, the archbishop Theophilus, until being sent to Nitria for a period of approximately 5 years.[234] He was recalled to Alexandria in 399 CE, and it is possible he was in Alexandria with Theophilus during the tensions with the Dionysian cult and the destruction of the Serapeum in 391 CE.[235] After the death of his uncle, Cyril fought a fraught campaign against another potential for the bishopric, Timothy the archdeacon, from which he emerged victorious and ascended to the episcopate in 412 CE.[236] Theophilus had left Cyril with a Christian community that was flexing its muscles and attempting to redraw the political landscape of the city through the establishment of more significant Christian authority. Despite this newfound strength and prominence, there was enough division within the community that during the election for bishop Roman soldiers were called in to keep the peace between at least two vociferous and violent factions.[237] Socrates Scholasticus states that Abundantius, the commander of the Roman troops in Egypt, had intervened on behalf of the archdeacon Timothy, creating a possible motive for Cyril's later feud with the Roman Praefect Orestes. Yet despite the

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[232] Russell, *Cyril*, 4; John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 79.12, John refers to the name of Cyril's father's town as Mahalle, formerly Didusja.
[233] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 74.1.
[234] O'Keefe, 8.
[235] O'Keefe, 12. Évieux, 20-29.
[236] Socrates, *HE* 7.7.
[237] Ibid.

supposed support for his rival, Cyril emerged victorious.[238] The intervention was likely non-partisan, as the Roman *modus operandi* was to efficiently quell any possible dissent or revolt.[239]

5.1.1. Cyril's Early Leadership and the Censuring of the Novatianists

Cyril inherited a bishopric in tension with the regional monastic communities, and the sustained attacks on the Constantinopolitan See had not ingratiated the Alexandrian bishop with the imperial court either.[240] Cyril's leadership took an almost immediate and decisive turn toward authoritarian control. Socrates' account states, "Cyril immediately therefore shut up the churches of the Novatians at Alexandria, and took possession of all their consecrated vessels and ornaments; and then stripped their bishop Theopemptus of all that he had."[241] That Cyril had the means to operate with impunity against a schismatic sect demonstrates that his authority over the Christian community was deemed legitimate. Cyril had both the clout and force in his *parabalani*, a pseudo-militia formed from the guild of hospital porters, to engage in the wholesale deposition of the Novatian bishop and the possession of his churches and their

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[238] Ibid.; For an analysis of possible errata in the manuscript tradition, see: Wessel, "Socrates' Narrative," 98-9.
[239] Wendy Mayer, and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London: Routledge, 2000), 104-5. The Imperial government would intervene in church affairs when there were significant stakes for general peace. An example is the Riot of the Statues that occurred in 387 in Antioch, after increased taxation led the populace to throw down statues of the imperial rulers. Bishop Flavian, as an urbanite of education, was forced to be complicit with the imperial powers, and despite protests was pressured to support a program of mass executions. To counteract this imperial power, he invited the monks of Syria led by Macedonius, who only spoke Syriac, to reproach the imperial agents, admonishing the emperor's anger, and threating more action if the imperium did not back down. Brown writes, "The wind of *parrhesia* had plainly come to blow from a different quarter" (*Power and Persuasion*, 106). The homiletic apologies to the imperial representatives were offered to prevent the execution of Christian instigators of the riots (Theodoret, *HE* 5.19).
[240] Wessel, *Cyril*, 23.
[241] Socrates, *HE* 7.7.

consecrated objects.[242] Nascent anti-Novatian opinion was already present within the greater empire, but Cyril's local reclassification efforts to describe Novatianism as a dangerous heresy engendered support for his expropriation and censuring tactics. This made shutting down a Christian sect relatively easy pickings, reinforcing the public perception of Cyril's authority without the risk of angering the larger imperial forces that may have perceived this as an act of self-policing. The Novatianist sect was the perfect target, as it allowed the bishop to present himself as a staunch orthodox reformer with a strong desire to get his own house in order. Wessel notes that Cyril's actions against the Novatians had legal standing after the Council of Nicaea, which denounced the Meletians for their rigourist non-acceptance of lapsed Christians, and a recent imperial edict in 412 against the Donatists for the same behavior during the Great Persecution of the fourth century likely emboldened the bishop.[243] Shutting these churches achieved two aims: the first was to unify the power-base of the Alexandrian See under Cyril's authority; and the second related aim was the reabsorption of church infrastructure into the hands of Cyril's own appointed clergy. Cyril's first festal letter from 414 CE, likely delivered after the Novatianist purge, opens with the bishop enjoining unity in the church:

> For he calls those who attend to the divine laws the Savior's choir, teaching them to form an assembly one in harmonious thought, rather than divided in mind and ideas, as they confess their faith in Christ, "in order that," as Paul says, "with one voice and one mind" we may keep our confession of him firm and unwavering."[244]

This ideal of unity in the Christian community, paired with the violent rhetoric Cyril imparts towards the Jewish community demonstrates that the archbishop may have felt his authority over the Alexandrian Christians was largely hegemonic.[245]

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[242] Russell, *Cyril*, 6.
[243] Ibid., 21.
[244] Cyril, *Ep. Fest* 1.1., 35. Cyril quotes Rom 12.16.
[245] Wessel, "Socrates' Narrative," 100-101; Haas, 295-300.

5.1.2. Violent Eviction of the Jewish Populace

Cyril's next target became the Alexandrian Jewish community and it is here that the use of violent rhetoric became the main instigating force. Christopher Haas writes that the Jews' participation in earlier Arian persecutions "may have convinced Cyril that his security was at least partially dependent upon neutralizing Jewish opposition."[246] Haas demonstrates that the Jewish community had significantly recovered from near annihilation at the hands of pagan imperial troops after their failed revolt of 115, reorganizing around a synagogue leadership structure.[247] Cyril's personal vendetta against the Jews stemmed from his development as an exegete, where central to his understanding of the Bible was the role of the Jews after the coming of Christ, whom he cast as impious, senseless, and murderers of God.[248] It is this interpretation which provides material for the metaphor as the Jews as criminals discussed above.[249]

Socrates describes the events leading up to the mob violence against the Jews, with an exposition of the escalating series of reprisals that eventually led to the expulsion of the Jews from the city. According to Socrates, the Jews had grown fond of celebrating the Sabbath by taking in popular dancing shows in the theatre.[250] These must have been the cause of some public disturbance, leading Orestes, the praefect around 415 CE, to demand restrictions set to limit the diversions in an effort to maintain peace.[251] Hierax, a *grammaticus* (a teacher of the secondary literary component of a student's education), was a Christian who Socrates claims was an avid

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[246] Haas, 300.
[247] Haas, 99-103.
[248] Ibid., 300-1.
[249] See pp. 45-50.
[250] Socrates, *HE* 7.13.
[251] Ibid.

follower of Cyril. Hierax was in attendance during the reading of Orestes' edict, and stirred up indignation among the Jews for applauding the Praefect's censure. Socrates writes:

> There was among them a certain Hierax, a teacher of the rudimental branches of literature, and one who was a very enthusiastic listener of the bishop Cyril's sermons, and made himself conspicuous by his forwardness in applauding. When the Jews observed this person in the theatre, they immediately cried out that he had come there for no other purpose than to excite sedition among the people. Now Orestes had long regarded with jealousy the growing power of the bishops, because they encroached on the jurisdiction of the authorities appointed by the emperor, especially as Cyril wished to set spies over his proceedings; he therefore ordered Hierax to be seized, and publicly subjected him to the torture in the theatre.[252]

We can see the careful leadership of Orestes on display in Socrates' summary of the events, demonstrating his primary goal was not in censuring any particular community, but rather to prevent factors that might instigate violence. His response to the potential powder keg is swift, and to mitigate the displeasure caused by the edict and Hierax's escalation of the crowd, he has the grammaticus publicly flogged for inciting unrest. Connecting Socrates' description of events to Cyril's first festal letter earlier that year, Hierax's public praise for the edict of Orestes is in keeping with Cyril's rhetoric, exhorting punishment for those who no longer observe God's commandments, and ignore the exhortations to prayer and fasting.

Socrates continues to describe how Cyril met with the Jewish leaders, condemning the actions in the theatre, and calling on them to cease hostilities or face retribution.[253] He writes that, "Cyril, on being informed of this, sent for the principal Jews, and threatened them with the utmost severities unless they desisted from their molestation of the Christians. The Jewish populace on hearing these menaces, instead of suppressing their violence, only became more furious."[254] The outrage of the Jewish community at Cyril's rebuke is quite understandable, and

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[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.

it seems that the archbishop had overestimated the control he wielded in the city. The Jews were not willing to accept of the classification placed upon them by Cyril's rhetoric, and instead embarked on a countermove to push back at the Christian community.

There were those within the Jewish community unwilling to take this slight in stride, and took action to demonstrate their autonomy. A small group of Jews raised a false alarm that a church was burning, and when the Christians responded, they "fell upon and slew" those who were hurrying to help put out the fire.[255] Socrates heightens the drama of the event by noting that the conspirators wore rings with the sign of a palm, and this allowed them to distinguish their Jewish co-conspirators from their Christian prey.[256] It is hard to imagine what motivations pushed the conspirators to such an attack on unwitting and vulnerable individuals, and we must either assume they felt a significant threat from Cyril's censure, or were being inspired by their own violent rhetoric promoting Jewish hegemony through violent reprisal.

This event led to a downward spiral of violent reprisals from the Christian populace, leading to the forced expulsion of the entire Jewish populace from the city, and the pillaging of their homes. Socrates directly connects Cyril to the events following the night attack on the Christians. He writes that the archbishop's retribution was swift, and severe:

> Cyril, accompanied by an immense crowd of people, going to their synagogues— for so they call their house of prayer— took them away from them, and drove the Jews out of the city, permitting the multitude to plunder their goods. Thus the Jews who had inhabited the city from the time of Alexander the Macedonian were expelled from it, stripped of all they possessed, and dispersed some in one direction and some in another.[257]

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[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.

What physical role Cyril played in the enterprise is uncertain, as Socrates may have been continuing his project of casting Cyril as vindictive and overreaching in his role.[258] It may be argued this was a justifiable response to a violent attack, similar to the scope of retribution meted out by the state if a similar sort of violent insurrection were committed against state representatives. Yet, even if Cyril's direct physical involvement in the expulsion of the Jews did happen, it was merely the product of a series of events that led to the justification of this violent expulsion that began with Cyril's rhetorical urging, and therefore does not reduce the importance of his rhetoric in instigating violence against Jews.

The wholesale expulsion of Jewish citizens was extreme, but was a major step towards the goal of Christian political hegemony that Cyril seemed to have his sights on. Cyril had already put in place an authorizing discourse which framed the Jews as willfully disobedient, and worthy of divine retribution. As the representative of the divine in the city of Alexandria, it was Cyril's duty to see this retribution meted out. Cyril responded to this violent encounter with a small group of Jews by forcefully evicting a major body of Jewish citizens from their homes and encouraging the mob to pillage and destroy the Jews' property. Cyril's rebuke of the Jewish leadership was an attempt to establish authority over a group where his institutional authority had no bearing. The authorizing discourse, creating a set of appropriate behaviors for the Jewish leaders and populace, failed, leading Cyril to establish a new authorized framework founded upon the metaphor of the Jews as impure criminals, one which made violence against the Alexandrian Jews is acceptable. In the absence of a discursive mechanism to create and maintain a societal paradigm where he was in control, Cyril used his ability to authorize the Christians to

[258] See pp. 6-7.

act as his enforcement mechanism to eradicate the Jewish counter-authority and limit their ability to counter-act his gradual acquisition of political power into the office of archbishop.

The expulsion of the Jews by Cyril culminated in a campaign of casting the Jewish populace as a dangerous and sinister threat that must be expunged to make the body well. The effectiveness of Cyril's rhetoric is evident in its influence over Hierax, and Socrates makes clear that Cyril not only produced authorizing practices founded upon a classificatory framework in which Jews became negatively coded, but personally endorsed these violent reprisals. Socrates offers a critique of the archbishop, "surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort."[259] It is evident that a system of authorized practices founded upon a metaphor of the Jews as criminals, therefore impure and in need of judgement and cleansing, led to a classification strategy whereby retributive violence was condoned.

5.1.3. The Attack on Orestes by the Monks of Nitria

The fallout of the expulsion of the Jews led to the praefect Orestes and Cyril both sending competing envoys to the emperor, seeking imperial support for their part in the situation, leaving a significant rift between the Church and state powers in the city.[260] Cyril's ability to excise the Jewish population from Alexandria despite Orestes' protests demonstrates that the archbishop's authority was coming into serious competition with the imperial office, serving to reinforce the impunity with which he saw his uncle act toward pagan groups a few decades earlier. This emboldened Cyril to demand reconciliation on his own terms with the Praefect, and offered

[259] Socrates, *HE* 7.15.
[260] Ibid.

Orestes a book of the gospels as a token.[261] This gift was laden with symbolism of the means through which Cyril legitimized his authority. As we have seen, it was through the foundational Christian myths found in the gospels that the archbishop's authority was engendered.[262] The situation demonstrates Cyril's masterful ability to utilize classificatory strategies for political purposes, as accepting the gospels would have created the optics that Orestes was under the archbishop's authority, while rejecting them would place the praefect at odds with the most populous and powerful group in the city, as well as challenging his place within an imperial state that increasingly identified itself with Christianity. Orestes chose to reject the gospels.

The monks of Nitria then chose this time of unrest to come to the aid of Cyril, responding to the praefect's denial of the gospels as an act of idolatry. This action was possibly instigated by a request from the archbishop himself, as he likely had strong connections to individuals in the Nitrian community from his five years of training there. Cyril's own upbringing in the small town of Theodosiou, not far from many of the monastic communities, may also have fostered an affinity for those who recused themselves from the cosmopolitan life.[263]

Socrates Scholasticus records the incident of the monks of Nitria, a monastic settlement about 60 miles downriver and across the Mareotis from Alexandria, coming in to the city to physically accost the Praefect Orestes. He writes:

> Some of the monks inhabiting the mountains of Nitria, of a very fiery disposition, whom Theophilus some time before had unjustly armed against Dioscorus and his brethren, being again transported with an ardent zeal, resolved to fight on behalf of Cyril. About five hundred of them therefore quitting their monasteries, came into the city; and meeting the prefect in his chariot, they called him a pagan idolater, and applied to him many other abusive epithets. He supposing this to be a snare laid for him by Cyril, exclaimed that he was a Christian, and had been baptized by Atticus the bishop at Constantinople. As they

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[261] Ibid.
[262] See Figure 1, p. 57.
[263] Severus al'Ashmunein, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, 1.11, ed. B. Evetts (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1906-15): 427-8.

> gave but little heed to his protestations, and a certain one of them named Ammonius threw a stone at Orestes which struck him on the head and covered him with the blood that flowed from the wound, all the guards with a few exceptions fled, plunging into the crowd, some in one direction and some in another, fearing to be stoned to death.[264]

Socrates' description of the events highlight the palpable tension Cyril had created through his actions with Orestes. Creating the situation where the praefect was forced to either concede to Cyril's authority or be cast as an idolater warrants the speculation that the violent mob was encouraged by Cyril. As we have seen above, the authorizing practices employed by Cyril against the pagans was not so explicit in condoning violence, but did categorize them in a similar category as the Jews, deserving of retribution for their ignorance rather than willful rejection of the Christ.[265]

The monks' intervention in the conflict between Orestes and Cyril could be viewed as means of producing a contravening authority to destabilise the power base in Alexandrian society. The monk Ammonius casting the stone at Orestes dashed any hopes of a peaceful resolution.[266] The execution of Ammonius was an expected result of such an action, as a physical attack on a praefect would have been classified as an attack on the imperial institution itself.[267] Yet Orestes' response signaled the desperation he was under to maintain order. If Cyril had recognized his failure and decided to bide his time, this may have been the end of hostilities that year. However, that was not to be. Cyril instead chose to petition for Ammonius' body and gave it the honor due an official martyr by placing it in a *martyrium*.[268] Socrates chronicles Cyril's attempts at canonization of the monk:

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[264] Socrates, *HE* 7.14.
[265] See Anti-Pagan Rhetoric in the Festal Letters, pp. 50-54.
[266] Socrates, *HE* 7.14.
[267] Maurice Millner, Max Rheinstein, et. al., "Roman Law," in *Encyclopedia Brittanica* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Brittanica, 2018), https://www.britannica.com/topic/Roman-law.
[268] Socrates, *HE* 7.14.

> Cyril also on the other hand forwarded his statement of the matter to the emperor: and causing the body of Ammonius to be deposited in a certain church, he gave him the new appellation of Thaumasius, ordering him to be enrolled among the martyrs, and eulogizing his magnanimity in church as that of one who had fallen in a conflict in defense of piety.[269]

Despite Cyril's effort to seize the reins of Alexandria through this act, it backfired, forcing him into silence. Socrates writes of the reaction from Cyril's own community:

> But the more sober-minded, although Christians, did not accept Cyril's prejudiced estimate of him; for they well knew that he had suffered the punishment due to his rashness, and that he had not lost his life under the torture because he would not deny Christ. And Cyril himself being conscious of this, suffered the recollection of the circumstance to be gradually obliterated by silence.[270]

This is further evidence that Cyril's authority was not fully entrenched, not only in the city as a whole, but even within his own community. The failure of Cyril's classificatory strategy is evidence that he was stretching the boundaries of the authoritative discourse of what constitutes a martyr, and that while Cyril's attempt at classification of Orestes as a pagan had sway with the monks living outside the city, it was less convincing for the urban population. Despite this failure, it is evident that Cyril was attempting to create a rubric of authorizing practices, drawing lines around what constitutes legitimate behaviour, and firmly connecting those behaviours to an authoritative myth. For the archbishop, the gospels were the ultimate authority rather than a historical imperial office, and the conceptual frames formed from metaphors drawn from those texts create classifications of pure/impure individuals and actions.

5.1.4. The Murder of Hypatia

The echoes of the violence that began with Hierax in theatre continued to have reverberations throughout the city. Cyril's attempts at managing the narrative after the expulsion

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[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.

of the Jews and subsequent attack on the praefect were not convincing, and had placed him at greater odds with Roman authority in the city. Peter Brown writes that "it was essential to Cyril, as the newly installed patriarch, that he should have the monopoly of *parrhesia* in Alexandria. No unbeliever must be seen to carry weight with Orestes."[271] Brown notes that it is only after Cyril has gained a significant place of political authority that he goes after the one person who could challenge his right to *parrhesia*, and it is then that Hypatia is murdered. She was seen to be a vestigial inheritor of the pagan philosopher who could operate as a counterpoint to authority, and it was believed that Orestes still held her opinion in high esteem.[272] The lack of reconciliation between Cyril and Orestes led to displeasure in the Christian congregations, and the blame for the praefect's stubbornness began to be directed toward Hypatia. This tenuous connection was all the proof that was needed for a lector named Peter to encourage a mob which accosted Hypatia in the street. The mob found her riding in her carriage, dragged her from it to the church in the Caesereum, stripped her naked, and then stoned her to death with tiles.[273] To add final insult to injury, her body was torn to pieces, and then burned at a place called Cinaron.[274]

The horrific violence of such an act is shocking, yet the willingness and vehemence of the Christian mob's actions can be contextualized within the rhetoric espoused by Cyril. His festal letters present a refrain to prepare one's self for the coming Easter season, rooting out sinfulness and casting off hindering attitudes or behaviors, a purging of pollution from the body.[275] We

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[271] Brown, *Power and Persuasion,* 116.
[272] Ibid.*,* 116-17; Socrates, *HE* 7.15; John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84.87.
[273] Socrates, *HE* 7.14-15.
[274] Socrates, *HE* 7.15.
[275] Cyril, *Ep. fest.*, 1.1-2, 35-41. The language Cyril employs is drawn from Eph. 4.22-4, and Col. 3.10, where the author speaks to putting to death, or casting off the old self, and renewing oneself in spiritual truth found in the Christ.

have noted above that the violent rhetoric Cyril employed towards the Jews had similar ramifications for the pagans, and cast their lack of belief in Christ as infectious impiety.[276] John of Nikiû prominently displays this belief in casting Hypatia not only as a counterpoint to Cyril's authority, but as a seductive sorceress:

> And in those days there appeared in Alexandria a female philosopher, a pagan named Hypatia, and she was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles. And the governor of the city honoured her exceedingly; for she had beguiled him through her magic. And he ceased attending church as had been his custom. But he went once under circumstances of danger. And he not only did this, but he drew many believers to her, and he himself received the unbelievers at his house.[277]

This presentation of Hypatia may not reflect the contemporary opinions of the philosopher, as Socrates' account only faults her political affiliations, and does not condemn her of magical practices:

> On account of the self-possession and ease of manner, which she had acquired in consequence of the cultivation of her mind, she not unfrequently appeared in public in presence of the magistrates. Neither did she feel abashed in coming to an assembly of men. For all men on account of her extraordinary dignity and virtue admired her the more. Yet even she fell a victim to the political jealousy which at that time prevailed. For as she had frequent interviews with Orestes, it was calumniously reported among the Christian populace, that it was she who prevented Orestes from being reconciled to the bishop.[278]

There are no records of what particular reports were circulating about Orestes' involvement with Hypatia, but the connections they formed to the anti-pagan rhetoric of Cyril was clearly impetus enough for violence.

Returning to the discourse discussed in the introduction to this thesis, we can see how MacDonald and Watts might look at the same primary sources for murder of Hypatia and come to separate conclusions. Unlike with the expulsion of the Jews, Cyril is not directly indicted in

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[276] See pp. 50-54.
[277] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84.87-8.
[278] Socrates, *HE* 7.15.

the murder of Hypatia, and none of the primary sources relate the archbishop's involvement. However, both Socrates and John note the influence of Cyril on the actions of the Christians within the city, despite coming to different opinions about that influence. Socrates, in keeping with his presentation of Cyril as overstepping his political bounds writes, "This affair brought not the least opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church. And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort."[279] This opprobrium Socrates mentions may be his own editorializing, yet it would seem this mob violence was blamed on Cyril's leadership and was part of what earned him a negative reputation, even among the ecclesiastical community.[280] A letter from Theodoret to Domnus, Bishop of Antioch on the death of Cyril has little nice to say of the Alexandrian bishop. Theodoret writes, "I am glad and rejoice to see the fellowship of the Church delivered from such a contagion; but I am saddened and sorry as I reflect that the wretched man never took rest from his misdeeds, but died designing greater and worse."[281] The same classificatory strategies Cyril invoked against the Jews and pagans in Alexandria had come full circle to affect his own reputation.

John's presentation of the response to Cyril's involvement in Hypatia's murder is notably different. He writes, "And all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him 'the new Theophilus'; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city."[282] The epithet was earned for the similarities between the killing of Hypatia and the destruction and murder of the priests in the Serapeum. What both John and Socrates' presentations do provide is evidence that

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[279] Socrates, *HE* 7.15.
[280] O'Keefe, 3-4.
[281] Theodoret, *Ep.* 180.
[282] John of Nikiû, *Chron.* 84.103.

a direct connection between the authority of Cyril and the murder of Hypatia was being drawn in Late Antiquity. Having analyzed both the events described in the primary source documents, and the metaphor and violent rhetoric found in Cyril's festal letters from the years surrounding these violent events, it seems apparent that Cyril's rhetoric did indeed instigate violent action by his followers. Through the utilization of a metaphorical framework that conceptually framed both Jews and pagans as criminals and deserving of retributive justice, Cyril's rhetoric set into motion a series of events that would see Hierax enraging the Jewish populace, which in turn led to violent reprisals between Jews and Christians. Once the Jews were expelled from Alexandria, there was an amplification of tension over authoritative hegemony between Cyril and the state powers, leading to Orestes' stoning by the monks of Nitria. Cyril's response by seeking to label the monk Ammonius as a martyr exposed his attempt to classify those who challenged 'secular' authority as heroes of his cause, and in turn, those who were counter to Cyril's authority were being categorized among those who were lawbreakers, falling under Cyril's anti-Semitic rubric of the Jew as criminal. Hypatia's close ties to Orestes made her a prime target of those who saw challenges to Cyril's authority as a criminal act, worthy of retributive justice. By first using this metaphor of the Jew or non-Christian as criminal and then extending it to those who challenged his authority through extending his classificatory categories, Cyril planted the seeds of violent acts, and ultimately instigated the violence perpetrated against the Jews, pagans, and the state.

The murder of Hypatia, after a series of escalating violent events, can be directly tied to Cyril's continued and vociferous rhetorical attacks on the Jews, and the extension of the conceptual frame whereby all non-Christians were cast as impious criminals worthy of retributive justice. This conceptual frame enacted a series of classifications whereby the Jewish and pagan citizens of Alexandria were viewed as a problematic, corrupting force in the city, and

lesser members of the body politic. Hypatia happened to be one of the most prominent pagans at the time, so her existence was viewed as corrupting the state authority, and challenging the legitimacy of Cyril's claims to authority. For the Christians influenced by Cyril's teachings, Hypatia's existence threatened the very safety of Christianity in the city, and so she had to be destroyed. MacDonald's denial of Cyril's involvement fails to take this context into account, and so his literal reading of Socrates willfully ignores the writer's indictment of the archbishop's role in Hypatia's death.

6. Conclusions

The intended aim of this thesis was to provide support for Wendy Mayer's thesis of how violent rhetoric acts upon cognition to form moral intuitive frameworks by demonstrating that Cyril's violent rhetoric in his festal letters translated into acts of violence in early fifth-century Alexandria. Rhetoric utilizes metaphors, which are employed to form conceptual frames that delimit the available modes of an individual's thinking. From these frames, intuitive moral frameworks develop, which provide a basis for judgements that translate between the internal world of cognition and the physical reality of action. The continued application of violent rhetoric is itself a form of violence, damaging the individual's ability to find alternatives to violent interaction. These moral intuitive frameworks can map on to Bruce Lincoln's formulation of social discourse, in particular the use of classification as a means for constructing, maintaining or deconstructing society. The term authorizing practices proves a helpful redescription of the whole process from rhetoric through to classification as it is engendered by an authoritative individual. This individual is granted the opportunity to generate authorizing practices when their personal or institutional authority is legitimized by appealing to foundational myths. Individuals who adhere to the moral intuitive frameworks formed by the conceptual framing of these authoritative voices have an impetus to view target groups as deserving of violence, forming a causal link between the rhetoric of authoritative individuals and violent acts.

We have seen how Cyril legitimized his authority with Alexandrian Christians through appealing to both the authority of the scriptures, and by way of the institutional authority of the Church, which was built upon Christianity's foundational myths. By virtue of this authority, he was able to create a framework of authorizing practices which cast the Jewish and pagan communities as impious and criminal contagions, which needed to be scoured from the body politic to ensure its health. This authorized violence against any individual or community who

stood in the way of a sanctioned belief system, found in Cyril's teaching. Through an analysis of the primary sources, and correlating violent events described by ancient historians with Cyril's festal homilies, a structure of discursive strategies (authorizing practices) can be seen as motivating factors. Cyril's rhetoric can be seen to support violent interaction with the aim of empowering his followers towards a hegemonic power position within their society.

Cyril's career was built upon demarcating these sorts of boundaries, an office and modus operandi inherited from his uncle Theophilus. Due to Cyril's role in the events of his uncle's later tenure as archbishop and the ways in which it helped Cyril to more clearly formulate his discursive authority, we might draw similar conclusions about the impact of Theophilus' teaching, although limited evidence exists apart from his role in divisive church politics. The evidence of violence from the time of Cyril's rule as archbishop is clear, from the violent eviction of Jews, the monks of Nitria's attack on the Praefect Orestes, and the mob killing of Hypatia. We can see from the primary sources that Cyril either had a direct role in instigating conflict, or at the very least his contemporaries saw his influence on the events. Tying this evidence to Wendy Mayer's thesis, it is clear that a connection can be drawn between violent rhetoric and violent action, and that the anti-Jewish and anti-Pagan speech of early Christian preachers was not just theological flourish, or allegory, but had real world ramifications. Mayer's framework proves helpful in reassessing the role of elite Christian voices in Late Antiquity, seeing them as creators of authorizing practices who legitimize violence against increasingly marginalized groups of Jews and Pagans.

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