THE MYSTERY OF THE SYNAGOGUE: CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA ON THE LAW OF MOSES

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Abstract

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In my dissertation I argue that in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* Cyril of Alexandria makes a case, unprecedented in the prior exegetical tradition, that the Mosaic law has inscribed in itself a coherent and comprehensive exposé of its own soteriological inadequacies and the moral pollution of the Jewish people. Indeed, for Cyril the law of Moses, once spiritually contemplated, discloses the entire “mystery of the synagogue,” from the giving of the law at Sinai to the eschatological incorporation of a remnant of Israel into the church. In so doing the law furnishes a devastating and multi-faceted critique of post Christum Judaism as a religion whose adherence to the letter of the law ironically ensures its chronic impurity and estrangement from God. Indeed, the Jews emerge as the paradigmatically polluted people, alienated from the presence of God by virtue of their cleaving to a law that can never purify them and, above all, their murderous reception of Christ. Although many of Cyril’s criticisms of the limitations of the law clearly stem from his Pauline theological commitments, certain motifs that figure prominently in his exegesis, such as that of Jewish pollution, are not without extra-theological implications. As the dominant figure in the
Alexandrian church, Cyril assumed an adversarial stance toward the Jewish community, which he took seriously as a religious and cultural nemesis, and his exegesis is not untouched by the anxieties that such friction engendered. This is perhaps most evident in the way in which Cyril's exegetical account of the impurity of Jewish moral character supplies the theoretical underwriting for the strict separation of church from synagogue, a separation demanded by his incipient notion of Jewish space as marginal, polluted, and estranged from the divine presence localized in the church, the true tabernacle. I submit, then, that the outburst of exegetical creativity in the texts at hand cannot be adequately accounted for without reference to the state of Jewish-Christian relations in early fifth-century Alexandria, the dynamics of which characterized much of the eastern empire as a whole.
To Kirstin, *sine qua non*
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1.1: A Turbulent Weekend in Alexandria

A few years after he succeeded his uncle Theophilus as patriarch of the see of St. Mark in 412, a furious Cyril summoned the leaders of the Alexandrian Jewish community in order to deliver a clear and emphatic message: leave the Christians alone or be prepared to suffer.¹ This convocation was prompted by an incident that had occurred on a Saturday in Alexandria’s theater. A certain Hierax, a grammarian who was one of Cyril’s most fervent devotees, had visited the theater in order to hear the Alexandrian prefect, Orestes, promulgate a new edict regarding theatrical entertainments. Some Jews in attendance, who perceived Hierax as a demagogue in Cyril’s service, complained about Hierax’s presence to Orestes, who promptly apprehended and publicly flogged him.

For Cyril, such insolence toward a Christian on the part of the Jewish community was intolerable, and thus he issued his threat to the Jewish leaders. The outcome of this confrontation was not felicitous. Uncowed by Cyril’s fulminations,

certain Alexandrian Jews resolved to make an attack on some Christians at night by creating the impression that the church of Alexander, named for the former Alexandrian patriarch (212-28), was on fire, thus drawing Christians to the dark streets, where they were ambushed and massacred. Cyril reacted shortly after dawn by leading a throng of outraged Christians to the Jewish synagogues of Alexandria, driving the Jews out of the city and looting the synagogues, which were thereafter converted into churches. Orestes was indignant at Cyril’s actions, and hastily appealed to the emperor to intervene, but no imperial action was taken against Cyril. The “chief magistrate of the city,” as John of Nikiu calls Cyril in his Chronicle, had acted with impunity.

The historical accuracy of the foregoing account, taken almost in its entirety from Socrates’ Ecclesiastical History, is questionable. As J. McGuckin points out, Socrates was by no means an unbiased observer, inasmuch as he was sympathetic to the Novatians, whom Cyril persecuted, and had strong connections to Constantinople, a major ecclesiastical rival of Alexandria. Thus Socrates may well have had ulterior motives for exaggerating the ferocity of Cyril’s reprisals against the Jews. Moreover, Socrates’ disdain for Jews is palpable, and thus his account of their activities and motives in this conflict may well be distorted. D. Cassel also expresses reservations

2 This last detail is absent in Socrates but found in John of Nikiu, Chronicle 84.98 (Charles, 102).

3 John of Nikiu, Chronicle 84.94. In his notes R. H. Charles, Chronicle, 101, thinks that the manuscript is “apparently wrong,” and that it should read “Cyril” rather than “the chief magistrate of the people.” Perhaps he is correct, but perhaps John is making a rather bold point about the extent of Cyril’s political power.


5 Robert Wilken points out several passages from Socrates’ history that illustrate his anti-Jewish bias
about the reliability of several aspects of Socrates’ rendition. Cassel cites several edicts published by Theodosius II early in the fifth century that placed restrictions on the harassment of Jews and argues that such legislation calls into question the notion that Cyril could have acted against the Jews as he purportedly did without being called to account by the emperor.6

Indeed, most scholars agree that Socrates’ notice that the Jews of Alexandria were expelled from the city in toto is an exaggeration. Cassel adduces as evidence against Socrates’ report a sixth-century papyrus in which a denizen of Upper Egypt asks about a Jew who had recently traveled from Alexandria, thus apparently taking for granted a Jewish community there.7 R. Wilken casts further doubt on the plausibility of the expulsion of the entire Jewish community by citing the crucial contribution that community made to Alexandria’s shipping industry, which was responsible for the timely arrival of grain shipments in Rome.8 Similarly, McGuckin maintains that the Jewish community in Alexandria “would remain strong and influential for a long time to come.”9

Nevertheless, most scholars agree that there is no good reason to discount Socrates’ narrative entirely. Cassel claims that we are on terra firma if we infer from


8 Wilken, Judaism, 57.

9 McGuckin, Saint Cyril, 12.
Socrates’ report that Cyril had an acrimonious confrontation with some Jews, in which some fighting, looting, and expulsion took place. Likewise, McGuckin contends that “[f]ar from being the whole Jewish population the exiles probably constituted a group around the Alexander church. It was, nonetheless, a strong signal to the Jewish population as a whole.” Wilken argues along the same lines that with respect to Socrates’ report there “seems to be no good reason for doubting its main outlines, though Socrates’ explanation of the causes of the outburst are less than persuasive.” Socrates’ account, then, does provide some sort of window, however opaque, into Cyril’s volatile relationship with the Jews of Alexandria.

The present study takes as its point of departure the rather striking fact that at some point proximate to the tempestuous events just discussed, Cyril wrote a massive volume on the Pentateuch, the De Adoratione et Cultu, in which he extensively examines the cultic law of Moses. What is more, Cyril followed up the De Adoratione et Cultu with another substantial work on the Pentateuch, the Glaphyra. Of course, one should not simply assume that there is any necessary connection between Cyril’s deeds and his written words, even if they were in fact temporally coextensive. Nevertheless, I hope to show that a careful consideration of Cyril’s socio-religious context will shed some light on certain aspects of his hermeneutical treatment of the Mosaic law in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. Conversely, it is to be hoped that Cyril’s exegetical negotiation of the law can function as a prism that refracts light back onto the larger

11 McGuckin, Saint Cyril, 12.
12 Wilken, Judaism, 57.
canvas of Christian attitudes toward and anxieties about post Christum Judaism in late-antique Alexandria and beyond. It is to that larger canvas that we first turn.

1.2: Conflict and Contestation between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity

Notwithstanding the fact that the De Adoratione et Cultu is bereft of any clear references to contemporary events or personages, Cyril, like any other biblical commentator, did not write in a vacuum, even if he gives the appearance of doing so. Indeed, as Cyril was ruminating on the figural significance of the worship of the Israelites, the relationship between Jews and Christians in the Roman empire was changing in crucial ways. In this section I will trace some of the most significant developments in this increasingly strained relationship, beginning with trends characteristic of the eastern empire in general, moving to the Alexandrian context in particular, and concluding with the early episcopal career of Cyril himself. The aim of this survey is to ascertain which historical developments might have impinged on Cyril's treatment of the cultic law of Israel in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. Of course, one need not seek a monocausal explanation for Cyril's exegetical preoccupations and propensities, and one must beware of reductionism; for instance, Cyril's interest in and particular construal of the Mosaic law may be in part attributable to certain aspects of his education about which we are wholly ignorant. Furthermore, it should become clear over the course of this dissertation that the bulk of Cyril's spiritual readings are animated at least in part by theological convictions to which he would cleave throughout his life. For this reason it is untenable to suggest that the figural readings under review in this dissertation simply function as proxies for an
essentially non-theological agenda. Nevertheless, a careful consideration of the socio-political and religious antagonism between Jews and Christians in late antiquity can throw several features of Cyril's exegetical treatment of the Pentateuch into higher relief and bring to light some of the resonances and implications of his figural readings that might otherwise go undetected. The fruits of this consideration will be borne in Chapters Four and Five.

1.2.1: General Remarks

The evidence for interactions between Jews and Christians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries is not as wide or deep as the historian would like. With respect to the evidence for Christian attitudes toward Jews, F. Millar notes that "such attention as Christians ever paid to the realities of the Judaism occupying the same space and time as themselves is shown mainly in two contexts: in legislation of an increasingly repressive kind, and in records of assaults on Jewish synagogues."\footnote{Millar, Greek World, 459.} However, as we will see momentarily, one also finds traces of more civil, though still contentious, encounters between the two groups, such as exegetical debates.

One question that our sources raise concerns the extent to which Christians during this period perceived Judaism as a serious religious rival. Millar claims that "in a way which we ought to find noteworthy and surprising, the Jewish presence was also felt as a recurrent threat."

\footnote{Fergus Millar, \textit{The Greek World, the Jews, and the East} (vol. 3 of \textit{Rome, The Greek World, and the East}; ed. Hannah M. Cotton and Guy M. Rogers; Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 443.} Over recent decades this view has received widespread
scholarly support. In reaction to A. von Harnack's thesis that anti-Jewish rhetoric in patristic texts should not be taken to indicate the fact that Christians took Jews seriously as competitors in the religious marketplace, scholars such as M. Simon and R. Wilken have maintained that the volume and intensity of the anti-Jewish polemic found in early Christian texts are best explained by the fact that many Christians reckoned Judaism a vital religious rival. Simon in particular goes even further, claiming that it is the existence of pro-Jewish sentiments among the Christian laity that truly accounts for the anti-Semitism expressed in the texts of the Christian elite.

Recently M. Taylor has sharply criticized Simon's view, which she dubs the competitive model. According to Taylor, whose thesis has obvious affinities with that of Harnack, in patristic texts Jews are first and foremost "symbolic figures who play an essential role in the communication and development of the church's own distinctive conception of God's plan for His chosen people, and in the formation of the church's cultural identity." Although Taylor scores several cogent points against various aspects of the consensus view, her contention that most references to Jews and Judaism in early Christian sources do not reflect anxiety about Judaism as a socio-political and religious rival is less than convincing with respect to the early career of Cyril. The temporal convergence of Cyril's violent conflict with the Alexandrian Jewry, the


16 Simon, *Verus Israel*, 232.

acerbic anti-Jewish polemic of his early festal letters, and the manifold anti-Jewish features of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* suggest that in the early years of his episcopal career Cyril was particularly agitated by Jews, likely at least in part because they were living, breathing exponents of a religious tradition that challenged what P. Brown calls late-antique Christianity's "rhetoric of incessant conquest and reconquest." Moreover, the fact that by the 420s anti-Jewish rhetoric is relatively sparse in Cyril's festal letters suggests that in the first decade of his episcopate he was distressed by Jews and Judaism in a way that he was not later in his career. Such relative discontinuity (to be sure, anti-Jewish polemic appears in many of his later writings as well) does not jibe with Taylor's view that for early Christian writers Jews were *primarily* symbolic figures to be pressed into the service of Christian identity formation. To be sure, the Jews that appear in the pages of Cyril's writings are stock characters that likely bore little resemblance to his actual Jewish contemporaries. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily follow from the fact that Cyril described Jews and Judaism in stereotyped ways that the persistence of Judaism was not a major factor lying behind his tendency to aggrandize the church at the expense of the synagogue. As we will see below, the extant historical sources for this period indicate that at least some Christians considered Judaism a redoubtable socio-political and religious rival,

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19 Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that in Cyril's particular case "the Jews" could not be at once flesh-and-blood religious and socio-political competitors and the sort of symbolic figures described by Taylor.
and its survival an undesirable complication to the narrative of the church's post-
Constantinian triumph.

1.2.2: Exegetical Debates

One index of the fact that at least some Christians continued to deem Judaism a serious religious rival during Cyril's time is the phenomenon of face-to-face debates between Jews and Christians apropos the correct interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Although our knowledge of the nature and extent of these debates is rather tenuous, the letters of Cyril's contemporary and fellow Egyptian Isidore of Pelusium provide us with a tantalizing glimpse into them.²⁰ Several of Isidore's many extant letters are replies to those who have implored him for advice regarding how to rebut various exegetical arguments adduced by Jewish interlocutors.²¹ Rather than simply providing generic advice about how to debate with Jews successfully with respect to the interpretation of Scripture, Isidore gives concrete guidance concerning specific disputes involving named individuals. According to Millar, what emerges from these letters "is that Christian belief and biblical interpretation were known to be under challenge, and not merely in an abstract sense, relating to different written, or traditional, interpretations, but in the concrete sense of specific personal disputes. Once again we see how the contemporary religious scene was marked by overt rivalries."²² Given the fact that Cyril and Isidore were not only contemporaries, but also

²⁰ All 2102 of Isidore's letters can be found in PG 78:177-1046. A critical edition of almost 500 of these letters is available in SC 422 and 454.
²¹ Millar, Greek World, 483-84, discusses the content of some of these letters.
²² Millar, Greek World, 484. See also the similar observation of Wilken, "Jews and Christian Apologetics
occasional correspondents, it is highly implausible that Cyril would have been unaware that such debates between Jews and Christians were taking place in Egypt. It is certainly possible, then, that Cyril's awareness of these debates was one impetus for his attempt to provide a thoroughgoing Christianizing reading of the Pentateuch.

In addition to the evidence afforded by Isidore's letters, the Emperor Julian's argumentation in his *Against the Galilaeans* may also shine a light on the ambience of exegetical disputation in late antiquity. Julian maintains that Christianity is merely an apostate form of Judaism, inasmuch as Christians have forsaken the traditions of the Jewish law, which even Jesus validated in Matt 5:17. According to Wilken, it is this claim that constitutes the central argument of Julian's work.23 Wilken goes on to observe that Julian's critique "would have no force if there were not Jewish communities who did observe the Law of Moses, and who lived in close proximity to Christians."24 Likewise, it stands to reason that Julian's argument would be all the more potent if there were some Jews who issued a similar critique of Christianity's attitude toward the law.

There are several reasons to think that Julian's polemical depiction of Christianity was in the background of the *De Adoratione et Cultu*. First of all, the fact that Cyril saw fit to write an extensive rebuttal to Julian's treatise over half a century after

\[\text{after Theodosius I's *Cunctos Populos,* } HTR 73 (1980): 467: "Christians are being confronted by Jews in their own times who live in the cities alongside of Christians, part of their foreground if you will, and present themselves as rival interpreters of the ancient Jewish tradition which Christians claimed as their own."}\]


its composition clearly shows that Julian's argument against Christianity deeply unsettled Cyril.25 Furthermore, it is striking that a biblical text that Julian adduces as damning with respect to the Christian understanding of the law, namely, Matt 5:17, is precisely the text that provides the starting point for and framework of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* as a whole, as we will see below. Indeed, the entire work could be conceived of as a comprehensive rebuttal of Julian's charge, inasmuch as one of its main thrusts is that Christians have not rejected the law of Moses and replaced it with a new law, but rather they observe the law of Moses in a spiritual manner. It is certainly possible, then, that the genesis of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* was stimulated in part by Cyril's worry that Julian's notion of Christianity as a deficient and incoherent Judaism, on the basis of its neglect of the Mosaic law, might gain traction among the Alexandrian intelligentsia.26 We will consider this matter in greater detail in Chapter Four.

1.2.3: Contestations of Sacred Space

Julian may stand in the background of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* for another, related reason. His abortive plan to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem disturbed many Christian intellectuals, who took it for granted that the first-century destruction of the temple betokened God's judgment of the Jews and vindication of the incipient church, along with its Christocentric interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.27 As in the case


26 If Pierre Évieux, “Cyrille Avant 412,” *Lettres Festales* (SC 372), 39, is correct to claim that at the beginning of the fifth century most Alexandrian intellectuals were still pagan, then it is reasonable to suppose that Cyril was worried that they might be swayed by Julian's depiction of Christianity.

of his deployment of the Matthean text, Julian, who was raised as a Christian, seems to have known precisely how to touch Christian nerves. Indeed, it would seem that during this period at least some Jews awaited the full restoration of the temple cult, as Jerome's Commentary on Zechariah indicates.\(^{28}\) Of course, by Cyril's time such hopes had likely abated, but, as Wilken points out, the very idea of the restoration of the Jerusalem temple continued to haunt the imagination of Christian intellectuals.\(^{29}\)

The specter of a restored temple and a revived cult may have agitated Christians for a multitude of reasons, but two merit special mention. For one, a restored temple would be an apologetic catastrophe, inasmuch as Christians had long cited the destruction of the temple as the divine endorsement of their interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures in general, and of the obsolescence of the Mosaic law in particular.\(^{30}\) Second, some Christians in Cyril's time were increasingly intolerant of the very presence of the synagogues with which they shared civic space, and on several occasions their intolerance took the form of violent sequestration. Such incidents suggest that at least some Christians took umbrage at the very persistence of Judaism, of which the physical synagogue was a visual reminder, in the face of the juggernaut of the church. If a mere synagogue was capable of arousing such Christian ire, how would some Christians have reacted to the spectacle of a new Jerusalem temple?

\(^{28}\) See Jerome, *in proph. min.*, (CCL 76A:885).

\(^{29}\) Wilken, "Christian Apologetics," 452-53. Wilken catalogues several of the Christian authors who referred to Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple.

\(^{30}\) For an example of this argument, see Barn. 16 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 428-432).
Indeed, as the church and the Roman empire became more inextricable in the post-Constantinian epoch, and especially during and after the reign of Theodosius I, pagan and Jewish holdouts, along with their sacred spaces, were perceived by some Christians as inconvenient affronts to the widely-circulated narrative of the triumph of the church over the agents of error.31 One tangible indication of the church's ascendancy was the wave of church-building, initiated by Constantine, that swept virtually all the cities of the empire. Cyril's uncle Theophilus, for example, undertook a particularly ambitious program of church-building in Alexandria as part of his agenda to efface the city's impressive pagan heritage. According to Millar, the efforts of ecclesiastical leaders like Theophilus effected nothing less than "the transformation of the ancient city."32 In this way the increasingly privileged place of the church in Roman society was inscribed in the very built environment of the late antique city.

Theophilus' career also calls attention to a phenomenon related to this explosion of ecclesiastical construction, namely, the attacks by Christians on pagan sacred structures. According to Millar, "too little has been made, in the religious history of the fourth century, of the evidence for local Christian attacks on temples."33 The destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria, spearheaded by Theophilus in 391, is one of the most notable instances of the Christian destruction of a pagan shrine in late

31 According to Peter Brown, "Christianization," 634, the Christian writers of late antiquity espoused the view that "[b]etween Constantine and Theodosius II, a mighty conflict had taken place, and the Christian church had emerged as the victor." Nevertheless, these same Christian writers insisted that "the end of polytheism had occurred with the coming of Christ to earth. . . . The alliance of emperor and church to rid the world of polytheism, that took place after the conversion of Constantine, was simply a last, peremptory 'mopping-up' operation."

32 Millar, Greek World, 438.

33 Millar, Greek World, 439.
antiquity. In several cases the destruction of a pagan temple was followed by a Christian appropriation of the site and/or the ruins of the building. For example, Porphyry of Gaza used stones from the destroyed temple of Marnas to pave the courtyard of a new church built on the site. Pagan sacred space was sometimes challenged by Christians in less violent ways. For instance, Cyril established a martyrion for Sts Cyrus and John at Menouthis, a popular pilgrimage center for the Isis cult, located just outside the boundaries of Alexandria. S. Davis cites Cyril's translation of the saints' relics to Menouthis as a prime instance of Cyril's contestation of pagan cultic space and his agenda to reclaim the Egyptian landscape as Christian territory.

Even more pertinent to our study are those instances in which Christians assaulted Jewish places of worship. Before citing examples of such aggression, a brief account of the legal status of Judaism in the post-Constantinian period is in order. From the reign of Constantine until that of Theodosius I the legal status of the Jews remained rather stable. Jewish worship conducted by Jews remained legal, and attacks on synagogues were prohibited and liable to be penalized. An important milestone in the history of Judaism in the Roman Empire is Theodosius I's edict Cunctos Populos (380), which established the sole legality of the Catholic church in the empire. However, even Theodosius continued to affirm the long-established rights and prerogatives of the Jews.

34 See Peter Brown, "Christianization," 635, on how the destruction of the Serapeum was represented by ecclesiastical writers as a preeminent instance of the "instant, supernatural victory" of the church.

35 Millar, 452.

36 Stephen J. Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 74.

37 See the summary in Millar, Greek World, 461, of the most salient features of the legal status of Jews during this period.
to assemble and worship in their own buildings. 38 What is more, public offices were open to Jews until the beginning of the fifth century. 39

Nevertheless, as Millar points out, the imperial tone toward Judaism began to change around the time of Theodosius’ reign. In 383 Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius mandated the seizure of the property of Christians who converted to paganism, Judaism, or Manichaeism. 40 The imperial government began to attenuate the legal rights of Jews in other ways as well. Honorius, for instance, excluded Jews from the imperial service, 41 and by 438 Jews and Samaritans alike were excluded from all civic offices. 42 The very terminology used in imperial rescripts concerning the Jews betokened the diminution of their legal standing; from 416 onward the imperial chancellery described Christianity alone as a religio, while Judaism was henceforward deemed a superstitio. 43 Moreover, the imperial government began meddling in unprecedented ways in the internal affairs of the Jewish community. For example, in 398 the Romans more tightly circumscribed the jurisdiction of the Jewish courts, which were thereafter permitted to adjudicate matters of purely Jewish interest alone. 44 The

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38 Wilken, "Christian Apologetics," 465. Wilken, 466, goes on to note that "[w]hat appears to be happening in this period is that monks and some Christian people were becoming hostile to the Jews, no doubt in part because of the strength of Jewish communities in their cities, but imperial authorities continued to affirm Jewish rights and issue laws protecting the Jews."

39 Simon, Verus Israel, 127.

40 Millar, Greek World, 452.

41 See Amnon Linder, The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 280-83, for the text of and commentary on Honorius’ rescript of 418. This law stipulated that Jews could not serve as Executive Agents and Palatins nor could they serve in the military.

42 Linder, Jews, 323-37.

43 Linder, Jews, 57.

44 Simon, Verus Israel, 128.
imperial administration's encroachment into Jewish community life culminated in the struggle between Theodosius II and the Jewish patriarch Gamaliel VI in 415, which eventuated in the deprivation of the patriarchate's official status. ⁴⁵ Although the practice of Judaism by Jews remained legally protected, ⁴⁶ there had taken place a "profound change of mood" (Millar) and a "radical change" (Simon) in the relations between the Romans and the Jews in the final decades of the fourth and first decades of the fifth century. ⁴⁷ Despite the de jure legal protection still granted to the Jews by the Romans, A. Linder notes that "[f]rom 415 it is apparent that the authorities gradually yielded to the pressures of fanatical Christians." ⁴⁸

Nowhere was the imperial government's ambivalence about the legal standing of the Jews more apparent than in its legislation concerning synagogues. To be sure, the Romans continued to reiterate the illegality of the destruction or seizure of synagogues by Christians, as evidenced in the rescript of Theodosius II and Honorius to Asclepiodotus. ⁴⁹ However, in this same rescript these two Augusti placed a permanent moratorium on the construction of new synagogues and the repair of existing ones. Such legislation indicates that the imperial authorities were beginning to capitulate to the popular Christian eagerness to lower the profile of Judaism, at times by violent means, in the cityscapes of the empire.

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⁴⁵ Simon, Verus Israel, 130.
⁴⁷ Millar, Greek World, 455; Simon, Verus Israel, 131.
⁴⁸ Linder, Jews, 74. As we will see below, it is probable that Cyril wrote the texts at hand during the decade of the 410s.
⁴⁹ See the text of the rescript and commentary in Linder, Jews, 287-89.
Indeed, the destruction of synagogues by Christians had become a notable phenomenon in both the eastern and western halves of the empire. One of the most famous instances of this trend is the destruction of the synagogue in Callinicum, whose rebuilding Ambrose of Milan so vociferously opposed.\textsuperscript{50} Callinicum was not an isolated incident. In addition to instances in which synagogues were simply destroyed, often at the hands of zealous monks, there were many cases in which synagogues were violently wrested away from the Jews and converted into churches; such forced conversions took place in Tipasa in Africa, Vertona in Spain, and Edessa, among other places.\textsuperscript{51}

One of the most striking instances of this trend took place in the town of Mago on the island of Minorca, whose bishop, Severus, is our source for the interreligious tumult that took place there c. 417/18.\textsuperscript{52} The remains of St. Stephen, discovered in Palestine in 415, had recently arrived in Mago, much to the detriment of Jewish-Christian relations there, inasmuch as they inspired the Christians of Minorca to undertake a rather bellicose attempt to convert their Jewish counterparts to the Christian faith. According to Severus, violence was instigated by the Jews, who were armed and ensconced in Mago's synagogue. The outcome, however, was unfavorable in the extreme for the Jews; the synagogue was burned and its scriptures seized by the Christians. Rather unsurprisingly, given the Christian show of strength, many Jews

\textsuperscript{50} See Ambrose, Ep. 40.

\textsuperscript{51} Simon, Verus Israel, 224-27.

shortly thereafter defected to the church. E. D. Hunt notes that the Jews' forsaking of their former religion was so radical that they took part in the building of a new Christian basilica on the site of their former synagogue.

Several details from Severus' account are particularly pertinent to our study of Cyril's exegesis. One is the symbolic gesture of the Christians' removal of the Hebrew Scriptures from the synagogue before its conflagration. Severus remarks in his letter that the Christian mob "removed the sacred books so that they would not suffer harm among the Jews"; presumably the Jews inflicted harm on the Scriptures by their non-christological interpretation thereof.\footnote{Ep. Severi 13.13 (Bradbury 94).} Severus' comment, then, seems to reflect some sort of conceptual nexus between the Christian sequestration of a Jewish sacred space and the Christocentric reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. Another significant element of Severus' story is the construction of a new church on the footprint of the former synagogue, and the desire that this reflects on the part of the Minorcan Christians to reclaim a formerly Jewish sacred site as Christian holy space. As I will suggest toward the end of Chapter Four, incidents such as the one at Mago should be borne in mind in any study of Cyril's hermeneutical treatment of the sacred sites of ancient Israel. More specifically, I will propose that there is a certain analogy between the physical conversion of synagogues into churches and Cyril's notion of the imperative of the exegetical conversion of the type of the tabernacle into the "truth" of the church.\footnote{This is not to say that such exegetical "conversion" is intrinsically an act of violence, figuratively speaking, against Jews. For a good example of how some Christian triumphalists laid stress on the enshrinement of the ascendancy of the church in the Roman cityscape, see Eusebius' Festival Oration, given on the occasion of the completion of the cathedral in Tyre: "So now as never before the most exalted emperors of all, aware of the honor they had been privileged to receive from [Christ], spit in the faces of dead idols, trample on the lawless rites of demons, and laugh at the old lies handed down by}
Both types of "conversions" could plausibly be taken to reflect anxiety among late-antique Christians about the import, whether theological and/or socio-political, of the endurance of Judaism not only post Christum, but also post Constantinum. At the very least, the cultural climate revealed and generated by events such as those in Minorca and Alexandria may help to explain, at least in part, Cyril's fascination with Sinai and the tabernacle, Jewish sacred spaces that, in his view, invite and indeed require a sort of Christian conversion.

1.2.4: Jews and Christians in Alexandria

Now we will narrow the focus of our survey of Jewish-Christian relations in late antiquity to Alexandria itself. C. Haas notes the broad range of contact between Jews and Christians in fourth- and fifth-century Alexandria; the continuum of relations ranged from everyday, face-to-face contact in the social and economic realm, to formal theological disputations between leaders of the respective religious communities, to the sorts of religious violence of which the events related by Socrates are the most striking example. The literary remains of late-antique Alexandria, which includes several texts of the Adversus Judaeos genre (e.g., The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila and

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their fathers. But as the one only God they recognize the common Benefactor of themselves and all people, and Christ they acknowledged as Son of God and sovereign Lord of the universe, naming him 'Savior' on monuments, and inscribing in royal characters in the middle of the city that is queen of the cities on earth an indelible record of his triumphs and his victories over the wicked." Eusebius, h. e. 10.4.17 (GCS 9:374-75). Translation from Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, trans. G. A. Williamson, rev. and ed. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 309 (orthography and capitalization altered).

The Dialogue of Athanasius and Zaccheus)\textsuperscript{56} and Cyril's own lost On the Apostasy of the Synagogue,\textsuperscript{57} also testify to the atmosphere of vigorous contention between Christians and Jews on theological and exegetical matters.

Haas contends that in Alexandria, unlike many other major cities of the empire, such as Antioch, there was a minimum of interaction between Jews and Christians in a religious context. On the one hand, there is "no evidence at all of Judaizing tendencies within the Alexandrian church."\textsuperscript{58} Conversely, whereas Jewish conversions to Christianity were relatively common throughout the empire, they were rare in Alexandria.\textsuperscript{59} Haas explains these peculiarities by adverting to the robustly exclusive sense of identity possessed by the two communities: "The self-identities of the respective communities had been forged over the course of several centuries. The exclusive nature of these ethno-religious groups was well established by the late empire, shaped by a long history of intercommunal animosity."\textsuperscript{60} According to Haas, the period from 300 to 425 was a time of particularly intense competition between Christians and Jews for cultural supremacy in Alexandria.\textsuperscript{61} The stakes of this rivalry

\textsuperscript{56} F. C. Conybeare, The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zaccheus and of Timothy and Aquila, Anecdota Oxoniensia 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898).

\textsuperscript{57} Mentioned by Gennadius, De Vir. 2.192 (ed. Bernoulli, 80). Fragments are found in PG 76:1421-24.

\textsuperscript{58} Haas, Alexandria, 124. According to Haas, Judaizing activity is "evidence of extensive socioreligious intermingling and, more importantly, a nonexclusive communal self-definition."

\textsuperscript{59} This would change to some degree after the outbreak of violence in 414/15. Haas, Alexandria, 125, notes that the "outcome of this disturbance could thus be seen as the breakdown of Jewish communal identity within the city and resultant gains for Christianity."

\textsuperscript{60} Haas, Alexandria, 124-25.

\textsuperscript{61} Millar, Greek World, 438, singles out the period from 312 to 430s as "unique phase of overt coexistence, competition, and conflict between fundamentally different religious systems" in the empire as a whole.
became even higher after 391: "Once the Alexandrian church gained imperial favor, won ascendency over the Arians, and defeated the pagan opposition during the conflict over the Serapeum in 391, the Jewish community was the only major group remaining in the city that challenged the complete hegemony of the church and its patriarch."62 Thus it is evident that the friction between Jews and Christians in Alexandria was not only generated by their theological differences, but also by a keen sense of social and political rivalry, which came to a head in the events of 414/15.

How should the nature of the relations between Jews and Christians in Alexandria inform one's reading of the De Adoratione et Cultu? If Haas is correct, then it is untenable to claim that Cyril's anxieties about the Jews reflected in this text stemmed from the phenomenon of Judaizing in the Alexandrian church; in this respect, Cyril's setting contrasts with that of John Chrysostom in Antioch. Nevertheless, even if the communal boundaries of the Alexandrian church were as rigidly drawn as Haas suggests, then the duty would devolve on Cyril as patriarch to police and reinforce those boundaries, which were not self-perpetuating, but rather dependent on the vigilance of the leaders of the two communities; well-drawn communal lines do not necessarily obviate anxiety about their transgression. However, as we will see momentarily, not every scholar is as confident as Haas that by the time of Cyril's patriarchate Jewish rites and festivals did not exert a strong gravitational pull on some Alexandrian Christians.

62 Haas, Alexandria, 126.
1.2.5: Cyril's Festal Letters

At last we come to the figure of Cyril himself. The extent and magnitude of Cyril's ecclesiastical and civil power in Alexandria, and indeed in all of Egypt, was impressive. Since at least the episcopate of Athanasius, the patriarch of Alexandria possessed an authority “that extended far beyond that of a traditional urban power broker.” As patriarch, Cyril not only effectively controlled the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy of Alexandria (and to a great extent, that of Egypt as well), but he was also the single most influential figure in the secular affairs of the city. In order to shape the civic and religious life of the city, Cyril could have recourse not only to eloquent and persuasive words, but also to the sheer muscle of the parabalani, who formed a sort of urban militia that was apparently under direct patriarchal control. Above all, Cyril was the face of the Christian community in Alexandria; according to Haas, it is “difficult to exaggerate the role played by the patriarch as the single element that bound together the Christian community, molded its identity, and expressed its will.” Thus it must be constantly borne in mind that Cyril the biblical commentator was at the same time the supreme advocate for the Alexandrian Christian community, whose religious, social, and political interests he was charged with promoting.

At this point we will briefly consider several of Cyril's early festal letters, which illustrate some of the pastoral anxieties that beset him in the early years of his episcopate. As was the custom for Alexandrian patriarchs since the time of Dionysius

63 Haas, Alexandria, 247.
65 Haas, Alexandria, 217.
in the third century, Cyril sent out annual festal letters in order to fix the date of Easter, exhort his flock to good works, and recapitulate the major themes of salvation history. A brief glance at several of Athanasius' extant festal letters demonstrates that Cyril was not the first Alexandrian patriarch to use these missives as a forum in which to criticize Jewish biblical interpretation and, correlatively, the manner of his Jewish contemporaries' celebration of the feasts of the law. Specifically, Athanasius anticipates Cyril by contrasting the Jews' preoccupation with "shadows," as evidenced in their fixation on the types of the law and the manner in which they keep its feasts, with the Christians' apprehension of the truth of Christ, which, by bringing to light the truth contained in the types of the law, enables them to keep the true feast of virtue and thereby fulfill the law. Indeed, criticism of the Jews in general and their "unseasonable" observance of the feasts of the law in particular are frequently recurring features in Athanasius' festal letters. Thus Cyril's castigations of the Jews and Jewish practices in his festal letters, which we will scrutinize presently, were not unprecedented in the corpus of Alexandrian festal letters.

The festal letters of Cyril that we will examine were all written in the first decade of his episcopate, and thus are likely coextensive with the writing of the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra, with which they share many of the same themes and biblical citations. As noted above, although anti-Jewish rhetoric is a hallmark of

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Cyril's corpus as a whole, several of these early festal letters are preoccupied with Judaism to an extent unmatched by his later letters. Several specific features of Cyril's anti-Jewish polemic in these letters are also prevalent in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. One salient rhetorical strategy that Cyril employs in the festal letters is to conflate the ancient Israelites of the Hebrew Scriptures with his Jewish contemporaries. Cyril justifies this conflation on the grounds of the deranged mind (γνώμη), filled with every sort of impurity (ἀκαθαρσίας), that the two groups share. To be sure, before the advent of Christ the Jews could boast of their unique relationship with God; however, after their rejection of faith in Christ the Jews effectively "forsook every form of piety." Indeed, now the Jews "outstrip the entire world in the novelty of their impiety." Consequently, the Jews are now under the wrath of God, who has deprived them of their joy by not allowing them to boast about their fidelity to the law. In these anti-Jewish diatribes (and in Letter 1 in particular) Cyril draws heavily on prophetic critiques of Israelite misconduct in order to substantiate his claims about the moral character of the Jews.

Furthermore, in several of these letters the Jews come under heavy fire for their wrongheaded interpretation of Scripture. The Jews, Cyril asserts, draw their glory from


69 Lionel Wickham, "Introduction," Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xix, notes that Cyril's polemical broadsides against various groups in his festal letters "must reflect in some measure particular problems and conflicts in the diocese of which we otherwise know nothing."

70 Cyril, hom. pasch. 1.6 (SC 372:174); 1.5 (SC 372:172).

71 Cyril, hom. pasch. 4.4 (SC 372:258).

72 Cyril, hom. pasch. 1.5 (SC 372:170).

73 Cyril, hom. pasch. 4.6 (SC 372:268).
the law, the shadow, and the type. In one of numerous instances of his apostrophizing a Jewish hearer, Cyril challenges any Jew to defend the valorization of the law’s letter alone. In another apostrophe Cyril, citing John 4:24, asks the Jews when they will at last offer worship in spirit to God, which requires one to transcend the coarseness of the law’s letter. Cyril frequently champions Paul as the true savant and model interpreter of the law, and highlights his impressive Jewish credentials as noted in Acts 22:3 and Phil 3:5. In the sixth festal letter Cyril himself models the spiritual interpretation of the law by explicating at length the spiritual significance of circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath.

Although his negative characterizations of the Jews are generally of a stock character, there are some indications that for Cyril "the Jews" are not merely symbols or rhetorical devices. In Letter 2 he refers to the sounding of trumpets at Jewish festivals, and notes that it would be absurd if Christians, when celebrating the paschal feast, showed less zeal than the Jews. Cyril clearly expects his readers to understand the reference to the trumpets, and the ambience of liturgical competition is palpable.

Cyril’s relentless criticism of the way in which Jews keep their feasts in Letter 1

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similarly suggests a context of religious rivalry.\textsuperscript{81} Furthermore, it is telling that the two ordinances of the law whose spiritual import Cyril considers at length are circumcision and Sabbath observance, two regulations that many Jews continued to observe in Cyril's day. These letters do not, however, provide any unambiguous evidence of intermingling between Jews and Christians in Alexandria, and thus do not necessarily falsify Haas' contention that Judaizing was not an issue in the Alexandrian church.

However, J. McGuckin maintains that Cyril's early festal letters constitute "implicit evidence for the very kind of ecumenical 'leakage' we would least expect. The strength of the pastoral denunciation is a testimony to the prevalence and long-standing nature of the practice [of participation of Alexandrian Christians in Jewish festivals]. The issue of Christians observing the cycle of Jewish feasts in the culturally mixed city of Alexandria had been an aspect of Origen's own preaching in Caesarea in the third century. Even in the fifth, it would seem, the inter-communal leakage is strong."\textsuperscript{82} Thus McGuckin concludes that the "defining of cultic boundaries is something that Cyril wishes to establish for the church, not something he can take for granted even in the period of Byzantine Christian ascendance."\textsuperscript{83} Although McGuckin may be overstressing the evidence somewhat, he is certainly correct to point out that Cyril's early festal letters do not necessarily reflect a situation in which boundaries

\textsuperscript{81} Cyril, \textit{hom. pasch.} 1.5 (SC 372:170-72).


\textsuperscript{83} McGuckin, "Bishop and Pastor," 227.
between church and synagogue in Alexandria were watertight. We will return to this point in Chapter Five, when we examine Cyril's exegetical treatment of pollution.

At the very least, these early festal letters make it manifest that during the first several years of his patriarchate Cyril was intensely agitated by Judaism in general and the Jewish interpretation of the law in particular. This fact should be brought to bear on any reading of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Gaphyra*, lest Cyril's choice of subject matter and his abundant anti-Jewish rhetoric simply be regarded as fortuitous. Although significant differences of tone, genre, and audience exist between the festal letters and the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and *Gaphyra*, one should not overlook their shared features: sharp critiques of Jewish moral character, a tendency to absorb contemporary Jews back into the biblical universe of the ancient Israelites, an emphatic affirmation of the necessity to surpass the letter of the law alone with a corresponding dismissal of Jewish interpretation, and the deployment of several of the same Pauline and Johannine texts in similar contexts. It is probable, then, that some of the same pastoral concerns that animate the festal letters also figured prominently in the genesis and composition of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and *Gaphyra*. Moreover, these letters suggest that the violent clash between Cyril and the Alexandrian Jewish community in 414/15 was not adventitious, but rather the outcome of long-simmering tension between two communities that had taken on political, social, and theological dimensions. Therefore Cyril's early festal letters further warrant a reading of the texts at hand that is sensitive to the social and political connotations of their trenchant evaluation of Jews and Judaism. The temporal convergence of Cyril's violent reprisals against Alexandrian Jewry and the anti-Jewish thrust of his early festal letters leave
little room for doubt that Cyril’s exegetical and theological grievances against Judaism, while undoubtedly genuine, cannot always be neatly cordoned off from those of a social and political cast.

1.3: Introduction to the De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate

At last we come to the De Adoratione et Cultu itself, to which a general introduction is in order, since the text is unfamiliar even to many patristic scholars. The genesis and date of composition of the De Adoratione et Cultu are shrouded in darkness. Most scholars agree that it was Cyril’s first written work, but beyond that there is little consensus or certainty. There is no evidence internal to the work itself that is of much utility for dating, and the external evidence is meager and does not make possible a great degree of precision in dating the work. The uncertainty surrounding the composition of this text also envelops Cyril’s early life in general, including his early years as patriarch. S. Schurig notes: “Die Erstellung einer Chronologie des Frühwerks des Cyrill von Alexandria ist ein schwieriges Unternehmen, da mit Ausnahme der in der Kirchengeschichte des Sokrates erwähnten Vorfälle über die erste Periode der Amtszeit Cyrills, die sich von seiner Erhebung zum Bischof bis zum Ausbruch der nestorianischen Kontroverse (412-428) erstreckt, an Fakten nahezu nichts weiter bekannt ist.” At the very least, one can be confident that Cyril wrote the

84 It should be noted, however, that Noël Charlier believes that Cyril’s first works were his Commentary on John and the Thesaurus on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity. “Le Thesaurus de Trinitate de S. Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Questions de critique littéraire,” Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 45 (1950): 25-81. In her recent book Lois Farag, St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2007), 60-67, also argues that the Commentary on John is Cyril’s first exegetical work, but as far as I can tell, she does not offer a strong argument for this dating.

85 Sebastian Schurig, Die Theologie des Kreuzes beim frühen Cyrille von Alexandria (Tübingen: Mohr
De Adoratione et Cultu before the Glaphyra, since in the latter he occasionally refers back to the former. It is also highly likely that Cyril wrote both texts before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in 428, since there are no direct references or even oblique allusions to it in either work.

Despite this scarcity of evidence, Schurig dates the text sometime between 412 and 418, for reasons I find largely compelling. He observes that both Socrates’ history and Cyril’s early festal letters highlight that controversies with the Jews loomed large in the early years of Cyril’s patriarchate. The festal letters themselves make it clear that Cyril was quite preoccupied by various matters pertaining to Judaism until at least 418, after which anti-Jewish polemic becomes less prevalent in Cyril’s letters. Schurig situates the De Adoratione et Cultu in the context of this wrangling with Judaism early in his episcopacy, since in this text Cyril 1) takes up at length questions about the place of the Jews vis-à-vis Jesus Christ, their consequent place before God, and their future, 2) stresses the soteriological insufficiency of the law over against Christ, and 3) emphasizes the need to transcend a literal understanding of the law.86 In addition, Schurig points out that particular biblical interpretations that the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra hold in common with the early Festal Letters, which can be reliably dated, also suggest that the former two texts were written in the early years of Cyril’s episcopate.87

86 Schurig, Theologie, 32.

87 Schurig, Theologie, 34. He cites as an example the interpretation of Exod 4:2-4, which describes Moses’ first sign before Pharaoh, that is found in hom. pasch. 2.8 (SC 372:226-28), ador. (PG 68:244a) and glaph. Ex. (PG 69:465c-485a).
Schurig concedes that one cannot altogether exclude the possibility that Cyril wrote the *De Adoratione et Cultu* before his installation as patriarch. Indeed, Évieux seems to hold this view, although he does not make an argument for it. G. Jouassard, in his essay on the chronology of Cyril’s early works, also acknowledges the possibility of a pre-episcopal date, but he maintains that Cyril’s somewhat pompous tone in the dialogue should make one wary of dating the work before 412, when Cyril was still in his uncle’s shadow and likely would have been hesitant to upstage him. Jouassard concludes that the *De Adoratione et Cultu* was in fact Cyril’s first non-epistolary written work, which he regards as roughly contemporaneous with the first festal letters on the basis of their thematic overlap. He speculates that it may have been written coextensively with the festal letter of 414, or perhaps even before.

The question of the text’s audience is perhaps even more vexing than the matter of its date. Of course, the difficulty of this question is not peculiar to the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, since our knowledge of the dissemination of texts, levels of literacy, and reading habits in the ancient world is rather modest. Most scholars have not even hazarded a guess as to the intended audience of the text at hand. An exception is Évieux, who maintains that Cyril’s almost constant recourse to the figural meaning of the biblical text in this work indicates that

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88 Évieux, “Cyrille Évêque d’Alexandrie,” *Lettres Festales* (SC 372), 66. Évieux simply mentions the possibility of a pre-episcopal date, but then does not list the *De Adoratione et Cultu* among the works that Cyril likely wrote between 412 and 418, thus insinuating that he proposes a pre-episcopal date.


ce n’est pas ceux qui admettent seulement la lettre de l’Écriture qu’il veut persuader; c’est le public cultivé, Chrétien ou non, qu’il vise. C’est pour eux qu’il écrit le De adoratione, qu’il rassemble ses homélies (les Glaphyres). Dans la méthode, s’affirme la continuité entre Théophile et Cyrille. Ce dernier, comme le disait son oncle à ceux qui lui reprochaient d’être resté en fait fidèle à Origène, a gardé les fleurs de l’illustre théologien, en laissant les épines.  

He goes on to note in support of this view that the De Adoratione et Cultu is “empreint d’une certaine prétention philosophique,” but does not elaborate on this observation.  

Of course, even if Évieux is correct, many questions about the text’s audience, both intended and actual, remain hanging. Who makes up the “public cultivé” of which he speaks? Learned bishops and presbyters throughout Egypt? The intelligentsia of Alexandria, which included both ecclesiastical functionaries and educated laypeople, both Christian and pagan? Did Cyril envision and/or receive an audience outside of Alexandria as well, such as literate desert monks? These questions are well-nigh unanswerable. The voluminous size of the text would obviously have discouraged the casual reader, and perhaps most learned readers as well. The most that can be said at this point with confidence is that, given the length of the text, the Atticism of its prose style, the "Platonic" dialogue form, and the fact that the premise of the work was likely inspired at least in part by Cyril’s anxiety to parry Julian’s critique of Christianity as a defective Judaism, Cyril most likely intended for his audience to be comprised primarily of intellectually elite Christians and, to a lesser extent, pagans.

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One further possibility is that Cyril intended for the *De Adoratione et Cultu* to gain an audience in the imperial court at Constantinople. As is well known, in the course of the Nestorian imbroglio Cyril addressed multiple treatises to members of Theodosius' court with the aim of bringing the emperor around to his view of Nestorius and what constitutes orthodox Christology. Moreover, it is evident from Cyril's letters that he had agents in the imperial city who would distribute copies of his works. It is possible that Cyril saw to it that members of the imperial *comitatus* received a copy of the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, perhaps in order to establish his theological and literary credentials as a fledgling bishop, and perhaps even to provide oblique exegetical justification for his bare-knuckled treatment of the Alexandrian Jewish community. It must be admitted, however, that the sheer length of the text and the variety of topics it addresses, compounded with the lack of internal and external evidence regarding its intended destination(s), make such a hypothesis rather tenuous, though not outside the realm of possibility.

Even the question of the *De Adoratione et Cultu*’s literary genre is somewhat complicated. It is sometimes described as a commentary on the basis of the fact that the primary concern of the work is the spiritual interpretation of the Pentateuch, but this designation is not self-evident; both the dialogue format and the non-linear

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93 See the discussion of Kenneth G. Holm, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 158-162.

94 See especially Cyril’s letter to Eulogius, a priest living in Constantinople (Ep. 44, ACO I.1.4, p. 37.3-14). We also learn from other letters that Cyril would sometimes send complimentary copies of his writings to his correspondents. See his letters to Pope Celestine (Ep. 11, ACO I.1.5, p. 12.19-22) and to Succensus (Ep. 45.12, ACO I.1.6, p. 157.9-15).

95 Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 263, remarks that “[w]hat Cyril gives us is a kind of thematic treatment—not verse-by-verse commentary; it aims to expose the human predicament and its solution in Christ, showing how the
examination of biblical texts would make it more properly a long essay in biblical theology. Schurig notes that in traditional German patristic scholarship the De Adoratione et Cultu was classified in the quaestiones et responsiones genre, but remarks that the title of the text does not speak in favor of this classification. 96 Moreover, the prolixity of De Adoratione et Cultu militates against its assignment to this genre, which by the beginning of the fifth century was characterized by the brevity of the answers. 97 Perhaps the most congenial genre for our text is that of the didactic dialogue. In a dictionary entry on the dialogue genre in early Christianity, D. Weber proposes that the subjects of the didactic dialogue “are those of the philosophical-theol. dialogue but the distribution of roles resembles that of the controversy dialogue inasmuch as one of the partners knows the ‘truth’ from the outset, while the other achieves full understanding only at the end.” 98 This asymmetry between the interlocutors is certainly true of the De Adoratione et Cultu, and thus it is not entirely unfitting to characterize it, at least provisionally, as a didactic dialogue.

Christian use of the Jewish scriptures is an integral part of the whole theological construction. This is no word-by-word allegory, but a sort of biblical theology emerging from a kind of figural allegory which permits the two Testaments to cohere.”

96 Schurig, Theologie, 38. Schurig notes that several other roughly contemporary theologians, such as Theodoret and Augustine, did begin the title of some of their works "Quaestiones in . . ." Schurig, 38 n.35, also speculates that if Cyril did indeed study with Didymus the Blind, in whose school dialogical exercises may have been used, then it is possible that Cyril “hier aus erster Hand auch diese Form zu praktizieren lernte und sein dialogisch geschriebenes Frühwerk dies widerspiegelt."


The structure of the text also resists a straightforward schematization. As I have already observed, Cyril does not bind himself to the actual order of the Pentateuch, as he does in the *Glaphyra*, although in the latter text he does not comment on every pericope. Instead, the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is arranged thematically, making it unique among all of Cyril’s exegetical works. Schurig points out that there are two major divisions in the seventeen books of the work. While in Books I-VIII historical and ethical texts figure most prominently, in Books IX-XVII cultic texts come to the fore. In some ways the first eight books constitute a preface of sorts, inasmuch as only in Book IX does Cyril commence to pursue what is ostensibly the primary inquiry of his study, namely, to ascertain how the cultic life of Israel adumbrated worship in spirit and truth.\(^9^9\)

However one wishes to analyze the structure of the work, none of the books of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is completely untethered from the main theme of the work, which is introduced in the opening exchange between Cyril and Palladius in Book I. Indeed, the crux of the entire work is the problem with which Palladius is grappling when Cyril first encounters him. Palladius is confounded by two dominical sayings that seem to be irreconcilable with one another, namely, Matt 5:17-18, in which Jesus appears to vindicate the letter of the law, and John 4:21-24, in which Jesus announces to the Samaritan woman the advent of a worship in spirit and truth that is bound neither to Jerusalem nor to Mt Gerizim. Palladius goes on to cite a battery of texts from the Pauline epistles and Hebrews that seem to jibe with the thrust of the Johannine

passage, before bluntly posing his question to Cyril: “If, however, the law has perfected nothing, but there has been instead an annulment of the old commandment and the introduction of a second one, which adapts us to God, why then does the Savior say, ‘I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it’”?100

In this way Cyril frames the entire work as an essay on the proper posture that the Christian should assume vis-à-vis the Mosaic cult. According to Cyril, this question cannot be contemplated in isolation from other theological topoi, since when one begins to peer into the “depth of the contemplations contained in the law,” then one must bring into one’s compass the entire scope of salvation history, beginning with the creation of Adam in the image of God.101 Furthermore, the worship prescribed by the law of Moses possesses nothing less than “the beauty of truth hidden in itself (κεκρυμμένον ἐν ἑαυτῇ τῆς ἀληθείας . . . κάλλος).”102 The task then devolves upon Cyril to demonstrate precisely how the law contains in itself the plentitude of the truth in all of its splendor.

However, this task is not strictly hermeneutical, as if the law were simply a cryptogram to be decoded by a feat of exegetical virtuosity. Rather, Palladius and Cyril are concerned above all with the question of whether and the extent to which the life and worship stipulated by the Mosaic law are in any way amenable to or normative for the Christian way of life. Palladius puts the question succinctly, asking, “how are we to live in an evangelical manner (εὐαγγελλικῶς), if we believe that we still depend on the

100 PG 68:135d-137a.
101 PG 68:145a.
102 PG 68:137b.
old commandment, and that those things that were ordained by Moses must be fulfilled?” In his response, Cyril does not deny that Christians must in some way discharge the Mosaic precepts. Rather, he highlights how Palladius’ query raises the question of the character of virtue, with which the Church is adorned, just as its type, the pure virgin of Psalm 44 (LXX), is decked out with golden garments.

In the subsequent discussion it becomes clear that while the form of the evangelical and thus ecclesial way of life is incomparably more magnificent than that ordained by the letter of the law, it is not the case that the Christian should simply consign the types contained in the law to oblivion. Rather, it is incumbent upon Christians to remodel and transform those types in such a way that they become luminous with “the mystery of spiritual worship (τῆς ἐν πνεύματι λατρείας τὸ μυστήριον).” For Cyril, the transition from the legal to the evangelical way of life announced by Christ is not simply a fait accompli, but rather it is a transformation that every Christian must instantiate both in her exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures and also in her way of life in the ambit of the Church. Because the fulfillment of the law is still required of Christians, as the Matthean text makes clear, the precepts of the law cannot simply be disregarded, but rather must be contemplated spiritually, and then actualized. As Cyril puts it, life in Christ “is not especially far removed from the way of life of the law, if those things declared to the ancients are subjected to spiritual contemplation (θεωρίαν πνευματικήν).”

103 PG 68:137b.
104 PG 68:145a.
105 PG 68:137a.
In this way Cyril posits a tight correlation between the Christian way of life and the spiritual contemplation of the “old command,” inasmuch as the practice of the latter helps to define more clearly the shape of the former. As Cyril explains, “those longing to see the beauty of the way of life in Christ would attain what they desire in the best way possible by using the law as if it were a mirror. For by remolding the very image of things into the truth, they will see clearly that which seems best and well-pleasing to God.”

Accordingly, the law was not simply necessary for the obtuse Israelites but otiose for Christians basking in the light of Christ. Rather, it remains the indispensable conduit to Christ and life in him: “But if we shall spurn the pedagogue, then who will still lead us to the mystery of Christ?” Therefore the plea of the psalmist must rise continually from the hearts of all who wish to be initiated more deeply into the mystery of Christ and the worship in spirit and truth that he inaugurated: “Uncover my eyes, and I will behold the wonder of your law” (Ps 118:18 LXX). In one way or another all seventeen books of the De Adoratione et Cultu are devoted to the “arduous and sublime” contemplation of the “mystery of worship in the spirit” latent in the oracles of the law.

At this juncture we should secure the point that in the opening exchange of the work Cyril makes it clear that the ensuing discussion about the law of Moses will be biased toward moral concerns. The central question of the dialogue is, What does the law of Moses, if contemplated spiritually, have to teach Christians about how the

106  PG 68:141c.
107  PG 68: 140a.
evangelical way of life should be cultivated in the ambience of the church? Although
the title of the work might suggest otherwise, the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is scarcely
concerned with Christian worship *qua* that which transpires at a given synaxis. Indeed,
despite his anti-Jewish enthusiasms Cyril shows scant interest in comparing Jewish
(*ante* or *post Christum*) and Christian liturgical gatherings in order to denigrate the
former and exalt the latter. In this text at least, Cyril’s imagination is captured not by
the liturgical, but rather the moral reformation ushered in by Christ. The thesis that he
prosecutes throughout the entirety of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is that the way of life
made possible by this moral reformation is in fact the spiritual subject matter of the
Mosaic law. However, it is equally true for Cyril that both the utter failure of the literal
observance of the law to bring about true moral renewal and the incorrigible moral
turpitude of the Jews also constitute the spiritual subject matter of the law. It will be
the burden of Chapters Four and Five to substantiate this claim.

1.4: Scholarship on the *De Adoratione et Cultu*

Scholarly study of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* remains in a nascent state. Over
thirty years after writing a monograph on Cyril of Alexandria and his attitude toward
Judaism, R. Wilken notes that “Cyril’s commentaries on the Old Testament sit passively
(and expectantly) alongside the other volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca (PG)* in libraries
all over the world gathering dust.”109 He goes on to observe that “little has changed”
with respect to the scholarly treatment of Cyril’s Old Testament interpretation since

the last monograph on the topic, written by A. Kerrigan, was published over fifty years ago. In addition to the relative dearth of scholarly articles and monographs devoted to Cyril’s Old Testament exegesis, precious few translations of Cyril’s works on the Old Testament into modern languages have appeared.

Wilken’s comments are certainly accurate with respect to Cyril’s works on the Pentateuch. The De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra were last edited in 1638 and 1636, respectively. No critical edition for either text exists, nor has either been translated, either in part or in whole, into any modern language. To my knowledge, there exists only one monograph devoted to the De Adoratione et Cultu, Schurig’s Die Theologie des Kreuzes beim frühen Cyrill von Alexandria. Given Cyril’s considerable stature in the history of Christian theology as well as his ecumenical significance, one may justifiably be perplexed by such a state of affairs, although surely the De Adoratione et Cultu’s redoubtable length and pre-Nestorian controversy date have something to do with this neglect, which has persisted even in the wake of the Roman Catholic ressourcement movement, with its keen interest in patristic exegesis.

110 Wilken, "Interpreter," 1.


112 I am not aware of any monograph devoted primarily to the Glaphyra.

Nevertheless, some noteworthy scholarly work has been done on the De Adoratione et Cultu. For instance, Kerrigan’s mid-twentieth-century monograph, St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament, remains an invaluable resource. Kerrigan, in keeping with the spirit of much scholarship on patristic exegesis at the time, was concerned by and large with questions of terminology and classification. He devotes major sections of the book to Cyril’s notion of the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture, and concludes the work with an extensive section in which he provides concrete illustrations of Cyril’s exegetical method. Kerrigan’s book is valuable in several respects, not least in its thoroughness; he has obviously sifted carefully through the entire corpus of Cyril’s exegetical works on the Old Testament. In particular, his meticulous cataloguing of the various expressions that Cyril employs to denote the senses of Scripture and their objects remains helpful for the student of Cyril’s exegesis. As a microscopic analysis of Cyril’s hermeneutical vocabulary, it is not likely to be surpassed in the near future.

However, Kerrigan’s work is hardly the last word on Cyril’s interpretation of the Old Testament. As one might expect, it is already dated in several respects. Kerrigan’s preoccupation with the affinities of Cyril’s exegesis with that of the Antiochenes and the emphasis he places on Cyril’s burgeoning interest in the literal sense, a trajectory that he claims becomes especially apparent in his commentaries on


115 See Joseph Lienhard, "The Christian Reception of the Pentateuch: Patristic Commentaries on the Books of Moses," JECS 10 (2002): 388, on the periodic rereading of patristic texts: “As new disciplines develop, the older ones should not be neglected. In our disciplines, texts have to be reread every fifty years or so, as perspectives change."
the prophetic books, betray his anxieties about the extent to which Cyril’s exegesis would satisfy the canons of the guild of modern biblical scholars. In the end, Kerrigan concludes that Cyril’s exegetical principles are not likely to be employed “by those who are now in quest of a new brand of spiritual exegesis which can be harmonized with rigorously scientific method.”

Although Kerrigan, like most Cyrilline scholars, acknowledges the anti-Jewish polemic that saturates Cyril’s writings, he does not have much to say about it. To be sure, Kerrigan allows that there is “scarcely a page on which he does not lash the Jews for their infidelity to God; he never fails to exploit the slightest allusion susceptible of being twisted into a description of their hostility to Christ and his Church; numerous and severe are his strictures upon the Scribes and Pharisees.” After listing several passages in Cyril’s Old Testament commentaries that are especially transparent to his animus towards the Jews, Kerrigan then raises questions about the significance of this pervasive polemic, but offers no answers:

M. Simon assures us that Antioch rather than Alexandria was the fatherland of anti-Jewish polemics and that the master of anti-Jewish invective par excellence was St. John Chrysostom. Is it far-fetched to regard Cyril’s anti-Jewish bias as

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116 Although these anxieties are shared by many who study patristic exegesis today, it is worth noting that Kerrigan, a Franciscan who studied at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, was writing in the immediate aftermath of Humani Generis (1950), which many Catholic scholars perceived as a rebuke to the advocates of the nouvelle théologie and their call for a renewal of biblical scholarship by means of, inter alia, the critical retrieval of patristic and medieval exegesis.

117 Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 460.

118 Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 385.
another trait that connects him with the school of Antioch? Or were his
censures of the Jews occasioned by real worries that the Jewish community at
Alexandria caused him?119

As should already be perspicuous by now, I believe that the answer to this last question
should be an emphatic "yes." Kerrigan never returns to the question.

Wilken, on the other hand, takes up the question at length in his 1971
monograph, Judaism and the Early Christian Mind. In this work Wilken mounts a
convincing case, contra Harnack, that Cyril’s polemic against the Jews was not simply a
rhetorical convention, but rather was elicited by the vital and vocal Jewish community
in Alexandria, whose representatives were more than willing to contest Christian
readings of particular Old Testament texts. This makes intelligible the fact that Cyril’s
exegetical works “are studded with hundreds of references to Jews and Judaism; Jews
provide the occasion for discussion of theological, historical, and exegetical
questions.”120

Wilken devotes a chapter of his book to the motif of worship in spirit and truth
in Cyril’s writings, focusing on the initial exchange between Cyril and Palladius,
described above, in De Adoratione et Cultu. According to Wilken, this motif is pressed
into the service of two distinctly Cyrillian ideas. The first is that Christianity is the
result of a transformation of Judaism “into a more God-pleasing way of life marked by
worship in spirit and truth.”121 The second idea is that worship in spirit and truth

119  Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 387.
120  Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 59.
121  Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 74.
constitutes a new way of life, the evangelical way, against which the way of life under the law acts as a foil. Thus in Cyril’s writings the trope of worship in spirit and truth is employed in support of his basic premise that “Judaism has been transformed through the coming of Christ and the result is superior to what was before.”

Wilken goes on to show how several other biblical motifs in Cyril’s writings, including the second Adam and new creation, also function to develop and reinforce this fundamental attitude toward Judaism. Indeed, according to Wilken, Cyril articulated his entire theological vision with constant reference to Judaism: “The overwhelming impression from the study of Cyril is that Christian beliefs are so deeply rooted in attitudes toward Judaism that it is impossible to disentangle what Christians say about Christ and the Church from what they say about Judaism.”

Wilken’s work is complemented by Schurig’s aforementioned volume. In general, Schurig accepts Wilken’s thesis concerning the relationship between anti-Jewish polemic in Cyril and the Jewish community of Alexandria. Moreover, Schurig echoes Wilken’s observation that it is a specifically Cyrilline tendency to situate the exegesis of the Old Testament in the context of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. However, Schurig has a more sanguine view than Wilken with respect to Cyril’s assessment of the soteriological value of the law; Schurig contends that Cyril generally had a “hohe Wertschätzung” of the law, to which he assigned a crucial place

122 Wilken, Judaism, 89. Emphasis original.

123 Wilken, Judaism, 229. Of course, Cyril’s writings are not unique in this respect vis-à-vis other early Christian writers.
in salvation history.124 Although Schurig’s book is at present the point of departure for future scholarship on the De Adoratione et Cultu, it does not pretend to be exhaustive. As the title suggests, Schurig is primarily concerned with how Cyril unfolds his understanding of Christ’s atoning death through his interpretation of the Pentateuch, and hence his attention to the anti-Jewish polemic in the text is circumscribed by the scope of his study.

It should by now be evident that despite the valuable contributions made by the scholars discussed above, significant lacunae still exist with respect to the study of the De Adoratione et Cultu. In particular, there has been no in-depth investigation of Cyril's comprehensive critique of Jews and Judaism embedded in his figural reading of the Mosaic law. Many of the passages in the text that are most pertinent to this inquiry have never, to my knowledge, received any scholarly comment at all and thus represent true terra nova for scholars of Cyril’s exegesis.125 It is this largely unknown territory that I intend to chart in my dissertation. In addition, even those passages that have received some scholarly comment will be scrutinized through a hermeneutical lens that has heretofore not been applied to them.

To be sure, I will be building on the research and insights of my predecessors, especially on those of Wilken. Indeed, in some ways my dissertation will serve as an elaboration and specification of his observation that Cyril seems to be unable to

124 Schurig, Theologie, 46. Compare Wilken, Judaism, 46.

125 As pertinent as Wilken’s work is to my thesis, his commentary on the De Adoratione et Cultu is almost entirely limited to the opening exchange between Cyril and Palladius in Book I. Moreover, while Schurig treats some of the passages that I will discuss below, his primary interest is such that these passages remain unmined for my purposes.
articulate Christianity and its way of life without also positing Judaism and the Jewish way of life as their foils. I also think that my dissertation will confirm Wilken’s contention that the best way to approach Cyril’s thought is to regard him neither as a Hellenist nor a dogmatic theologian, but rather as a pastor, administrator, and biblical exegete who was most at home not in the philosophical schools, but “in the world of religion: symbolism, metaphor, Scripture, tradition, liturgy, piety.” To adapt a phrase from G. Lindbeck, Cyril’s world was absorbed by the Bible, and our primary concern will be the nature and implications of that absorption with special reference to Judaism.

1.5: The Thesis of the Dissertation

We have observed that Cyril declares that his main intention in the De Adoratione et Cultu is to deploy the Mosaic law as a mirror by which to define more sharply the evangelical way of life. Although Cyril does in fact devote much space to pursuing this objective, I will demonstrate that in this text and in the Glaphyra also he is no less intent on using the law of Moses as a mirror by which to throw into high relief the law’s own soteriological deficiencies and the morally debased character of the Israelites and their Jewish progeny. In this way Cyril suggests that the law of Moses has inscribed within

126 Wilken, Judaism, 224.

127 George A. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 118: “Intratextual theology redescribes reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating Scripture into extrascriptural categories. It is the text, so to speak, which absorbs the world, rather than the world the text.”

128 My main concern in this dissertation is indeed Cyril’s interpretation of those precepts of the Mosaic law that bear on cultic matters. However, two caveats should be made. The first is that Cyril himself makes no attempt to schematize the mass of Mosaic legislation, and thus does not speak of the “cultic law,” but rather only of “the law.” Indeed, for Cyril the law comprises not only the legislation of the
itself a thorough and coherent critique of both Judaism as a religion of the law and the moral state of the Jewish people. Indeed, to use Cyril's own phrase, the law of Moses offers a synoptic view of the entire mystery of the synagogue of the Jews, from the exodus from Egypt to the eschatological incorporation of Israel into the church. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, never before had a Christian exegete made this case so starkly and expansively.

Many of Cyril's figural readings pertinent to our study are patently animated by the internal dynamics of his operative narrative of salvation history, a narrative derived to a great extent from the New Testament and the subsequent Christian tradition, even though Cyril adds distinctive emphases and motifs of his own. For instance, Cyril's account of the law's figural disclosure of its own crippling limitations hinges on his understanding of the epochal significance of Christ's redemptive action, which in turn is highly indebted to New Testament writings such as the Epistle to the Hebrews. However, I will also argue that at least some of the figural readings treated herein betray his anxieties about the synagogue as a religious and socio-cultural rival to the church. For example, I will consider how Cyril's employment of images of pollution and exile in the law in order to evoke the soteriological status of the Jews might have had socio-political resonance given the relationship between synagogue and church in the early fifth century. I do not suggest that Cyril's extra-theological

Pentateuch, but also the Pentateuchal narratives that have some connection, however tenuous, to Israel's cultic life. Second, in the Pentateuch itself there is no evidence of a schematization of the precepts of the Mosaic law in such a manner that "cultic" laws are easily distinguishable from "moral" precepts, for instance. In this dissertation I will operate with a generous conception of the "cultic law," and thus will be interested in Cyril's exegesis of any Pentateuchal passage that has even a slight connection with the tabernacle cult.
anxieties about Jews and Judaism are the "real" determinative factors for his spiritual
exegesis, while his theological concerns are merely epiphenomenal; indeed, many of
the interpretations that we will examine provide a privileged window into the
development of Cyril as a Christocentric exegete and theologian. Rather, I propose that
several of the hermeneutical strategies under review are best explicable as the product
of the interaction of his broader theological construct with his trepidation about the
persistence of *post Christum* Judaism in all of its dimensions. Without attention to
Cyril's historical context, the ensemble of figural readings under discussion cannot be
satisfactorily explained or its implications fully appreciated. Thus the approach of this
dissertation is to take Cyril's theological commitments seriously but to stop short of
regarding all of his figural readings as mere corollaries of those commitments.

I also hope to demonstrate, however, that Cyril’s attitude toward Judaism is not
totally without ambivalence. If the types that constitute the law are crass and
obscure, they are also pregnant with the beauty of Christ’s form; if the Mosaic cult is
completely ineffectual with respect to sanctification, it is still a crucial improvement
upon Egyptian polytheism; and if the depravity and faithlessness of the Jewish people
might seem to warrant their total elimination from salvation history, Paul’s vision of
the salvation of Israel in Rom 11 suggests otherwise. These ambivalences, I submit,
stem largely from Cyril’s attempt to be a genuinely Pauline exegete and theologian.
Cyril is without doubt a Christian triumphalist, but one for whom Christian triumph
does not preclude but rather seems to require the inclusion of Israel, or at least a
remnant of Israel, in the eschatological consummation of salvation.
My principal arguments are not dependent upon a particular chronology of Cyril’s early works, or upon a particular theory about the nature and extent of Cyril’s contact with actual Jews in Alexandria. It may well be that Cyril’s engagement with Alexandrians Jews was infrequent, indirect, and superficial. Likewise, it may well be that Cyril wrote one or both of the texts at hand before he became patriarch of Alexandria. However, our sources make it unmistakably clear that Cyril’s mind was already deeply perturbed by Judaism in the earliest years of his patriarchate, and thus it is highly probable that his attitude toward Judaism was not markedly different in the period immediately before his accession to the Alexandrian see. After all, Cyril had been groomed for the office by his uncle, and surely he would have been thinking as a bishop for several years before actually becoming one in fact. Regardless, then, of the precise date of the composition of these texts, and regardless of the exact nature and extent of Cyril’s relationship with Alexandrian Jews, I propose that the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* give us insight into Cyril’s anxieties about Judaism, which appear to have been most acute in the early years of his ecclesiastical career.

1.6: Structure of the Dissertation

I will conclude this introduction by giving a synoptic view of the structure of the present work and the main lines of its argumentation. Chapter Two will be devoted exclusively to an examination of seven of Cyril’s forebears in the interpretation of the cultic law of Moses. Although in virtually every case it will not be possible to demonstrate Cyril’s knowledge of their writings on the subject, this chapter will make it possible to appreciate better both Cyril’s debts with respect to his overall
hermeneutical approach and his originality at the level of specific readings. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of his particular readings of the narratives and legislation of the Pentateuch appears to be original to him. This fact is itself relevant to my thesis, inasmuch as one must try to give some sort of explanation for why Cyril chose not only to devote such lavish attention on the legal arcana of the Pentateuch, but also to eschew prior readings (such as those of Origen) of these texts in favor of his own, which, unlike those of his predecessors, frequently highlight the salvific inadequacy of the law and lambaste the moral state of the Jews.

In Chapter Three I will examine Cyril's construal of the typological dimension of the law of Moses, since it is this construal that undergirds the spiritual readings pertinent to our study. According to Cyril, the Mosaic law is above all a tissue of types and images that invites spiritual contemplation, a sort of opaque window by which, with no mean effort, one can espy the beauty of the truth. Thus we will inquire into Cyril's notion of the *historia* and the *theoria* of the law and try to ascertain their operative relationship in his exegesis. As we will see, Cyril's account of the figural dimension of the law effectively denies that the law, precisely in its figurative dimension, was a salvific boon for the Israelites. Correlatively, the law, due to its densely figural complexion and its temporal priority to Christ's resurrection, did not make true vision of God (*theoptia*), and thus full knowledge of God (*theognosia*), possible for the Israelites. Christians, on the other hand, can find priceless theological and moral wisdom intimated by the figures of the Mosaic cult by penetrating beyond the coarseness of the letter and, by corollary, the crassness that characterizes the exegesis and ethos of the Jews.
It is only in Chapter Four that we will actually begin to investigate Cyril’s spiritual interpretations of the prescriptions of the Mosaic law. The main concern of this chapter will be to document and elucidate Cyril’s penchant for finding in the legislation of the Pentateuch intimations of the soteriological deficiencies of the Mosaic law. Indeed, I will argue that Cyril is the first exegete in the Christian tradition to locate a comprehensive and coherent refutation of the law’s salvific adequacy in the words of the law itself. For Cyril, then, the law does not only refer prospectively to the superior dispensation of Christ, but it also, if understood spiritually, consistently points a critical finger at itself. Cyril’s theological imagination is captured most of all by the law’s impotence to sanctify and hence to grant access to and intimacy with the holy God. In many of the pertinent figural readings Cyril places special hermeneutical weight on the spatial demarcations of Israel’s sacred geography; both Sinai and the tabernacle complex serve as apposite graphic illustrations of the contrast between the relative estrangement from the divine presence entailed by life under the law and the immediateness to God’s illuminating and sanctifying presence enjoyed by Christians in the space of the church. Both Cyril’s notion that the law contains embedded in itself hints of its own salvific limitations and his fascination with the figural significance of Israel’s sacred topography point to the importance of the Epistle to the Hebrews for Cyril. Finally, I will consider how Cyril’s insistence on the law’s self-referential and self-incriminating quality might become more intelligible in light of the late-antique atmosphere of exegetical contestation in general and Julian the Apostate’s critique of Christianity’s attitude toward the Mosaic law in particular.
The fifth and final chapter also consists primarily of a close examination of Cyril’s spiritual interpretations, but in this case the focus will be on the many instances in which he discerns in the law figures of Jewish impurity and the consequent eclipse of Israel by the church of the Gentiles in salvation history. Special attention will be devoted to the pervasiveness and socio-political implications of Cyril’s use of the legal category of impurity to characterize the moral state of the Jews. I will argue that by so deploying these categories Cyril provides the theoretical underwriting for the total socio-religious separation of Christians from Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere. In addition, I will also scrutinize Cyril’s employment of Pentateuchal images of banishment and exile in order to evoke the supplanting of the synagogue by the church of the Gentiles in the divine economy of salvation. Once again, due consideration will be given to the socio-political valences of such a hermeneutical tactic. I will also advert, however, to the limit of Cyril’s critique of post Christum Judaism. It would seem that Cyril is ultimately held back from asserting the peremptory excision of the Jews from salvation history by the seriousness with which he takes the Pauline promise of Israel’s salvation in Rom 11:26. However, we will also see that even as Cyril affirms the ultimate salvation of Israel, he hedges this affirmation in such a way as to safeguard the primacy of Gentile Christians in the eschatological people of God.

Finally, in the Conclusion I will recapitulate my major findings and consider their value for several fields of study, including late-antique Jewish-Christian relations, the history of patristic exegesis, and Cyril’s own theological development. I will also offer a brief reflection on the relationship between the substance of Cyril’s most polemical figural readings and the figural approach to the law that he so avidly
champions. In recent years Christian figural exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures has been censured rather severely for possessing an inherent anti-Jewish thrust. I will consider this claim with reference to the findings of this dissertation, which *prima facie* seem to justify this accusation. The question of paramount importance, however, is whether there is a *necessary* relationship between Cyril's style of spiritual exegesis and the most polemical content of his actual figural readings. Finally, I will ponder the paradox at the heart of Cyril's figural exegesis of the Mosaic law: Cyril makes a strong case for the placement of the law at the center of Christian reflection and life, thus to a certain extent "Judaizing" the Christian way of life, while at the same time making the paltriness of the soteriological contributions of the law as well as the moral turpitude of the Jews two of the major *topoi* of the law, spiritually understood.
CHAPTER TWO:

CYRIL'S PREDECESSORS ON THE LAW OF MOSES

2.1: Introduction

When Cyril of Alexandria set his sights on the Pentateuch at some point early in his ecclesiastical career, he added his voice to a polyphonic tradition of Christian discourse on the significance of the cultic life of Israel. In this chapter I will examine several of Cyril’s most important forebears in this discourse, as well as one Jewish author. To be sure, this chapter will demonstrate that Cyril’s own contribution to this discussion was in many important respects indebted to his predecessors. However, this survey of Cyril’s precursors will also establish his originality as an exegete of the legal texts of the Pentateuch. In the conclusion of this chapter the significance of that originality will be pondered.

Of course, if our knowledge of Cyril’s own education were less conjectural, then the selection of authors and texts for our survey would be a somewhat easier task. The reality, however, is that what we know about Cyril’s education and reading habits is rather paltry. Cyril’s own writings are rarely self-revealing, and we have only a few scattered pieces of relevant information about Cyril’s early formation in other ancient documents, all of which scholars must approach with due caution.¹²⁹ P. Évieux

¹²⁹ An ancient source that comments on Cyril’s early education and formation is the Chronicle of John of
succinctly states all that can be said of Cyril’s early life with a high degree of confidence: “Cyrille résida à Alexandrie, parcourut le cycle habituel des études, et, à l’ombre de l’oncle évêque, fut initié à l’Écriture et instruit des rudiments de la foi.”

Unfortunately, we have scant evidence with respect to the particular authors and texts, apart from the Bible, that comprised Cyril’s reading curriculum. Thus the selection of the texts surveyed in this chapter was necessarily made on grounds other than direct evidence with respect to Cyril’s reading habits.

Although there is an inescapable element of arbitrariness in my choice of seven authors, I have selected them according to certain objective criteria. First, I chose to examine exclusively those authors whose influence on Cyril is at least possible, and in some cases probable. Their influence need not be direct, that is, Cyril need not have actually read their texts; rather, it could be indirect, mediated through persons who shaped Cyril’s thinking (e.g., Theophilus) or through Cyril’s cultural milieu. However, it must be said at the outset that due to Cyril’s propensity (common to almost all ancient Christian authors) to mask his non-biblical influences, conclusions about influence will in every case be tentative. Kerrigan’s observation apropos Cyril’s interpretation of Exod 20-31 in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* could equally apply to the entire text: "between the Patriarch of Alexandria and other exponents of Christian exegesis there are...

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130 P. Évieux, “Cyrille avant 412,” *Lettres Festales* (SC 372), 12. Évieux, 11-20, provides one of the best overall discussions of the available evidence concerning Cyril’s intellectual formation.
incidental rapprochements and points of contact, which, in the present instance, do not, however, furnish proof of his dependence on them.”131

In addition to meeting the criterion of possible influence, all of the texts considered in this chapter meet one further requirement, namely, that they discuss at some length the spiritual significance of at least some Pentateuchal texts that in some way pertain to the Mosaic law. As already stated, Cyril was by no means the first Christian exegete to tackle these texts, although only Origen is his peer with respect to the sheer breadth and depth of his treatment. 132 All of the authors treated here make at least some glosses on the tabernacle and its rites (or, in the case of Melito, on the Passover ritual), and in several cases they offer some sort of hermeneutical justification for their handling of the pertinent biblical texts.

Unfortunately, several of the authors who likely decisively shaped Cyril's exegetical and theological sensibilities will not appear in this chapter because in their extant writings they do not extensively treat the legal texts of the Pentateuch. Athanasius, who served as a model for Cyril in a number of respects, is the signal instance of such an omitted author. 133 Although, as I pointed out in the Introduction, in

131  Kerrigan, St Cyril, 417.

132  Kerrigan, St Cyril, 390, provides a helpful catalogue of those early Christian authors who offered interpretations of the tabernacle and its cult. He divides those authors into two categories: those who offer a ‘cosmic’ interpretation and those who adopt the Christocentric interpretive framework provided by the Epistle to the Hebrews. Kerrigan, 417, situates Cyril squarely within the second camp, remarking that the “explanations advanced by St. Cyril are the conclusions (logical in their own way) of an exegesis initiated by St. Paul, and to mention only one outstanding exponent, continued by St. Gregory of Nyssa.”

133 See Cyril, Ep. 1.4 (PG 77:13b-c; McGuckin, Saint Cyril, 247): "Our Father Athanasius, of illustrious memory, was an ornament to the throne of the church of Alexandria throughout forty-six years in all." Also see Russell, Cyril, 206, who notes that Athanasius was not only "the greatest influence on [Cyril's] theological development," but also "his family's benefactor."
his festal letters Athanasius repeatedly lambastes the Jews' preference for the shadow over the truth with respect to the interpretation of the law of Moses, he does not engage in the sort of detailed exegesis of the Pentateuch that one finds in Cyril's early festal letters. In addition, Didymus the Blind, who directed the so-called catechetical school at Alexandria during the period immediately prior to the commencement of Cyril's ecclesiastical career, almost certainly exerted some influence on Cyril's exegesis. However, due to the limited number and fragmentary form of Didymus' extant writings, we lack a sufficient textual basis for the comparison of his hermeneutical approach to the Mosaic law with that of Cyril. In the few cases in which we possess Didymus' interpretation of legal texts on which Cyril also comments, there is no evidence of Cyril's dependence on Didymus, as several footnotes scattered throughout Chapters Four and Five will demonstrate.

The final criterion of inclusion, which only some of the texts treated herein meet, is the presence of anti-Jewish polemic. For present purposes I understand anti-Judaism to be constituted by a rigorous theological doctrine of supersessionism coupled with *ad homines* lambasting of the Jewish people as a whole on the grounds that they are singularly depraved and perverse. Not all of the texts under present discussion

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134 See Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 440-442, on the possible influence of Didymus' biblical hermeneutic on that of Cyril.

contain anti-Jewish remarks. Obviously, such comments are lacking in Philo, and they are scarce if not wholly absent in the texts of Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa under discussion. Of the texts that do contain anti-Jewish polemic, I will inquire into the relationship between that polemic and the author's exegesis of the Pentateuch.

Before delving into the texts themselves, I will state briefly the major aims of this chapter. I intend to trace the contours of the Christian (and Philonic) discourse on the law of Moses that preceded Cyril and to ascertain the particular exegetical and theological problems that it broached, thereby making it possible to contextualize the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra in the history of Christian reflection on the law. In particular, this survey will enable us both to discover points of contact between Cyril and his forebears and to ascertain the nature and extent of Cyril’s originality. However, my purpose is not to determine his debts and innovations for their own sake, but rather to consider their significance for the interpretation of the texts at hand. I will make the case that the host of novel readings found in these texts does in fact shed some light on both Cyril’s broader theological vision and his anxieties about the persistence of Judaism post Christum. Finally, I should note that although in this survey I will make some general comments, in a comparative context, about Cyril's interpretive approach to Scripture, I will amplify and substantiate those claims extensively in Chapter Three, which is exclusively devoted to the hermeneutical lens that Cyril applies to the law.

One final prefatory remark: I am not treating biblical authors in this chapter, since Cyril's most significant biblical debts should become apparent in my examination of his overall hermeneutical approach to the law (Chapter Three) and his actual figural readings (Chapters Four and Five). Nevertheless, it is worth noting at this point the
especially heavy shadow that the Epistle to the Hebrews casts over Cyril's treatment of the Mosaic cult. Although Cyril occasionally quotes particular verses from Hebrews, it is the epistle's grounding of the claim of the superiority of Christ's priestly work to the rites of the levitical priesthood in a figural reading of the tabernacle cult that most decisively shaped Cyril's approach. Indeed, in Chapter Four we will take up at some length the question of the relationship between Hebrews' treatment of the tabernacle and that of Cyril. At this juncture, however, it should be noted that despite the affinities between the two authors, the overwhelming majority of Cyril's specific figural readings are not found in Hebrews, but rather apparently originated with Cyril himself.

2.2: Cyril's Predecessors

2.2.1: Philo of Alexandria

Philo will be the only Jewish author considered in this chapter. Among other reasons, Philo merits inclusion in this discussion because in many ways the essence of his entire corpus is, as J. Danièlou points out, the exegesis of the Pentateuch. Indeed, as D. Runia avers, all of Philo's writings are animated by the conviction that “the highest wisdom attainable by man is to be found in the Law of the great Hebrew prophet Moses.” Despite his polymath accomplishments, then, Philo was above all a biblical exegete; according to V. Nikiprowetzky, the text of the Bible was the essential pole in relation to which all Philonic developments are oriented. Nikiprowetzky

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138 V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Commentaire de l’Écriture chez Philon d’Alexandrie: Son Caractère et Sa Portée*
notes that the Torah occupies such an exalted position for Philo because he held it be
the perfect and hence unsurpassable revelation of the wisdom of God, and deemed
every word written by Moses in Scripture nothing less than divine speech.  Moreover,
Philo’s influence on early Christian exegesis in general is undeniable. Runia admits
that the comment of Photius, the ninth-century Patriarch of Constantinople, to the
effect that Philo was the font from which the allegorical method of reading Scripture
began to pour into the church, is essentially correct. Of course, those Philonic texts
that will interest us most at present are those that explicitly deal with the tabernacle
cult, especially The Special Laws and The Life of Moses.

Before examining these texts, a brief word about the probability of Cyril’s
knowledge of Philo’s texts and ideas is in order. Runia has concluded from his
thorough study of references to Philo among the church fathers that there are no
indisputable citations of or allusions to Philo in Cyril’s entire corpus. However, there
are several reasons to doubt that this silence signifies Cyril’s total ignorance of Philo.
First of all, Philo was cited approvingly by several generations of Alexandrian Christian
intellectuals, including Clement, Origen, and Didymus the Blind, and the former two
seemed to have played an important role in the transmission of Philo’s writings.
Furthermore, Philo is cited approvingly on several occasions by Isidore of Pelusium, an


139 Nikiprowetsky, Commentaire, 131.
140 Runia, Church Fathers, 154.
142 Runia, "References," 111-21. Also see Runia’s translations and comments in Church Fathers, 155-81.
Egyptian monk with whom Cyril corresponded. According to Runia, who has translated and annotated the five letters in which Isidore refers to Philo (none of which are addressed to Cyril), Isidore displays a more than superficial knowledge of Philo.\textsuperscript{143} Isidore’s knowledge of Philo increases the probability that Cyril was, at the very least, familiar with some of Philo’s ideas, if not his texts. However, our comparison of Philo’s treatment of the tabernacle with Cyril’s in the De Adoratione et Cultu will not contradict Runia’s claim that one cannot find indisputable evidence in Cyril’s writings of his knowledge of Philo.\textsuperscript{144}

However, there are undeniable affinities between Philo’s basic hermeneutical approach and that of Cyril. Scattered throughout Philo’s writings on the tabernacle are comments that shed light on his interpretive presuppositions concerning the Pentateuch. For one, Philo notes that the precepts of the Torah are articulated with great precision, thus necessitating diligent attention to each word and phrase.\textsuperscript{145} This precision applies equally to the numbers that appear in the text, as Philo’s numerological speculations make clear.\textsuperscript{146} Second, the notion that Scripture is a highly unified text is usually tacit but always operative in Philo’s exegesis.\textsuperscript{147} Another one of Philo’s key hermeneutical presuppositions is that the biblical text, whether narrative

\begin{enumerate}
\item Runia, Church Fathers, 179.
\item Kerrigan, St Cyril, 155-63, provides a side-by-side comparison of Cyril and Philo’s moralizing readings of certain passages from the Pentateuch and does not find any particular points of contact.
\item See, for example, Philo’s remark, Spec. Leg. 1.105 (PCW:V.27), about the regulations given to the high priest: τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ γάμον οὕτως ἡκρίβωται τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ. As we will see in the next chapter, Cyril is fond of using forms of the word ἀκριβεῖα in reference to the exact wording of the biblical text.
\item See Philo’s interpretation of the pillars and curtains of tabernacle in Mos. 2.77-90 (PAPM:226-32).
\item Runia, Church Fathers, 6.
\end{enumerate}
or prescriptive in form, can and should be read with an eye toward both its literal and figural significations. The figural significance of a given biblical text need not be single; for example, in the *Life of Moses* Philo adduces three possible figural readings of the Cherubim looming over the ark. 148 However, the presence of a figural meaning should not, according to Philo, prejudice the literal observance of the legal precepts. Hence in *De Migratione Abrahami* Philo chastises those Jews who only recognize the spiritual reference of the law and neglect the literal mandates to circumcise, rest on the Sabbath, and observe the Jewish festivals. 149

With respect to the interpretation of the Pentateuch in particular, Runia notes how Philo assumes that “at the deepest level the Pentateuch is concerned with the fate of the soul, how she gradually emancipates herself from the deceptive attractions of earthly existence and returns to the promised land, i.e., a heavenly or even divine existence.” 150 Likewise, Daniélou asserts that Philo conceives of the Torah as a mystical itinerary that leads the soul to the knowledge of God. 151 Such a conception of the Pentateuch is not wholly unlike that which undergirds the *De Adorption et Cultu*, inasmuch as Cyril sees numerous narratives and precepts of the Pentateuch as signs

148 Philo, Mos. 2.97-100 (PAPM:236). Philo clearly prefers the third interpretation, but does not suggest that any of the readings are mutually exclusive.

149 Philo, Mig. 89-93 (PAPM:148-52). Philo's deference to the literal meaning of texts does not, according to Runia, Church Fathers, 12, reflect an interest in history for its own sake, since Philo “does not consider the possibility that an event of shattering importance could take place in the course of time as experienced here on earth.” However, it must be stressed that Philo did insist on the actual, bodily observance of the law.

150 Runia, Church Fathers, 8. He goes on to say that “the entire Pentateuch can thus be interpreted as a long journey from the domain of the body and the earthly regions to the heavenly and spiritual realm (11).”

151 Daniélou, Philon, 135.
and icons of the Christian believer's progress in the life of virtue. Finally, with respect to the tabernacle itself, Philo contends that it was built as, among other things, an object of contemplation.\textsuperscript{152}

Now we are poised to examine Philo’s actual reading of the Pentateuchal texts that bear directly on the tabernacle cult. Philo’s interpretation of the tabernacle’s furniture and rites is marked above all by the tendency to find therein intimations of the structure of the cosmos on the one hand, and oblique instruction on virtuous living on the other. First, I will adduce some examples of Philo’s propensity to extract cosmological significance from the tabernacle cult. In \textit{On Drunkenness} he claims that the visible tabernacle and altar are images of invisible objects of speculation perceptible only by the intellect.\textsuperscript{153} Elsewhere he claims that the vestments of the high priest are a copy and representation of the world, thus seeing in the figure of the priest a microcosm of sorts.\textsuperscript{154} For Philo, this means in turn that the vestments of the high priest reflect heaven itself, since the visible world is a model of heaven.\textsuperscript{155} Finally, several of Philo’s interpretations reveal an interest in astronomy. For instance, he interprets the lampstand of the tabernacle as an icon of astral motions.\textsuperscript{156}

As lively as Philo’s cosmological interests are, his propensity to discover moral significance in the tabernacle is even more pronounced. W. Gruber has argued that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} Philo, \textit{Mos.} 2.74 (PAPM:224-26).
\item \textsuperscript{153} Philo, \textit{Ebr.} 132 (PAPM:78)
\item \textsuperscript{154} Philo, \textit{Mos.} 2.117 (PAPM:242).
\item \textsuperscript{155} Philo, \textit{Spec. Leg.} 1.302 (PCW:73).
\item \textsuperscript{156} Philo, \textit{Mos.} 2.102 (PAPM:238).
\end{itemize}
Philonic allegory is chiefly concerned with ethical matters and is predicated on a fundamental duality of body and soul. Philo’s interpretation of the tabernacle bears out this claim. In general, one observes that in Philo’s hands the various prescriptions of the Mosaic cult pertaining to sacrifices, pollutions, and exclusions from the assembly take on moral valences. For instance, the bodily deformities that exclude one from the priesthood are symbols of various impurities of the soul. Likewise, Philo interprets impurity in moral terms: “the unjust and impious man is peculiarly unclean, being one who has no respect for either human or divine things, but who throws everything into disorder and confusion by the immoderate vehemence of his passions, and by the extravagance of his wickedness.” Conversely, he usually interprets the purifications prescribed by the law as oblique references to various virtues. Hence he asserts that the washing of the hands and the feet symbolize the irreproachable life that is cultivated by one who is on the straight path of virtue.

With respect to the sacrificial system of the tabernacle, Philo holds that God selected as victims those animals that possess the most wholesome moral qualities. Oxen were chosen, for example, because they are “the most gentle and the most manageable of animals.” Moreover, like several Old Testament authors (e.g., Ps 51),


158 Philo, Spec. Leg. 1.80 (PCW:21)


160 Philo, Mos. 2.138 (PAPM:238; Yonge, Philo, 503).

Philo understands sacrifice itself in moral terms, and says that the virtuous man is the most holy sacrifice. Likewise, in another text he asks, “What can be a real and true sacrifice but the piety of a soul which loves God?” Philo also tends to discern moral significance in texts that do not directly pertain to pollutions, purifications, or sacrifices. For instance, he interprets the fasting women's contribution of their mirrors to the tabernacle (Exod 38:26) both as an indication of their modesty and desire for “genuine and unadulterated beauty” alone and a reminder of the importance of self-examination for the extirpation of the passions.

How, then, does Philo's hermeneutical approach to and exegetical treatment of the tabernacle compare with those of Cyril? Philo and Cyril are nowhere closer than on their global hermeneutical assumptions about Scripture. Scripture is a unified whole, and each scriptural word is precise and so significant. With respect to the Pentateuch in particular, both authors discern therein an overarching moral trajectory, seeing in the narrative and the legal material alike an outline of God's ethical program for humanity. Both writers assume that the Pentateuch is a repository of divine wisdom and that to access that wisdom in its fullness a literal reading alone is insufficient. Finally, they also contend that the tabernacle was erected at least in part in order to serve as an object of contemplation for the discerning exegete.

However, with respect to the substance of their readings of the Pentateuchal texts pertaining to the tabernacle, there is scarcely any overlap at all. In contrast to

163 Philo, Mos. 2.108 (PAPM:240; Yonge, Philo, 500)
164 Philo, Mos. 2.137-139 (PAPM:252).
Philo, Cyril shows virtually no interest at all in discerning cosmological significance in these texts; this fact alone ensures that their readings will often be discrepant. Moreover, although they are both keen to mine the Pentateuch for its moral ore, they do not offer the same moralizing readings. Thus we can say that although Philo may well have influenced Cyril’s general exegetical approach by virtue of the former’s important place in the development of the Alexandrian style of interpretation of Scripture in general and of the Pentateuch in particular, we have discovered no compelling evidence that Philo’s interpretation of the tabernacle and its cult directly shaped that of Cyril.

2.2.2: Epistle of Barnabas

We now turn to an early Christian writer who espoused a radically different take on the cultic law of Moses. The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* remains an enigma; the only scholarly consensus about him is that he is not the Barnabas who accompanied Paul on some of his missionary journeys. However, a majority of scholars accept the hypothesis that the author was from Alexandria (other possible settings include Syria-Palestine and Asia Minor). J. C. Paget, who tentatively accepts an Alexandrian provenance for the letter, summarizes some of the main arguments in favor of this hypothesis.

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166 Paget, *Epistle*, 30-42.
First, most of the earliest and most approbative witnesses to this text, Clement of Alexandria and Origen above all, have strong ties to Alexandria.\(^{167}\) Second, Paget cites the tradition, maintained by Eusebius, that the biblical Barnabas traveled to Alexandria, a tradition that might make somewhat intelligible the otherwise puzzling attribution of the epistle.\(^{168}\) In addition, Paget contends that several passages from the epistle have affinities with Jewish Alexandrian writers such as Philo.\(^{169}\) Finally, if scholars such as C. H. Roberts are correct in thinking that Christianity emerged out of the Jewish community in Alexandria at a relatively late date, then this fact would help to explain both the Jewish and anti-Jewish features of the epistle.\(^{170}\) According to this hypothesis, the anti-Jewish arguments of the epistle were deployed in the service of identity formation, the author's concern for which is clear from his pervasive use of "us" and "them" language.\(^{171}\)

Obviously, if the epistle was in fact written in Alexandria, then the possibility of Cyril's exposure to it, whether first- or second-hand, becomes greater. Indeed, of the early Christian authors who refer to the epistle, the Alexandrian authors were most


\(^{168}\) Eusebius, *h.e.* 2.16.

\(^{169}\) See Paget, *Epistle,* 36-37, for an enumeration of parallels between *Barnabas* and Philo. Paget, 38, also notes that *Barnabas*' concentration on the interpretation of the legal prescriptions of the Pentateuch comports well with an Alexandrian context.


\(^{171}\) As for the date of the text, which is not crucial for our present purposes, we can be on relatively *terra firma* by fixing it at some point between 70 and 130. See Paget’s discussion of the date of the epistle in *Barnabas,* 9-29. For a dating of the epistle during Nerva's reign, see Reidar Hvalvik, *The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant: The Purpose of the Epistle of Barnabas and Jewish-Christian Competition in the Second Century* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 17-34.
effusive in their commendation. In addition to Clement and Origen, Didymus the Blind obviously thought highly of it, and appears even to have considered it canonical.\footnote{See Didymus the Blind, Zech. 234.21-22, 259.21-24, 355.20-24; Ps. 300.12-13. In addition, the epistle’s inclusion toward the end of the Codex Sinaiticus (which is most likely Egyptian in origin) also points to its quasi-canonical status among some fourth-century Christians. However, Paget, \textit{Epistle}, 257, notes that references to the epistle begin to taper off after the year 400; this fading away likely had something to do with the solidification of the Christian canon in the fourth century, after which the status of texts like \textit{Barnabas} became ambiguous.}

Although there is no evidence internal to Cyril’s writings that points obviously to acquaintance with the epistle, the place of the \textit{Epistle of Barnabas} in the history of early Alexandrian Christianity makes it unlikely that Cyril would never have been exposed to the text itself or at least its main ideas. Indeed, as we will see below, similarities between Cyril’s and \textit{Barnabas}’ approach to the cultic law of Moses are not entirely lacking.

The root claim from which all \textit{Barnabas}’ subsidiary arguments derive is that the Jews have completely misconstrued the nature and purpose of the Mosaic law from the very beginning by interpreting and enacting it in a woodenly literal fashion. Although the author does not discuss the tabernacle in particular, he does show a special interest in Israel’s cultic life. According to \textit{Barnabas}, it is the prophets above all who corroborate his main claim: “For [God] has made it clear to us through all the prophets that he needs neither sacrifices nor whole burnt offerings nor general offerings.”\footnote{\textit{Barn.}, 2.4, in \textit{The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations}, ed. and trans. Michael W. Holmes (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2007), 382. I will use Holmes’ English translations, which are on the pages facing the Greek text, when quoting from \textit{Barnabas}.}

Nevertheless, at several points in the epistle the author also seems to suggest that the Israelites were simply not capable of understanding the true import of the Mosaic law. With respect to the dietary precepts, \textit{Barnabas} asks, “But how could those people grasp
or understand these things? But we, however, having rightly understood the
commandments, explain them as the Lord intended.”174

The author also explains Jewish incomprehension in view of the golden calf
incident. According to Barnabas, the manufacture of the calf and Moses’ subsequent
breaking of the tablets signified God’s decision to abort the covenant that he had
intended to seal with the Israelites.175 This interpretation leads to a radically
streamlined account of salvation history; for our author, there is one law, one
covenant, one people of God, and only one event of real salvific significance, namely,
the sanctifying and exculpating death of Christ. Hence for Barnabas the church does
not supersede Israel so much as it fills the vacuum left open by God’s decision to
forswear the covenant with Israel. The logical corollary of this denial of Israel’s
reception of the covenant is that the Israelites attempted to implement a law that was
never really theirs, but rather was reserved for that people whose hearts and ears God
would circumcise subsequent to Christ’s saving work. Thus for Barnabas, his comments
about the prophets aside, the Israelites simply lacked the resources that would enable
them to grasp the spiritual intention of the law. As we will see in the next chapter,
Cyril shares this pessimistic estimate of the ability of the Israelites to discern the figural
dimension of the law.

But what, according to our author, is the true spiritual intention of the law of
Moses? For one, the Mosaic law, especially in its cultic precepts, foreshadowed the
salvific work of Christ on the cross. For example, the author contends that the two

174 Barn. 10.12 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 414).
175 Barn., 14 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 424-26).
goats involved in the Day of Atonement rite are types of the two advents of Christ, one humble, the other glorious. Likewise, the ritual in which a red heifer is burned and its ashes are sprinkled on the people is a type of the death of Christ and the purification that it effected. Such adumbrations of salvation in the law are not simply literary devices, but rather they are intended to foster the thanksgiving of Christians, who conclude from them that the death of Christ was in fact necessary and divinely intended.

In addition, many of the precepts of the Mosaic law obliquely enjoin the principles of right living. This is especially evident in the dietary laws, all of which have moral significance for Barnabas. For instance, the prohibition of swine is a metaphorical injunction to avoid contact with swine-like people, who ignore God when prosperous and grovel before God when indigent. Likewise, the proscription of birds of prey is an enigmatic warning against idleness and the exploitation of others. Further examples could be multiplied at length.

Barnabas does not restrict his moral interpretations to the food laws alone. Although he does not discuss the tabernacle per se, the author does refer to the temple, which he sees as a farcical undertaking motivated by the Israelites' lack of faith in God. Barnabas remarks that there is indeed a temple exalted in Scripture, but it is not a

176 Barn. 7.3-11 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 400-404).
177 Barn. 8 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 404-406).
178 Barn. 7.1 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 400).
179 Barn. 10.3 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 410).
180 Barn. 10.4 (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 410).
temple made with stones: “Having received the forgiveness of sins and having hoped in the name, we became new, created afresh from the beginning; therefore in our habitation God truly dwells in us. . . . This is the spiritual temple erected for the Lord.”\textsuperscript{181} Barnabas also interprets the mandates to circumcise and keep the Sabbath as pertaining to essentially moral concerns.\textsuperscript{182} Indeed, as K. Wengst\textsuperscript{183} has pointed out, Barnabas is above all a moralist and a legalist, stressing as he does the keeping of commandments and envisaging a future judgment based on one's actions.\textsuperscript{184}

Ultimately, for Barnabas the law of Moses is perfect and authoritative, if interpreted correctly, that is, with an exclusive eye toward its spiritual intention. Although early in the epistle the author makes a reference to the “new law” of Jesus Christ, the low profile of Christ as a teacher in the letter reinforces the general impression that Christ simply reiterated and enacted the prophetic interpretation of the law of Moses.\textsuperscript{185} This conception of the law's perfection provides an apt starting point for a comparison with Cyril, since he also contends that the law of Moses is a virtually exhaustive and authoritative guide to virtuous living, if understood spiritually.\textsuperscript{186} Cyril also emphasizes the inability of Jews to understand spiritually their own sacred texts, and shares Barnabas' ambivalence about their culpability for their

\textsuperscript{181} Barn. 16.8-16.10 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 430-32).

\textsuperscript{182} Barn. 9, 15 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 406-408, 426-28).

\textsuperscript{183} Wengst, *Tradition*, 89.

\textsuperscript{184} Barn. 4.11-4.12 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 390).

\textsuperscript{185} Barn. 2.6 (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 382).

\textsuperscript{186} See pp. 37-40.
ignorance. In addition, although he certainly does not go as far as Barnabas, who simply deletes the election of Israel and its life under the law from salvation history, it is true that Cyril does offer at times a rather simplified view of salvation history. In his numerous brief recapitulations of the divine economy of salvation, he often begins with Adam’s sin and moves directly to the incarnation and paschal mystery of Christ, glossing right over Israel and leaving the distinct impression that its worship and life under the law made no substantive contribution to the divine deliverance of humanity from sin and death.\footnote{For example, see PG 68:1008d-1009a.}

Moreover, Barnabas’ self-consciously magisterial tone in his explication of the mysteries hidden in the Pentateuch is not altogether unlike that of Cyril in the De Adoratione et Cultu. Just as the author of the epistle promises to impart to his readers \textit{gnosis} concerning the spiritual significance of the precepts of the Mosaic law,\footnote{Barn. 1.5 (Holmes, \textit{Apostolic Fathers}, 380).} Cyril guides Palladius through the thickets of the law as an authoritative expositor of the biblical text; the relationship between the two is clearly that of master and student.\footnote{However, it must be admitted that Cyril does not, as does Barnabas, use the language of \textit{gnosis} in the works at hand; indeed, Clement is the last Christian Alexandrian author to use this term and its cognate forms frequently in an approbative sense.}

In other words, for both Barnabas and Cyril, the spiritual interpretation of the law of Moses is not an enterprise to be undertaken without the guidance of a learned guide. Despite these similarities, Cyril’s approach to the law of Moses diverges from that of Barnabas in several important respects. In the De Adoratione et Cultu and the \textit{Glaphyra} Cyril generally acknowledges the propriety of the literal observance of the

\footnote{For example, see PG 68:1008d-1009a.}

\footnote{Barn. 1.5 (Holmes, \textit{Apostolic Fathers}, 380).}

\footnote{However, it must be admitted that Cyril does not, as does Barnabas, use the language of \textit{gnosis} in the works at hand; indeed, Clement is the last Christian Alexandrian author to use this term and its cognate forms frequently in an approbative sense.}
Mosaic law prior to the paschal event. In addition, whereas it is not at all clear that Barnabas had been exposed to Pauline texts or ideas (including the Epistle to the Hebrews), Cyril is quite obviously operating within a Pauline framework. Furthermore, with respect to the particular typological correspondences that they discern in the law, there is minimal overlap between the two authors. Some of these discrepancies in typology may be explained by Barnabas’ knowledge of certain post-biblical Jewish traditions; for example, his interpretation of the two goats involved in the Day of Atonement rite exploits details that are not included in Leviticus 16, but have parallels in post-biblical texts. Cyril, on the other hand, tends to adhere very closely to the Septuagint text available to him; it is probable that he was much less familiar with non-biblical Jewish texts and traditions than the author of Barnabas. Thus, if Cyril was in fact familiar with Barnabas, for reasons we cannot know with certainty he chose not to draw on it for any of his specific figural readings.

2.2.3: Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho

Of all the works to be surveyed in this chapter, only Justin’s shares a dialogue format with the De Adoratione et Cultu. Moreover, both texts are animated by an anxiety, which is more patent in Justin’s case, to justify Christian non-observance of the Jewish law. In an early passage in the Dialogue with Trypho Justin’s eponymous interlocutor, who is a Jew, throws down the gauntlet:

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190 See Paget, Epistle, 207-213, on the question of Barnabas’ knowledge of Paul. Paget concludes that there is no compelling evidence in the epistle that points to the author’s knowledge of any of the extant Pauline writings.

191 Paget, Epistle, 141-142.
But this is what surprises us most, that you who claim to be pious and believe yourselves to be different from the others do not segregate yourselves from them, nor do you observe a manner of life different from that of the Gentiles, for you do not keep the feasts or sabbaths, nor do you practice the rite of circumcision. . . . But you, forthwith, scorn this covenant, spurn the commands that come afterwards, and then try to convince us that you know God, when you fail to do those things that every God-fearing person would do.192

Justin then responds at great length, building a case for Christian non-observance of the law by adverting to the historical occasion for the giving of the law, developing a rudimentary classification scheme for the precepts of the law, and drawing out the implications of Christ’s mediation of a new covenant.

One of Justin’s primary theses regarding the law, and the cultic law in particular, is that it was given to Israel by God due to Israel’s extraordinary hardheartedness, as evidenced most flagrantly in the construction of the golden calf. According to Justin, the entire cultic apparatus of the law has its genesis in this abominable event. In this way he underlines the contingency of the cultic law, and the particularity of its recipients; the law represents a divine measure to address a peculiarly Jewish problem. As Justin tells Trypho, “we, too, would observe your circumcision of the flesh, your sabbath days, and, in a word, all your festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed on you, namely, because of your sins and your hardness of heart.”193


193 Justin, dial. 18.2 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 99; Falls, Saint Justin, 175).
However, not all of the precepts that fall under the rubric of the law of Moses are so contingent. Indeed, we discover in Justin’s text one of the earliest Christian attempts to provide a categorization, albeit not an especially rigorous one, of the precepts of the law: “some precepts were given for the worship of God and the practice of virtue, whereas other commandments and customs were arranged either in respect to the mystery of Christ [or] the hardness of your people's hearts.”\footnote{Justin, dial. 44.2 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 142; Falls, Saint Justin, 214). Justin is not consistent in assigning the precepts of the law to only one of these three categories. For example, in dial. 42.4 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 138; Falls, Saint Justin, 211) he seems to claim that all Mosaic precepts have a typological dimension: “Therefore, if I were to enumerate all the other Mosaic precepts, my friends, I could show that they are types, symbols, and prophecies of what would happen to Christ and those who were foreknown as those who would believe in him, and similarly of the deeds of Christ himself.”} The precepts that belong to the first category comprise that element in the law of Moses that is “good, holy, and just.”\footnote{Justin, dial. 45.3 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 143; Falls, Saint Justin, 215).} Justin seems to suggest that the precepts of this category, which he regrettably does not specify, remain binding in the new covenant.

Justin maintains that a multitude of precepts belong to the second category, and thus possess a figural dimension. Many of the typologies he adduces are Christological. For example, he interprets the Passover lamb as a type of Christ, the two goats of Yom Kippur as types of the two advents of Christ, and the offering of fine flour as a type of the Eucharist.\footnote{Justin, dial. 40-41 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 136-38).} Several of his figural readings are moralizing in nature. For instance, the prohibition against eating leavened bread should be understood as a proscription of the old deeds of wicked leaven,\footnote{Justin, dial. 14.2 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 93).} and fleshly circumcision is a type of the circumcision
of the heart administered by Christ. In this way Justin, just as Philo and Barnabas, points up the moral thrust of many Mosaic precepts, understood typologically.

Justin’s third category encompasses those precepts given on account of the obstinacy of the Israelites. As already noted, most of the precepts that are included in this category are cultic in nature. Justin concedes that these injunctions were not merely instituted by God in order to punish Israel, but also to have a remedial impact on them. For instance, the mandated sacrifices to God were intended to discourage idolatry, and the Sabbath and dietary laws were meant to make the Israelites especially mindful of God and thus less likely to act unjustly. According to Justin, then, the divine intention of these precepts was to ameliorate the cultic and moral condition of the people of Israel: “because of the hardness of your hearts, God imposed such commandments upon you through Moses, in order that, by observing these many precepts, you might have him constantly before your eyes and refrain from every unjust or impious act.”

Justin does not, however, consistently ascribe to all the Mosaic precepts a remedial intention. This becomes painfully clear in his treatment of circumcision, which provides a good starting point for a discussion of Justin’s polemical treatment of Judaism. As part of his apology for Christian non-observance of the law, Justin avers:

Indeed the custom of circumcising the flesh, handed down from Abraham, was given to you as a distinguishing mark, to set you off from other nations and from us Christians. The purpose of this was that you and only you might suffer

198 Justin, dial. 24.1-2 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 109).
199 Justin, dial. 46.5 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 145; Falls, Saint Justin, 217).
the affections that are now justly yours; that only your land be desolate, and you cities ruined by fire; that the fruits of your land be eaten by strangers before your very eyes; that not one of you be permitted to enter your city of Jerusalem.200

Justin goes on to explain that the Jews have merited this special punishment on account of their killing of the prophets and Christ, and their cursing of Christians in the synagogues.

Indeed, Justin sees in the Jewish people a race of extraordinary hardheartedness and perversity, and finds confirmation of this assessment in the words of the prophets. Justin informs Trypho that despite the restraining measures of the law, “you still continued to practice idolatry. In the times of Elijah, when God was enumerating those who had not bowed the knee to Baal, he could count only seven thousand. And in Isaiah he scolds you for having sacrificed your children to idols.”201 Thus according to Justin, the law, in spite of its remedial intention, and later the prophets utterly failed to effect any notable religious or moral improvement among the Israelites.

As already noted, Justin’s account of the rationale for the cultic law lays stress on its historical contingency. As a corollary of this contingency, the law’s authority is not permanently binding, but rather was in fact abrogated by Christ, who mediated a new covenant in its place: “Now, a later law in opposition to an older law abrogates the older; so, too, does a later covenant void an earlier one. An everlasting and final law, Christ himself, and a trustworthy covenant has been given to us, after which there shall

200 Justin, dial. 16.2-3 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 96; Falls, Saint Justin, 172).
201 Justin, dial. 46.6 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 146; Falls, Saint Justin, 217).
be no law, or commandment, or precept." Although one cannot demonstrate this with certainty, it seems that Justin’s overall approach to the law and his theory of abrogation is shaped by the theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In particular, the stress on the law’s inability to bring perfection (7:19), the contrast of the limitations of the law with the efficacy of Christ’s death (9:13-14), the notion that an old covenant becomes obsolete upon the advent of a new one (8:13), and the characterization of the law as a shadow of good things to come (10:1) all appear in the Dialogue.

The convergences of the Dialogue with Trypho with the Epistle to the Hebrews bring us back to Cyril’s text, which is informed heavily by Hebrews in general and the aforementioned verses in particular. Both Justin and Cyril readily catalogue the various shortcomings of the law, and it would seem that the Epistle to the Hebrews was an important source for both thinkers’ critiques (it obviously was for Cyril). Moreover, both authors tend to use the law as a sort of foil that precisely in its inadequacy pointed to the perfect law and covenant to come. E. Osborne notes this penchant in Justin and characterizes it as a Platonic justification for the Mosaic law. We have already noted Wilken’s observation that Cyril seems unable to talk about Christianity without positing Judaism as a virtual antithesis, and this propensity characterizes Justin’s treatment of the law as well.

Furthermore, Justin and Cyril also share an extremely pessimistic outlook on the ethical character of the Jewish people. For both authors, the sinfulness of the

202 Justin, dial. 11.2 (Marcovich, Dialogue, 88; Falls, Saint Justin, 164).
204 Eric Osborn, Justin Martyr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 158.
Jewish people is uniquely heinous and utterly unamenable to divine correction, at least until the eschaton. Cyril, however, is usually more generous in his estimate of the extent to which the law was able to extirpate polytheistic proclivities and practices among the Israelites; however, as we will see below, this concession represents the limit of Cyril’s generosity with respect to the efficacy of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, Cyril would heartily agree with Justin’s general assessment of the state of the Jewish people, past and present: “But you Jews are a ruthless, stupid, blind, and lame people, children in whom there is no faith. As God himself says, 'Honoring him only with your lips, but your hearts are far from him, teaching your own doctrines and not his.'”  

Perfunctory ritual compliance without a true understanding of God or a transformation of life: this is Cyril’s characterization of Judaism as well.

Nevertheless, several significant differences between Justin and Cyril should be noted, in addition to the difference between their respective estimates of the power of the law to inculcate the worship of the one true God in the Israelites. There is no evidence that Cyril shares Justin’s view on the rationale for the requirement to circumcise. Another salient difference between the two authors consists in the fact that Cyril does not, as does Justin, make any sort of attempt to classify the precepts of the Mosaic law; for Cyril, all the Mosaic injunctions (at least in theory) remain normative if understood spiritually. Finally, we should advert to the fact that in Justin’s dialogue a Jewish voice, however fictional and stylized, is heard, whereas in Cyril’s dialogue the interlocutor is a rather faceless Christian. This difference may

205 Justin, dial. 27.4-5 (Marcovich, Dialogus, 114; Falls, Saint Justin, 188).
reflect the fact that in Justin's time there was a more pressing need for Christians to
distinguish themselves from the Jews, whereas by Cyril's lifetime the problem of
Christian self-definition was less acute.

2.2.4: Melito of Sardis' Peri Pascha

Now we will move north and inland from Ephesus, the putative site of Justin's
conversation with Trypho, to Sardis, the setting from which Melito’s Peri Pascha emerged.206 A. Stewart-Sykes makes an extended argument for seeing the text as constituting two parts of the Quartodeciman liturgy for the Pascha celebration.207 According to his hypothesis, the first part of the text is a liturgical homily on Exod 12 delivered on the night before Pascha, and the second is the text of the commemorative ritual that constitutes the actual celebration of the Pascha, intended to make the exalted Christ present to the Christian community at Sardis.208

Before examining the germane content of the text, it is worth attending to the social and liturgical matrix from which the Peri Pascha emerged, with special reference to its theory of typology.209 The Quartodeciman community in Sardis (and elsewhere)

206 A critical edition and English translation is available in S. G. Hall, Melito of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979). For some recent discussions concerning whether or not Melito was the bishop of Sardis, see Hall, Melito, xii; Pierre Nautin, Lettres et Écrivains Chrétiens des IIe et IIIe Siècles (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 71; Alistair Stewart-Sykes, The Lamb’s High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 4-6. Scholars have not been able to date the Peri Pascha with great precision, but A. Stewart-Sykes, High Feast, 2, agrees with S. Hall that a date between 160-170 is uncontroversial, although not certain.

207 High Feast, 141-206. For background on the Quartodecimans, see 11-29.

208 Stewart-Sykes, High Feast, xi. Also see his more detailed schema of the text on 114.

209 Schreckenberg, Christlichen Anti-Judaeos-Texte, 201, calls the Peri Pascha a “bemerkenswert Zeugnis des frühchristlichen Antijudaismus.”
celebrated their paschal feast coextensively with the Passover celebration of the Jewish community, beginning with a vigil on the evening of 14 Nisan.\textsuperscript{210} It is possible that this ritual coincidence served to heighten the already keen sense of competition between the Jewish and Christian communities that may have obtained in Sardis at the time (late second century). In his dissertation on Melito’s attitude toward Judaism, I. Angerstorfer argues for the relatively marginal position of Christians in Sardis, who had no special buildings of their own, were persecuted by their fellow denizens (possibly including some Jews), and had a negligible influence on local politics.\textsuperscript{211} The members of the long-established Jewish community in Sardis, on the other hand, were free to practice their religion, relatively prosperous, and citizens.\textsuperscript{212} Moreover, there is evidence of at least a moderate degree of interest in Judaism among the Gentiles of Sardis.\textsuperscript{213} In his article “Melito’s Anti-Judaism” Stewart-Sykes argues that, in light of the status of Jews in Sardis vis-à-vis that of the Christians, the Christian community in Sardis can be best understood by employing the model of a sect.\textsuperscript{214} He goes on to argue

\textsuperscript{210} For more on the paschal celebration of the Quartodecimans, see Stewart-Sykes, \textit{High Feast}, 160-176. Also see Hall, \textit{Melito}, xxiv-xxvili.

\textsuperscript{211} Ingeborg Angerstorfer, \textit{Melito und das Judentum} (Regensburg, 1985), 215-20.

\textsuperscript{212} Stewart-Sykes, \textit{High Feast}, 9.

\textsuperscript{213} Stewart-Sykes, \textit{High Feast}, 9.

\textsuperscript{214} Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “Melito’s Anti-Judaism,” \textit{JECS} 5 (1997): 271-83. He writes: “in the context of Sardis at least Christianity may be perceived as sectarian, and so the attitude displayed by Melito is, at least in part, the typical attitude of a sectarian towards outsiders. . . the term ‘sect’ is employed as a term indicating a small cultural group whose members reject the norms of the prevailing society; Christianity in Sardis as a religious group rejects the religion of the predominant society, from which it has broken away. It is astonishing that a Melito, at the head of a tiny Christian congregation, may claim that it is they, rather than the large and powerful Jewish community, which God has favored” (274-75). However, also see Frederick W. Norris, “Melito’s Motivation,” \textit{ATR} 68 (1986): 16-24. Norris argues that “[w]e do not know enough about Melito and his relationship to the Jews of Sardis to argue as Kraabel did that Melito’s motivation for attacking the Jews was more likely ‘socio-political’ than ‘theological’” (22).
that the particular social setting of Christians in Sardis strongly influenced the critique of Judaism enshrined in the *Peri Pascha*.\(^{215}\)

Melito’s antagonism toward Judaism is especially manifest in his digression on the nature and purpose of types in *Peri Pascha* 35-45. In this section Melito uses the analogy of the relationship between an artist’s sketch and his finished work in order to explain the purpose and value of the many types that appear in the history and law of Israel before the advent of Christ. He minces no words about the dispensability of types once the realities to which they point appear:

> When the thing comes about of which the sketch was a type, that which was to be, of which the type bore the likeness, then the type is destroyed, it has become useless, it yields up the image to what is truly real. What was once valuable becomes worthless, when what is of true value appears.\(^{216}\)

The value that the type possessed before the appearance of the finished work is thus nullified when the truly real arrives. Although this theory of typology does indeed presuppose the type’s value at a discrete point in time, Melito is simply not concerned with delineating that relative value. Melito thus posits a virtual antithesis between the τύπος and the ἀλήθεια; the former portends the latter, whose appearance in turn totally invalidates the former.\(^{217}\)

\(^{215}\) However, Stewart-Sykes, "Anti-Judaism," 274, does not want to gloss over as peripheral the theological reasons for Melito’s uncompromising stance toward Judaism.


\(^{217}\) Melito, pass. 38 (Hall, *Melito*, 18-20). Stewart-Sykes, *High Feast*, 88, notes how Melito’s deployment of the language of τύποι in order to describe the events of Exodus follows in the tradition of Barnabas and Justin.
With respect to the typological dimension of Israel’s history in particular, Melito declares that

the Lord’s salvation and his truth were prefigured in the people, and the decrees of the Gospel were proclaimed in advance by the law. Thus the people was a type, like a preliminary sketch, and the law was the writing of an analogy. The Gospel is the narrative and fulfillment of the law, and the church is the repository of reality.²¹⁸

Melito does not clarify the way in which and for whom this advance proclamation and prefiguration was beneficial. For him, it suffices simply to point out that nothing is said or made without an analogy or sketch, respectively.²¹⁹ However, perhaps his own homiletical reflections on Exodus make the purpose of prefiguration clear; by reflecting on the story of the first Passover, the Christian is led deeper into the paschal “mystery of the Lord.”²²⁰

Moreover, there is for Melito a perfect homology between the way in which the type cedes to the reality and the total supplanting of the law by the gospel and hence the Israelites by the Christians. Indeed, the Peri Pascha represents one of the most explicit and uncompromising statements of Christian supersessionism in all of patristic literature. In the midst of his digression on the nature and dynamics of typology, Melito observes:

²¹⁸ Melito, pass. 39-40 (Hall, Melito, 20; Stewart-Sykes, On Pascha, 47).

²¹⁹ Melito, pass. 35 (Hall, Melito, 16; Stewart-Sykes, On Pascha, 46).

²²⁰ Melito, pass. 33 (Hall, Melito, 16; Stewart-Sykes, On Pascha, 45). Stewart-Sykes, "Anti-Judaism," 274, notes that Melito’s writings are characterized by an “anti-Marcionite tone.” Indeed, despite Melito’s supersessionary language, there is no indication that the Jewish Scriptures are ever superseded qua Scripture.
In the same way that the type (τύπος) is depleted (ἐκενώθη), conceding its power to the truth (ἀληθείᾳ), and the analogy is brought to completion through the elucidation of interpretation, so the law is fulfilled by the elucidation of the Gospel, and the people is depleted (ἐκενώθη) by the arising of the church, and the type is dissolved (ἐλύθη) by the appearance of the Lord. And today those things of value are worthless, since the things of true worth have been revealed.\(^{221}\)

According to Melito, however, this “depletion” of Israel did not have to assume the precise form that it did. The Jews could have recognized the true identity of Jesus Christ and been integrated into the church. As it is, Israel completely failed to see who Christ really is: “You were not Israel. You did not see God. You did not perceive the Lord. Israel, you did not recognize the first-born of God.”\(^{222}\) Melito's denial that the Jews were true Israelites lends credence to Stewart-Sykes’ claim that the notion “that Christianity is a true Judaism is central to Melito’s approach to Scripture.”\(^{223}\)

Of course, for Melito the Jews' failure of vision culminates in their killing of Christ, for which they are solely responsible: “This is the one who has been murdered. And where murdered? In the middle of Jerusalem. By whom? By Israel.”\(^{224}\) He then apostrophizes his Jewish opponents, anticipating their objections to his blunt assertion of their culpability:

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\(^{221}\) Melito, pass. 43 (Hall, Melito, 20-22; Stewart-Sykes, Pascha, 47-48).

\(^{222}\) Melito, pass. 82 (Hall, Melito, 44; Stewart-Sykes, On Pascha, 60).


\(^{224}\) Melito, pass. 72 (Hall, Melito, 38; Stewart-Sykes, On Pascha, 56-57).
O Israel, what have you done? Is it not written for you: ‘You shall not spill innocent blood’ so that you might not die the death of the wicked? ‘I’ said Israel. ‘I killed the Lord.’ Why? ‘Because he had to die.’ You have erred, O Israel, to reason so about the slaughter of the Lord. He had to suffer, but not through you. He had to be dishonored, but not by you.\textsuperscript{225}

In this way the Jewish failure of vision is mirrored by the Jews’ failure to reason correctly about the ways of providence.

Furthermore, Jewish guilt for the death of Jesus has radical implications for their present status:

You disowned the Lord, and so are not owned by him. You did not receive the Lord, so you were not pitied by him. You smashed the Lord to the ground, you were razed to the ground. And you lie dead, while he rose from the dead, and is raised to the heights of heaven.\textsuperscript{226}

In light of passages such as this Schreckenberg speaks of Melito’s conception of the “Totsein” of Israel, which he asserts as a proof of the truth of Christianity and the rejection of Israel by God.\textsuperscript{227} Thus the inability of the Jews to perceive Jesus’ divine identity, their exclusive role in his death, the election of the church and the concomitant dissolution of the Jews as the people of God are all intimately linked in Melito’s thought. As we will see in due course, Cyril will connect all of these dots in much the same manner.

What is the probability that Cyril would have been familiar with the \textit{Peri Pascha}?\textsuperscript{228} This is, as always, a very difficult question to answer, but there is some

\textsuperscript{225} Melito, pass. 74-75 (Hall, \textit{Melito}, 40; Stewart-Sykes, \textit{On Pascha}, 58).
\textsuperscript{226} Melito, pass. 99 (Hall, \textit{Melito}, 56; Stewart-Sykes, \textit{On Pascha}, 65).
\textsuperscript{227} Schreckenberg, \textit{Adversus-Judaes-Texte}, 204.
\textsuperscript{228} R. P. C. Hanson, \textit{Allegory and Event}, 294, believes it likely that “this Homily of Melito, couched as it is
evidence internal to the *De Adoratione et Cultu* that is suggestive of influence. For one, Cyril frequently points up the contrast between τύπος and ἀλήθεια to which Melito has recourse, using Melito's very terminology. Moreover, in the opening exchange of the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, Cyril makes uses of Melito’s artistic analogy in order to elucidate the relationship between the ethos of the law and the evangelical way of life.229

There are other points of contact between the two texts that are worth noting, whether or not they point to direct or even indirect influence. There is a shared presumption about the enigmatic nature of Scripture, which both authors see as “a riddle which hides a wisdom.”230 Moreover, the texts share numerous features that suggest that both authors sit comfortably within a Johannine framework: an emphasis on the total abolition of the literal precepts of the law, a keen interest in typological interpretation, a propensity to posit Judaism as a necessary foil in the articulation of Christianity, and correlative to that the anxiety to define Christian identity over against Judaism.231 Finally, Cyril also frequently avows that the egregious depravity of the Jewish people culminated in their killing of Christ, as we will see below.

Nevertheless, the two texts are quite different in several respects. Although both authors employ an analogy from the plastic arts in order to explain the relationship between the law and the gospel, Melito uses that analogy in order to argue

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229 PG 68:140c-141a.

230 Stewart-Sykes, *High Feast*, 89. He discusses rather extensively the hermeneutical trends of Melito’s time in 84-92.

231 See Stewart-Sykes, "Anti-Judaism," 279-81, on the Johannine flavor of the *Peri Pascha*. 

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for the obsolescence of both the law and the people of Israel after Christ’s paschal mystery, while Cyril utilizes this analogy in order to argue for the importance of preserving the model in some fashion rather than simply discarding it. Although one might argue that substantively Melito and Cyril’s attitudes toward the Hebrew Scriptures are quite similar, there is no doubt that there is a discrepancy between the two in tone and emphasis. Significantly, Melito does not ascribe to the law the sort of self-critical quality that Cyril attributes to it. Furthermore, the occasion of Melito’s text is such that, with respect to typological interpretation, he focuses almost exclusively on the Passover event in Egypt. The De Adoratione et Cultu, on the other hand, examines scores of narratives and legal material from the Pentateuch in order to ascertain their typological import.232

2.2.5: Clement of Alexandria’s Stromateis V

We now return to the cosmopolitan intellectual ambience of Alexandria, wherein Clement produced much of his literary corpus. The text that concerns us is Stromateis V, in which Clement expounds his doctrine of literary concealment and adduces certain Pentateuchal texts on the tabernacle as signal instances of such veiling. Due in large part to its lack of an obvious structure, there is no scholarly consensus on the precise nature and aim of the Stromateis.233 Nor is it entirely clear that Clement

232 There is, of course, the further obvious difference that while the Peri Pascha is probably a liturgical text of some sort, the De Adoratone et Cultu is not.

intended for the *Stromateis* to be the third installment of a trilogy that would putatively begin with the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus*. However, these debates are not directly germane to our purposes; we are concerned with the substance of what Clement has to say about both biblical hermeneutics in general and the cultic law of Israel in particular. As we will see, while Cyril’s overall exegetical approach in many ways dovetails with that of Clement, his spiritual interpretation of the tabernacle seems innocent of Clement’s influence.

As several of his commentators have pointed out, Clement was a pivotal figure in the history of Christian biblical exegesis. According to R. P. C. Hanson, Clement was the first Christian to advance the notion that hidden meanings are ubiquitous in Scripture. C. Mondésert believes that Clement was the first Christian author to attempt to provide a theoretical rationale for allegorical exegesis. According to Mondésert, Clement’s importance as a biblical exegete also derives from the fact that he worked with a certain set of hermeneutical criteria, like those of Philo, by which he justified assigning allegorical meanings to certain biblical texts: “s’il n’est pas sûr que Clément les ait formulées, il est certain que les a appliquées.”

234 Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 117. Hanson stresses Clement’s debt to Philo for this doctrine. He also claims, with lugubrious resignation, that Clement was the first Christian writer “to introduce into the biblical text a philosophical system which is not there” (120). For a full-length study of the *Stromateis*’ literary relationship with the works of Philo, see A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).


236 Mondésert, *Clément*, 137.
For our present purposes it is Clement’s theoretical defense of literary concealment, and by corollary his apology for allegorical interpretation, that will occupy most of our attention. This defense begins in earnest in *Stromateis* V.4, in which Clement points out that the concealment of divine truths is by no means unique to the Hebrew Scriptures, but can be traced back as far as the Egyptian hieroglyphs. From the very beginning, he contends, this obfuscation was predicated on a certain kind of elitism: “Hence the prophecies and oracles were spoken through enigmas and the mysteries were not made known to those who came upon them pell-mell, but rather with certain purifications and prior instructions.”237 According to Clement, this practice of concealment is indeed universal: “all of the barbarians and the Greeks who theologized concealed the principles of things and transmitted the truth by enigmas and symbols and allegories and metaphors and such tropes.”238 Clement then buttresses this allegation by examining Pythagorean symbols, Egyptian enigmas, the poetry and philosophy of the Greeks, and various biblical texts. Plato in particular represents for Clement a paragon of literary concealment, while Paul in turn is depicted as Plato’s Christian counterpart.239

Why this universal practice of concealment? Some of Clement’s most concentrated reflections on this matter are found in *Stromateis* V.9. For Clement, the practice of writing about God involves serious risks, one of the most salient of which is that a divine truth enshrined in writing is liable to be misunderstood and hence

238 Clement, *Str.* 5.4.21.4 (SC 278:60).
perverted by those who encounter it without a proper interpreter or guide.\textsuperscript{240} Techniques of concealment minimize this hazard. While the veil of allegory prevents the ignorant from misapprehending the truth concealed, the gnostic is able to discern the truth in such a way that it shines through “grander and more august.”\textsuperscript{241} Clement’s esotericism is predicated not on a belief that some are ontologically worthy of divine truths while others are not, but on his conviction that only those who undertake a strenuous effort to purify their souls will be able to appropriate divine truths in a profitable way. Only those who can distinguish objects of intellect from objects of sense perception and who can correlatively improve their mode of living are so capable. Thus Clement, adapting Paul’s metaphor in 1 Cor 3, maintains that “solid food is for the perfect, who through habit possess the disciplined perceptive faculties that allow them to discriminate between good and evil.”\textsuperscript{242}

Clement also cites another compelling reason, philosophical in nature, why techniques of concealment are indispensable. He is, of course, concerned with texts that speak of divine matters, and such matters cannot be adequately circumscribed by words. After quoting Plato on the necessity to speak about God in enigmas, Clement avers that “the God of the universe, who is above all speech and all thought and every notion, could not ever be transmitted in writing, since he is ineffable in his power.”\textsuperscript{243}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{240} Clement, str. 5.9.56.4 (SC 278:116). Compare Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 27.
\textsuperscript{241} Clement, str. 5.9.56.5 (SC 278:116).
\textsuperscript{242} Clement, str. 5.10.62.4 (SC 278:128).
\textsuperscript{243} Clement, str. 5.10.65.2 (SC 278:132).
\end{flushright}
Thus all speech about the divine must be oblique and tropological lest one think that God can somehow be ensnared in the conceptual nets of human discourse.

As J. Kovacs notes, the “centerpiece” of Clement’s rationale for the symbolic exegesis of the Bible is his account of the tabernacle and its furnishings (Exod 25-27), the garments of the high priest (Exod 28), and the entry of the high priest into the holy of holies (Lev 16). \(^\text{244}\) Clement does not single out these biblical texts because their enigmatic nature is exceptional, but rather because these texts are exemplary and thus serve as a proof (ἐνδειξίας) of his thesis that virtually all of Scripture is enigmatic in nature. \(^\text{245}\) Clement’s considerable debt to Philo in his interpretations of the tabernacle and its rites has been documented extensively. \(^\text{246}\) One of his more obvious debts to Philo is his propensity to find cosmological meaning in the Pentateuchal descriptions. For example, the four materials with which the veil of the tabernacle was embroidered, namely, blue, purple, scarlet, and linen, represent the four elements of the created universe. \(^\text{247}\) In addition, the altar of incense in the sanctuary of the tabernacle was “the symbol of the earth,

\[^\text{244}\] Judith L. Kovacs, “Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria’s Interpretation of the Tabernacle,” StPatr 31 (1997): 414-37. Kovac’s thesis is that “an important part of the background of this chapter [str. V] has not been recognized, viz., the Valentinian idea that there are two ways of salvation, the psychic way of πίστις and the spiritual way of γνώσις” (415).

\[^\text{245}\] Clement, str. 5.6.32.1 (SC 278:76).

\[^\text{246}\] Kovacs, "Concealment," 414, succinctly describes the degree and extent of Philo’s influence on Clement: “In the first two sections Clement is largely dependent on the cosmological exegesis in Philo’s Life of Moses II 71-135, but he differs from Philo at numerous points, most notably by providing specifically Christian interpretations of a number of details. In the third part of the chapter, Clement departs entirely from his Philonic Vorlage.”

\[^\text{247}\] Clement, str. 5.6.32-33 (SC 278:76-80).
which lies in the middle of the universe,” since the altar was situated between the covering and the veil.248

For Clement, one of the assets of literary concealment is that it makes possible multiple valid interpretations of a single text,249 and indeed in his interpretations of the tabernacle and its rites Clement instantiates this hermeneutical generosity. For instance, he notes that the sanctuary of the tabernacle, which is between the holy of holies and the external court, has been interpreted as the middlemost point of heaven and earth, and alternately as a symbol of the intellectual world.250 Clement gives no indication that the two interpretations are mutually exclusive. One can also observe this interpretive ductility in Clement’s willingness to accept Philo’s interpretation of a given text and then to augment it with another possible reading, one that is often specifically Christian in nature. For example, Clement follows Philo very closely in his reading of the golden lampstand as a figure of the motion of the seven planets.251 He strides beyond Philo, however, when he notes that the lampstand also intimates the way in which Christ illuminates believers.252 Clement also shows his Philonic colors when he finds moral and ascetic significance encoded in these Pentateuchal texts. For

248 Clement, str. 5.6.33.1 (SC 278:78).
249 See, for instance, Clement’s treatment of Greek oracles in str. 5.4.22-23 (SC 278:60-62).
250 Clement, str. 5.6.33.2-3 (SC 278:78).
251 Clement, str. 5.6.34.8 (SC 278:80).
252 Clement, str. 5.6.35.1 (SC 278:82).
example, he remarks that “the sacrifice that is acceptable to God is the irreversible separation from the body and its passions.”

Another noteworthy feature of Clement’s interpretation of the tabernacle is his readiness to find in these Pentateuchal texts intimations of the characteristics of the true gnostic Christian as well as oblique references to those who are unworthy of divine gnosis. For example, Clement interprets the covering on the five pillars that separates the court of the tabernacle from the sanctuary as “the impediment of popular unbelief,” which ensures that those who “are attached to perceptible things as if nothing else existed” do not have access to the mystical five loaves broken by the Savior. Conversely, Clement interprets the high priest’s laying aside of his consecrated robe in order to don another tunic, which he wears when he enters the holy of holies, as a reference to the gnostic, who, “having splendidly reached the summit of his conduct, having grown from a priest to something better, in a word, having been sanctified in word and life, having donned the brilliance of glory . . . is now filled with insatiable contemplation face to face.” In this way Clement understands the distinction between gnostic Christians and the hoi polloi to be both the rationale for concealment and, at least in some cases, the very truth that is concealed.

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253 Clement, str. 5.11.67.1 (SC 278:136).
254 Clement, str. 5.6.33 (SC 278:78-80).
255 Clement, str. 5.6.40.1 (SC 278:90). Kovacs, "Concealment," 427, notes apropos this passage: “While we have no extant Valentinian interpretations of this passage from Leviticus, the exegetical method used here is strikingly similar to the Valentinian practice of interpreting contrasts in Scripture as referring to two different Christian groups, the psychics and the pneumatics.”
At this point we can make some tentative observations about how Clement’s hermeneutical approach to Scripture and his exegetical treatment of the Mosaic tabernacle compare with those of Cyril. As the reader will by now tire of hearing, it is impossible to demonstrate with certainty Cyril’s knowledge of Clement’s writings. Kerrigan seems to conclude that Cyril had at least some exposure to Clementine texts when he characterizes Cyril as “an exponent of the Alexandrian school” and claims that Cyril “revives an idea espoused by Clement,” namely, “that parables constitute the very style of the Old Testament.” My reading of the De Adoratione et Cultu, however, does not reveal any definitive proof of Cyril’s dependence on Clement on any particular point.

However, Kerrigan is correct in suggesting that Clement and Cyril share many of the same hermeneutical assumptions with respect to the exegesis of the Old Testament. As will become manifest in the next chapter, Cyril largely concurs with Clement on the ubiquity of concealment in the Pentateuch and the consequent difficulties (and opportunities) that this poses for interpretation. Cyril also shares Clement’s notion that there is no superfluous detail in Scripture, and that biblical texts, or at least certain Pentateuchal texts, are patient of multiple valid interpretations. Both authors also assume that what is concealed in these texts is nothing less than divine wisdom.

Nevertheless, the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra are almost totally devoid of Clement’s brand of esotericism. While Cyril certainly agrees with Clement

256 Kerrigan, St Cyril, 439-40.
that many biblical passages conceal divine truths, he does not follow Clement with respect to the rationale for that concealment. Although it is true that Cyril does not provide a theoretical account of biblical concealment as elaborate as Clement’s, nevertheless the tenor of Clement’s esotericism is almost completely absent. The relationship between Cyril and Palladius is not that of a gnostic teacher and pupil. Palladius never appears to be anything more than a literate Christian, of average intellectual means, who simply cannot make heads or tails of the prescriptions of the law of Moses without the assistance of a learned teacher; he does not appear to have any special credentials that would entitle him to privileged knowledge. Furthermore, Cyril never warns Palladius of the dangers of sharing the exegetical fruits of their dialogue with others. As one might expect, then, Cyril nowhere finds enigmatic indications in the Pentateuch of the distinction between elite Christians and their less scintillating and more carnal counterparts. In addition, Cyril does not appear to share Clement’s philosophical concern about the enshrining of divine truths in language. Furthermore, with respect to their material readings of the passages pertaining to the tabernacle and its rites, there is virtually no overlap at all. Indeed, we have already noted the fact that Cyril’s readings almost always diverge from those of Philo, whose influence on Clement’s reading of the tabernacle is pervasive. However, Cyril does not even adopt any of Clement’s specifically Christian readings.

Moreover, Clement’s exegesis of the tabernacle does not engage in polemic against Judaism, which is a conspicuous feature of the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. None of Clement’s particular readings, nor indeed his hermeneutical theory in general, appear to be motivated by anti-Jewish sentiment. Indeed, Schreckenberg
considers Clement’s writings in general to be noteworthy among early Christian texts for their dearth of explicit anti-Jewish remarks.\textsuperscript{257} According to Schreckenberg, Clement is unusually chary of asserting Jewish culpability for Jesus’ death, and nowhere posits the total supplanting of the Jews by the church. The same, as we will see in Chapter Five, cannot be said of Cyril.

2.2.6: Origen’s Homilies on Exodus and Leviticus

At last we come to an author with whose writings Cyril was almost certainly familiar. Several commentators on Cyril’s early works have detected the influence of Origen on Cyril’s biblical exegesis. In an examination of the \textit{Glaphyra}, Kerrigan catalogues several points on which Origen and Cyril agree (as well as some discrepancies), and concludes from his investigation that “many of Origen’s exegetical opinions were still held in honour at Alexandria in St. Cyril’s time. Though dependent on the older exegete, Cyril does not copy him in a slavish fashion.”\textsuperscript{258} In addition, Schurig argues that Cyril’s self-conscious search for a given biblical text’s \textit{skopos} places him in Origen’s exegetical trajectory.\textsuperscript{259}

However, it is quite likely that Cyril’s attitude toward Origen had become quite ambivalent by the time he assumed the patriarchate. This equivocal posture stemmed

\textsuperscript{257} Schreckenberg, 	extit{Adversus-Judaeos-Texte}, 211-13.

\textsuperscript{258} Kerrigan, \textit{St. Cyril}, 427. Schurig, \textit{Theologie}, 8, also discusses the probability that Cyril read Origen early in his education, noting how strongly Didymus the Blind, who taught at the so-called catechetical school at Alexandria until his death in 398, was influenced by Origen.

in large part from his uncle Theophilus’ *volte-face* with respect to Origen’s theology.\(^{260}\) Even though Theophilus anathematized Origen’s writings under pressure from the desert monks, Socrates reports with exasperation that Theophilus admitted that he continued to read Origen, albeit in a discriminating manner.\(^{261}\) There is no reason, then, to suppose that even after his condemnation of Origen, Theophilus would have forbidden Cyril’s reading of Origen altogether. At the same time, Theophilus’ public condemnation, among other factors, ensured that Cyril would never wholeheartedly embrace Origen’s exegesis and theology.\(^{262}\)

Origen’s homilies on Exodus and Leviticus provide an ideal point of comparison with the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* because they treat a plethora of passages that bear directly on the tabernacle, its furniture, and its rites, and do so at a length that rivals that of Cyril.\(^{263}\) Moreover, as I hope to demonstrate, Cyril’s hermeneutical approach to Scripture harmonizes with that of Origen in several crucial respects. Since it would be tedious to comment on each of the relevant homilies

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\(^{260}\) See P. Évieux’s account of the anthropomorphite controversy in which Theophilus became embroiled and that led to his anathematizing the writings of Origen. “Cyrille Avant 412” (SC 372), 22-25.

\(^{261}\) “After these transactions, Theophilus was degraded, in every one’s estimation, but the odium attached to him was exceedingly increased by the shameless way in which he continued to read Origen’s works. And when he was asked why he thus countenanced what he had publicly condemned, he replied, ‘Origen’s books are like a meadow enameled with flowers of every kind. If, therefore, I chance to find a beautiful one among them, I cull it; but whatever appears to me to be thorny, I step over, as that which would prick.” Socrates Scholasticus, *h. e.* 6.17 (GCS NF 1:340). The English translation is from NPNF2:150.


\(^{263}\) See also Origen’s *Homilies on Numbers* (SC 415). Given the limitations of space and the bounty of material supplied by Origen’s homilies on Exodus and Leviticus, I have not taken these sermons into account in this section.
successively, I will provide a synoptic account of the most salient features and interpretive propensities of these sermons.

First, we should consider Origen’s regulative hermeneutical assumptions about the proper interpretation of the law of Moses. Time and again, Origen harps on the folly of clinging to the letter alone and asserts the necessity to seek out the spiritual sense when interpreting the ordinances of the law. In his first homily on Leviticus, Origen makes this programmatic statement:

So also when the Word of God was brought to humans through the Prophets and the Lawgiver, it was not brought without proper clothing. For just as there it was covered with the veil of flesh, so here with the veil of the letter, so that indeed the letter is seen as flesh but the spiritual sense hiding within is perceived as divinity. Such, therefore, is what we now find as we go through the book of Leviticus, in which the sacrificial rites, the diversity of offerings, and even the ministries of the priests are described. But perchance the worthy and the unworthy see and hear these things according to the letter, which is, as it were, the flesh of the Word of God and the clothing of its divinity. But ‘blessed are those eyes’ which inwardly see the divine spirit that is concealed in the veil of the letter; and blessed are they who bring clean ears of the inner person to hear these things. Otherwise, they will perceive openly ‘the letter which kills’ in these words.

Thus the person who clings obstinately to the letter of the law alone is like the person who is blind to the divinity of Christ, seeing only his fleshly raiment.

264 To broach the topic of Origen’s attitude toward the letter of Scripture is to broach the topic of his attitude toward history, a subject that several scholars have recently revisited. Two of these scholars in particular, K. J. Torjesen and J. D. Dawson, have stressed, against critics of the previous generation (e.g., R. M. Grant and R. P. C. Hanson) the importance of history for Origen’s exegesis. See John David Dawson, Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Karen Jo Torjesen, Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen’s Exegesis (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986).

As one might then expect, Origen frequently reminds his hearers of the dangers of a strictly literal reading of the legal prescriptions of the Pentateuch. For instance, in a homily on Leviticus that begins with a lengthy quotation from Lev 6, which gives instructions on how to present a sin offering, Origen declares:

> Unless we take all these words in a sense other than what the literal text shows, as we already said often, when they are read in the Church, they will present more an obstacle and ruin of the Christian religion than an exhortation and edification. But if it is discussed and found in what sense these things were said, and if they are turned worthily to God who is said to write these things, indeed he who hears these things will become a Jew, but not one ‘who is one in appearance’ but ‘who in secret is a Jew.’

Origen finds this hermeneutical imperative to exceed the law’s letter intimated enigmatically in the law itself. Those animals that are cloven-hooved and ruminant were considered clean, he proposes, because they image the ideal reader of Scripture: “he chews the cud who applies those things which he reads according to the letter to the spiritual sense and he ascends from the lowest and visible to the invisible and higher things.”

As part of his agenda to encourage his audience to penetrate beyond the veil of the letter, Origen repeatedly underscores what he considers to be the absurdity of specific Mosaic precepts. The preposterousness of these precepts, literally understood, should then goad the reader to seek the spiritual significance of the text. For example, apropos the precept of Lev 5:2-3 on the sources of defilement, Origen remarks,

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266 Origen, lev. 5.1 (SC 286:204; Barkley, 88).
267 Origen, lev. 7.6 (SC 286:342; Barkley, 148).
These precepts, to be sure, are observed by the Jews indecently and uselessly enough. And why should one who, for example, touches a dead animal or the body of a dead man be held to be impure? What if it is the body of a prophet? What if it is the body of a patriarch or even the body of Abraham himself? . . . Will that one be unclean who touches the bones of the Prophets and likewise do they make that one unclean whom they raise from the dead? See how unsuitable the Jewish interpretation is.268

Passages such as this acutely raise the question of Origen’s position on the propriety of the literal observance of the law even before the advent of the incarnate Christ, a question I will address momentarily.

Elsewhere Origen makes similar remarks about the foolishness of the interpretation of the Mosaic law propounded by Jewish teachers. In the following quotation Origen pits the interpretation of Jewish teachers against an apostolic reading of the Mosaic law:

Therefore we must return to the evangelical and apostolic exposition so that the law can be understood. For unless the gospel shall have taken the veil from the face of Moses, it is not possible for his face to be seen nor his meaning to be understood. See, therefore, how in the Church of the Apostles the disciples stand by these things that Moses wrote and defend them because they can be fulfilled and were reasonably written. But let the Jewish teachers, in following the letter, make these things both impossible (impossibilia) and irrational (irrationabilia).269

Here Origen clearly insinuates that many precepts of the law are “impossible and irrational” if enacted in a literal manner.

Nevertheless, although Origen finds many occasions on which to point out the absurdity of the letter of the law, he never goes as far as the Epistle of Barnabas and

268 Origen, lev. 3.3 (SC 286:128; Barkley, 55-56).

269 Origen, lev. 4.7 (SC 286:188; Barkley, 81).
explicitly denies that God intended for the preponderance of the precepts of the Mosaic law to be observed literally by the Israelites. Even one of Origen’s most trenchant critics, R. P. C. Hanson, observes that Origen “does sometimes, a little reluctantly, admit that the Jews were justified in taking the law literally under the old dispensation.” 270 However, in these sermons at least, Origen often opts to highlight the absurdity of the literal sense of a given injunction rather than dwell on any benefits that might have accrued from the Israelites’ literal observance thereof.

A point on which Origen is unequivocal is the benefit to be derived by Christians and the church at large from contemplating the statutes of the law spiritually. The mysteries of the tabernacle, he insists, were given by God as signs for zealous readers. 271 If this were not the case, then it would be a vain exercise to read these legal texts in the church: “These individual things that are written in the law are forms of those things that ought to be accomplished in the Church. Otherwise it would not have been necessary to read these in the Church unless some edification was supplied to the hearers from them.” 272 Thus Origen understands spiritual contemplation of the law not as a mere hermeneutical exercise, but rather as the means by which Christians can become true observers of the spiritual law:

Let us meditate on these things, and recalling them to our memory ‘day and night’ and being diligent in prayer and vigilant, let us entreat the Lord that in these things which we read the Lord may see fit to reveal wisdom in us and to

270 Hanson, Allegory and Event, 300. Hanson, 301-303, goes on to point out that Origen even thought that Christians should take the law literally with respect to several precepts that he took to be applicable to church order.

271 Origen, lev. 3.8 (SC 286:154).

272 Origen, lev. 5.12 (SC 286:260; Barkley, 113).
show us how we may observe the spiritual law not only in understanding but in our deeds that, illuminated by the law of the Holy Spirit, we may be worthy to obtain the spiritual grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.  

In this way spiritual reading of the law becomes a catalyst for personal transformation and deeper initiation into the life of virtue and the divine economy of grace. Along the same lines, earlier in the homily Origen, speaking of the cleansing of the law that ought to precede baptism, says that “you ought first to meditate on the Law of God that, if perhaps your deeds are intemperate and your habits disordered, the Law of God may correct you and reform you.” Thus spiritual exegesis functions as a means of self-examination and reform.

As one might then expect, Origen often finds the spiritual significance of the cultic precepts of the Mosaic law to be moral in nature. According to Origen, the overarching Pentateuchal narrative of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt into the desert is an image of the soul's growth in virtue, and once the reader grasps this insight and acquires those virtues intimated in the text, “that man can consequently also attain to the contemplation and understanding of the tabernacle.” Indeed, Origen frequently interprets the furniture and rites of the tabernacle as shadowing forth the preparations and efforts that one must undertake in order to present oneself as a tabernacle in which God could dwell. For instance, Origen claims that the twisted linen found in the tabernacle is a figure of the restraining of the flesh by means of vigils,

273 Origen, lev. 6.6 (SC 286:296; Barkley, 128).
274 Origen, lev. 6.2 (SC 286:268; Barkley, 118-19).
abstinence from pleasures, and the exertion of meditations.\textsuperscript{276} For those who are illuminated by Christ, to read the instructions in Exodus concerning the construction of the tabernacle is to survey a map of the life of virtue cultivated in the church, of which the tabernacle is an icon.\textsuperscript{277}

This tendency to find in the precepts of the Mosaic cult intimations of the contours of the Christian life represents one important point of contact with Cyril’s exegesis. I will briefly note several other compatibilities between the two exegetes, the cumulative force of which suggests that Cyril’s interpretative approach to the cultic law did not break the Origenian mold. Both authors presuppose that the Pentateuchal texts pertaining to the Israelite cult are caches of hidden mysteries waiting to be uncovered by the assiduous Christian exegete. Accordingly, both authors demand that the Christian reader transcend the veil of the letter of the law, which has been removed by Christ. Indeed, in both Cyril’s writings and Origen’s homilies on Exodus and Leviticus the two authors show quite meager interest in the \textit{historia} of Pentateuchal texts per se, and thus are almost exclusively interested in their spiritual significance.\textsuperscript{278}

Furthermore, both authors find in Paul a justification for their spiritual exegesis. For instance, in a sermon on Leviticus Origen cites one of Cyril’s favorite biblical texts, 2

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{276} Origen, \textit{ex.} 13.5 (SC 321:392).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{277} See Origen, \textit{ex.} 9.3 (SC 321:286-94), on the virtues with which the church is adorned.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{278} In some cases Origen’s terminology for these two dimensions of the scriptural text closely approximates that of Cyril. In \textit{ex.} 13.4 (SC 321:388) Origen briefly notes the “historical reason (\textit{historiae ratio})” for the “scarlet doubled,” and then hastily moves on to the “spiritual reason (intellectuala).”
\end{quote}
Cor 5:17 ("the old has passed away; behold, everything has become new"), in order to defend a non-literal reading of Israelite dietary laws.\textsuperscript{279}

There are also several points of contact between the two authors at the material level. They share a couple of typologies, such as their interpretation of the four materials of blue, purple, doubled scarlet, and twisted linen as types of the four elements, an interpretation which we have already seen in Clement, and which in fact goes back at least as far as Philo.\textsuperscript{280} They also both employ an obviously non-Philonic typology in their interpretation of the evening as an icon of the advent of Christ.\textsuperscript{281} Rather unremarkably, both authors find adumbrations of the sacrificial death of Christ in the immolations of the Israelites.\textsuperscript{282}

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of Cyril’s particular figural readings of the precepts of the cultic law are not derived from Origen. Origen, like Philo and Clement before him, is much more prone to find cosmological significance in the prescriptions of the Pentateuch than Cyril. Most crucial for our purposes, Origen does not share Cyril’s tendency to traffic in typologies that either highlight the deficiencies of the Mosaic law or disparage the moral character of the Jewish people. To be sure, as Schreckenberg points out, although Origen tends to maintain a scholarly, non-

\begin{itemize}
  \item[279] Origen, lev. 10.2 (SC 287:140).
  \item[280] Origen, ex. 13.3 (SC 321:386-88); Philo, Mos. 2.88.
  \item[281] Origen, lev. 4.10 (SC 286:250-52).
  \item[282] For example, see lev. 1.3; 2.3 (SC 286:100-106). It is partly for this reason that Hanson, Allegory and Event, 309, concludes that “Origen made no drastic innovation upon the traditional Christian attitude toward the Jewish law which he inherited. Christians had from the very beginning maintained that the Jewish law predicted and prefigured Christ, and Origen made this his chief point, using for his elaboration of this point the Philonic tradition of allegory which he had found in Clement as well as Philo, and greatly enlarging and intensifying the use of it.”
\end{itemize}
polemical tone when speaking of the Jews, the substance of his critique of alleged Jewish error is uncompromising, and his characterization of the bare literal sense as the “Jewish sense” points up his conviction that Israel’s sin and error is bound up with its strictly literal interpretation of Scripture.283 Moreover, Origen does not hesitate to lay at the feet of the Jews exclusive guilt for Christ’s death; in a sermon on Leviticus he chastises those Christians who attempt to keep kosher in conformity with “those who crucified Christ.”284 Nevertheless, in his spiritual interpretation of the cultic law of Israel Origen shows very little interest in detecting therein enigmas of the soteriological shortcomings of the law and the conspicuous moral failings of the Jewish people.

As we have seen above, Origen is often quite explicit in his contempt for the literal sense of certain Mosaic prescriptions, which he deems irrational and ridiculous when taken at face value. On numerous occasions Origen declares that he has found absurdities or contradictions in the letter of the law, and exploits these discoveries as invitations to lift the veil of the letter in order to ascertain the spiritual significance of the text.285 Cyril, on the other hand, is much more hesitant to suggest that the plain sense of a given legal precept was inherently absurd even during the Mosaic dispensation, despite the fact that he is invariably eager to move beyond the historia.

283 Schreckenberg, Adversus-Judaos-Texte, 228-35.


285 For instance, see Origen, lev. 6.6 (SC 286:290-96), on the significance of the discrepancy in Exodus and Leviticus concerning the number of priestly garments.
Only on a couple of occasions does he suggest that the literal observance of a particular
injunction during the Mosaic era would have been ludicrous or worse.286 Furthermore,
Cyril does not express Origen’s anxiety that certain laws are unworthy of the divine
nature if taken at their face value.287

What is more, Origen’s exegesis is at times marked by an esotericism that is
largely lacking in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. For instance, noting the
fact that the high priest would don certain garments when he went out of the
tabernacle to speak to the multitude, whereas he wore other vestments when
ministering to the experienced and perfect in the sanctuary, Origen says, “let us be
worthy to be found among those to whom [Jesus] says, ‘To you it has been given to
know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.’”288 Likewise, apropos the loaf of fine wheat
flour that is separated for the priests alone, Origen says,

But that one to whom was brought nothing of the mystery but the
understanding of the present salvation and life, is described as having common
loaves made from only regular flour. And you, therefore, if you have knowledge
of the secrets, if you can discuss wisely and carefully about faith in God, about
the mystery of Christ, the unity of the Holy Spirit, you offer to the Lord loaves
from fine wheat flour. But if you use common exhortations for the people and
only know how to treat a moral issue that pertains to all, you know you have
offered a common loaf.289

286 For example, see Cyril’s comments on the law regarding the offerings of children (PG 68:1037c).

287 Regarding the distinction between clean and unclean animals, Origen, lev. 7.5 (SC 286:340-42;
Barkley, 147), says that “if we stand by the letter and according to that we accept what is seen by the
Jews or the multitude as the written law, I would be ashamed to say and to confess that God gave such
laws. For human laws, for instance, either of the Romans, or the Athenians, or the Lacedemonians, seem
more elegant and reasonable. But if the Law of God is received according to this understanding that the
Church teaches, then clearly it surpasses all human laws and is believed to be truly the Law of God.”

288 Origen, lev. 4.6 (SC 286:184; Barkley, 80).

289 Origen, lev. 13.3 (SC 287:210; Barkley, 238). This quotation is reminiscent of Origen’s discussion
of the three levels of biblical meaning in De Princ. 4.2-3.

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As we have already noted with reference to Clement, Cyril rarely makes explicit distinctions between groups of Christians based on their understanding of the mysteries of Christ, although the form and content of the De Adoratione et Cultu presupposes that sound contemplative exegesis of the Pentateuch requires a learned guide.

In summary, we can say that in many ways Cyril’s overall hermeneutical outlook on the Pentateuch in general and the tabernacle cult in particular is stamped by Origen’s impress. Both authors approach the legal texts of Pentateuch as a repository of hidden mysteries that the exegete can unlock only by using Christ as the key. Neither exegete totally disavows the propriety of the literal observance of these laws during a particular stage of salvation history, but both insist that for the Christian reader the letter is valuable only insofar as it provides the indispensable pabulum for spiritual contemplation. However, even though Origen and Cyril treat many of the same biblical texts, the material convergences between their interpretations are remarkably few. Their typologies frequently differ, their imaginations are captured by different passages, they focus on different theological questions raised by the biblical text, and most pertinent to our present purposes, Origen does not share Cyril’s preoccupation with finding in the ordinances of the cultic law oblique indications of its own salvific shortcomings and the moral impurity of the Jews.  

However much Cyril may have gleaned from Origen’s exegetical writings, we can safely conclude that he did

290 For an example of a theological question raised by the Israelite sacrificial system with which Origen grapples extensively, and with which Cyril is almost completely unconcerned, see Origen’s excursus, lev. 2.4 (SC 286:106-12), on the remission of sin in the law and the gospel.
not rely heavily on Origen’s homilies on the Pentateuch for his substantive exegetical treatment of the law of Moses.

2.2.7: Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Moses*

The last author whom we will examine in this chapter is the one most temporally proximate to Cyril, namely, Gregory of Nyssa. Cyril seems to have had some knowledge of Gregory’s writings, but the extent and depth of that knowledge remain unclear.\(^{291}\) Despite the fact that Gregory had no personal connection with Alexandria, several scholars have argued that his style of biblical interpretation was basically Alexandrian. R. Heine, for one, has argued that Gregory’s apology for allegorical interpretation in the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* was provoked by “a clash between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of Biblical interpretation in fourth century Cappadocia,” prompting Gregory to valorize, on Pauline grounds, allegorical interpretation over and against Antiochene objections.\(^{292}\) In addition, E. Ferguson and A. J. Malherbe argue that Gregory’s exegetical terminology betrays his debt to Alexandrian hermeneutics, citing as evidence his penchant for employing the word *theoria* to refer to any non-literal meaning of the biblical text.\(^{293}\) Moreover, M.

\(^{291}\) Cyril cites a passage from Gregory of Nyssa in the *Diod.* 12 (PG 76:381).

\(^{292}\) Ronald E. Heine, “Gregory of Nyssa’s Apology for Allegory,” *VC* 38 (1984): 360-70. In the first section of his article Heine shows the extent and nature of Gregory’s debt to Origen’s deployment of Pauline texts in Gregory’s own arguments in defense of allegorical reading.

\(^{293}\) Everett Ferguson and Abraham J. Malherbe, “Introduction,” in *Gregory of Nyssa: Life of Moses* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 7. The authors note that *theoria* was also Cyril’s preferred word for the non-literal sense of Scripture. Although they admit in a footnote that “Cyril represents a narrowing down from Gregory’s interests in his concern for dogma,” they also remark that the “few references we have found suggest that someone versed in Cyril of Alexandria would find many points of continuity with Gregory” (145 n.49).
Canévet notes how Gregory adopted the exegetical techniques of his Alexandrian precursors, such as the association of terms and symbols, the elucidation of obscure texts by clearer texts, and typologies that are ethical and sacramental in nature.\(^{294}\) Given Cyril’s debts to the Alexandrian hermeneutic tradition as represented by Philo, Clement, and Origen, *inter alios*, it is not implausible that he would have found in Gregory’s exegetical writings an attractive model of spiritual exegesis.

The only Gregorian text that presently concerns us is the treatment of the tabernacle in the *Life of Moses*. One should first of all note the strong paraenetic thrust that shoots through the entire *Life of Moses*, including the section on the tabernacle. Gregory forthrightly articulates his moral and hortatory aim in the Prologue:

> Let us put forth Moses as our example for life in our treatise. First we shall go through in outline his life as we have learned it from the divine Scriptures. Then we shall seek out the spiritual understanding (διανοιαν) which corresponds to the history (ιστορια) in order to obtain suggestions of virtue. Through such understanding we may come to know the perfect life for men.\(^{295}\)

Accordingly, then, many of Gregory’s interpretations of Pentateuchal texts are moralizing in nature, and his readings of the passages bearing on the tabernacle are no exception.

The above quotation also draws our attention to one of the most noteworthy features of Gregory’s exegesis in this text, to wit, the explicit distinction he makes


between the *historia* and *theoria* of the life of Moses as depicted in the Pentateuch, a distinction that furnishes the organizing principle of the work.\(^{296}\) As is manifest from the quotation itself, while Gregory certainly finds edification in the text's *historia*, he clearly privileges the *theoria* of the text, since only through the spiritual contemplation of the biblical text can one define the shape of the perfect life. Gregory is even more explicit about the exalted status of *theoria* in the Prologue to the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, probably written a few years after the *Life of Moses*. After citing six Pauline texts in defense of allegorical interpretation, he says:

> But in all these different figures and names for spiritual interpretation he is describing one form of teaching to us, that one must by no means be concerned with the letter since the obvious meaning of the things which are said hinders us in many ways in the virtuous life, but we must pass over to the immaterial and spiritual interpretations so that more corporeal thoughts are changed to an intellectual and spiritual meaning, the more fleshly meaning of what is said having been shaken off like dust.\(^{297}\)

Although it is obvious that here Gregory is preoccupied with some of the peculiar interpretative challenges posed by the Song of Songs, his wider agenda in the Prologue to the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* is to establish a Pauline warrant for the spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament in general, as evidenced by his citation of Rom 7:14 (“the law is spiritual”) several lines before the passage just quoted. Indeed, one can

\(^{296}\) See Gregory, *Mos. 2.217* (SC 1:254-56; Malherbe and Ferguson, *Moses*, 111), on the glorification of Moses as an example of the harmony of *historia* and *theoria*: “Moses was transformed to such a degree of glory that the mortal eye could not behold him. Certainly he who has been instructed in the divine mystery of our faith knows how the contemplation of the spiritual sense agrees with the literal account. For when the restorer of our broken nature (you no doubt perceive in him the one who healed our brokenness) had restored the broken table of our nature to its original beauty—doing this by the finger of God, as I said—the eyes of the unworthy could not longer behold him.”

find several examples of Gregory’s eagerness to move beyond the historia of a given text in the Life of Moses. Referring to the Passover regulations, Gregory claims that “it is evident that the letter looks to some higher understanding, since the law does not instruct us how to eat.” 298 Also, in several places in the Life of Moses Gregory, like Origen, identifies a rigidly literal style of exegesis with a “Jewish understanding (Ἰουδαϊκῆς διανοίας).” 299

With respect to Gregory’s interpretation of the tabernacle, we can observe several points of contact with that of Cyril. First, Gregory draws attention to the difficulty of plumbing the spiritual significance of the tabernacle as well as to his own fallibility as an interpreter: “We shall leave what we say conjecturally and by supposition on the thought at hand to the judgment of our readers. Their critical intelligence must decide whether it should be rejected or accepted.” 300 Furthermore, Gregory, as one might expect from his statement of purpose in the Prologue, discovers moral significance in many of the passages pertaining to the tabernacle. 301 In addition, the two authors have a few typologies in common; they both interpret the tabernacle as an icon of the church, as did Origen, and the pillars of the tabernacle as types of the apostles and teachers of the church. 302

298 Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.105 (SC 1:168; Malherbe and Ferguson, Moses, 78).
299 Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.150 (SC 1:200).
300 Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.173 (SC 1:218-20; Malherbe and Ferguson, Moses, 98).
301 For example, he avers that the vestments of the high priest “symbolically instruct concerning priestly virtue under the form of clothing.” Mos. 1.55 (SC 1:90; Malherbe and Ferguson, Moses, 46).
302 Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.184 (SC 1:228-30).
However, a comparative reading of the *Life of Moses* and Cyril's texts reveals extensive differences with respect to their main emphases, themes, and typologies. Although both authors mine the Pentateuchal texts in questions for their moral significance, their exegetical conclusions rarely coincide. Gregory develops various themes at length that go unsounded in the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, such as the infinity of God and the correlative incessant ascent of the virtuous soul to God. Indeed, in general the interpretations found in the *Life of Moses* tend to be more overtly philosophical than those of Cyril. For instance, Gregory argues that the removal of Moses’ sandals after he beheld the burning bush teaches us that the “full knowledge of being comes about by purifying our opinion concerning nonbeing.”

Furthermore, Gregory’s emphasis on the importance of ascertaining the *akolouthia* of a given biblical text is lacking in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra*, at least overtly.

Apart from a few exceptions, one does not find Gregory’s typological readings of the furniture of the tabernacle taken up in the *De Adoratione et Cultu*. Just to cite a few examples, Gregory’s figural readings of the two altars of the tabernacle complex, the wings of the Cherubim covering the ark, the court of the tabernacle, the covering made of woven hair, and the priestly vestments diverge almost completely from Cyril’s interpretations. Furthermore, on several occasions Gregory’s theological imagination is captured by passages that Cyril simply passes over in silence. For example, while Gregory develops at impressive length his interpretation of Moses’ vision of God’s back, Cyril exhibits no particular interest in this passage. Conversely, in contrast to Cyril,

304 This is true of the *Glaphyra* as well.
Gregory rarely cites texts from Leviticus and Numbers, and it would appear that he had rather scant interest in the copious ritual laws found therein.³⁰⁵

Finally, in the Life of Moses Gregory shows little inclination to engage in anti-Jewish polemic. In fact, Gregory even speaks of the restoration of divine grace to the people after the destruction of the first tablets.³⁰⁶ Schreckenberg notes the "massvollen Zurückhaltung" of Gregory and of the Cappadoxchians in general with respect to criticism of the Jews.³⁰⁷ Moreover, Canévet observes that Gregory, in marked contrast to Cyril, tends to interpret dualities in Scripture not in terms of the opposition between the Old and New Testaments, or by extension between Judaism and Christianity, but rather in terms of his theory of divine incomprehensibility or the two natures of Christ.³⁰⁸ More specifically, anti-Jewish polemic is wholly absent from Gregory’s exegetical account of the tabernacle itself. Certain Pentateuchal narratives pertaining to the Mosaic cult from which Cyril extracts anti-Jewish significance are interpreted in a wholly different manner by Gregory. For example, according to Gregory the uprising of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram refers not to the refractory nature of the Jews in general, as it does for Cyril, but rather to those Christians who wrongfully arrogate the priesthood to themselves.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ Canévet, Grégoire, 105-06.
³⁰⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.214 (SC 1:252).
³⁰⁷ Schreckenberg, Adversus-Judaeos-Texte, 300.
³⁰⁸ Canévet, Grégoire, 235-39.
³⁰⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, Mos. 2.279 (SC 1:294).
In the conclusion of his monograph on Cyril’s attitude toward Judaism, Wilken tries to explain the differences between Gregory’s and Cyril’s positions toward Moses and the law, and by extension toward Judaism, at least partly in terms of their respective sources:

The great tragedy of Cyril’s theology is that he developed this view of Christ not only through the exegesis of the Bible but at the expense of Judaism. The beautiful things Cyril has to say about Christ are said by contrast to Moses and Judaism. The law kills and Christ brings life. It is true, of course, that Cyril’s interpretation of Moses was not the only view available to patristic writers. Gregory of Nyssa, for example, presented a quite different view of Moses. For Gregory Moses was the symbol of the quest for perfection and the ascent of the soul to God. But Cyril was not Gregory, he had not learned as much from Origen, nor had he drunk as deeply of the Platonic and Philonic traditions. Cyril was, quite frankly, too biblical. His Achilles heel is the Bible, not Hellenism.310

Regardless of the explanatory value of Wilken’s analysis, it is impossible to deny that he has put his finger on a crucial point of divergence between Gregory and Cyril. Indeed, in light of the foregoing comparative analysis, we can safely eliminate the Life of Moses as a source of inspiration for the anti-Jewish features of Cyril’s exegesis of the Pentateuch. In fact, the Life of Moses is so unlike the De Adoratione et Cultu in a number of respects that one would be hard pressed to demonstrate any sort of literary relationship between the two works.311

310  Wilken, Judaism, 226.

311  This is not to deny the possibility that Cyril was familiar with the Life of Moses and appropriated from it certain features that were amenable to his purposes.
2.3: Conclusion

At this point we should take stock of the significance of the findings of this survey for the interpretation of the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. First, we should reiterate that most of Cyril’s hermeneutical assumptions concerning the interpretation of the Mosaic law were traditional to Alexandrian exegesis à la Philo, Clement, and Origen. Some of these presuppositions pertained to Scripture as a whole; Alexandrian exegetes were emphatic that Scripture is a unified whole and each of its words is precise and thus never superfluous or insignificant. With respect to the law of Moses in particular, Cyril’s Alexandrian forebears conceived of it as a treasury of cryptic wisdom that can only be unlocked when one outstrips the letter in order to contemplate the law spiritually. Moreover, they considered much of this wisdom to be moral in character, and in this way they transmuted the law of Moses into a sort of handbook of morals. This wisdom is also theological, inasmuch as many of the rites of the Mosaic cult prefigure Christ, his saving death, and the sacramental life of the church.

Cyril also adopts from his predecessors several technical hermeneutical terms. Just to cite three prominent examples, Cyril’s antithesis between aletheia and typos was anticipated by Melito, the notion that Pentateuchal texts were capable of being read according to either their historia or their theoria has a clear precedent in Gregory of Nyssa, and the phrase logos historias, which appears frequently in the De Adoratione et Cultu, likely traces back to Origen, who, in the Latin translation of his works, uses the equivalent phrase ratio historiae. In light of these traditional elements of Cyril’s
interpretive approach, we must grant that the *De Adoratione et Cultu* does not represent a major breakthrough in hermeneutical theory or method.312

Cyril’s debts to his predecessors are not only of a hermeneutical order. Many of the theological and polemical features of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* have distinguished pedigrees as well. Cyril was not the first author to insist that Christians continue to observe the Mosaic law, even the cultic precepts, albeit in a spiritual manner; *Barnabas* and Origen both affirmed the same in their own distinctive ways. In addition, the doctrine of the supplanting of Israel by the church of the Gentiles as the people of God, a doctrine that Cyril frequently endorses, is explicitly articulated by Melito and Justin, among a bevy of other early Christian writers. In addition, many of Cyril’s charges against the Jews were basically of a stock character by his time and appear in several of the writings we surveyed in this chapter: the prophets affirmed the intractability of Jewish perversity, the Jews were solely responsible for the murder of Christ, the Jews read their own Scriptures with a veil over their hearts and thus cannot penetrate beyond the veil of the letter. Finally, as already noted, the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is not even the first dialogue framed by the question of how the Christian should interpret the law of Moses; Justin had composed such a text several centuries earlier.

If the hermeneutical presuppositions that Cyril brought to bear on the Pentateuch were virtually identical to those of several of his predecessors, and if many of the central features of his theological and polemical treatment of Judaism had clear

312 The next chapter will further substantiate my case that one should situate Cyril’s basic interpretive approach to the Mosaic law squarely in the Alexandrian trajectory.
precedents in the Christian tradition, then to what extent is one permitted to speak of the originality of the exegesis found in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra*?

Perhaps most striking, and certainly most pertinent to the thesis of this dissertation, is the fact that in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* Cyril offers a veritable bounty of figural interpretations pertaining to the law that appear to be original to him. Indeed, it appears that the lion’s share of his spiritual readings were fresh.\(^{313}\) We have noted throughout our survey how infrequently Cyril adopts his predecessors’ typologies. To be sure, most prior Christian exegetes had not treated the legal portions of the Pentateuch nearly as extensively or intensively as Cyril; however, Origen came close to matching the comprehensiveness of Cyril’s treatment, yet the substance of Cyril’s exegesis differs from that of Origen at most points.

As we will see in Chapters Four and Five, a significant number of Cyril’s apparently novel readings stress the salvific inadequacy of the Mosaic law and the moral impurity of the Jewish people. In fact, virtually none of these adversarial interpretations were borrowed from the writers reviewed in this chapter. Furthermore, although Cyril certainly drew heavily from the standard patristic repertoire of accusations against the Jews, he also introduced several new wrinkles into the Christian critique of Judaism, as we will see below. Although Cyril’s general hermeneutical approach is not innovative, his exploitation of the interpretive latitude afforded by the Alexandrian style of exegesis in order to ground in the Mosaic law itself a full-scale exposé of both its own soteriological limitations and the moral pollution of

\(^{313}\) I say "seems" because it always possible, of course, that Cyril made use of a text or texts that are no longer extant.
the Jewish people represents a *novum* in the history of Christian exegesis. In Chapters Four and Five I will substantiate and flesh out this claim. The task of the next chapter, however, is to furnish a thorough analysis of Cyril's hermeneutical lens, to the extent that it can be teased out from the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra*, since it is this lens that brings into focus the spiritual readings that will be studied in Chapters Four and Five.
CHAPTER THREE:
TYPES AND TRANSFORMATION

Now that we have become acquainted with several of Cyril's predecessors, we turn to Cyril himself. In this chapter I will offer a synoptic and synthetic account, moored primarily in the De Adoratione et Cultu, of Cyril's hermeneutical approach to the law of Moses. What are the conditions of the possibility of reading the law rightly? What particular interpretive challenges does the law pose, and how is the exegete to meet them? Much of this inquiry will be devoted in particular to Cyril's understanding of the figural dimension of the law, which for him is its most salient aspect. What are types, and how should the interpreter handle them? What exegetical conditions must be met in order for their illuminative potential to be actualized? By addressing these questions I will expoit the mechanics and dynamics of the mode of exegesis by means of which Cyril locates his comprehensive critique of Judaism in the law itself. Moreover, I will demonstrate how Cyril's theory of typology underscores the stringent limitations of the knowledge and vision of God afforded by the law; in this way a certain congruence obtains between Cyril's theoretical understanding of typology and the substance of many of his actual figural readings. Finally, as we will see, for Cyril scriptural interpretation is charged with ethical significance, and the type of exegesis practiced by Jews both mirrors and ensures their state of arrested moral development.
3.1: The Figural Dimension of the Law of Moses

3.1.1: Typos

According to Cyril, the Mosaic law is irreducibly twofold. In at least one place in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* Cyril draws an analogy between the constitution of the human being and that of the law, both of which have a somatic and a pneumatic element.\(^{314}\) This bipartite makeup of the law derives from the fact that it is a tissue of types, which have a double nature, inasmuch as they are constitutive of both the *historia* and the *theoria* of the text (these terms will receive further comment below). The terminology that Cyril employs in designating these types is varied, though he exhibits a predilection for using the word *typos* to refer to those persons, objects, and events in the Pentateuch that possess spiritual significance.\(^{315}\)

First, we need to secure a working definition of *typos*. F. Young's account of the overall patristic understanding of the term *typos* comports well with Cyril's own use of the word:

\(^{314}\) PG 68:544c. Compare Origen's discussion in *On First Principles* 4.2.

\(^{315}\) Kerrigan, *St Cyril*, 126-27, gives an overview of the terms that Cyril most frequently employs in order to designate those persons, objects, and events in Scripture that have spiritual significance. These terms include αἰνίγματα, εἴδωλα, εἰκόνες, ὁμοιώσεις, παραδείγματα, σκιαί, τύποι, and ὑποτυπώσεις. Kerrigan notes that in "Cyril's writings all the terms just mentioned are practically synonymous; they connote the 'likeness of impress and accurate impression of form,' which sensible things bear to spiritual things--in virtue of which they evoke the latter in much the same way that a statue reminds one of the person that it represents." He does note, however, that certain expressions, such as αἰνίγματα and εἴδωλα, "stress with greater emphasis that the resemblance in question is at most but external and imperfect."
What the patristic texts describe as a 'type' is a mimetic 'impress' or figure in
the narrative or action described. . . . The word *typos* may be used for any
'model' or 'pattern' or 'parable' foreshadowing its fulfillment, whether an event
or an oft-repeated ritual. It is not its character as historical event which makes
a 'type'; what matters is its mimetic quality.316

To say that Cyril's exegesis of the law in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is typological is not to
stake out a particular position on the now hoary debate in patristic scholarship over
whether one can make a tenable distinction between typological and allegorical
exegesis.317 For present purposes, it is sufficient to secure the point that Cyril believed
that the single most significant feature of the Mosaic law, at least for the Christian
reader, is that it is a rich tapestry densely woven with types, and that it is
consequently incumbent upon the reader to ascertain those types' spiritual referents,
which, whether doctrinal or moral in nature, all pertain in some way to "the mystery of
Christ."318 Such discernment is theologically requisite because, for Cyril, Christ is the
fulcrum of salvation history, which is itself the figural subject matter of the law.

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317 I refer the reader to Young's astute contribution to and complexification of this debate in *Biblical Exegesis*, 186-213. While retaining some distinction between typological and allegorical modes of reading, she allows that "the 'production' of correspondences, whether or not the word 'type' actually appears, is
what may constitute 'typology' as a particular definable form of the broader category 'allegory'" (198).
She also provides a helpful interpretive grid that illustrates the particular traits of nine different modes
of interpretation. Cyril's exegesis in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* most closely approximates what Young
dubs 'symbolic mimesis,' although it is not a perfect fit. For another recent attempt to distinguish
between two styles of patristic nonliteral exegesis, see John J. O'Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An
Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press,
2005). For a less optimistic assessment of the heuristic value of the categories of allegory and typology
with respect to early Christian interpretation, see Peter W. Martens, "Revisiting the Allegory/Typology

318 According to Kerrigan, *St Cyril*, 131, "for St. Cyril the objects of the spiritual sense are identical with
the various realities that belong to 'Christ's mystery.'" Also see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 119-39, on the
close connection between meaning and reference in patristic exegesis.
Cyril, like most early Christian authors, did not expatiate on his hermeneutical theory. Thus it should come as no surprise that he does not systematically set forth the theoretical underpinnings of typological exegesis in the *De Adoratione et Cultu*. In fact, despite his liberal employment of the term *typos*, Cyril does not actually describe his own interpretation as "typological."319 Nevertheless, scattered throughout the pages of the text at hand we can find an ample number of remarks that cast light on Cyril's understanding of the nature and function of the types of the law, indeed ample enough to allow us to make some substantive claims about his "theory of typology."

3.1.2: *Historia*

We may begin our investigation by considering Cyril's notion of how the type participates in the body, that is, the *historia*, of the biblical text.320 We have already seen that Gregory of Nyssa uses this term extensively in his *Life of Moses*.321 But what exactly does the term denote? As F. Young points out, we will go astray if we understand this term to mean for the Fathers something like the modern understanding of

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319 See the apt reminder of Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 152-53: "Typology is a modern construct. Ancient exegesis did not distinguish between typology and allegory, and it is often difficult to make the distinction, the one shading into the other all too easily. . . . The modern affirmation of typology as distinct from allegory, an affirmation which requires the historical reality of an event as a foreshadowing of another event, its 'antitype,' is born of modern historical consciousness, and has no basis in the patristic material."

320 Insofar as it is possible I will attempt to avoid speaking of Cyril's notion of the "literal sense" for the reason cited by Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 187 n.6, who writes apropos Kerrigan's list of Cyril's terms for the "literal sense": "In fact his list embraces terms referring to the 'plain sense,' the 'letter,' the sequence of the words, the 'obvious' or 'immediate' logos, the logos concerning 'sensible' objects, the things apparent, 'corporeal matters,' and so on. Also included are phrases specifying the *hermeneia, theoria* or *nous* of what lies in front of the interpreter (to prokeimenon). It is questionable whether these were ever seen as alternative ways of speaking of the same thing, namely an univocal 'literal sense.'"

321 Ferguson and Malherbe note in *Life of Moses*, 7, that *historia* "was the regular term in use by all schools to designate the literal wording or actual event."
She prefers to define *historia* as "the enquiry that produces as much information as possible with respect to the elements, actions, characters or background of the text." Such research into past events makes it possible for the interpreter to cobble together a coherent narrative. Indeed, Cyril frequently employs the term *historia* in this sense in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra.*

However, sometimes Cyril uses the term simply to denote the biblical words' most immediate referents, which are frequently self-evident and thus do not require further research. For instance, after quoting a passage from Exod 22 concerning the seduction of a virgin, Cyril remarks that the *historia* requires no further clarification in order to be intelligible. In other words, this particular piece of legislation does not contain any elements that would bewilder Cyril’s readers on the basis of their historical and cultural distance from the ancient Israelites. In cases like this one, *historia* would appear to refer not to an inquiry into the background of the text, but rather to the plain sense of the text. Indeed, for Cyril the *historia* of the law is in general distinguished by its perspicuousness. Reflecting on the Lord's command to Moses to "instruct" the sons of Israel, Cyril says:

> Indeed the text says pointedly, You will instruct, that is, you will make a clarification, so that those who are listening will be able to perceive that the law is a pedagogue, and speaks the mystery of Christ; for the law is not at all hard to

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322 It should be noted, however, that Cyril is indeed much less prone than Origen to call into question the historical accuracy of any of the events described in the Pentateuch; however, one should not assume that this assumption of historical veracity is what is denoted by the term *historia.*

323 Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 87.

324 PG 68:540d.
Thus when Cyril does feel obliged to eludicate the *historia* of a given precept or narrative, he does so not because the Israelites themselves would have required such explication, but rather because of the historical and cultural estrangement that obtains between Cyril's readers and the Pentateuchal text.

A few examples of legal texts whose *historia* requires the sort of inquiry that Young describes will suffice. One example is the notice in Exod 38:26 (LXX) about the women who fasted outside the gates of the tabernacle and donated their mirrors for the construction of the bronze basin. When Palladius expresses perplexity about this passage, Cyril admits that "many of the things that happened in the divine Scriptures are not very clear." Nevertheless, he presses forward with a historical explanation of the passage:

Some Israelites worshipped idols, since they endured servitude under the Egyptians, and passed their lives under their laws, and remained there for a long time. Accordingly, the ethos of the Egyptians was adopted most of all by the women who, frequenting the shrines, and dressed in linen clothing, were surrounded in a sacral way by a mirror on the left and a rattle on the right, although those who are more tested and initiated into the mysteries than others are scarcely worthy of such an honor—nay rather, of such an insult, for that is

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325 PG 68:841d. Cyril never follows up on this remark, which seems to imply that Moses explained to the Israelites the spiritual, and hence christological, significance of their laws. Perhaps here Moses is a figure for Christian teachers like Cyril, who are competent to draw spiritual significance out of the law.

326 PG 68:629c.
more accurate. And so I have discovered in women of Israelite blood a remnant of the worship of Egypt in their own service, and they have brought their mirrors as an offering, which were transformed for the use of the washing basin.\textsuperscript{327}

In this instance Cyril provides historical background (without revealing his source) that is not supplied by the Bible itself in order to make a cryptically laconic passage intelligible. As we will see below, Cyril does not commend such historical inquiry for its own sake, but rather he engages in it only because it paves the way for the spiritual contemplation of the text.

Cyril once again adverts to the religious and cultural milieu of the Israelites in order to explain the terms of the Nazirite vow set forth in Num 6. After Cyril quotes a lengthy portion of the chapter, Palladius expresses his befuddlement:

\begin{quote}
It is not easy in the least to make sense of the oracle, unless the law be examined subtly. Not to shave the hair, but to allow it to grow long, shunning wine and vinegar of wine and strong drink, and indeed also grape-stones--what manner of worship could this be?\textsuperscript{328}
\end{quote}

Cyril's response to Palladius' query is rather protracted, but for present purposes we will simply record his explanation of the proscription against cutting one's hair. According to Cyril, the pagans of the time used to let their hair grow long in order to offer it to demons or mountain nymphs in a putative act of worship. In view of the perpetual Israelite temptation to revert to idolatrous ways, "the most wise Moses, or rather the all-wise and most ingenious God through Moses, legislated these things so

\textsuperscript{327} PG 68:629d-632a.

\textsuperscript{328} PG 68:1041c.
that the Israelites might wash away the error they acquired in Egypt, gradually moving them away from it through the ancient customs and ways, so that they might apply their piety no longer to demons, but to the God of all things.³²⁹

As the two preceding examples show, Cyril deems it appropriate for the exegete to explain the historia of the text when it is obscure at first blush. Nevertheless, Cyril also takes pains to underline the strictly relative value of the historia of the law. A good example of this relativization of the historia can be found in Cyril's discussion of the redemption of Levite cities as described in Lev 25. After Cyril establishes the main gist of the historia, Palladius asks him if the skopos of the law is limited to the plain sense of the text alone. Cyril's response is telling:

If so, then how could the law still be spiritual? How could it not be worthwhile to reflect on whatever the holy letter says about those things in town that are not redeemable when one year has elapsed, and those things outside the towns and fields that are perpetually redeemable? But it is easy to see that the rationale (λόγος) of the history is not of much consequence (οὐ σφόδρα πολὺς) to the all-wise God, and that when spiritual things are manifested, the characters of the truth are revealed to be very precise.³³⁰

For Cyril, then, the historia of the law alone is not sufficient to render it spiritual, at least in the sense intended by Paul in Rom 7:14. Consequently, the Christian reader should seek the divine wisdom of the law not in its historia, but rather in the spiritual matters to which the law refers precisely, albeit obliquely.

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³²⁹ PG 68:1044b. Cyril goes on to note that the same divine logic was at work with respect to the ordained sacrifices of blood, which were intended to wean the Israelites away from sacrifices to demons. Unlike Origen, who is often quick to point out the absurdity or repulsiveness of the historia in order to underscore the necessity of spiritual exegesis, Cyril tends to explain the most outré features of the law with reference to the divine pedagogy by which the Israelites were converted from polytheism to the worship of the one true God.

³³⁰ PG 68:868d.
For Cyril, then, the *historia* of the law is of no intrinsic importance for the Christian exegete; in the cases in which it requires explanation, the exegete offers such clarification only in order to make possible the spiritual contemplation of the text, which requires the establishment of the *historia* of the text as its precondition. Hence spiritual contemplation, at least in theory, is not simply a matter of latching on to an isolated word or phrase of the text and manipulating it as one wishes, but rather it is contingent on the establishment of the *historia*. Thus *theoria* is not intended by Cyril to be a running roughshod over the *historia* of the text with no respect for its narrative logic and sequence. On the other hand, once one establishes the *historia* of a text and consequently ascertains its spiritual reference, the *historia* as such ceases to be of any particular importance. Thus in the text at hand Cyril does not reflect at length on the significance of the *historia* qua *historia* of the law for the nature and status of the sacred history of Israel. To be sure, Cyril has plenty to say about the status of Israel and its sacrifical cult in the divine economy of salvation, but he says them almost exclusively from the vantage point of *theoria*. For example, Cyril does not directly address the claims made in the Pentateuch with respect to the efficacy of the sacrifices of the tabernacle to expiate sin; however, in his ruminations on how those sacrifices foreshadowed Christ’s death, Cyril, echoing the Epistle to the Hebrews, asserts that they were totally incompetent to remove sin.

Why does Cyril restrict the value of the *historia* of the law so severely? What qualities does the *historia* possess that behoove the interpreter to outstrip it immediately after it is established? Several passages from the *De Adoratione et Cultu* allow us to offer a provisional answer to these questions. In the first such passage Cyril,
commenting on the fact that the law excluded blind and lame men from serving as priests, admits that

the subject matter is very repugnant (ἀκαλλὲς) in and of itself, if it is considered bodily; for he whose eyes have been removed, or whose feet are insufficiently firm, and is not able to walk in straight paths, for the one who does not know whither the priest must go--how is it not better for him to remain still than to to walk in a risible fashion, using the eyes and feet of others? But the rationale (λόγος) for this precept could not matter much (οὐ πολὺς). Come, then, let us discuss the things that are necessary for spiritual knowledge and contemplation, skirting around the gross matter of the history (τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ὑποτρέχοντες παχὺ).\textsuperscript{331}

Here Cyril insinuates that the crassness of the \textit{historia} consists in its inability to provide spiritual edification. Statements similar in terminology and tenor are found elsewhere in the \textit{De Adoratione et Cultu}, and in the \textit{Glaphyra} as well.\textsuperscript{332} In every such case Cyril insists that the exegete not belabor the \textit{historia} of the text longer than necessary, since it is not at that level that spiritual edification is to be found.

The terminology that Cyril employs in the above quotation suggests why such belaboring is inappropriate. Here, as elsewhere, Cyril describes the literal subject matter of the law as \textit{ἀκαλλὲς}, an adjective that denotes unattractiveness or unseemliness. Cyril appears to regard this particular statute as \textit{ἀκαλλὲς} because the very idea of a blind or lame man serving in a priestly capacity is absurd and insulting to the reader's intelligence, and therefore at the level of \textit{historia} this precept is totally devoid of edificatory value and is distasteful to the contemplative exegete seeking the beauty of the truth. In another instance Cyril refers to the τὸ \textit{ἀκαλλὲς} of the types of

\textsuperscript{331} PG 68:785c. The verb ὑποτρέχω is listed neither in the LSJ nor in the \textit{Patristic Greek Lexicon}.

\textsuperscript{332} PG 68:384c, PG 69:565c.
the law after quoting in full Heb 9:7-12, which refers to the law's sacrificial system and its "regulations of the flesh." In this case it seems that what Cyril finds unattractive is the very sacrificial system of the tabernacle, which is predicated on the offering of the blood of livestock. Although Cyril does not specify what precisely renders the worship of the tabernacle ἀκαλλές, the context suggests that it is the unpalatableness of offering the blood of animals and performing fleshly ablutions, and perhaps the spiritual ineffectiveness of these rites.

Furthermore, in some cases Cyril deems the historia of a given law to be ἀκαλλές because of its moral repugnance. After citing the divine mandate to send away from the camp all lepers and those suffering from gonorrhea, Cyril notes:

And so I think that the rationale (λόγος) for gross bodily matters is not of great concern (οὐ σφόδρα πολὺς) to God, who foreshadows to us the divine and spiritual worship. For those things that transgress the law are punished, and however many things appear to have gone beyond what is fitting, I would say that they are subject to judgment and penalty; but bodily weaknesses could in no way offend against the laws. And so those infirmities will reasonably be as removed as far as possible from censure, and they could not possibly be accused by someone--how could they be? For is it not clear to everyone that no one is sick voluntarily, and that everyone considers, so I think, robust health to be a most desirable thing? . . . Therefore if the words of the history should contain anything unbecoming (τὸ ἀκαλλές), it is not at all grievous, as long as spiritual things should be directed properly to what seems good to the Legislator.333

In this case, the law in question seems to disregard the fact that moral culpability is grounded in the freedom of the will; hence the historia of this precept is ἀκαλλές. One should note that Cyril uses almost exactly the same formula in this passage (οὐ σφόδρα πολὺς παρὰ θεῶ λόγος ἢν) as he does in the excerpt quoted above concerning the

333 PG 68:889a-b.
prohibition of blind and lame priests. Thus a given law may be ἀκαλλές for a number of reasons, but all precepts described as such share the common characteristic of offending in some way the good sense of the reader and hence lacking spiritual edification on the plane of historia.

At this point, in light of Cyril's reference in the preceding quotation to "gross bodily matters," it is worth securing the point that by describing certain precepts as ἀκαλλές Cyril is not straightforwardly privileging spirit over matter. There is no indication in the text that Cyril finds the sheer materiality of the types to be the ground of their charmlessness, nor does he postulate or presuppose a neat antithesis between material type and spiritual referent. To be sure, Kerrigan is right to say that for Cyril "the objects of the spiritual sense are identical with the various realities that belong to 'Christ's mystery.'" However, many of these realities, such as baptism, the Eucharist, the resurrection of Christ, and the suppression of the passions, have an irreducibly corporeal component. Therefore the distastefulness, to Cyril's mind, of certain precepts should be attributed to the offense that they give to right thinking and their failure to edify spiritually rather than to the fact that they pertain to bodily and material matters.

334 See Kerrigan's discussion, St Cyril, 45-51, of Cyril's understanding of the grossness of the "literal sense." He makes a good case for his argument that the "inferiority of the objects seized by the literal sense is further emphasized by the fact that knowledge of them is acquired by the senses" (46). He goes on to say that Cyril's "seeming lack of esteem for [the literal sense] should be ascribed to the inferiority that is connatural to the order of being, to which the objects of the literal sense belong" (50). This statement is accurate as long as one does not simply identify the order of being to which the types belong with matter.

335 Kerrigan, St Cyril, 131. His further claim that those realities constitute "the realm of being with which our author identifies Plato's intelligible world" does not, it seems to me, find support in the De Adoratione et Cultu or in the Glaphyra.
One should further note that Cyril does not always describe the aesthetic features of the types of the law so pejoratively. Indeed, in the analogy that Cyril draws at the beginning of the De Adoratione et Cultu between types and the models of artists and craftspeople, he seems to suggest that the relationship between the aesthetic appeal of the model and that of the finished work is not one of stark contrast, but of a difference in degree; compared to the finished work, the model is "less conspicuous and beautiful (ἀφανέστερόν τε καὶ ἀκαλλέστερον)." Nevertheless, even in this passage Cyril places such stress on the beauty of the finished product that he cannot help but call attention to the fact that its form is incomparably superior (ἀσυγκρίτως ἄμεινον) to that of its model. The point of the analogy, after all, is not that the models are inherently attractive, but rather that they serve a certain purpose.

Another adjective that Cyril employs frequently to describe the aspect of the historia of the law that must be transcended is παχύς, a word that encompasses in its semantic field the notions of coarseness, carnality, and even stupidity, the first of which is paramount in Cyril's usage. For Cyril, the coarse nature of the types of the law consists above all in the fact that these types, considered in themselves, are but tenuously related, by virtue of some degree of mimesis, to their spiritual referents, belonging as they do to "another order of things." In other words, while the realities to which the types enigmatically refer belong to the mystery of Christ, the types themselves do not so belong. Indeed, Cyril nowhere intimates that the types in any

336 PG 68:141a.
337 PG 68:140d.
338 Kerrigan, St. Cyril, 50.
way participate proleptically in their spiritual referents. This ontological disparity between the type in se and its referent has epistemological consequences for the exegete, for it ensures that the spiritual significance of the type will often be arcane, at least at first blush.\(^{339}\) Therefore when Cyril predicates coarseness of the types of the law, he is affirming that their spiritual import is recondite and hence that they resist facile interpretation.

Indeed, the very fact that the *De Adoratione et Cultu* is formatted as a didactic dialogue is attributable to the obscurity of the types of the law. The spiritual referents of those types are hardly self-evident, even to the Christian reader intimately familiar with the writings of the New Testament; Palladius himself seems to be just that sort of reader, and yet he is totally dependent on Cyril to decipher the figures of the law.\(^ {340}\) The spiritual significance of the types of the law is simply inscrutable to most Christians without the guidance of a learned interpreter like Cyril. Even so, Cyril himself frequently adverts to the difficulties with which the spiritual exegesis of the law is fraught, and on several occasions explicitly acknowledges that at least some of his interpretive judgments are liable to correction.\(^ {341}\) The food of the divine contemplations contained in the law, Cyril grants, is difficult to chew.\(^ {342}\)

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339 See Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 161-62, on what she dubs "symbolic exegesis."

340 When Cyril asks Palladius what he is holding in his hands, Palladius replies: βίβλος Εὐαγγελική, Ματθαίου τε καὶ Ἰωάννου συγγραφή (PG 68:133a). He goes on to cite a variety of other New Testament texts.

341 For example, see PG 68:597b.

342 PG 68:552c.
Cyril even finds intimations in the law itself of the opacity of its types. When commenting on the curtains of the tabernacle, which measured twenty-eight cubits in length but only four cubits in width, Cyril proposes that their narrow width is an enigma of the fact that the instruction of the law is "most difficult on account of the obscurity (τὸ ἀσυμφανὲς) of the letter." In the same vein, Cyril interprets the curtain dividing the courtyard from the sanctuary as a type of the fact that "the law itself is not obvious to those who chance upon it. For the letter has in itself a veil (κατακάλυμμα), and it is covered up and clothed completely by obscurity (ἀσάφειαν), in shadows, as it were." 

Certain key terms denoting the resultant arduousness of the spiritual contemplation of the law recur often in the text. Above all, Cyril characterizes the law as βαθύς on account of its figural complexion. At the beginning of the work, Cyril, having been petitioned by Palladius to draw out the beauty of the truth latent in the oracles of the law, underlines the difficulty of meeting this objective:

For the contemplation of these things is so difficult and sublime that it is scarcely possible for it to be undertaken by the human intellect; I think that it is fitting to say to the one examining closely the depth (τὸ βάθος) of the contemplations contained in the law, Who is wise and will understand these things? And who is the wise man, and will he recognize these very things?

343 PG 68:633b-c.
344 PG 68:668b.
345 Paul uses the same term to describe the mystery of God's plan for Israel in Rom 11:33.
346 PG 68:145a. The text in italics is from Hos 14:10.
Cyril makes it clear that the law's profundity is a correlative of its obscurity, when he claims that his interpretation of the sacrifices described in Lev 1 possesses the truth, which "gleams in mist and in darkness; for the law is deep (βαθὺς)."347

The difficulty of interpreting the figures of the law is compounded by the fact that every word and phrase of the biblical text is meticulously coined by God, and thus the interpreter can dismiss nothing in the text as nugatory. Thus Cyril often comments admiringly on the precision (ἀκρίβεια) of the law: "The holy scriptures are precise (ἀκριβὲς), Palladius, and there is absolutely nothing vain (εἰκαῖον) in them."348 This precision demands a corresponding scrupulousness on the part of the exegete, who may not skim over seemingly superfluous or peripheral details in the text. Thus Cyril claims that each implement of the tabernacle possesses great (μακρὸς) and complex (πολυσχιδὴς) significance.349 Similarly, when commenting on the narrative of Moses and Joshua's defeat of the Amalekites, Cyril implores Palladius to consider "how subtle (λεπτός) and indispensable (ἀναγκαῖος) is the meaning (νοῦς) of each detail."350

The first adjective draws attention to the adroitness of mind requisite for successful exegesis, while the second underscores the imperative for the exegete to ruminate on every word and phrase of the scriptural text. That being said, however, in the texts at hand Cyril does not show much interest in etymology, and there is no evidence that he

347 PG 68:1017b.
348 PG 68:665c. Elsewhere Cyril notes that this precision also characterizes Paul's writings (PG 68:784c).
349 PG 68:633a. It should be noted, however, that Cyril concedes that some biblical details about the construction of the tabernacle are not amenable to spiritual contemplation, but rather were included with a view to practical considerations alone.
350 PG 68:652d.
consulted the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch or was even aware of the discrepancies between the Hebrew text and the LXX.351 His main point is simply that every scriptural detail warrants careful consideration by the interpreter.

I will give but one example from the De Adoratione et Cultu of Cyril's attention to textual detail. The instructions in Exod 27 concerning the lighting of the lamps stipulate that "olive oil from olive trees" be used as fuel. This apparent tautology arouses Palladius' curiosity: "And for what reason does it say that the olive oil is from olive trees? For perhaps the precise wording (ἀκριβὲς) of the account is pregnant with some crucial insights (θεωρημάτων)."352 Cyril commends Palladius on his perspicacity, and goes on to illumine the historical context of the Israelites to whom this regulation was addressed. It was a widespread custom of the time, he avers, to adulterate pure olive oil with "many spurious and earthier seeds."353 This historical tidbit then becomes the launching pad for Cyril's spiritual interpretation: "Therefore olive oil from olive trees is rightly compared to an unadulterated and pure word, which is furnished to the worthy through wisdom from above."354 In this case, attention to an apparently trifling textual detail is crucial for the establishment of the historia of the regulation at hand, which in turn provides the basis for Cyril's spiritual interpretation of the passage.

351 Nor is there any indication that Cyril consulted non-Septuagintal Greek translations when composing the De Adoratione et Cultu. However, Kerrigan, St Cyril, 253, notes that though "Cyril has little flair for textual criticism, he introduces now and then (four times in the commentary on Isaias, but more frequently in that on the Minor Prophets) variant readings borrowed from the Hexapla."

352 PG 68:644b.

353 PG 68:644b.

354 PG 68:644b.
3.1.3: From Type to Truth: Spiritual Contemplation

This concrete instance of spiritual exegesis brings us to the next feature of Cyril's understanding of typology that we will consider, namely, the crucial conversion of the tenebrous types into the resplendent truth. As one might expect in light of the discussion above, for Cyril the types of the law, apart from this conversion, are utterly without value, at least for the Christian reader: "But the type possesses nothing beneficial (τὸ ὑφελοῦν) unless it receives the truth. For it is the truth's shadow, inasmuch as it does not exist properly on its own account, but so that it might paint (ζωγραφῇ) upon itself something better." Thus the primary task incumbent on the contemplative reader is to metamorphize the bare figure into the truth that it portends, which is invariably related in some way to the mystery of Christ.

The above quotation, in which Cyril employs the metaphor of painting, alerts us to the pervasive motif of vision in this text, apart from which Cyril's notion of spiritual theoria cannot be properly understood. In general, Cyril tends to speak of spiritual exegesis and the aim thereof in visual terms; the goal of spiritual contemplation is to make visible to the reader the many-splendored truths that constitute the mystery of Christ. Of course, the word theoria, which is Cyril's preferred designation for spiritual exegesis (that is, exegesis that transcends the historia of the text), literally denotes an act of vision. This visual emphasis is present in Cyril's opening comments on the

355 PG 68:669c.

356 See H. N. Bate's discussion of theoria as used in both the Alexandrian and Antiochene traditions in "Some Technical Terms of Greek Exegesis," Journal of Theological Studies 24 (1922): 59-66. He argues that in the Alexandrian tradition theoria "is practically synonymous with ἀλληγορία, as that word is with διάνοια" (61).
necessity of spiritual contemplation, in which he declares that the evangelical way of life "is not excessively far removed from the the way of life of the law, if those things declared to the ancients are carried over to spiritual contemplation (θεωρίαν . . . πνευματικήν). For the law is a type and shadow, and a pregnant form (μόρφωσις) of piety, as it were, having the beauty (κάλλος) of the truth hidden in itself."357 Both the words μόρφωσις and κάλλος underscore the visual nature of spiritual contemplation, which enables the reader to see those realities pertaining to the mystery of Christ that are otherwise concealed by the veil of the letter. Furthermore, Cyril's analogy between a sculptor's model and finished work on the one hand and the type and the truth on the other also betrays his visual conception of the function of spiritual exegesis.

Another passage from Cyril's initial exchange with Palladius perhaps illustrates most vividly the visual thrust of Cyril's understanding of spiritual exegesis:

For just as those who are looking in a mirror would see an image and type of the truth, and not the real thing itself, in the same way, I think, those longing to see the beauty of the way of life in Christ would fulfill this desire in the best way possible by using the law as if it were a mirror. For by remolding (μεταπλάττοντες) the very image of things into the truth, they will see clearly that which seems best and well-pleasing to God.358

Bearing in mind our observations about the grossness of the types of the law above, it becomes apparent that for Cyril types possess a paradoxical nature: whereas their intrinsic coarseness makes them initially opaque, they are nonetheless potentially luminous to the beauty of the truth. Indeed, in the quotation above Cyril suggests that

357 PG 68:137a-b.
358 PG 68:141c. See Wilken, Judaism, 89-92, on the varied vocabulary that Cyril utilizes to describe the transformation of types into truth.
the types of the law, if handled properly, make possible a vision of the beauty of the evangelical life that is not otherwise obtainable.

Put in aural rather than optical terms, the law, which in its historia shares with Moses a stammering and weak tongue, receives through spiritual contemplation an articulate and resounding voice.\textsuperscript{359} Through spiritual contemplation the various ordinances and implements of the tabernacle become expressive of the beauty of Christ's form and the splendor of the evangelical way of life. Indeed, only the transformation of the type wrought by spiritual contemplation makes it possible for Cyril to speak of "the beauty of the icon (τῆς εἰκόνος τὸ κάλλος)."\textsuperscript{360} Of course, it is not just any beauty that spiritual contemplation of the law enables one to espy, but precisely the beauty of the truth, a phrase that we have already seen Cyril employ in the opening dialogue of the De Adoratione et Cultu.\textsuperscript{361}

What is the effect on the reader of this hermeneutical "theophany"? Cyril addresses this question in several places with reference to Moses' veil.\textsuperscript{362} In a passage

\textsuperscript{359} See Cyril's comments on the law's slowness of tongue in PG 69:505c.

\textsuperscript{360} PG 68:405b. In this passage Cyril appears to use τύπος and εἰκῶν synonymously.

\textsuperscript{361} Although it is difficult to ascertain exactly what Cyril meant by this expression, it seems rather clear that he understood it in contradistinction to sheerly material beauty, which can often be perniciously seductive, as in the case of certain pagan religious practices, which were "beautified with extrinsic adornments (κατακαλλύεται . . . τοῖς εἰσποιητοῖς ὡραίσιμοῖς)" (PG 68:704d).

\textsuperscript{362} For an overview of early Christian exegetical treatments of Moses' veil, see Riemer Roukema, "The Veil over Moses' Face in Patristic Interpretation," in The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman (ed. Riemer Roukema; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 237-50. Roukema, 239-240, notes that from "the third century onward the Church Fathers testify to the interpretation that, when the Jews read the Old Testament (for they so understand the term 'the old covenant' in 2 Cor. 3:14), there is a veil over their faces since they do not see that spiritually it speaks about Christ." Roukema singles out Origen and Didymus the Blind, both of whom cite 2 Cor 3 to criticize certain Christian interpretations of Scripture, as exceptions to this generalization.
from the *Glaphyra*, Cyril avers that Moses' removal of his veil images the Christian believer who contemplates the law spiritually and is thereby transformed:

And so Moses most advantageously removes the veil. For the law has a veil, and the coarseness of the letter and the history is not very illuminating. But Moses, coming into the sight of God, removes the veil. And indeed we will discover that this is true for us ourselves. For having been led in the face (πρόσωπῳ), as it were, of God the Father, when Christ conveys us thereto, we will see his glory apart from the shadows of Moses, understanding the law spiritually. *For we are transformed from glory into glory*, according to what is written.363

Here Cyril causally links the vision of and intimacy with the Father through Christ with an understanding of the spiritual referents of the figures of the law; the vision of God's glory afforded by Christ makes possible the simultaneous vision of the beauty of the truth in the figures of the law. Furthermore, Cyril hints, through his partial citation of 2 Cor 3:18, that this twofold vision effects the personal transformation and glorification of the reader. In this way the transformation of the type into the truth is mirrored by and a catalyst for the glorious transformation of the contemplative reader.

This constellation of divine vision, intimacy to the divine presence, and glorious transformation also appears in the opening pages of the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, once more with reference to Moses' veil:

Moses placed a veil over his face (πρόσωπον) because it was not possible for the sons of Israel to look upon his face. . . . To the minds of the Jews, being very obtuse, the exterior matters of the law were somehow still tolerable, those things, I say again, that were signified by the letter alone, and those other things were insufferable and dispensable to them, namely, those things hidden within and, so to speak, the true face (πρόσωπον) of the meanings (νοημάτων). Accordingly the prophetic Paul writes to us, *For to this day the same veil remains over their reading of the old covenant, unlifted, because it is taken away only by Christ. But to this day, at the time when Moses is read, the veil lies over their hearts.*

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363 PG 69:537a-b.
One should observe how, as in the passage from the *Glaphyra*, Cyril draws attention to the transformative effects of the spiritual contemplation of the law ("Moses") by means of his quotation of 2 Cor 3:18; it is only those who lift the veil from the law who are transformed from glory into glory. This dynamic of spiritual interpretation and transformation is also implicit in his lexical correlation of the unveiled face (προσώπῳ) of the Christian with the true face (πρόσωπον) of the figures of the law. Thus the apprehension of the spiritual import of the figures of the law follows from the unveiled vision of the Lord’s glory (which is in turn made possible by faith in Christ), and from this double vision ensues the christomorphic transformation of the reader.

However, the ability to contemplate the law spiritually does not necessarily follow automatically upon Christian faith; there are certain exegetical competencies that are requisite for the task. Above all, the exegete must have a firm grasp on the main lines of salvation history. This becomes evident midway through Book I, when Cyril, having made his case for the necessity of the spiritual contemplation of the law, says,

> And it is necessary for us, in my view, to mention before all else the deviation of humanity into a poor state, held in slavery and imprisonment by the enemy of all, so that these things might be done in a certain way by us and among us. And

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364 PG 68:141b-c.
thus it is necessary to speak further about how to incline away from evil, and to shake from ourselves the yoke of slavery to that one, and rather to spring up to our primitive state, when God saves us and comes to our aid.365

This admonition signals the commencement of a recapitulation of salvation history, beginning with the creation of the free human mind. Over the course of the next several books of the De Adoratione et Cultu Cyril provides Palladius with a thorough overview of the major moments of salvation history and their theological significance, with special emphasis on the resurrection of Christ as the watershed event that divides all history into before and after.366

However, mere knowledge of the outlines of salvation history is not by itself sufficient for a comprehensive spiritual reading of the law. After all, Palladius himself evinces at least a rudimentary knowledge of the divine economy of salvation, and is presumably a baptized Christian. What Palladius lacks and Cyril supplies is an intimate knowledge of the whole texture of Scripture and thus an ability to cross-reference discrete and seemingly unrelated biblical texts in an illuminating manner. Indeed, several of Cyril’s particular interpretations give decisive hermeneutical weight to biblical texts that do not self-evidently bear on the text in question. For example, in order to discern the spiritual significance of the golden lampstand in the sanctuary of the tabernacle, Cyril adduces Zechariah’s vision of a lampstand, which in turn becomes

365 PG 68:145b. I should note, however, that for Cyril the establishment of the main lines of salvation history is not simply propaedeutic to the spiritual interpretation of the law, since he frequently corroborates the narrative of salvation history that he sketches in the De Adoratione et Cultu with spiritual readings of various Pentateuchal texts. In other words, there is a certain circularity in his method.

366 For a representative reflection on the import of the resurrection, see PG 68:768a.
the basis of Cyril's spiritual interpretation of the tabernacle's lampstand.367 Without an intimate knowledge of the whole sweep of Scripture and its variegated parts, a spiritual interpretation such as this would simply not be possible.

In good patristic fashion, Cyril never prescribes a certain method by which Palladius, or anyone else, can reliably discern the spiritual significance of any given Pentateuchal text. Although comprehensive knowledge of the scriptures is certainly a sine quo non of spiritual exegesis, the successful spiritual exegete must also possess a certain savoir-faire that is not easily communicated from one who possesses it to another who does not. Accordingly, in the dialogue Cyril enacts a virtuoso exegetical performance for Palladius' benefit, rather than imparting to Palladius the principles of an exegetical method by which he himself could become a proficient practitioner of spiritual contemplation.

Given these prerequisites for the spiritual contemplation of the law, it is obvious that only Christian readers qualify for the task. Indeed, over the course of the De Adoratione et Cultu it becomes apparent that Cyril holds that God imparted to the law of Moses a densely figural composition exclusively for the benefit of Christians, who scrutinize the figures of the law on the near side of the resurrection of Christ, and who are accordingly the true legatees of the spiritual law. On several occasions Cyril suggests that from the very beginning God fashioned the figures of the law in such a way that they might nourish the faith of the church. At the outset of his discussion of the spiritual significance of the tabernacle, Palladius asks: "Was not the old tent in the

367 PG 68:608d-612c.
wilderness constructed for us (εἰς τύπον ἡμῖν) as a type of the church of the nations, somehow manifesting the obscure beauty of the truer tent?"368 The implication is that the tabernacle qua type, that is, the tabernacle inasmuch as it is lends itself to spiritual contemplation, was constructed in order to serve as grist for the spiritual contemplation of Christians, who are of course always to be identified with the ἡμεῖς of the text. Needless to say, Cyril answers the question affirmatively.

One other passage, which merits being quoted in full, will further corroborate my point. Shortly after having discussed the erection of the tabernacle, Cyril declares:

For the law announced beforehand the things that were to come, and contains the manifest announcement of the achievements of the Savior, if it is contemplated spiritually. For this reason, I think, Moses erected the holy tent. For the pedagogy of the law is not unprofitable for the edification of the church. For it leads to Christ, who is the head of the church, and who is every structure, pillar, and foundation of the truth, as it is written. At any rate, Christ said to the Jews, If you believed Moses, then you would believe me too; for he wrote about me (Jn 5:46). Therefore Moses, that is, the pedagogy of the law, builds up the church of Christ, announcing beforehand the mystery in shadows, as it were.369

According to Cyril, then, the figural pedagogy of the law was intended primarily to fortify the faith of the church; he does not suggest that the figures of the law, qua figures, were in any way salutary for the Israelites. In this way Cyril envisages a sort of retrospective pedagogy of figures, in which the law nourishes the reader not so much by showing her what is to come, but rather by showing that what has already transpired in and through the incarnate Christ was shadowed forth in the tabernacle cult. Cyril finds Pauline warrant for this retrospective notion of the law's pedagogy,

368 PG 68:589d. I am taking ἡμῖν as a dative of advantage.
369 PG 68:653b-c.
above all in 1 Cor 10:11 ("Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction"). 370

Indeed, nowhere in the De Adoratione et Cultu is there any evidence that Cyril thought that the Israelites ante Christum had the native resources by which they could profit in any respect from the figural dimension of their law. To be sure, Cyril never flatly denies that it was possible for the Israelites to contemplate the law spiritually. Indeed, there are a couple of scattered remarks in the text that at first glance could suggest that certain Israelites attained to something like spiritual contemplation. For instance, in his explanation of the prohibition against going up to the altar by steps, Cyril remarks:

To those who worshipped idols, it seemed necessary and noble to establish an altar in lofty precincts; . . . and so the law aptly weaned them away from what was customary for them, and it corrects the holy priests for the better, and leads them from the bodily type to spiritual contemplation. For the text reads, He will not go up in steps to my altar, lest you uncover your deformity on it. That is, let the divine priest who has been sanctified for my service seek those things that are humble, and let him not spring up to what is haughty. Let him be removed from arrogance, lest he should appear to be disfigured and ugly. 371

It seems that "spiritual contemplation" in this context encompasses any understanding of a given precept that is not strictly literal, in this case a moralizing interpretation; going up by steps is a trope for arrogance. This particular instance of spiritual contemplation does not seem to pertain directly to the mystery of Christ, and thus this passage does not suggest that Cyril thought that the Israelites, lay or priestly, could espy, however faintly, the mystery of Christ in the figures of the law.

370 PG 68:360b.
There is only one passage in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* that directly touches on the ability of certain Israelites to glimpse prospectively the mystery of Christ:

Certain holy men foresaw in the Spirit more clearly and in boundless ways the more excellent things that our Savior would do in his glorious advent, and they cried out: *Sing to the Lord a new song* (Ps 97:1), that is to say, *God ascends in jubilation* (Ps 46:6), having pillaged Hades, *when he said to those who were in chains, Depart, and to those who were in darkness, Be brought to light* (Is 49:9).372

Although in this instance Cyril clearly affirms that certain Israelites foresaw the saving works of Christ, he does not affirm this proleptic vision in relation to the interpretation of the figures of the law, and he also appears to restrict those clairvoyant holy men to the authors of the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus there is no positive indication in the entire work, or indeed in the *Glaphyra*, that the Israelites did or were able to perceive in the figures of their own law the outlines of the mystery of Christ.

Cyril even claims that the unfathomableness of the figures of the law to the Israelites is actually intimated by the law itself, specifically Lev 19:23-25, in which God decrees that the trees of the land will be impure for three years, will become holy on the fourth year, and will become edible on the fifth year. Cyril prefaces his interpretation of this text with a discussion of how certain precepts of the law inculcated in the Israelites principles of sound moral action:

And so in countless ways the law brings us toward that which is suitable. And it does not yet give more solid and adult food, but it provides milk, as it were, for those who are infants, leading the ancients little by little toward the mystery of Christ. So note well that the law is spiritual, and that, inasmuch as it pertains to

shadow and type, it was inedible, nor was it useful as spiritual food, but it will be such, if remodeled into evangelical contemplation and the mystery of Christ, seeing that the all-wise Moses wrote thus about him.  

Cyril's claim that the law gradually led the ancients toward the mystery of Christ cannot mean that the Israelites progressively came to a better understanding of how the figures of the law adumbrated the mystery of Christ. Indeed, such an interpretation does not cohere with Cyril's subsequent statement that the spiritual food of the law was inedible and hence of no use to the ancient Israelites.

Rather, one should interpret the phrase "gradually leading the ancients toward the mystery of Christ" in accordance with Cyril's actual interpretation of the legislation at hand. The first three years, in which the fruit was unholy, corresponds to the eras of Moses, Joshua, and the judges; during this time the law was still impure, inasmuch as it was weighed down by the crassness of the *historia* and enveloped by a vain and vulgar shadow. The fourth year, in which the law was holy but not yet edible, corresponds to the epoch of the prophets, who announced the imminent abrogation of the precepts of the law and proclaimed the mystery of Christ's advent. Finally, Cyril explains that the fifth year, upon which the fruit becomes edible, refers to the advent of the incarnate Christ, when "the pedagogy of the law, most useful for those who love learning (φιλομαθέσι), was carried over to spiritual contemplation."  

Hence figural interpretation of the precepts of the law was not possible prior to the advent of Christ, notwithstanding the prophets' announcement of his coming and the concomitant

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373 PG 68:585b-c.

374 PG 68:588b.
abolition of the literal implementation of the law. If the fruit of the trees cannot be eaten before the fifth year, then it is quite obvious that it was not a source of spiritual nourishment for the Israelites until then. According to Cyril, then, an authority no less than the law itself excludes the possibility that the Israelites did or could have peered through the dark haze of the historia of the law and discerned the mystery of Christ.

Without a doubt, Cyril does not gainsay that the law was in some way pedagogical for the Israelites. But as we will see in the next chapter, that pedagogy is almost totally restricted to leading the Israelites away from polytheistic practices in favor of the worship of the one true God. Moreover, the law's pedagogy consisted in direct instruction rather than figural adumbration. Monotheistic belief is for Cyril simply an insufficient hermeneutical key for deciphering the figures of the law; only the radiant light of the resurrected Christ renders their spiritual referents visible. In this way the figures of the law were placed in trust, as it were, until they could be cashed out by Christian readers, who alone consume the fruit of the scriptural tree:

The scriptures of Moses seem to us to be similar to the most fertile plants, pregnant with a multiplex growth of precepts, and dense with laws, as if with trees, for each matter. But the text says, purge from each tree its impurity, that is, cut away at the vanity of the history, and remove the woodiness, so to speak, of the letter, and you will arrive at the heart of the plant; in other words, seek diligently the interior fruit of the legislation, and convert it into food.\(^{375}\)

By now it should be transparent that the spiritual law, that is, the law inasmuch as it is a treasury of insight into the mystery of Christ and the evangelical way of life, was

\(^{375}\) PG 68:585d.
divinely intended solely for the edification of the church. For the Israelites and their Jewish successors, that law is but a closed book.

3.2: Shadows of True Divine Vision

Cyril's notion of the Israelites' "veiled" understanding of the law has implications for his construal of Israel's sacred history ante Christum. For Cyril, Israel's hermeneutical handicap is at the same time an optical one. As a case in point, Cyril's denial that the Israelites could apprehend the spiritual import of their law is homologous to his account of the nature of God's appearance to Israel at Sinai. On several occasions Cyril evinces anxiety that contemporary Jews might adduce the Sinai episode as proof that their ancestors, and by proxy they themselves, were privy to a true theophany:

And observe how, having come down on the mountain in the form of fire, he appeared to the entire people. For it was written as if he was not yet appearing: Having been thus manifested, I will be seen among you, that is, after the construction of the sanctuary. For though he shouted aloud, he was scarcely seen clearly, because those visions are shadows (σκιαί) of the true vision of God (θεοπτίας). But the true manifestation is Christ, in whom we have beheld the Father himself. And at any rate, he refutes as entirely without substance the things set forth by the Jews, who imagine that they have truly (κατὰ τὸ ἀληθὲς) seen the God of all things on Mount Sinai, saying, You have neither heard his voice, nor have you seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding among you, because the one whom he sent, this one you do not believe (Jn 5:37-38).376

It is significant that Cyril uses the same plural noun, σκιαί, to describe both the visions of God vouchsafed to the Israelites and the types of the Mosaic law, as yet unconverted into the truth, which is precisely how the Israelites understood them. Thus Cyril posits

376 PG 68:596b.
a direct correlation between the Israelites' incapacity to behold a true theophany and their inability to experience a "hermeneutical theophany" by penetrating through the coarse veil of the law's types and so apprehending the beauty of the truth. The Israelites received a vision of God at Sinai commensurate to the epistemic limitations imposed by the densely figural constitution of their law.

Cyril makes the same correlation in another passage, in which he claims that the "misty fire" (τὸ πῦρ, πλὴν ἀχλύος οὐ δίχα) on Sinai signifies the dim illumination of the law; the law, like this fire, is "murky (ἀμυδρὸς)" and "unclear (ἀσαφὴς)," since the veil of the letter is "coarse (παχύ)."³⁷⁷ Thus the ontological and epistemic gap between the bare type and the truth it intimates corresponds to the discrepancy between the fire beheld by the Israelites at Sinai and the true form of God. The Israelites were no more able to enjoy true divine vision than they were able to detect the outlines of the mystery of Christ in the figures of their law. The fire that interposed itself between God's form and the Israelites on Sinai prevented the Israelites from glimpsing God's true face, just as the veil of the letter of the law made the mystery of Christ opaque to them. In this way both the fire on Sinai and the veil of the letter signify the remove at which the Israelites stood from both the divine face and the "true face" of the law.³⁷⁸ As we will see in the next two chapters, this is only one of many instances in which Cyril lays stress on the Israelites', and by extension the Jews', alienation from the divine presence.

³⁷⁷ PG 68:489a.
³⁷⁸ See Cyril's wordplay with the term πρόσωπον on pp. 143-44.
In yet another place Cyril points to the divine appearance at Sinai as the foil for the vision of the incarnate Christ, and once more cites John 5:37-38 in order to obviate the Jews' boast that they are the unique recipients of a true vision of God. Cyril goes on to adduce another text from the Fourth Gospel, namely, Jesus' rebuke of Philip for his petition to see the Father: "The one who has seen me has seen the Father (14:9)." In this way Cyril contrasts God's "shadowy" self-disclosure at Sinai with the luminous divine self-revelation in the person of Christ. For Cyril, there can be no true theophany, and by implication no spiritual contemplation of the law, before the incarnation of the Word; the Israelites were simply not able to see "the glory of the Lord with spiritual eyes," either in a theophany proper or by interpreting their law spiritually.

Indeed, Cyril maintains that the Israelites were in general characterized by the weakness of their vision. This optical infirmity is obliquely indicated, so says Cyril, by another Pentateuchal text, the story about Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel (Gen 29:16). Cyril claims that Leah is an icon of the synagogue, due to the weakness of her eyes, and that Rachel, who is Leah's younger and more beautiful sister, is a type of the church of the Gentiles. Cyril buttresses this typology with a citation of Jer 22:17, which says apropos the Israelites, "They do not have eyes, nor is your heart beautiful." The extent to which the Israelites' myopia should be ascribed to the typological

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380 PG 68:692d.
381 PG 68:237b-c.
complexion of the law, and the extent to which it stems from their own moral failings, which Cyril is always keen to point out, is not altogether clear.

For Cyril, the *post Christum* Jewish interpretation of the Mosaic law, which is characterized by its exclusive commitment to the bare letter, represents a pernicious perpetuation of the Israelites' defective understanding of their law. Whereas the Israelites' failure to understand their law spiritually can be attributed at least in part to their temporal priority to the incarnation of Christ, the stubbornly literal reading of their Jewish descendents is indefensible, since the hermeneutical key that unlocks the figures of the law is now available to all. According to Cyril, the Jews have preferred to turn their backs on the illumination of Christ in order to continue to walk in darkness, that is, in the cover of the shadows of the law. Their failure to recognize Christ as the *telos* of the law and the prophets, and their correlative false absolutizing of the letter of the law, have eventuated in their total misunderstanding of Scripture. Thus in the *Glaphyra* Cyril asserts that the question that Philip asks the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:30, namely, 'do you understand what you are reading?,’ is most aptly put to the Jews, who most certainly do not.

Cyril's critique of Jewish exegesis takes on additional bite when one recalls his conception of the transformative efficacy of spiritual contemplation. We have seen above that for Cyril the spiritual interpretation of the law catalyzes the reader's transformation into greater conformity with the image of the Lord. The Jews, by culpably fetishizing the law's letter, deliberately refuse the transformation afforded by

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382 PG 69:533c.
383 PG 69:533b.
spiritual exegesis. In this way Cyril's critique of Jewish interpretation subserves his broader agenda to depict the legal, and hence Jewish, way of life as an obstinate commitment to moral complacency, which the Jews fob off as obedience. For Cyril, the refusal to transcend the letter of the law is a sign of the refusal to allow oneself to be transformed by the Spirit into greater conformity with Christ. As we will see in the following chapters, Cyril's account of the law's inability to sanctify and thus transform those under its yoke ensures the wretched moral state of the Jewish people, and consequently the necessity for Christians to remain separate from them.

3.3: Conclusion

Because the primary aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate and elucidate the way in which Cyril utilizes the spiritual interpretation of the Pentateuch as a platform for his critique of Judaism qua religion of the law and his indictment of Jewish moral impurity, we should briefly review the findings of this chapter that are most relevant to this goal. We have seen how emphatically Cyril privileges the theoria of the law over its historia, without ever specifying the precise nature of the relationship between these two dimensions of the text. The Christian exegete need concern himself with the historia of a given precept or narrative of the Pentateuch only in order to detect the mimetic nexus between it and some aspect of the mystery of Christ; he need not establish the theological significance of the law's historia in its own right, since the writings of the New Testament (especially the Fourth Gospel and the "Pauline" writings) provide the requisite template for understanding the status and role of Israel and the Mosaic law in the divine economy of salvation. In the next two chapters the
hermeneutical leverage that such a privileging of spiritual exegesis affords Cyril will become readily apparent.

We have also seen how Cyril's particular construal of the figural makeup of the law of Moses is pregnant with negative implications for Judaism. First, we looked at the way in which Cyril's conception of the epistemic challenges posed by the types of the law guarantees that those types, *qua* types, were not able to edify and instruct the Israelites, but rather were divinely intended to serve as grist for the mills of contemplative Christian exegetes. As a corollary, Jews are exposed as incompetent readers of the Pentateuch, inasmuch as they are blind to precisely that dimension of the law that qualifies it as spiritual. In this way Cyril forestalls the claim that the Jews are the ablest interpreters of the Pentateuch because they continue to observe it literally, at least as circumstances permit. Rather, Christians, and more specifically learned Christians like Cyril, are the only legitimate interpreters of the law of Moses, because only they are equipped to bore through the veil of the letter and to draw out the beauty of the truth theretofore concealed, thereby vindicating Paul's claim that the law is spiritual.

Moreover, Cyril emphasizes how the Jews' inability to transmute the figures of the law into the truth has deleterious consequences for their capacity to know and see God, and to enjoy intimacy with the divine presence. Just as they have mistaken the sheerly literal instruction of the law for true and adequate knowledge of God and the God-pleasing way of life, they have confused the fiery spectacle at Sinai with a true vision of God. Furthermore, the limitations of the Jewish understanding of the law have adverse moral repercussions. As we have seen, Cyril interprets 2 Cor 3:18 in such
a way as to establish a vital link between the spiritual interpretation of the law and transformation into the image of Christ. Hence by stressing the failure of the Jews to look beyond the immediate reference of the letter of the law, Cyril implies that they remain subject to the tyranny of the devil and sin, a tyranny that is overcome only by Christ, who is simultaneously the one who removes the veil from the letter of the law. In this way Cyril’s accentuation of the opacity of the figures of the law buttresses his contention, which we will examine in the next chapter, that Judaism, held in thrall as it is to the letter of the law, cannot function as a matrix of moral and spiritual transformation. Just as the Jews lack the native resources to transform the figures of their law into the truth, they are impotent to transform the way of life literally mandated by the law into one that is truly holy and pleasing to God. In the next chapter we will see how Cyril moors this conception of the epistemological and sanctificatory deficits of the law in a figural reading of the law itself.
We have seen in the previous chapter that in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra Cyril does not linger long on the historia of a given Pentateuchal text, preferring instead to modulate as swiftly as possible into the key of theoria, in which the types of the law embedded in the historia are transmuted into the truth. This is not to say, however, that Cyril is only interested in the truths that the law prefigures and is thus indifferent to the theological significance of Israel's law and history as narrated in the Pentateuch. To the contrary, from the vantage point of theoria Cyril expounds at length the theological meaning of some of the most symbolically potent events and places in early Israelite history. In particular, Cyril comments extensively on the merits and (especially) the deficiencies of the law of Moses, viewed retrospectively in the light of Christ. As I will demonstrate, Cyril displays a marked propensity to find in the narrative and legal material of the Pentateuch figural indications of the various and grave soteriological defects of the Mosaic law. For Cyril, then, the law does not only prefigure Christ and the evangelical way of life, but it also contains a bevy of textual clues that, if understood spiritually, testify to the law's own inadequacies; in other words, the law does not only have a prospective thrust, but also a certain self-referential and self-critical quality. Ultimately, through his figural exegesis Cyril
locates in the law itself nothing less than a comprehensive and coherent account of the
the nature and function of the law in salvation history. As the survey in Chapter Two
indicates, none of Cyril's predecessors undertook quite such a venture.

The primary objective of this chapter is to show how Cyril constructs his
account of the nature and salvific impact of the Mosaic law by means of spiritual
exegesis of the law. Although some of his figural readings highlight particular benefits
that the law provided for the Israelites, the overwhelming majority of such readings
underscore the various soteriological failures of the law, which become glaringly
apparent when viewed in the incandescent light of Christ. Above all, Cyril emphasizes
that the law failed to impart to the Israelites true knowledge and vision of God, access
to and intimacy with God, and sanctification, which is the condition of the possibility of
the evangelical way of life.

I will also draw attention to how Cyril discerns in the sacred topography of Sinai
and the tabernacle complex an apt graphic illustration of the soteriological
shortcomings of the law. For Cyril, a proper spiritual "mapping" of these locales will
disclose the impressive qualitative difference between the proximity to God and
personal holiness possible under the regime of the law on the one hand and in the
confines of the church on the other. I will go on to discuss the relationship between
Cyril's spiritual exegesis and that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. I will suggest that
Cyril's specific figural readings examined in this chapter collectively constitute a sort of
elaboration and amplification of Hebrews' treatment of the Mosaic cult. Indeed, Cyril
appears to have found Hebrews' treatment of the tabernacle to be hermeneutically
fertile; while Cyril's basic approach to the spiritual exegesis of the law is clearly
inspired by Hebrews, the vast majority of Cyril's specific figural readings of the law that point up the law's salvific inadequacies appear to be fresh.

Why did Cyril pursue this line of interpretation so extensively and creatively? Undoubtedly, his substantive account of the law's salvific limitations is fully consistent with the theological principles and sensibilities that underpin his entire corpus. However, I will propose that Cyril's historical context might also have some explanatory value with respect to his sustained attempt to demonstrate that the law has inscribed in itself enigmatic indicators of its own redemptive imperfections. As we noted in the Introduction, in Cyril's day Christian readings of the Hebrew Scriptures were not without vocal and articulate detractors. Indeed, Cyril's early festal letters reflect an ambiance of exegetical contestation between Jews and Christians. In addition, we know from his own Contra Julianum that Cyril was rattled by Julian's critique of the manner of the Christian appropriation of the Old Testament in general and the law in particular. In the final section of the chapter I will make the case that Cyril's mooring of his account of the law's soteriological limitations in the law itself may well constitute a sort of apologetic retort to Julian's characterization of the Christian position on and non-observance of the law. According to Cyril, once one adopts Christ as the hermeneutical key to all of Scripture, then the account of the law's imperfections and hence provisionality proffered by Paul and other New Testament writers finds ample figural verification in the law itself, and this corroboration in turn suggests that the Christian account of the law's incapacities does not do violence to the Pentateuch, as Julian suggests, but rather illuminates some of its most mysterious features and reveals its true telos.
4.1: The Law as Pedagogue

As numerous commentators have pointed out, Cyril, like virtually all of his patristic counterparts, drank deeply from Pauline wells (he considered the Epistle to the Hebrews Pauline as well). It comes as no surprise, then, that his construal of the place and function of the law in salvation history is heavily informed by Paul's writings. Like Paul and the author of Hebrews, and in contrast to Barnabas, Cyril acknowledges the propriety of the Israelites' literal implementation of the law before the advent of the incarnate Christ, although on occasion he does express ambivalence about the literal observance of certain laws. Moreover, Cyril takes seriously the Pauline dictum that the law was a pedagogue (Gal 3:24). For Cyril, then, the law did provide the Israelites with some tangible, albeit limited, benefits. As Cyril explains to Palladius near the beginning of the dialogue, the Israelites were like children who were not yet able to embrace the evangelical way of life:

For they were still rough and quite susceptible to everything discordant. And this characteristic was hard to extirpate for those who were utterly sickly in the love of the flesh and captured by passions that are difficult to escape, and it was still out of reach and not feasible for them to choose to spring up straightaway to that which is very honorable, and to enter into a certain manner of life, one so radiant and extraordinary that it both walks on the earth and possesses the heavenly way of life . . . . Or is solid food not for the perfect, and milk more fitting for those who are still infants?

384 For instance, see his comments on the laws concerning offerings from children (PG 68:1037c) and the exclusion from the camp of those with certain bodily deformities (PG 68:889a-b).

385 PG 68:141d-144a.
The contrast between milk and solid food is further evidence of Cyril's generally Pauline orientation.386 Although at times Cyril seems to suggest that the law was given by God for the benefit of the whole human race, in this quotation and on many other occasions he speaks of the law as if it were a provisional divine measure to address a peculiarly Jewish problem.387 Indeed, Cyril adduces the moral infirmity of the Israelites as the primary reason why God first legislated a figural and "shadowy" law rather than mandating the evangelical way of life from the very beginning.

According to Cyril, God did not intend for this provisional law to be merely punitive, but also remedial and instructive, inasmuch as its pedagogy was teleologically ordered toward Christ, as Gal 3:24 affirms.388 Similarly, Cyril claims elsewhere that the law leads one to the beginning of the knowledge of Christ.389 However, one should not infer from such statements that Cyril believed that the Israelites possessed, by virtue of their reception of the law, some sort of proleptic, inchoate knowledge of the incarnate Christ. Rather, the pedagogy of the law leads to Christ only insofar as it discourages and eliminates polytheistic beliefs and practices and establishes the worship of the one true God instead:

386 See 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12.

387 Shortly after the above quotation Cyril says that Moses proved that the Israelites were not prepared for perfection, since when he sprang up the mountain to receive the law, the Israelites "straightaway sank down into apostasy. For they made a calf, and those wretches dared to say, These are your gods, Israel, the ones who led you out of the land of Egypt (Exod 32:4). Moses was angry at such horrible levity, and he broke the tablets that contained the law, having considered those, whose minds were so greatly crippled that they were not mindful of such great wonders that were wrought on their behalf by the divine power, but rather ascribed worship to a calf and returned to their Egyptian worship, to be worthy neither of shadows nor types nor any of the pedagogy of heaven" (PG 68:144b-c).

388 PG 69:508a.

389 PG 68:665d.
For God, the Creator of all things, leapt down in the form of fire on Mount Sinai, and he enacted laws, according to which all actions were to be directed to what is upright and guileless. Then, carrying them away from their earlier error and placing them as far away as possible from Egyptian idolatry, he spoke to Moses, who was a mediator at the time. . . . For God does not permit the worship of gods falsely so-called. But he enjoins that we must worship only the one who really holds power in all things. . . . And it was necessary to depart from the things enjoined by the old unholy and worldly worship and to emigrate to another, upright custom, and to embrace the worship of God that accords with nature.390

Thus the law took a first step toward true worship insofar as it proscribed piety toward false gods and prescribed the worship of the one true God, who would later disclose himself in a more transparent and immediate way in the incarnation of Christ. It is worth reiterating the point, mentioned in the last chapter, that for Cyril the law's training course in monotheism was effective for the obtuse Israelites precisely because it consisted in direct instruction rather than in spiritual contemplation, for which the Israelites were unequipped.

However, in certain exceptional cases Israel's theological education was supplemented by figural visions vouchsafed to certain Israelites. In the Glaphyra Cyril considers the significance of Exod 24:9-11, in which Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy elders went up the mountain and saw the place where the God of Israel stood.391 Cyril glosses this text by asserting that Moses and his escorts saw not God in his glory, but rather the place of God in the form of the firmament of heaven.

According to Cyril, it was fitting for those who used to worship many gods to see such a spectacle, through which it became apparent to them that all created things are under

390 PG 68:591b-c.
391 PG 69:521c-524c.
God's dominion. Such visions worked in tandem with the stipulation that all sacrifices be offered within the sacred precincts of the tabernacle in order to impress exclusive veneration for the one true God upon the Israelites.

Cyril develops his account of the law's pedagogy by means of his figural readings of the law itself. For instance, he interprets the lamp in the sanctuary of the tabernacle as an icon of the law's illumination of the Israelites:

[I]n the first tent there was a shining lamp, manifesting, I think, that the very ones who are being led by a pedagogue in the law are not without the divine light, as this fact makes clear. For the law given through Moses called them from polytheism into the knowledge of God as he is in nature and truth, and he led the ancients away from worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.392

Here Cyril clearly equates the knowledge of God that the law communicates with the basic principle of monotheism, rather than some sort of incipient belief in God's Logos. In like manner, Cyril interprets the anointing of the altar of burnt offering, understood as a synecdoche of the entire cultic law, as a figural confirmation of the Pauline claim that the law is holy (Rom 7:12), inasmuch as the law imparts the knowledge of God's nature and of righteousness.393

Cyril's most elaborate spiritual interpretation by which he explicates the nature of the law's pedagogy concerns Jethro's entrance into Moses' tent (Ex 18:1-9).394 Cyril

392 PG 68:677d.
393 PG 68:692a-b.
394 PG 68:281a-284a. Origen, Ex. Hom. 11.5 (SC 321:338; Heine 360), interprets Jethro's entrance into Moses' tent as a symbol of an intermediate stage in the spiritual and ascetic ascent: "But Moses 'went out' of the camp 'to meet him' and does not bring him to the mountain of God, but 'brings him to his tent.' For the priest of Madian was not able to ascend the mountain of God. Neither could he nor Moses' wife descend into Egypt, but now he comes to Moses with his sons. For one cannot descend into Egypt and submit to the Egyptian contests unless he is a fit athlete."
begins by noting that Jethro was a Midianite, and hence not from the root of Abraham. Cyril then provides a brief excursus on Midianite religion, which he claims wavered between devotion to the true God and obeisance to various created gods. He goes on to consider the spiritual significance of the fact that Jethro dwelled in the same tent as Moses. According to Cyril, Jethro's subsequent declaration that the God of Israel is superior to all other gods shows that by so dwelling Jethro was persuaded that there is only one God and that it is necessary to make offerings to him. For Cyril, Jethro's conversion to monotheism by Moses images the introductory catechesis of the law, which, in its capacity as an elementary teacher (εἰσαγωγικός), represents the first stage of initiation into the true knowledge of God (θεογνωσία). This elementary education is of no mean importance, since the first article of faith (πίστις) of catechumens is that there is one true God.395

Cyril's next move follows a pattern that is repeated time and again in the De Adoratione et Cultu. Having established the significance of Jethro's conversion to the worship of the one true God, he ponders the import of the fact that Aaron and the elders came to eat bread in the presence of God (Exod 18:12). What does it mean, Cyril muses, to eat in the presence of God? He avers that this notion evokes the eucharistic complex of mystical table, sacrifice, and its participants. This transposition from Israelite history to the sacramental life of the church impels Cyril to assert the superiority of the understanding (σύνεσις) of God offered by Christ to that made possible by the law, and of perfection in Christ to boasting in the law.396 To buttress his

395 PG 68:284b.
396 PG 68:284c. Once again, Origen's figural reading moves in a different direction. He maintains that
point, he adduces a Pauline text to which he often has recourse, namely, Phil 3:8, in which Paul declares his achievements in the law to be dung in the light of Christ. Finally, Cyril corroborates Paul with a citation of a prophet, in this case Jeremiah (8:8–9), who rebuked those who still honored "the things of Moses" rather than accepting perfection in Christ.397

The argumentative sequence of this piece of exegesis is nicely representative of many readings found in the De Adoratione et Cultu. Cyril begins with a concession to the limited pedagogical efficacy of the law of Moses, but then immediately contrasts its pedagogy with the illumination of Christ, and the way of life prescribed by the law with the evangelical way of life. Indeed, Cyril only rarely affirms the limited value of the law's instruction without simultaneously drawing attention to its grave deficiencies vis-à-vis Christ's enlightenment. One should also note the way in which Cyril handles the concept of the presence of God raised by Exod 18:12. Jethro does not come into the presence of God until he eats bread (an icon of the Eucharist) with the elders and Aaron (the latter is an icon of Christ). In other words, according to spiritual contemplation, Jethro does not enjoy access to God's presence until he is inducted into the sacramental life of the church. As we will see below, Cyril is frequently at pains in his spiritual exegesis to distance the Israelites and the Jews from the divine presence, which he locates exclusively in the ambit of the church. In this instance, then, the tent in which Jethro and Moses converse is implicitly a Jewish space, not wholly negative but at a

397 PG 68:284d.
significant remove from the divine presence, whereas the undisclosed location at
which Jethro ate bread with Aaron and the elders in the presence of God is reckoned
ecclesial territory.

In addition to the law's capacity to implant faith in the one true God, Cyril also
recognizes the law's modest contribution to the moral amelioration of the Israelites. In
the course of his commentary on the first two commandments of the Decalogue, Cyril,
noting the fact that the Israelites were not yet ready to embrace a life of true
purity, argues that they were not able to obey the commandments of the law unless
they chose faith in God as a fortification by which they might resist the pleasures that
would induce them to indifference. In this way monotheism was not only an
epistemic boon for the Israelites, but also a necessary condition of their moral
rehabilitation, however incipient it may be.

Indeed, Cyril often places the law's instruction about the nature of the one true
God in parallel with its indoctrination into the first principles of right living. For
instance, in the aforementioned passage about the anointing of the altar of burnt
offerings, Cyril writes,

For the law too is holy, summoning one to the knowledge of God in his nature,
and implanting the knowledge of righteousness in those who are attentive, and
brining those who are instructed into the first principles of goodness, for doing

398 Cyril's general lack of interest in the Decalogue is a notable feature of the De Adoratione et Cultu and
the Glaphyra. Such relative neglect may stem primarily from Cyril's almost exclusive preoccupation with
spiritual exegesis, for which the ordinances of the Decalogue are not especially amenable.

399 PG 68:409c.
what is just is the beginning of the good way (Prov 16:5). And somewhere the divine Paul writes, Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Rom 7:12). 400

In other passages Cyril further specifies the content of the law's moral catechesis. He notes the way in which certain precepts of the law accustomed the Israelites to mutual love and forgiveness. For example, the law found in Exod 21:35-36, which stipulates the proper course of action if one man's ox kills another, promotes equitable relationships and mutual benevolence. 401 In addition, the law found in Deut 24:14-15, which forbids the withholding of the wages of the poor, furthers the moral education of the Israelites by mandating liberality in small things. 402 The regulation of Deut 24:19-21, which commands that sheaves be left in the field to be gleaned by the poor, functions in much the same way, fostering mutual love among the Israelites. 403

In accordance with his modus operandi, Cyril finds figural adumbrations of the nature and effect of the moral education of the law in the ordinances of the law itself. One of Cyril's most robust and unequivocal affirmations of the potency of the law to effect at least some degree of moral improvement is found in his interpretation of the offerings required for the feast of Tabernacles (Num 29:12-16). According to Cyril, the calves, rams, and sheep that were offered daily during the festival signify, by virtue of

400 PG 68:692a-b.
401 PG 68:553b-c.
402 PG 68:565a-b. Philo's gloss on this text makes roughly the same point: "Are these things not very conspicuous instances to teach us to guard against greater offenses?" (Spec. Leg. 4.196; PCW:V.254; Yonge, Philo, 635).
403 PG 68:565b-c.
their different bodily dimensions, the three grades of life belonging to those who trod the path of the law.\textsuperscript{404} He interprets the two rams offered on each festal day as a symbol of multiplication, which in this case signifies the fact that "there were many holy and honorable people who boasted in their blamelessness with respect to the law."\textsuperscript{405} He then cites as support Lk 1:6, which affirms that Zechariah and Elizabeth walked blamelessly "in all the commands and justifications of the Lord."\textsuperscript{406} Cyril concludes that "there was a righteousness according to the law, by which it was possible to become quite upright in obedience to God, although the law could not absolutely perfect unto holiness."\textsuperscript{407} However, Cyril turns this admission into a back-handed compliment by having Palladius note in agreement that in Scripture "God accused the mother of the Jews, saying, \textit{How have you become a prostitute, the faithful city of Zion, full of judgment, in which righteousness has lodged?} (Is 1:21)."\textsuperscript{408} Cyril can only concede that "righteousness has lodged" in Israel in conjunction with the Isaianic denunciation of Israel's moral prostitution. Moreover, Cyril's choice of exemplars of legal righteousness is telling, since Zachariah and Elizabeth are, of course, figures from the Gospels who are closely connected with the birth of Christ and thus proto-Christians of a sort. Nevertheless, it is clear that Cyril ascribes to the pedagogy of the law some capacity to mitigate the moral turpitude of the Israelites.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{404} PG 68:1121b.
\textsuperscript{405} PG 68:1121c-d.
\textsuperscript{406} PG 68:1121d.
\textsuperscript{407} PG 68:1121d-1124a.
\textsuperscript{408} PG 68:1121d.
\end{footnotesize}
Although Cyril stresses the idea that the law was a pedagogue more than any other strand of Paul’s theology of the law (as represented by Romans and Galatians), he endeavors to cover all of the Pauline bases in his theological appraisal of the law. In the first three books of the De Adoratione et Cultu, which contain his most concentrated discussion of the place of the law in salvation history, Cyril endorses other Pauline conceptions about the law. For instance, he interprets the inciting of Pharaoh’s wrath by Moses and Aaron as an image of the way in which the law, by pointing out what is shameful, actually inflames the human mind and persuades it to inveigh against the Legislator; this notion that the law provokes sin is an evocation of Rom 7:7-8.\footnote{PG 68:193a-b.} In another place Cyril cites Rom 3:19-20 ("through the law comes knowledge of sin") to shore up his argument that it was necessary for there to be an accuser and expositor of the weakness of all, so that the magnitude of Christ’s mercy might be manifest.\footnote{PG 68:216c-217c.} Cyril then goes on to quote Rom 5:20: "the law entered in so that transgression might abound."\footnote{PG 68:220a.} However, it must be noted that these Pauline motifs are marginal in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra, briefly (and rather dutifully) trotted out in the first several books but never further developed. As we will see below, what really fascinates Cyril about the law is not that it incites and exposes sin, but that it utterly fails to deliver precisely those salvific goods that sinful humanity so desperately needs. As will become evident in due course, the Epistle to the Hebrews is considerably more
determinative for Cyril's understanding of the law's soteriological imperfections than Romans or Galatians.

For Cyril, the law of Moses, read properly, discloses itself as a cryptogram of its own multiple, crippling deficiencies. Indeed, the space that Cyril devotes to the advantages that the law afforded to the Israelites is dwarfed by that which he dedicates to the law's shortcomings. These deficiencies can be classified into four different orders, all of which are interrelated and of soteriological import: epistemic, visual, spatial/relational, and moral. Of course, for Cyril all of the law's incapacities serve as foils to highlight the saving riches of Christ, which are completely comprehensive and efficacious. As we will see, while Cyril's substantive account of the law's soteriological limitations by and large voices particular criticisms well-established in the prior Christian tradition, reaching all the way back to the New Testament, he discovers figural expressions of those criticisms in new and unexpected places in the very words of the law.

4.2: The Law as Self-Critical

4.2.1: Epistemic Deficiencies

We will first turn to Cyril's account of how the limitations of the law's capacity to convey fully adequate knowledge and vision of God are etched in the law itself. One relatively peripheral but substantive criticism that Cyril makes about the law's epistemological inadequacy concerns the relatively tiny number of its recipients. This demographic limitation of the law is imaged by the "misty fire" at Sinai, which, as we have seen, also intimates that the law is opaque because of the veil of the letter. Cyril
underlines the fact that the law was not a mystagogue for the whole world, but only for those dwelling in the land of the Jews. Elsewhere Cyril finds further figural confirmation of this point; Moses' slowness of tongue likewise signifies that the law is "weak-voiced (ἰσχνόφωνος)," speaking as it did to the Israelites alone. Cyril harps on this shortcoming in the Glaphyra as well, once again seizing on the spiritual significance of Moses' difficulty in speaking and contrasting his faltering voice with the loud trumpet that resounded in the camp when God descended on Sinai. Whereas Moses' slowness of tongue and inarticulate speech signify the fact that at the time God was known in scarcely all of Judea, the great trumpet blast on Sinai represents Christ, whose voice echoes throughout the whole world.

However, Cyril places even more stress on how the law provided the Israelites with only a most rudimentary knowledge of God. His account of the law's epistemic inadequacy flows from a theological principle that he frequently invokes, namely, that the knowledge of the Father is inextricably bound with that of the Son. Cyril tends to rely heavily on the Fourth Gospel in order to substantiate this point. For instance, he cites Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in John 8:19 ("You neither know me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also") in order to explain how the Jews'

412 PG 68:489a-b.
413 PG 68:252a. Philo and Origen both proffer figural readings of Moses' speech impediment, but with different takes. Philo cites Moses' ineloquence as evidence that he "was not formed by nature for the conjectural rhetoric of plausible and specious reasons" (Det. 38; PCW:1.289; Yonge, Philo, 116). Origen's interpretation is explicitly Christian: "But if someone should contemplate the divine Word himself and look at the divine wisdom itself, however learned and wise he may be, he will confess that he is a dumb animal in comparison with God" (Ex. Hom. 3.1; SC 321:90; Heine 247).
414 PG 69:505d.
erroneous knowledge of God the Father stems from their ignorance of the Son, who alone reveals the Father fully.415

Accordingly, Cyril adduces several images and narratives contained in the Pentateuch that figuratively express the circumscribed epistemic capacity of the law. One particularly telling episode is God’s descent on Sinai, and in particular God’s location vis-à-vis the Israelites during that event. After acknowledging that the fact that the Israelites were led to the foot of the mountain is an image of the law’s positive pedagogy, Cyril goes on to consider the spiritual import of the fact that those Israelites were led not in the mountain (ἐν αὐτῷ), but rather to it (ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος).416 According to Cyril, this locative datum, inasmuch as it suggests a lack of penetration, signifies that the law does not communicate the sublime knowledge of the mystery of Christ, which befits only those who have been sanctified in the Spirit; perfect wisdom and knowledge, Cyril maintains, is gained through Christ, not Moses. As we will see below, many more of Cyril’s figural interpretations also tend to invest the spatial details of the Pentateuch with figural significance.

Strikingly, several pages later Cyril employs the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος to specify the location of the altar, which Cyril takes as a symbol of the church, that Moses builds at the foot of Sinai (Ex 24:4).417 In this instance, being positioned ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος is a

415 PG 68:508b.
416 PG 69:508a.
417 PG 69:517d. Interestingly, the Latin translation provided in the Migne edition translates ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος here as in monte, whereas it renders the appearance of the phrase on 69:508a as sub monte, in contradistinction to in montem. Perhaps the Latin translator rendered the phrase in 69:517d differently because it seemed to contradict what Cyril said earlier about the pedagogy of the law.
supreme privilege given only to those who approach the Father through the Son, whereas in the previous interpretation one's situation ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος signifies that one has advanced in the knowledge of God, but is still excluded from the highest wisdom and knowledge. As it will become more evident below, for Cyril Israel's sacred landscape is organized by spatial boundaries and zones whose spiritual significance in a given text must be calibrated in accordance with the primary spiritual import of that text. Therefore, for Cyril, proper spiritual interpretation requires hermeneutical flexibility; rather than fixing determinate spiritual meanings for certain recurring biblical types or phrases, Cyril interprets biblical figures, including geographical ones, in accordance with what he believes to be the skopos of the text in question.

Cyril's figural interpretation of the burning bush also highlights the serious defects of the knowledge that the Israelites gleaned from the law. He prefaces his exegesis by rehearsing the rationale for the giving of the law to the Israelites:

They were reared in the laws of the Egyptians; the law was to be given to them through the angels, a law able to illuminate—if, to be sure, it is understood spiritually—and to expel darkness from the mind, seeing that it has the force of fire. However, it was useless for those who received it, not at all because of something intrinsic to it, but because the light was not received in the mind and heart of those to whom the word was addressed, and having luxuriated in the extrinsic letter with the appearance of illumination, they truly lacked the very thing they thought they possessed.⁴¹⁸

Cyril's almost off-hand remark that the law was capable of illuminating the Israelites provided that it was interpreted spiritually is rather jarring, since we have already seen in Chapter Three that Cyril implicitly excludes the possibility that the Israelites, by

⁴¹⁸ PG 68:232c-d.
reflecting contemplatively on the law, could attain to an inchoate understanding of the
mystery of Christ. In this passage, however, Cyril seems to explain the fact that the
Israelites did not receive enlightenment from the law by appealing to the native
Israelite proclivity for the bare letter of the law. Thus he implies that what prevented
the Israelites from receiving spiritual illumination from their law was not so much
their historical location ante Christum, for which they could hardly be held responsible,
but rather their inordinate love of the law's letter. It is not clear how or even if Cyril
resolves this tension.

At any rate, immediately after the foregoing quotation, Cyril illustrates his point
by citing the burning bush as a visual symbol of the unfounded presumption of the Jews
that they have been salvifically illumined by the law:

Therefore the fact that the fire was seen around (περὶ) the bush, but that the
sensation of heat did not enter in (ἐνιέναι) the plant, intimates just this point, as
it seems to me. And that the light from the law was useless for the Jews, the
Savior himself makes clear, saying, You search the scriptures because you seek to
have eternal life in them; and these are the things that witness to me. And yet you do not
wish to come to me, so that you might have eternal life (Jn 5:39). 419

Like the altar that was on, but not in, the mountain, the burning bush functions as an
icon of a failure of intellectual penetration. For this reason Cyril deems it a most
apposite emblem for the illusion perpetuated by the Jews that the law has rendered
them truly enlightened. Although in this particular reading Cyril accents the
superficiality of the Jews rather than any intrinsic deficiency of the law, it nevertheless
remains the case that the law did not de facto communicate to the Israelites or their

419 PG 68:232d.
Jewish descendents the sort of knowledge that leads to eternal life. Indeed, it is not altogether clear precisely how the Israelites would have been able to pierce through the "extrinsic letter" of the law so that its spiritual light might shine forth. Regardless of whether Cyril's interpretation of the burning bush coheres with his readings that more strongly stress the inherent soteriological limitations of the law, this interpretation is yet another instance in which Cyril locates in the Pentateuch itself a clue indicating that the law did not communicate saving knowledge to the Israelites.

In antiquity, of course, knowledge was closely associated with vision, and Cyril is accordingly intent on demonstrating from the law itself the strictures on Israel's vision of God during the regime of the law. We have already seen in the previous chapter how Cyril depicts God's descent at Sinai as a sort of spectral apparition in which God's true form was not revealed. We also saw how Cyril correlates the opacity of this divine self-manifestation with the Israelites' inability to lift up the veil of the law and apprehend the mysteries concealed within. For Cyril, however, this incapacity is not simply hermeneutical, but also noetic. The Israelites, and by extension the Jews, were barred from the sublime knowledge of God made available in the incarnate Christ; this is the spiritual meaning of the obscure vision that they beheld at Sinai.

Once again, Cyril turns to the burning bush in order to bolster his point. More specifically, he maintains that the aversion of Moses' face from the fiery spectacle (Exod 3:6) intimates that the law lacks the capacity to make possible divine vision:

For Mosaic things are types and shadows, and thus we will revel in thoughts concerning supernal mystagogy, and we will gather together in ourselves knowledge of God, since the Father manifested himself to us in the Son. For we will see him in an incomparably better way than the people of old did in the person of Moses. For he turned his face away; he showed reverence by turning
his face down away from God. Through this the infirmity of mind of those who were led by the pedagogy of the law is signified, a mind that was unable to turn its face toward God, and neither was it possible for it to see his glory. . . . But we ourselves, directing our thoughts to the ineffable nature, contemplate with pure (καθαροῖς) and enlightened eyes the conspicuous beauty of God the Father in the Son. And Christ wisely said to the Jews, who thought that they beheld the Father, You have neither seen his form nor heard his voice (John 5:37).420

For Cyril, then, the turning of the face of Moses, who here as so often functions as a metonym of the law, signifies that the pedagogy of the law is commensurate with the Jews' mental and optical feebleness. Cyril goes on to supplement his reading of Moses' averted face by citing the description of Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel, in Gen 29:17 ("And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was shapely in figure and lovely in appearance"), which he construes as further figural testimony to Jewish myopia and Christian perspicacity, respectively. In so doing Cyril explicitly underlines the law's inherent limitations: "And that the vision (θεωρία) and instruction (παίδευσις) given through the legal command is not very robust or sufficient for the precise perception (κατάδειξιν) of God, we will see through the two daughters of Laban, as if in a shadow and enigma."421

It should be observed that the structure of Cyril's interpretation of Moses' averted face mirrors that of his reading of God's appearance on Sinai in the form of fire. In both cases Cyril takes a biblical narrative that could be taken to confirm both the privileged proximity of Moses and/or the Israelites to the divine presence, which in both narratives is signaled by fire. Cyril then invests figural import in textual details

that for him reveal that even in these apparently theophanic narratives the Israelites did not see God, at least not in the manner in which they thought they did. In the case of the burning bush, it is Moses' downcast eyes and averted face that are the interpretive keys; in the Sinai episode, it is the fact that God appeared in the form of "misty," opaque fire. Furthermore, in both readings Cyril couples his avowal of Israelite non-vision with the assertion that Christ is the true manifestation of God, which in turn is buttressed by a citation of John 5:37. Finally, it should be noted that this pairing of interpretations also showcases Cyril's flexible approach to typology. Whereas in the Sinai episode it is the presence of fire that indicates that this act of divine condescension was not a true θεοπτία, in the case of the burning bush the flames enveloping the bush do in fact signify a true θεοπτία, which Moses, and hence all Israelites under the law, lack the strength to behold.

Cyril finds suggestions of the law's inability to provide the necessary conditions for the vision of God in yet other Pentateuchal texts, of which I will mention only one. In Book XI of the De Adoratione et Cultu Cyril quotes in full Lev 9:1-7, in which Moses, "on the eighth day" (9:1), prescribes a sacrificial rite and promises that "the Lord will be seen among you as a sign" (9:4). A little later Cyril goes on to reproduce Lev 9:22-24: "And the glory of the Lord was seen by the entire people. And the fire went out from the Lord, and it devoured those things that were on the altar, the holocausts and the fat; and the whole people saw it, and they were amazed and fell on their faces." Cyril

422 PG 68:489a.
423 PG 68:768c-d.
424 PG 68:768c.
immediately zeroes in on the fact that these events took place on the eighth day, which Cyril, like Barnabas and many other early Christian writers, takes as a common biblical trope for the resurrection of Christ. Cyril then reminds Palladius that the resurrection represents the precise moment at which the literal observance of the law was annulled:

But when Christ was manifested on the eighth day, the observation of Moses came to an end indeed, for we do not still worship God in figures and shadows, but nevertheless the institution of the law is not silent; for the law is spiritual for those who are spiritual, and it always speaks of the mystery of Christ. Indeed, the vision of the glory of the Lord was promised to Moses on the eighth day; the law, then, foretold the time of the advent of our Savior.425

It is by this route that Cyril makes sense of the otherwise disconcerting claim made in Lev 9:23 that the glory of the Lord "was seen (ὤφθη)" by the people; the mention of the eighth day is the crucial clue for the exegete that the text in question requires a spiritual interpretation. Moreover, Cyril goes on to put Lev 9:23 in tandem with another Pentateuchal text, Num 14:21, which speaks of the future manifestation of God's glory: "I myself am living, says the Lord, and indeed the entire earth will be filled (ἐμπλησθήσεται) with the glory of the Lord."426 Cyril argues that the future tense of this verb entails that the event described in Lev 9:23 was not itself a full-fledged theophany, which was not possible for a people under the tutelage of a figural and shadowy law to behold. Rather, it was the promise and foreshadowing of the true divine self-manifestation in the resurrected Christ.

425 PG 68:768a.
426 PG 68:768d.
Before moving on, it is crucial to secure the point that for Cyril divine vision is in a sense the very substance of salvation itself. A few pages after his treatment of Lev 9, Cyril reflects at length on the soteriological upshot of seeing the face of God in Christ:

The illumination of the face (προσώπου) of God presently allows us to attain mercy, if indeed it is true that we will be participants in eternal life by knowing God; for thus says the Savior to God the Father who is in heaven, For this is eternal life, that they know you alone as the true God, and the one you have sent, Jesus Christ (John 17:3). Moreover, no one, I think, doubts that the Son, who appeared to us, is the face (πρόσωπον) of God the Father; for he is the Father's character and likeness and image, and through him and with him we know the Father, and knowledge thereof is followed by mercy as a consequence.427

In this passage Cyril knits together several prominent themes in the text at hand. First, he yokes together knowledge and vision in such a way that they are practically synonymous; to be illuminated by God's face is to know God. In turn, knowing God is the condition of the possibility of the gift of eternal life, as the Johannine text shows. Finally, this salvific vision and knowledge, and concomitantly divine mercy, is available only through the Son, the lustrous face and perfect representation of God the Father. According to Cyril's reckoning, then, to concede true divine vision (θεοπτία) to the Israelites under the dispensation of the law, even to Moses, is to gainsay the singular salvific significance of the incarnate and resurrected Christ.428

427 PG 68:773b.
428 Cyril, PG 68:773c-d, notes a few lines down from the above passage that Christ made his mercy available to those Jews who desired to see (ἰδεῖν) Christ's advent and cried out to God with the words of the psalmist, "God of powers, convert us and show us your face (πρόσωπόν), and we will be saved" (Ps 79:8). The clear implication of Cyril's identification of the voice of the psalmist with the entire collectivity of the (presumably righteous) Jews is that no Israelite actually did see the face of God until the advent of the incarnate Christ.
4.2.2: Access and Intimacy

At this point we will return to the foot of Sinai in order to examine another prong of Cyril's refutation of the soteriological sufficiency of the Mosaic law. According to Cyril, one of the signal deficiencies of the law consists in the fact that it was unable to provide true access to and intimacy with God, a limitation that is of course not unrelated to the law's inability to provide fully adequate knowledge and vision of God. Yet again, Cyril has recourse to the Sinai event in order to justify this claim. He turns his sights on Exod 19:21-22, in which the Lord instructs Moses to enjoin the Israelites not to ascend the mountain and to ensure that the priests, who are permitted to make the ascent, have been consecrated. First, Cyril considers the spiritual significance of the fact that the people were kept at a remove, concluding that it is an enigmatic indication that "it is impossible to draw near (ἐγγίζειν) to God through the pedagogy of Moses." He continues:

For [God] does not admit (προσίεται) those who still acquiesce to types and shadows, for such are the things belonging to Moses; but rather he seeks among us the beauty of the truth. And Christ is the truth, through whom we have had access (προσαγωγήν) and have drawn near to the Father, as if going up the mountain, that is, increasing in knowledge about him. For having known the Son, we know the Father through him and in him. Therefore through him we have had access, not through Moses, that is, not through the law.430

One should note the "Pauline" vocabulary on which Cyril is drawing here. The verb ἐγγίζειν appears in Heb 7:19, which contrasts the ability of Christians to approach God with the Israelites' inability to do so under the law. The author of Ephesians uses a

429 PG 69:509b.
430 PG 69:509b-c.
form of προσαγωγή twice (2:18 and 3:12), in both cases with reference to the access to God made possible by the salvific work of Christ. In addition, Cyril's appeal to the Sinai event in order to highlight the discrepancy between the proximity to God possible under the law and that made available by Christ is reminiscent of Heb 12:18-24: "You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (NRSV)." Finally, one should observe that Cyril makes an intimate link between the "Pauline" theme of Christ's gift of access to the Father and the knowledge of the Father gained through the Son; the ascent up the mountain signifies access to the Father, and the mountain itself represents the knowledge of God. Bearing in mind the conceptual nexus that Cyril establishes between knowledge and vision, it is evident that for him knowledge, vision, and access are all inextricably linked with one another.

But what to make of the consecrated priests who ascend the mountain with Moses? According to Cyril, the Lord's command that the priests be consecrated before ascending demonstrates the fact that "the priesthood according to the law was not yet perfectly holy, inasmuch as it still needed sanctification (ἁγιασμοῦ)." For Cyril, then, the most hermeneutically significant part of Exod 19:22 is not the priests' actual ascent with Moses, but rather the fact that they were commanded to be consecrated beforehand. For Cyril, this textual detail hints that baptism is the prerequisite for

431 PG 69:509c.
access to God. In typical fashion, then, Cyril uncovers the theological significance of the *historia* of this passage in and through spiritual *theoria*. As we will observe below, this is not the only instance in which Cyril conceives of priestly consecrations as figural indictments of the law's capacity to sanctify and hence to furnish access to the divine presence.

Elsewhere Cyril even more emphatically points up the close connection, to his mind, between the law's failure to provide true divine vision and its inability to grant access to God's presence. After reproducing the text of Exod 40:33-38, in which a cloud covered the completed tabernacle and filled it with the glory of God, Cyril writes:

> For when that holy and true tabernacle, that is, the church of the Gentiles, is manifested in the orb of the world, the light of Christ shines all around, as if a spiritual cloud, gladdening us with abundant dew from above, and completes the temple of God. However, it was not possible, it says, for Moses to enter; neither could Israel enter, since it was not able to bear the rays of divine light, nor did it understand the mystery of Christ. And it did not accept spiritual illumination, nor has it seen with the eyes of the mind the glory of the Lord, with which glory, as if in the form of a cloud, rising up from the cosmos and going toward higher things, we too are raised up, pursuing traces of the Lord... And there are absolutely none in the churches who are beset by the darkness of worldly error, since Christ irradiates them, and at the same time illuminates all things with spiritual light.  

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432 PG 68:692c-693a. Unlike Cyril, in his exegesis of this text Eusebius of Caesarea puts the accent on the fact that the Israelites did in fact behold the radiant cloud: "The people then beheld the pillar of cloud, and it spoke to Moses. But who was the speaker? Obviously the pillar of cloud, which appeared to the fathers in a human form. And I have already shown that this was not the Almighty God, but another being whom we name, as the Word of God, the Christ who was seen for the sake of the multitude of Moses and the people in a pillar of cloud, because it was not possible for them to see Him like their fathers in human shape. For, surely, it was reserved for the perfect to be able to see beforehand his future incarnate appearance among men, and since it was impossible for the whole people to bear it, he was seen now in fire in order to inspire fear and wonder, and now in a cloud, as it were in a shadowy and veiled form ruling them, as he was also seen by Moses for their sake" ([d. e. 5.14.4; GCS E.6]). English translation from *Proof of the Gospel* (trans. W. J. Ferrar; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981), 241. Eusebius' notion that the "perfect" in Israel could "see beforehand" the future appearance of the incarnate Christ is not endorsed by Cyril.
For Cyril, this incident is particularly instructive, because even Moses, the Israelite with
the most privileged relationship with God, was estranged from the glory of the Lord;
the Lord's glory is localized inside the tabernacle, while Moses and the Israelites remain
outside. In Cyril's hands, then, this passage serves as a potent proof of Israel's inability
to see and know God fully under the auspices of the law's pedagogy. Once again we see
how Cyril correlates the limitations of Israel's vision and knowledge of God with its
spatial alienation from the divine presence.433 In counterpoint to the estranged
Israelites, of course, are the Christians who inhabit the sacred precincts of the true
tabernacle, their minds irradiated by the beams of Christ's light.

As we have already seen in his interpretation of the consecration of the priests
who ascend Sinai with Moses, Cyril also closely correlates access to God and its
concomitant benefits with sanctification. This conjunction is also evident in his
description of the prerogatives of the "true priesthood," which he defines as "the
people that is in Christ and sanctifies what is holy through him, that is, those who are
illuminated in faith and have abounded in intimacy (οἰκειότητα) with God, through
participation (τοῦ μεταλαχεῖν) in the Holy Spirit."434 Here we see intimacy with God
linked not only with illumination, but also with sanctification, which is evoked by the
reference to sharing in the Holy Spirit. Cyril makes this connection between intimacy
and sanctification in several other places as well. Sometimes he does so in the context

433 Cyril’s explication of the phrase "odor of sweetness," which frequently appears in the sacrificial
ordinances of the law, further underlines the intimate link between access and knowledge. He explains
how it is that one might share in Christ's sweet savor: "Faith is the means of access (προσβολή), leading
to knowledge (σύνεσιν), and exposing, so to speak, the mind to the reception of the divine light" (PG
68:624a).

434 PG 68:725b.
of reflection on Christ's sacrificial death: "Our Lord Jesus Christ sanctifies (ἁγιάζει) us in scores of ways, and he renders us holy and well-pleasing. For through him and in us we have possessed access (προσαγωγήν), and we are not unwelcome to God the Father." In other places Cyril stresses how sanctification is a prerequisite for entry into the presence of God: "it is necessary to go most uprightly into the house of God, radiant and cleansed, attaining intimacy (οἰκειότητα) with God through sanctification (ἁγιασμοῦ)." We have seen how Cyril discovers textual clues in the law that intimate the law's own inability to provide full access to and intimacy with God. As we will discover momentarily, Cyril finds a number of similar enigmas in the law that, if spiritually deciphered, testify to the law's inability to sanctify, and hence to make possible a truly God-pleasing way of life.

4.2.3: Creation and Deformation

Now that we have broached the topic of sanctification, it is perhaps an apt occasion to survey briefly the outstanding features of Cyril's soteriology as it emerges from the pages of De Adoratione et Cultu. One of these features is his conviction that the deleterious consequences of Adam's sin for human morality constitute its most devastating outcome. Before that primal transgression the human creature possessed a likeness (ὁμοίωσιν) to God by virtue of the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit, who remodeled the image of God already present in humanity into greater conformity with

435 PG 68:756a.
436 PG 68:948d-949a.
the divine nature.⁴³⁷ Such a likeness did not abolish human freedom, inasmuch as the human creature graced with likeness with God nevertheless remained a creature, that is to say, mutable, and accordingly could choose to pursue or to eschew virtue. However, when Adam yielded to Satan's temptation in the garden, he was "stripped bare of the good things that existed at the beginning" and "expelled from the garden of delight, and human nature (ἡ ἄνθρωπος φύσις) was at once remodeled⁴³⁸ into something uncomely (τὸ ἄκαλλὲς)."⁴³⁹ The most devastating legacy of this deformation of the divine likeness was humanity's slavery to sin and the passions, as well as its imprisonment by the devil.⁴⁴⁰ In such a state, human beings could not bear the fruits of virtue and offer spiritual sacrifices to God, enslaved as they were to their passions and diabolically deceived by worldly pleasures.

For Cyril, then, the crux of salvation history is that postlapsarian human beings are no longer able to cultivate the life of virtue and to dedicate the fruits of that life to God; in other words, they are no longer capable of spiritual worship.⁴⁴¹ According to Cyril, the most pernicious aspect of sin, and virtually the only aspect of sin with which he is concerned in the texts at hand, is that it makes unattainable precisely the way of life that permits one to offer spiritual worship to God and correlative to enjoy the

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⁴³⁷ PG 68:145d.

⁴³⁸ See Wilken, *Judaism*, 73-75, on Cyril's varied vocabulary for transformation, which he employs with reference to both the Christological reconstitution of humanity and the hermeneutical metamorphosis of the law.

⁴³⁹ PG 68:149a. Recall that Cyril also uses the term τὸ ἄκαλλὲς with reference to the law's *historia*.

⁴⁴⁰ See PG 68:145c.

⁴⁴¹ Here Cyril places himself in the trajectory of Christian thinking about sin that is exemplified by texts like Rom 1-3 and Athanasius' *On the Incarnation* 4-5.
presence of God and participation in the divine life. To be sure, Cyril employs the Pauline language of justification, but if one examines the context in which Cyril uses that language, it becomes evident that he understands justification not in a forensic sense, but as synonymous with redemption from spiritual slavery. Thus justification is nothing other than the condition of the possibility of spiritual worship. Sin, in turn, is defined as that which thwarts the mortification of the passions and extinguishes the mind's love of virtue, perverting its *eros* by skewing it toward ephemeral worldly pleasures. Sanctification is that purgation of sin, made possible by the sacrificial death of Christ, by which the human person commences to recapture the primeval state of likeness and communion with God, a state characterized by the performance of free acts of virtue in the presence of God. For Cyril, it is the church's rite of baptism alone that effects this *katharsis* in sinful human beings.

It is against the horizon of this understanding of the predicament caused by human sin, as well as its solution in Christ and the sacramental life of the church, that Cyril develops the sharpest fork of his theological assessment of the law. For Cyril, it is humanity's abysmal moral condition, its inability to pursue and perform free acts of virtue in a consistent manner, that constitutes the problematic of salvation history. As a result of sin's defilement, human beings can no longer enjoy access to and knowledge of God.

442 See PG 68:216a: "In Christ therefore we are justified through faith and we are redeemed from spiritual slavery (*δουλείας*)." Cyril does not offer a working definition of justification, but rather tends to place it in tandem with sanctification (*ἁγιασμός*) and/or freedom from the tyranny of the passions, thereby giving justification cognitive content by means of its close association with other soteriological concepts.

443 For a similar approach, see Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration* 35-36.

444 For Cyril's understanding of baptism, see PG 68:628b-d, 648a, 777a-b, 821a-b. Also see the synthesized treatment of Cyril’s understanding of Jesus’ baptism in Keating, *Appropriation*, 20-53.
and vision of God. According to Cyril's schema, then, if the law were able to provide true katharsis, then there would be no need for a further divine dispensation until the eschatological consummation of salvation. However, the advent, death, and resurrection of the incarnate Christ make it manifest that the law was unable to effect the very purification upon which the salvation of humanity depends. In this way the katharsis made possible by the paschal mystery of Christ, which is mediated through the Holy Spirit and the church's sacramental life, throws into high relief the law's impotence to restore to the human race what it relinquished in Adam. Thus when Cyril harps on the law's inability to sanctify truly, he is asserting the law's failure to deliver that which alone would redeem humanity from the tyranny of sin and the devil. In view of this limitation, the actual achievements of the law, as described above, appear rather paltry.

4.2.4: Katharsis and Sanctification

Cyril culls numerous images from the law that intimate darkly its own inability to effect true katharsis and sanctification. Several of these images come from the life of Moses, who, as we have seen, is for Cyril the preeminent metonym for the law. One such image is taken from the story of the burning bush. We have already noted how Cyril construes God's imploring of Moses not to draw near as a figural indication that the law does not provide access to God. In that reading Cyril goes on to remark that Moses could not draw near because it is fitting only for those who are holy to be joined to the holy God. For Cyril, God's command for Moses to remove his shoes obliquely makes this point. This injunction, Cyril contends, indicates that the way of life
according to the law is not blameless and was not yet pure (καθαράν), inasmuch as it still retained a remnant of the mortality and corruption, signified by the leather of Moses' shoes, inherited from Adam. Cyril thus infers from this episode that "the law did not release us from the corruption of mortality and all those things that attain to such a degree of impurity (ἀκαθαρσίας)," but that only "faith in Christ and the most perfect purification (ἡ τελειοτάτη κάθαρσις) of the evangelical way of life" can so liberate us. Conversely, the discalced Moses is an icon of the Christian, who, with her feet freed from this world, draws near (ἐγγίζειν) to God by walking in the way of life in Christ.

In the *Glaphyra* on Exodus Cyril considers the spiritual meaning of a subsequent episode in Moses' life, in which he and Aaron ask Pharaoh for permission to lead the Israelites into the wilderness in order to sacrifice to their God. Pharaoh denies their request, and allows the Israelites to leave Egypt only after the tenth plague, which the Israelites survived by their observance of the paschal laws. Given that the Passover in Egypt shadows forth the paschal mystery of Christ, Cyril concludes from this juxtaposition of Moses' ineffectualness before Pharaoh with the efficacy of the tenth plague that "it is impossible for death to be abolished through Moses or the law. But the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for its destruction, and it releases those who have been sanctified from corruption." For Cyril, the law's inability to do away with

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445 PG 68:236a-b.

446 PG 68:236c. One should note the accent here on Christian access to and proximity to God.

447 PG 69:420a. In *Ex. Hom.* 3.1 Origen interprets Pharaoh's refusal to be swayed by Moses as primarily a revelation of Pharaoh's pride, rather than of the ineffectiveness of Moses, or, correlatively, of the law.
death is but the corollary of its impotence to sanctify, seeing that it is precisely the
corruption introduced into the human race by sin that ensures its continual
subjugation to death. In this way Moses’ futile petitioning before Pharaoh illustrates
the fact that the law is powerless to sanctify and, by corollary, to excise the cancer of
death plaguing humanity.

Above all, Cyril finds intimations of the law’s cathartic impotence in the
furniture and rites of the tabernacle itself. Cyril’s treatment of the altar of burnt
offerings, which is located in the courtyard of the tabernacle, is a case in point. By the
time Cyril comes to this altar he has already expatiated on the spiritual significance of
the furniture within the tabernacle proper, all of which is overlaid with gold. Cyril
notes at once that the instructions for the construction of the altar of burnt offerings
stipulate that it be covered with bronze rather than gold. If gold, according to Cyril’s
reckoning, is a symbol of the incomparable splendor of the divine nature, then what
does the bronze of the altar signify? Cyril’s answer runs thus:

And so consider that the altar of worship according to the law is utterly without
gold; perhaps in this matter God grants us an enigma and shows very clearly
that the law is by no means an agent (πρόξενος) of the Holy Spirit, and that
figural worship has not been honored with such a privilege. For the spirit of
servitude was over Israel; but that gift [of the Spirit] was apportioned out to us
through Christ after his resurrection from the dead. . . . the power of worship
according to the law did not enrich with participation in the Holy Spirit. For
Christ had not yet been brought back to life, since at that time alone the nature
of the human person was gilded by the Spirit, and was in fellowship with him.
For this reason he ordered that the altar be made without gold.\footnote{PG 68:613b-d.}
First, it is worth noting Cyril's identification of the altar of burnt offerings as "the altar of worship according to the law." Cyril thus conceives the bronze altar as an fitting synecdoche of Israel's entire cultic life, concentrating in itself the essence of the worship of the tabernacle. Implicitly, then, Cyril disassociates the gilded furniture of the tent itself, understood spiritually, from Israel's sacrificial cult. Second, Cyril claims that the bronze with which the altar of burnt offerings is overlaid signifies that the tabernacle cult, as observed by the Israelites, did not enjoy the sponsorship of the Holy Spirit, who alone brings about the purification by which a spirit of slavery is replaced by a spirit of adoption. Although Cyril does not use the terminology of *katharsis* in this passage, we have already seen that for Cyril purification is conceptually linked with participation in the Holy Spirit. In this way Cyril finds support in the very material constitution of the altar of burnt offerings for his claim that the law is incapable of providing true sanctification and hence emancipation from slavery to sin and death.449

Cyril's exegetical treatment of the basin located between the bronze altar and the sanctuary reaches a similar conclusion. According to Cyril, "it is not obscure that the grace of holy baptism is foreshadowed in this basin."450 If the basin is a type of baptism, then what, Cyril asks, is the significance of the fact that Aaron and his assisting priests had to wash their hands and feet with water from this basin before

449 Although Origen makes some comments on the bronze of the altar, he does not offer the same interpretation; according to Origen, bronze is a symbol of sound (Ex. Hom. 13.1).

450 It is noteworthy that in this instance Cyril does not consider the figural significance of the fact that the basin, like the altar of burnt offerings, is made of bronze rather than gold; this is true for his subsequent treatments as well. Gregory of Nyssa, Moys. 2.185, also discerns in the basin a type of baptism, but unlike Cyril does not take the occasion to make a pejorative observation about the ablutions of Israel's priests. Didymus the Blind comments on the bronze basin as well, but unlike Cyril and Gregory does not interpret it baptismally, but rather as a symbol of moral purification (Ps. A 95.18).
entering the sanctuary, upon pain of death? For Cyril, if indeed the basin is a figure of baptism, then this requirement betrays the law's inability to offer true purification and sanctification:

And consider indeed that Aaron, although he was holy according to the law, and those who were instructed to serve with him, washed their hands and feet with water, and thereafter engage in holy works, and even enter into the Holy of Holies, free of fears. And the law clearly and evidently indicates, and the action itself all but screams out, how unholy to God is the one who seems to be holy according to the law (ὁ δοκῶν εἶναι τις κατὰ νόμον ἱερὸς), unless he be washed by water, and that the worship of the law is not sufficient for katharsis. And so they were washed in advance of entering, even though they were already sanctified according to the law; but that which is pure is not purified, but rather that which is filthy and impure. . . . And so the law is imperfect with respect to sanctification (ἁγιασμὸν), unless salvific baptism be added to those who have thirsted for intimacy (οἰκειότητα) with God.451

In this passage the dialectic between appearance and reality, which we have seen in Cyril's reading of the burning bush, resurfaces. Even though the law appears to provide the Israelites with means of purification through practices such as ritual ablutions, in reality those who participate in that cult and abide by its regulations remain unholy, filthy, and impure. Thus precisely the rite that, according to the text's historia, seems to guarantee the purity of Israel's priests actually functions as an enigmatic revelation of the law's inability to purge Israel's abiding impurity, which is shared by priests and non-priests alike.

This interpretation of the basin is so amenable to Cyril's theological account of the Mosaic law that he takes it up again later in the text. After remarking that the law initiates one into the knowledge of God but by no means leads one into the Holy of

451 PG 68:628c-d.
Holies, that is, into the presence of Christ the Logos of God, Cyril goes on to reflect further on the imperfection of the law with reference to the basin:

And if you consider the use of the basin, you ought to note straightaway and quite readily that the law has perfected nothing (Heb 7:19); for the blood of bulls and goats is powerless to remove sin (Heb 10:4). For it lies in the middle of the first tent, brilliant and conspicuous, washing with water those who were about to enter into the Holy of Holies. And the rule in question was enjoined for the priest. Therefore the fullness that seemed to be in the law (ἡ ἐν νόμῳ δοκοῦσα πλήρωσις) was incomplete, inasmuch as it adumbrated purification (κάθαρσιν) through holy baptism, which washes the holy nation, that is, those who have been justified by faith. 452

Once again, Cyril accentuates the discrepancy between appearance and reality with respect to the function of the basin in the tabernacle cult. For those who do not know better, the ablutions of the basin could foster the illusion that the law provides true purification; however, if one grasps that those ablutions enigmatically refer to baptism, which alone effects true purgation, then one gives the lie to the notion that the law is cathartically adequate. Furthermore, it is significant that Cyril weaves verses from Hebrews into his figural reading of the basin; as we will see below, the affinities between Cyril’s and Hebrews’ theological assessment of and hermeneutical approach to the Mosaic cult run deep indeed.

Cyril’s interpretation of the precepts that detail how a polluted Israelite is to regain a state of purity follows along the same lines and leads to the same conclusion. In his commentary on Lev 22:6-7, Cyril stresses the fact that the law stipulates that the person who has touched something unclean will remain impure, and hence unable to eat from the sacred donations, until the evening. Because the incarnate Christ arrived

452 PG 68:665d-668a.
in the last time of the age, Cyril avers, the evening is an appropriate symbol for his advent. Bringing this figural identification to bear on the passage as a whole, Cyril deduces that the ordinance in question indicates that "the setting aside of all filth and acquittal from accusations is not otherwise possible for us except through Christ alone, at the time of his advent." Indeed, for Cyril this precept intimates that, with respect to moral purity, the difference between the eras before and after the incarnate Christ's advent is absolute, not relative, inasmuch as his spiritual interpretation shows that "what precedes the advent of the Only-begotten remains wholly impure and polluted (ἀπερικάθαρτον ἅπαν καὶ ἐν μολυσμοῖς ἐτι)." Accordingly, then, the person who was under the law before the time of Christ "is polluted, and, biding the time of katharsis, does not participate in the holy and life-giving food. But having been washed by the water of the setting sun, he is clean, and he possesses the very bread from heaven. For the blessing of Christ is distributed to those who have been sanctified (ἡγιασμένοις) by water, that is, by holy baptism." Once again, while the ritual ablutions mandated by the law give the appearance of effecting at least some sort of purification, rightly understood they reveal that true katharsis is effected exclusively through participation in the sacramental life of the church.

Indeed, on multiple occasions Cyril employs figural exegesis of the law in order to demonstrate the church's status as the sole locus of sanctification. Commenting on Lev 1:2-9, Cyril remarks that the fact that the law ordained that victims be brought to the gates of the tabernacle signifies that "we are not perfected otherwise, unless we

453 PG 68:800b-c.
454 PG 68:800c-d.
become well-pleasing to God the Father in the churches, where the priest Christ offers us. For through him we have had access (προσαγωγήν), and he himself inaugurated for us the way in which to proceed, having entered into the Holy of Holies as a precursor for us.”455 Once again, Cyril couples the notions of sanctification (described here as perfection) and access; we have access to God only when Christ offers us, in the church, to God the Father as a holy victim. According to Cyril’s reading of the Leviticus text, the gates of the tabernacle image the portal into the church, which is the exclusive venue for the sort of self-mortification that renders the person a holy and pleasing sacrifice to God. Yet again, Cyril evinces his sensitivity to the spatial dimension of the notion of access.

Given Cyril’s insistence that the law is completely unequipped for the communication of true purification and sanctification, what is the moral quality of the way of life that follows from the literal observance of its precepts? We have seen above that Cyril is willing to concede to the law at least a limited capacity to teach certain virtues. But to what degree of virtue could the faithful observer of the law attain ante Christum? For Cyril, the way of life mandated by the law of Moses is morally mediocre at best, and should by no means be reckoned truly virtuous. Cyril contends that this inability of the law to provide the necessary conditions for a life of virtue is signified by the fact that Moses required Aaron’s assistance:

455 PG 68:1016b.
And consider that Moses was commanded to summon Aaron; for the law was in a certain sense weak and imperfect, if deprived of Christ. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to remove sin (Heb 10:4). But Christ, having brought one sacrifice on behalf of sinners, has perfected those who have been sanctified forever. And so let those who still love the shadow and the letter, and who still hold in high esteem the Mosaic commandments, know that unless they summon the chief priest and apostle of our confession, Jesus Christ, their pursuit of the typological worship will amount to nothing (οὐδὲν) for them. For to what do the boasts of a life in the law amount before the God who loves virtue?456

Cyril’s final rhetorical question clearly indicates that he considers the discharging of the ordinances of the Mosaic law to be qualitatively distinct from virtuous action.

Cyril’s mitigating comments noted above notwithstanding, here he implies that the law does not even initiate the process by which one cultivates true virtue.

Cyril claims that the moral mediocrity of the legal way of life is adumbrated by several other episodes from the life of Moses. For example, Moses’ lack of qualifications to be Israel’s spokesperson intimates the "p Pettiness (μικροπρεπὲς)" of the way of life prescribed by the law.457 Cyril goes on to interpret Moses’ indecisiveness about returning to Egypt from the land of the Midianites as a symbol of the "divided" nature of the legal way of life, which is unable to liberate the sinful human mind, which oscillates between human and divine things, from its own schizophrenia.458 In contrast, the evangelical way of life is characterized by its integrity, since those who submit to Christ consecrate and dedicate all things to God, having crucified their own flesh. Cyril follows up this point with reflection on the fact that before his divine vocation Moses

456 PG 68:728c-d.
457 PG 68:253b.
458 PG 68:256a.
had fled from Egypt because he feared death. According to Cyril, Moses' flight in terror signifies that the law was unable to liberate Israel from the slavery of the fear of death. Only in Christ, Cyril reiterates, is redemption from such servitude available.

Another text that for Cyril refers enigmatically to the anemia of Mosaic ethics is Exod 38:26, which mentions a group of fasting women at the gate of the tabernacle who donated their mirrors for the construction of the bronze basin. Cyril commences his exegesis with a brief notice concerning the passage's historia, which he acknowledges is not immediately intelligible. According to Cyril, these Israelite women had adopted certain pagan rituals during their sojourn in Egypt, rituals that involved the employment of mirrors, among other implements. The women's fasting and the donation of their mirrors for the construction of the bronze basin signify the fact that they wished to repudiate their former ways and embrace the worship of Israel's God as instated in the tabernacle. When contemplated spiritually, however, these women present an image of souls who are no longer being led by the pedagogy of the Mosaic precepts, but rather who already exhibit a spiritual and evangelical way of life, not treading lazily in earthly pleasures, but who are rather being transformed (ἀναμορφομένων) in incorruptible beauty, on account of the fact that they cannot bear the foul and abominable charges of loving the flesh. Or is the way of life for those of us who are in Christ not thus called to sanctification and spiritual simplicity?

Here Cyril implies that the way of life according to the law does not preclude indulgence in worldly pleasures and the love of the flesh, in contradistinction to the

459 PG 68:256b.
460 PG 68:632c.
evangelical way of life, which requires the mortification of the flesh and the presentation of one's own disciplined body, not the bloody carcasses of livestock, as a sacrifice to God. Even if one grants to the law a limited efficacy with respect to the amelioration of morals, as Cyril himself does elsewhere, such modest remediation should not be confused with the true moral transformation, which requires the katharsis of Christ as its catalyst.

4.2.5: Images of Abrogation

In view of its manifold soteriological defects, the law was intended by God from the start to be a provisional measure that would at some point cede to another, superior dispensation. According to Cyril, the law itself contains images of this abrogation, which is a concomitant of Christ's resurrection. A passage from the Glaphyra is illustrative. Therein Cyril meditates on the spiritual significance of the fact that a lamb or calf is nourished by its mother for seven days, and only then brought forward as a victim on the eighth day (Exod 22:30). According to Cyril, the seven days with the mother signify that it is necessary for sinful human beings to be educated first by types, which provide a form of instruction that is not very "manly (ἀνδροπρεπεστέροις)," but rather fitting for infants. As is his wont, Cyril interprets the eighth day as a figure of the mystery of Christ's resurrection. Understood spiritually, then, this precept teaches that after seven days, the legal cult was abolished, just as the

461 PG 69:441c.

462 The Epistle of Barnabas 15.8-9 appears to be the first instance in which a Christian exegete makes an explicit figural link between the eighth day and Christ's resurrection.
lamb or calf was taken away from its mother. Cyril also maintains that this text obliquely signifies the rationale for the law's annulment, namely, the fact that as long as one remains under its tutelage one remains estranged from God's presence: "And so God is inaccessible (ἀπρόσιτος) through the worship of the law, and he could become accessible (προσιτὸς) through Christ alone." In this way Cyril exploits the images of spatial distance and proximity in this statute; the period in which the calf or sheep remains with its mother represents a time of (relative) alienation from the divine presence, which is localized in the tabernacle, whereas the eighth day, a symbol of Christ's resurrection, represents the moment at which that distance is collapsed and access to that presence, signified by the taking of the calf or sheep to the tabernacle, finally becomes available.463

Cyril's exegesis of the Nazarite ordinance of Num 6:9-12 conforms to the same basic pattern. If someone suddenly dies nearby the Nazarite, he must shave off his hair and bring an offering to the tabernacle on the eighth day. Cyril conceives of this rite as an image of the sloughing off of the pedagogy of Moses:

And so the law also commanded that the pedagogy of the law be shaven, as if it were hair, and for the things given in type up to the seventh day to be shorn, that is, the things before the eighth day, on which Christ lived again, renewing us in incorruption, and remolding us in the new and evangelical life... And the mind grows hair again, no longer for types and shadows... but for dogmas in truth and faith. Do you not think that it is necessary for those who have been justified by faith to be shorn, as it were, of the boast of worship in the law, and

463 Once again, Cyril's interpretation evokes Heb 12:18-24, although the author of Hebrews does not link the unprecedented access to God enjoyed by the Christian as explicitly as Cyril does to Christ's resurrection.
in turn to grow again, and to choose for their interior mind and heart the knowledge of the evangelical way of life, since it is better by far and more excellent than the knowledge that is in old things?464

Here again we see the conjunction of the resurrection of Christ, signified by the eighth day, and the cancellation of the worship according to the law, represented by the shaving of hair. A little further on, Cyril considers the spiritual meaning of the fact that the one who has fulfilled the Nazirite vow comes to the gates of the tabernacle in order to make his offering, which includes his shaven hairs:

He who still owes God the vow according to which he must be sanctified, after having gotten rid of, as it were, the crassness (τὸ πάχος) of the Mosaic history and figural and shadowy worship, having released from the mind a long and ponderous head of hair, as it were, and possessing, like hair regrowing, the truly holy knowledge and pedagogy of Christ's statutes--he will be holy and priestly, and worthy to be admitted (ἀξιόληπτος) as well."465

As he does in the passage from the Glaphyra examined above, Cyril establishes a causal relationship between the revocation of the Mosaic cult, a necessary correlate of the resurrection of Christ, and closer proximity to the divine presence. The sequence of the Nazarite's shaving off his hair and his subsequent approach to the tabernacle gates, Cyril claims, shadows forth the way in which the abolition of the law made possible unprecedented access to the divine presence.

464 PG 68:1049c-d.
465 PG 68:1053b.
4.3: Israel’s Sacred Geography

By now it should be evident that Cyril finds the spatial configuration of the ancient Israelites’ holy sites to be highly amenable to his account of the law’s soteriological shortcomings. For Cyril, both Sinai and the tabernacle compound provide for the contemplative exegete a kind of visual aid that manifests the discrepancy between the access to God, and all the salvific goods associated with it, permitted by the law on the one hand and by the incarnate Christ on the other. Sinai and the tabernacle so function precisely because of their particular spatial features; while God makes himself present at both locales, in both cases the divine presence is localized in a particular space (the peak of Sinai, the Holy of Holies), and those areas furthest removed from these sites of manifestation thus represent zones in which full and intimate access to that presence is unavailable.

Of course, the tabernacle complex is quite manifestly organized by boundaries that delineate spheres of greater or lesser proximity to the divine presence resident (at least occasionally) in the Holy of Holies. Cyril frequently exploits this spatial organization by construing those precincts most intimate to the divine presence as figural representations of the church and those areas further removed from that presence as the figural spaces of the Jews under the pedagogy of the law. In several cases Cyril construes the courtyard of the tabernacle as a space of relative estrangement. As noted earlier, Cyril considers the altar of burnt offerings, which is located in the courtyard, to be the most apposite synecdoche of the Mosaic cult as a whole, at least in part because the bronze of which it is constituted discloses that the worship of the law lacked the patronage of the Holy Spirit, whose divine nature is
consistently signified by gold (a material found throughout the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies). It is not, however, simply the bronze of the altar that signifies this limitation of the law; after all, the altar's inferior material is commensurate with its distance from the innermost tent of the tabernacle.

In like manner, we have seen that Cyril construes the basin that stands in the courtyard at the threshold of the sanctuary as an icon of the law's incapacity to make possible intimate access to God and hence true sanctification. Those who have received the *katharsis* of baptism are permitted to enter the tabernacle itself, while those who have not are, as it were, detained in the courtyard, denied intimate access to the God who dwells in the Holy of Holies. According to this interpretation, the basin, due to its unique liminal location, is simultaneously a figure of access to God's presence for those who avail themselves of the *katharsis* of baptism and an icon of debarment for those who are under the law. Thus in his readings of both the altar of burnt offerings and the basin of ablutions Cyril envisions the tabernacle courtyard as a region of relative alienation from the presence of God whose most exemplary denizens are the Israelites and their Jewish descendents.

However, in Cyril's exegesis of the fasting women at the gates of the tabernacle, he figurally "re-maps" the tabernacle complex and assigns the spiritual significance of its component areas differently. In this instance the boundary between ecclesial and Mosaic space is not formed by the entrance into the sanctuary, but rather by the gates of the courtyard. Therefore in this particular instance the entire tabernacle complex, including the courtyard, signifies the church, which for Cyril is the only milieu in which the truly holy and God-pleasing life can be cultivated. Of course, as we have
seen above, Cyril closely links sanctification with the singular access to God provided by Christ. Hence in this particular reading Cyril envisions the whole tabernacle compound, including the courtyard, as a symbol of intimate access to God. Furthermore, it should be noted that this figural identification between the gates of the courtyard and the boundaries of the church appears elsewhere in the text. For instance, in Cyril's spiritual interpretations of the victims brought to the gates on the eighth day and of the Nazirite votary who brings an offering to the gates after shaving his hair, the courtyard also represents a precinct of intimate proximity and access to God.

Cyril displays similar hermeneutical flexibility in his figural treatment of the geography of Mount Sinai. When reflecting on the significance of the fact that the Israelites drew near the mountain but did not ascend it, Cyril understands the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος as a figural index of the fact that the pedagogy of the law did not permit the Israelites to attain to a truly salvific knowledge of God. However, in a later passage in which he identifies the altar that Moses built at the base of Sinai as a figure of the church, he uses the very same prepositional phrase to specify the location of the altar. However, here this location signifies the privileged access to the Father that the church enjoys through the Son. Therefore when the Israelites arrive ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος, but go no farther, Cyril claims that the ineptitude of the law to impart a saving knowledge of God is enigmatically revealed. On the other hand, when Moses builds an altar ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος, Cyril declares that the altar signifies the church and the close proximity it enjoys to God, who is represented by the mountain. Clearly, then, Cyril does not take a rigidly formulaic approach to spiritual exegesis; instead, he gauges the spiritual significance of
specific sites in the Mosaic landscape with an eye toward what he takes to be the spiritual skopos of the particular text.

The salient point is that, regardless of the particular calibrations, in all the aforementioned instances Cyril construes spatial details from the text as figural references to the extent to which the law on the one hand and Christ on the other make possible immediate access to God and, correlatively, a truly holy way of life. The cumulative effect of all these readings is a bifurcation of Israel's sacred topography into a penumbral zone of relative distance from the divine presence, which is populated by those who pursue the way of life stipulated by the law, and a radiant ward of immediate divine access whose entry requirement is faith in Christ and the ecclesial and sacramental appropriation of his redemptive work.

Of course, Cyril is not the first Christian exegete to discern in the spatial organization of the tabernacle a cryptogram of the qualitative difference between the soteriological accomplishments of the Mosaic and the Christic covenants. Indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews' figural treatment of the tabernacle's configuration was clearly an inspiration for Cyril. More specifically, Hebrews regards the tabernacle's spatial demarcations as underlining the difference between the intimate access to God made available by Christ and the lack thereof made possible by the Mosaic cult. We have already noted that in addition to the fact that both Hebrews and Cyril thematize the

law’s inability to open up access to God, both authors also use the same verb to denote the attainment of that access (ἐγγίζειν).

Moreover, on a couple of occasions the author of Hebrews detects in the rites of the tabernacle cult figural hints that testify to the soteriological ineffectualness of the law. For instance, the author notes that the high priest goes into the second [tent], and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. This is a symbol of the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right (9:7-10; NRSV).

In this way the author takes the first tent, the Holy Place, as a concentrated symbol of the entire Mosaic cult, which was not able to furnish access to God. Conversely, the annual entry of the high priest into the Holy of Holies images Christ’s entrance into the heavenly tabernacle, by dint of which access to God has became available. In this way the spatial configuration and ritual calendar of the tabernacle cult contain within themselves an enigma of the law’s salvific inefficacy; the exclusion of all Israelites from the Holy of Holies, save on Yom Kippur, functions as a figural witness to the serious soteriological limitations of the Mosaic law as a whole. Along the same lines, the author of Hebrews cites the daily regimen of sacrifices offered by Israel’s priests as a sort of parabolic representation of the law’s salvific futility, inasmuch as the constant repetition of sacrifices, in contrast to Christ’s singular self-sacrifice, underscores the law’s inability to take away sin (10:1-4, 11). For the author of Hebrews, then, the law possesses not only "a shadow of the good things to come" (10:1), but also symbols of its
own redemptive deficiencies; to return to an earlier point made in reference to Cyril, the law qua figural is not only prospective, but also self-referential.

Given Cyril's patent debt to the theology of Hebrews as a whole and its treatment of the Mosaic cult in particular, one may justly wonder whether Cyril saw in the foregoing interpretations the template for a more comprehensive reading of the Mosaic law that would assemble an impressive ensemble of images of the law's soteriological flaws from the law itself. Indeed, one can see in the readings scrutinized in this chapter a sort of amplification and elaboration of Hebrews' approach to the tabernacle cult in general and more particularly its notion that a Christocentric, figural reading of the law can bring to light images that bear witness to the fact that "the law made nothing perfect" (7:19). Keeping in mind our survey of Cyril's exegetical predecessors in Chapter Two, it would appear that Cyril is the first Christian exegete to parlay the figural approach of Hebrews to the tabernacle cult into a comprehensive account of the law's soteriological imperfections that is grounded in a figural reading of the law. Therefore even though the substance of Cyril's critique of the law is fundamentally traditional, his hermeneutical strategy, represented by the readings examined in this chapter, constitutes a creative development and extension of the figural approach to the Mosaic cult inaugurated by Hebrews. Like the author of that book, Cyril adopts a typological approach to the law that not only makes explicit the logic of superiority intrinsic to most forms of figural reading, but also highlights the capacity of the types of the law to lay bare the salvific incompetencies of the law in which they are couched. In this sense, at least, one can speak of Cyril's exegesis as at once traditional and creative.
4.4: Historical Context

Before drawing the chapter to a close, it is worth inquiring into possible impetuses for Cyril's prosecution of the interpretive strategy under examination. It will be instructive to return to some of the points made in the Introduction about Cyril's historical context. As we have seen, Cyril did not live and write during a time in which Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures went unchallenged. The evidence, scarce as it is, from the early fifth century in Egypt seems to reflect an ambience of exegetical disputatiousness between Jews and Christians. For instance, as mentioned in the Introduction, in several of his letters Cyril's contemporary and friend Isidore of Pelusium gave advice to correspondants who sought his help in rebutting exegetical arguments put forward by Jewish acquaintances. In light of Isidore's correspondence and Cyril's own early festal letters, many of which asserted specifically Christian readings of Pentateuchal texts over against Jewish interpretations, one should not rule out the possibility that through the readings investigated in this chapter Cyril was attempting to counter certain Jewish interpretations of the Pentateuch or defend certain Christian readings from Jewish critiques.

It may be more promising, however, to look in another direction for at least a partial explanation for Cyril's determination to demonstrate that the law possesses ensconced in itself a rich cache of images of its own soteriological limitations and hence of its provisionality and planned obsolescence. I mentioned in the Introduction that Cyril's framing of the *De Adoratione et Cultu* as an extended explanation and validation of Matt 5:17 appears to have been animated at least in part by a desire to refute one of the principal arguments against Christianity made by Emperor Julian in
his Against the Galileans, namely, that Christians' non-observance of the Mosaic law belies their claim to be "Israelites" who obey and honor Moses and the prophets.\textsuperscript{467} Cyril clearly perceived in Julian's treatise a redoubtable, if completely wrongheaded, challenge to Christian teaching and exegesis, as evidenced by his voluminous Contra Julianum, which he wrote sometime after 433, seventy years or so after Julian penned his polemic. Obviously, then, Cyril believed that Julian's hostile characterization of Christianity continued to resonate in his own time, particularly among the intellectual élite.

As noted earlier, one of the main complaints that Julian lodges against Christianity is that it is little more than an apostate Judaism. As the editor of the Loeb edition of Julian's polemic (reconstructed from Cyril's treatise) remarks, Julian's "chief aim in the treatise was to show that there is no evidence in the Old Testament for the idea of Christianity, so that the Christians have no right to regard their teachings as a development of Judaism."\textsuperscript{468} More specifically, Julian contended that the Christian refusal to observe the Mosaic law flies in the face of not only explicit Pentateuchal avowals of the law's eternal validity, such as Deut 4:2,\textsuperscript{469} but also Jesus' own apparent valorization of law observance in Matt 5:17-19.\textsuperscript{470} The Christians' only recourse is to appeal to the sophistry of Paul, whose views on God, Julian wryly notes, change "as the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[467] Julian, Against the Galileans 253a-b (LCL 392-94).
\item[468] Wilmer Cave Wright, introduction to Against the Galileans in The Works of Emperor Julian (trans. Wilmer Cave Wright; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 313.
\item[469] Julian, Against the Galileans 320b (LCL 410).
\item[470] Cyril of Alexandria, Juln. (PG 76:993b-c). Cyril only refers to the fact that Julian adduced Matt 5:17 against the Christians; he does not quote Julian's actual words.
\end{footnotes}
polypus changes its colors to match the rocks." Julian heaps especial opprobium on Paul's declaration in Rom 10:4 that Christ is the end of the law, a claim that Julian regards as an arbitrary fiat that serves as a pretext for Christians to disregard most of the law's commandments and the plain sense of many texts in the Hebrew Scriptures: "Where does God announce to the Hebrews a second law besides that which was established? Nowhere does it occur, not even a revision of the established law." In Cyril's demurral in the Contra Julianum, he maintains that Julian has failed to grasp two types of logic. One is the logic of supplanting, according to which a superior covenant supersedes an inferior one. If the blood of bulls and goats is unable to take away sin, then it must cede to a covenant sealed by blood that can in fact expiate sin. Cyril also avers that Julian is wholly ignorant of the logic of typology, whereby God led the Israelites to the mystery of Christ through an education in types, a training program teleologically oriented toward the metamorphosis of the crude types of the law into the beauty of the truth of Christ. Such a transformation, Cyril insists, does not destroy the Mosaic law, but makes it transparent to the law's true dianoia. According to Cyril, then, Julian reveals himself to be a crude exegete with no aptitude for the subtleties of spiritual interpretation.

It is highly probable that Cyril was aware of Julian's treatise at the time of the composition of the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. Is it possible, then, to see

471 Julian, Against the Galilaeans 106b (LCL 342). English translations are adapted from the Loeb edition.
472 Julian, Against the Galilaeans 319e-320b (LCL 408-10).
473 Cyril of Alexandria, Juln. (PG 76:968c–969a).
474 Cyril of Alexandria, Juln. (PG 76:993b).
Julian's critique as a stimulus of the line of interpretation studied in this chapter? I submit that it is in fact possible. If one of Julian's central arguments against Christianity is that it disdains the actual words of the Old Testament and seeks refuge in the capricious assertions of Paul, then the hermeneutical strategy at hand could have obvious apologetic value. After all, through the readings examined in this chapter Cyril is endeavoring to show that the "Pauline" (inclusive of Hebrews) account of the law's soteriological shortcomings does not in fact represent a whimsical Christian travesty of the Pentateuch, but rather that account finds ample figural corroboration in the law itself. Perhaps, then, Cyril is making a sort of plausibility argument in favor of the "Pauline" construal of the law by locating in the law itself a critical mass of images that testify obliquely to the law's own salvific limitations, the very limitations that warrant the non-observance of the law's literal demands subsequent to the mediation of a perfect covenant. Indeed, the cumulative argument of these kinds of readings is that the law itself, understood rightly, justifies its non-observance in a context in which a superior covenant has supplanted it. This exegetical strategy thus functions as a rejoinder to Julian's contention that the Christian attitude toward the law is an illegitimate Pauline innovation and simply untenable on the basis of the Old Testament itself. If, as I suggested in the Introduction, Cyril's target audience for the works at hand was the Alexandrian and Egyptian intelligentsia, then it becomes all the more probable that Cyril's worries about Julian are in the background, since Julian's arguments would have gained the most traction among the cultured élite whose own cultural sensibilities would have been very similar to those of Julian himself.
Of course, even if Cyril was more unnerved by Julian's critique of the Christian construal of the law than that of any particular Jewish critic, it should be noted that Julian's argument against Christianity took on additional bite in view of the abiding presence of Jewish communities who did their best to keep the law post templum. Indeed, Julian himself draws attention to these observant Jews and cites them as further damning evidence against the Christian view of the law.\textsuperscript{475} Thus even if Cyril was not agitated by particular Jewish criticisms of the Christian understanding of the law, it is likely that his trepidation about Julian's argument was exacerbated by the persistence in Cyril's own day of communities of observant Jews, seeing that Julian enlisted his observant Jewish contemporaries as witnesses, whether witting or unwitting, for his charge that Christianity is guilty of an exegetically indefensible usurpation of the mantle of Judaism. Hence the presence of vital Jewish communities in Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt may have plausibly served as an additional precipitant of Cyril's attempt to substantiate the mainstream Christian view of the (qualified) decrepitude of the Mosaic law by means of a spiritual reading of the law.

4.5: Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that Cyril mounts a sustained case that the law of Moses has inscribed in itself a comprehensive and coherent exposé of its own soteriological impotence and obsolescence. Although he grants to the law some capacity to communicate the principles of monotheism and just action, Cyril is at much

\textsuperscript{475} Julian, \textit{Against the Galilaeans} 306a-b (LCL 406).
greater pains to show, by means of spiritual *theoria*, that the Mosaic law discloses its utter inability to provide salvific knowledge of God, access to God, and sanctification. Special attention has been paid to the way in which Cyril discerns in the spatial configuration of ancient Israel's holiest sites testimony to the law's salvific inefficacy. Such a hermeneutical gambit, I suggested, reveals Cyril's considerable debts to the Epistle to the Hebrews' figural rendering of the tabernacle cult; indeed, no prior Christian exegete found the approach to the Mosaic cult pioneered in Hebrews as hermeneutically fecund as Cyril. We have also argued that there are good grounds for ascribing to Cyril's interpretive strategy an apologetic function vis-à-vis Julian's critique of the Christian non-observance of the law, which stressed the fact that Jews continued to observe many of the laws that Christians wilfully ignored.

This last point brings us finally to the question of the extent to which the persistence of Judaism in Cyril's day was an additional spur for the hermeneutical strategy examined in this chapter. It bears repeating that Cyril wrote the works at hand in an epoch in which Christian contestation of non-Christian sacred spaces emerged as a salient phenomenon in the Roman world. Cyril himself established a Christian martyrion in Menouthis, located just outside Alexandria, in order to bring about the demise of the popular shrine to Isis located there.476 Jewish holy places, as we have seen, were no less intensely challenged by Christians, as the incidents in Minorca and Alexandria, among others, attest. Thus while Cyril was hermeneutically converting the sacred spaces of ancient Israel into an ecclesial domain, a number of Jewish

synagogues in the Roman Empire were being converted, often violently, into churches. This temporal convergence of homologous "conversions," I submit, bespeaks the fact that many Christians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries were vexed by the theological and socio-political import of the persistence of Judaism, which took visual form in the synagogues that dotted the cityscapes of late antiquity, even as the church was in its ascendancy. Of course, the fact that Cyril himself spearheaded one of these expropriations of Jewish synagogues only strengthens the case for the analogy. Therefore it is not, I think, altogether unwarranted to propose that Cyril's exegetical imagination, when confronted with the sacred topography of ancient Israel, may have been galvanized by these instances of Christian takeovers of Jewish spaces and the religious climate that they both reflected and fostered.

In the next chapter we will consider another aspect of Cyril's figural treatment of the spatial dimension of the tabernacle cult. We will see that Cyril emphasizes the fact that the boundary lines of the tabernacle have a moral dimension, inasmuch as they separate clean from polluted, pure from impure, holy from unholy. Cyril will find in these lines of demarcation boundaries that separate Christians from Jews, whom Cyril deems the spiritual referents of a plethora of polluted persons and objects mentioned in the Pentateuch. By making these figural identifications Cyril sustains his case that the Jews, by virtue of their moral miasma, are not only excluded from saving access to God's presence, but also from fellowship with the church of the Gentiles. Indeed, Cyril finds in the law of Moses a multi-faceted figural indictment of the moral depravity of the Jewish people, and it is to this indictment that we now turn.
CHAPTER FIVE:
THE LAW AGAINST THE JEWS

In the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* Cyril finds in the figures of the Mosaic law not only a refutation of the soteriological pretensions that the Jews ascribe to their law, but also a devastating account of the moral character of the Jews themselves and, correlative, their indefinite displacement from the ongoing story of salvation history. While Cyril’s refusal to grant the Mosaic law any power to sanctify its devotees certainly constitutes an implicit moral critique of the Jewish people, in this chapter we will be concerned with those many instances in which Cyril discerns in the law figural confirmation of the Jews’ wretched moral state and the soteriological implications thereof. Indeed, the sheer number of such figural readings make it patent that Cyril considers the law’s anti-Jewish thrust, ascertainable by means of spiritual *theoria*, to be one of its most salient features. Cyril also finds in the law of Moses a bevy of images of the soteriological status and eschatological prospects of the Jewish people. The primary task of this chapter, then, will be to examine the exegetical contours of Cyril’s account of the moral makeup of the Jews and its repercussions for their soteriological standing.

I will begin by considering some of the general features of Cyril’s account of the moral constitution of the Jews and the hermeneutical strategies by which he moors
that account in the law of Moses. Of particular interest will be those traits, all of which Cyril deems endemic in the Jews, that suggest that they are agents of civic unrest and disorder. Then I will show how Cyril exploits the levitical category of pollution in order to characterize the Jews' moral complexion. On occasion Cyril hints at the socio-political corollaries of his polemical treatment of pollution, a treatment that has no precedent in the prior exegetical tradition. I will build on these hints in order to consider how Cyril's own contentious relationship with Jews in Alexandria, as well as the general state of Jewish-Christian relations in the late Roman world, might shed light on his depiction of the Jews as the polluted people par excellence. Next, I will advert to Cyril's tendency to construe various images of banishment and exile in the Mosaic law as icons of the eclipse of the Jews by the church of the Gentiles in salvation history. On a more optimistic note, I will go on to demonstrate that Cyril also detects in the law figural hints that Israel, or at least some remnant thereof, will elude perdition by means of its eschatological incorporation into the church. Nevertheless, we will see that even Cyril's affirmation of the ultimate redemption of Israel is tempered by his extremely pessimistic evaluation of Jewish character. Finally, we will take stock of the fact that in the passages scrutinized in this chapter, no less than in the ones examined in the previous chapter, Cyril consistently extracts spiritual significance from the spatial aspect of many of the ordinances and narratives of the law. Therefore at the end of the chapter I will take up once again the suggestion made in Chapter Four that Cyril's treatment of Jewish space in his spiritual interpretation bespeaks late-antique Christian anxieties about the "place" of the Jewish people in the increasingly Christian late Roman society.
5.1: Cultic Law as Cryptogram of Jewish Perversity

5.1.1: Frozen Jewish Essence

As we have already seen in the Introduction, in his early Festal Letters Cyril avows that his Jewish contemporaries are cut from precisely the same moral cloth as their recalcitrant Israelite forebears. This notion of a fixed Jewish moral essence, frozen in time and thus equally predicable of ante and post Christum Jews, is operative in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra as well. Indeed, for Cyril the Mosaic law bears figural witness to this stable Jewish "essence" at almost every turn. However, despite the fact that Cyril acknowledges the reality of post Christum Judaism and frequently disparages it, he actually has nothing to say about the particularities of contemporary Jews or Judaism. He makes no clear references or allusions to particular contemporary Jews or recent events that involved Jews. Indeed, if one were forced to base one's knowledge of Cyril on the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glyphyra alone, it would by no means be clear whether he ever had any contact with Jews at all. The most that one could say would be that Cyril was aware of and agitated by the fact that Judaism continued to be practiced in his day. Even his most acerbic barbs at (anonymous) contemporary Jews always arise out of his exegesis of a given Pentateuchal text and never go beyond the form of a blanket condemnation. However, both Socrates' notice and Cyril's early Festal Letters preclude taking this lack of specificity as evidence that Cyril's castigations of the Jewish people are simply conventional and therefore not at all prompted by an acute perception of the various threats, both theological and socio-cultural, to the church represented by living Jews.
Indeed, the lack of references to the particularities of contemporary Judaism in the texts at hand could possess polemical utility, inasmuch as it facilitates the absorption of Cyril's Jewish contemporaries, who remain faceless and nameless, back into the world of the Old Testament, which is precisely where Cyril reckons them properly to belong. Post Christum Jews, Cyril implies on numerous occasions, are grotesque relics, intrusions from the past, with no real existence outside of the biblical ambit; consequently, the specifics of Jewish culture and life in fifth-century Alexandria are quite beside the point. This transposition of fifth-century Jews into the world of the Pentateuch also enables Cyril to make indiscriminate condemnations of Jewish moral character without substantiating them by making reference to actual contemporary Jews or Jewish practices and institutions.

One of the primary hermeneutical tactics by which Cyril assimilates contemporary Jews to their Israelite predecessors is the selection of certain Israelite figures as synecdoches of Jewishness. Invariably, Cyril singles out those Israelite persons who are most morally rebarbative. An example can be found in Cyril's treatment of the procession of the tribal leaders described in Num 7. He notes that the tribe of Judah was the first to offer its gift, even though Judah himself was not the firstborn among the sons of Jacob. He goes on to observe that Reuben (the firstborn), Simeon, and Gad trail behind Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. According to Cyril, the place of the Reubenites, Simeonites, and Gadites in the procession reflects the moral deficiencies of their eponymous forefathers; Reuben was obstinate and arrogant, Simeon had murderous intentions, and Gad was a brigand. Cyril then proceeds to
identify these three sons of Jacob with Jews who lived during and subsequent to the
time of Christ:

Israel the chronologically firstborn is hard and self-willed and hubristic, prone
to murder, possessing accursed anger, having killed people, and having
hamstrung a bull. They are a people low-minded and relentless in their
plotting, setting up traps and temptations, subordinated to those who are in
Christ and are free.477

Reading this passage, it is difficult not to be mindful of the incident described by
Socrates, in which the Alexandrian Jews "plotted" and set up a "trap" to lure the
Christians to the street to be ambushed. At any rate, the phrase "subordinated to those
who are in Christ" clearly indicates that Cyril has contemporary Jews in mind. In this
way Cyril subsumes all Jews into the figures of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad.478 Therefore if
a fifth-century Christian wants to ascertain the moral disposition of his Jewish
counterparts, then she needs to look no further than the Pentateuch.

5.1.2: Essentially Jewish Traits

As indicated above, all of Cyril's anti-Jewish castigations appear in the context
of exegesis of the Pentateuch, rather than in strictly polemical asides. For Cyril, then,
the consistent marks of Jewish morality can be read off the pages of Scripture. This
approach is not without potential polemical value, particularly given how it works in
concert with Cyril's studied evasiveness with respect to contemporary Jews and
Judaism; Cyril implies that he has arrived at his conclusions about the moral traits of

477 PG 68:721c.

478 We will see below a similar subsumption by synecdoche in Cyril's treatment of Korah and Dathan's
rebellion.
the Jews through a circumspect and contemplative reading of the Jewish Scriptures, not through antagonistic encounters with living, breathing Jews. To be sure, many of the aspersions that Cyril casts against Jewish moral character are of a stock variety, and can be found in scores of other early Christian writings: Jews are blind, hypocritical, boastful, obtuse, and so on. Some of these conventional accusations, however, take on new valences if one keeps in mind Cyril's Alexandrian context, in which the tension between Jews and Christians sometimes erupted into violence and, for at least some Jews, resulted in banishment from the city. Thus in the following section I will focus on those anti-Jewish remarks of Cyril that might have had distinct social and political resonance in the context of early fifth-century Alexandria.

We may commence by considering Cyril's characterization of the Jews as fomenters and agents of civic disorder. In several places Cyril reiterates Jeremiah's accusation (3:1) that the Jews "have fornicated with many shepherds," a charge that perhaps implicitly raises the specter of Jewish political disloyalty.479 Even more frequently, Cyril characterizes the Jews as disorderly and ungovernable. For instance, in his ruminations on the lampstand in the tabernacle, Cyril remarks that the light shining in front of the lampstand signifies those who are in the sight of God by virtue of their obedient and yielding nature. In contrast, the Jews "act recklessly (ἐμπαροινεῖν)" and behave "ungovernably (ἀκαθέκτως)," thus ensuring that the Lord will turn his eyes away from them.480 In a passage from the Glaphyra, Cyril describes the Jews at the base of Sinai as "uncontrollable (ἐξήνιοι)," and maintains that Moses' sending them away is

479 PG 68:813a.
480 PG 68:608c.
a figure of Israel’s long banishment from the divine precincts, resulting in an exile that will conclude only in the last days, when the Jews will return to the Father through the Son.\textsuperscript{481} We will study other examples of Cyril’s readiness to extract from the law images of Jewish soteriological exile later in the chapter.

In addition to the incident at Sinai, Cyril also adduces the examples of Korah and Dathan as paradigms of Jewish fractiousness. Despite the fact that Aaron was divinely appointed to serve as a priest and leader for the people, Korah, Dathan, and the "wild multitude (ἀγρία πληθύς)" that they spearheaded attacked "most rashly (προαλέστατα) the heavenly decree" and "rose up against the divine laws."\textsuperscript{482} Elsewhere Korah and his cohorts are described as bitter (πικροί), stubborn (ἀτεράμονες), impetuous (ἀχάλινοι), and insane (ἀπονοίας).\textsuperscript{483} According to Cyril, their violent uprising foreshadows the homicidal assault of the Jews against Christ. Furthermore, Cyril dubs the altar of burnt offerings, for whose construction the rebels' censers were melted down, "the altar of provocation (παροξυσμοῦ) and controversy (ἀντιλογίας)."\textsuperscript{484} This appellation is particularly significant when one remembers that for Cyril it is precisely this altar, of all the components of the tabernacle complex, that is the most concentrated symbol of the Mosaic way of life, and hence of Judaism. It follows from this figural identification that the uprising of Korah and Dathan reveals

\textsuperscript{481} PG 69:509d-512a.

\textsuperscript{482} PG 68:613d-616a. See also Cyril’s characterization of of Korah and Abiram in PG 68:672c-d, in which he compares them to "scornful bulls (ἀτιμαγέλαι . . . ταῦροι)" who shake off their yoke of servitude.

\textsuperscript{483} PG 68:860c-d.

\textsuperscript{484} PG 68:616c.
the propensity native to all Jews to resist legitimate authorities. Cyril's pervasive conflation of contemporary Jews with the ancient Israelites entails that post Christum Jews also share this inborn trait. Cyril also calls Paul as a witness to this liability of Jewish character. Early in Book I of the De Adoratione et Cultu Cyril glosses Rom 1:28 ("And God gave them over to their debased mind") and identifies "them" with "the unrestrained multitude of the Jews," who were guilty of "unbroken and obstinate disobedience," thus provoking the kind Lawgiver to anger. Through readings such as the foregoing Cyril insinuates that the Jews are constitutionally unfit for civic life, inasmuch as they buck authority, incite rebellion, and perpetuate discord, and that the iron fist of authority, divine or otherwise, is required in order to render them properly pliant.

Of course, for Cyril as for many early Christian authors, it is the crucifixion of Christ that represents the abysmal culmination of Jewish belligerence and disloyalty and exposes Jewish moral character in the full light of day. Indeed, the aforementioned rebellion of Korah and Dathan against Aaron does not for Cyril simply represent Jewish insolence in general, but rather forebodes the murderous uprising of the Jews against Christ, the true high priest, in particular. In the course of his explication of the postlude of Korah and Dathan’s rebellion, in which the rod of Aaron bloomed as a sign

485 Origen and Basil of Caesarea treat this pericope without any sort of anti-Jewish slant; rather, they lift up its moral implications for Christians. Origen, Rom. Com. 10.7 (PG 14:1262b-c), understands the text as an illustration of "the power of unanimity," while Basil, On Baptism Q.8, avers that it teaches Christians "to be exceedingly careful never to associate considerations of human justice with the rule for pleasing God laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ."

486 PG 68:156b-c. It should be noted that there is no textual evidence to suggest that in this verse Paul has the Jews in general or certain Jews in particular in mind; indeed, by all accounts Paul is talking about all human beings.
of the legitimacy of his priesthood, Cyril succinctly delivers his verdict against the Jews for their culpability in Christ's death:

Therefore the Word came down from heaven, and was among us, the minister of the holy things and of the true tent, which the Lord, not a human being, established. But he did not appear to think correctly to those of Israelite blood, and rising up against him, as it were, they asserted their own will in various ways with the darts of envy, refraining not from loose talk, nor insolence, nor nefarious undertakings, but rather those wretched men utterly destroyed themselves, and crucified the perfect one.487

Throughout the work Cyril frequently finds occasion to mention Jewish culpability for the crucifixion, and even goes so far as to anticipate possible objections to his assertion of exclusively Jewish guilt: "even if the attempt [to crucify Christ] could perhaps be attributed to Herod, nevertheless he is of the blood of Israel."488 Cyril presses this "latest accusation against the synagogue" into the service of two important hermeneutical strategies.489 First, he cites the Jewish participation in the killing of Christ as a pre-eminent proof that the Jewish people as a whole have incurred pollution, a category that he of course adapts from the Mosaic law. Second, he understands the Jewish contraction of pollution through the murder of Christ as the catalyst for the displacement of the Jews as the protagonists of salvation history, a displacement that Cyril describes by employing images of banishment and exile culled from the law of Moses. Hence we now turn our attention to the nature and import of Cyril's exegetical treatment of pollution.

487 PG 68:673c-d.
488 PG 68:680c.
489 PG 68:805d-808a.
5.2: Pollution and Boundary Maintenance

5.2.1: Paragons of Impurity

One of the primary categories to which Cyril has recourse when delineating Jewish moral character is that of pollution, or impurity. Cyril does not interpret pollution in a ritual context, but rather always understands it as a fundamentally moral concept. Although Cyril does not limit his accusations of impurity to the Jews alone, in the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and *Glaphyra* they emerge as the polluted people *par excellence*. Indeed, in these texts Cyril consistently and straightforwardly maps the categories of purity and impurity onto Christians and Jews, respectively. As we will see below, this propensity has significant implications for Cyril’s understanding of the proper relationship between the church and the synagogue.

Before turning to Cyril’s account of Jewish pollution, it will be worthwhile to sample the rhetoric of some of the Jewry laws that were being promulgated shortly before and during Cyril’s lifetime. A. Linder notes how highly rhetorically charged were the rescripts that enshrined Roman Jewry law during this period:

One notices several religious composites with oppositional prefixes, such as 'incredulity,' 'impiety,' 'the most impious,' 'neparious,' and 'sacrilegious.' Other terms, for example deformity and illness, pestilence, filth, abomination, death, infamy and madness, expressed the conviction that the Jews represented the negation of wholesomeness, health, purity, life, honor, wisdom, and sanity. . . . Further terms include 'turpitude,' 'perversity,' 'contagion,' 'pollution,' 'a plague . . . that spreads by contagion,' 'contamination,' 'to defile,' 'to purge [from Jews],' 'execrable,' 'corrupt with filth,' 'deed of disgrace,' 'senseless,' and 'madness.' And this collection of epithets was complemented by a smaller group of
pejorative political terms, asserting that Jews are 'alien and hostile to the Roman state,' 'enemies of the Roman laws,' and motivated by the spirit of 'arrogance and revolt.'

The final sentence harks back to the prior discussion of Cyril's portrayal of the Jews as volatile and rebellious, and hence inciters of civic unrest. However, for our present purposes the point to secure is that legal rescripts of the late fourth and early fifth centuries routinely referred to Jews as vessels of contagious pollution, thereby underlining the undesirability of their presence in the civic milieu. Furthermore, P. Fredriksen cites a Roman law that describes the phenomenon of Judaizing as Christians "polluting themselves with Jewish contagions." Here, then, we have a concrete instance in which Jews were branded as potential defilers of Christians in a specifically religious setting, resulting in the irony that the category of pollution, taken from the Torah itself, is used to characterize the Jews as a whole. This anti-Jewish employment of the language of pollution in Roman Jewry law makes less likely the possibility that Cyril's imputation of pollution to Jews is completely without political resonance, particularly given the fact that many of these legal rescripts used the rhetoric of pollution to couch laws that whittled away the remaining prerogatives of the Jews to govern their own affairs and partake in various civic privileges.


With this legal background in mind, we can now investigate how Cyril elaborates his account of Jewish pollution. As indicated above, Jews emerge as paragons of impurity primarily on the basis of their alleged culpability for Christ's death. Cyril exploits the fact that a corpse is considered impure in the Mosaic law in his presentation of the death of Christ as the pivotal moment at which the Jews incurred pollution. The Jews, Cyril avers, "were polluted upon contact with the dead, for they killed Emmanuel; the death of Christ is truly holy, but it was a pollution (μολυσμός) for those charged with killing the Lord."492 At no point does Cyril suggest that there might be a mechanism by which his Jewish contemporaries might expiate this pollution, save their eschatological conversion to faith in Christ, about which more will be said below.

Elsewhere Cyril ascribes Jewish pollution to still other causes. For instance, he claims at one point that the Jews are defiled by virtue of their clinging to the figural worship of the Mosaic law in the post-paschal era:

But when it was morning, or when the third era was manifested in its turn, the time of spiritual light, that is, the time of Christ, illuminating what is under the sun, with the old mist removed--during this time the former manner of worship was no longer acceptable, and what belonged to yesterday, the fat of the third day, the sacrifice, is no longer acceptable, but rather is abominable and rejected as worthless by God, and is reckoned a miasma for those who choose to offer them out of season.493

According to this line of reasoning, the Jews would be polluted by their stubborn cleaving to figural worship regardless of their complicity in Christ's death. Cyril's predilection for the term κάθαρσις to denote the morally regenerative aspect of Christ's

492 PG 68:1049b–c.
493 PG 68:700b–c.
work underscores this point; the Jews' commitment to figural worship, at a time when katharsis has been made available through the church's rite of baptism, ensures their abiding pollution.

Characteristically, Cyril is not content merely to assert Jewish pollution, but rather he locates and expatiates on icons of Jewish impurity embedded in the law itself. Cyril identifies one such figure in the instructions regarding those who are not permitted to celebrate the Passover at the proper time due to uncleanness (Num 9:10). Cyril interprets this verse in the light of Num 5:2, in which the Lord commands Moses to send "everyone unclean in soul" away from the camp. Cyril maintains in turn that this category of pollution encompasses those who have been polluted by contact with a corpse: "The holy scriptures call unclean in the soul of man the one who is polluted by a corpse; for he was prohibited from touching an inanimate body, and that old law accuses of impurity those who grieve for a neighbor or relative; accordingly, they were ejected from the camps." After making this clarification, Cyril goes on to proffer the following spiritual interpretation of Num 9:10: "those who are unclean in the soul of man, and for that reason celebrate on the second month in accordance with the law of the Passover, immolating a victim as a type of Christ, are none other than the Jews, polluted by their murder of Christ, and condemned on charges of impurity, because they insolently abused Emmanuel himself; accordingly,

494 See for example PG 69:537c.
495 PG 68:1081b.
496 PG 68:1081c.
497 PG 68:1081c.
they are necessarily excluded from our holy feast.” In this final clause Cyril makes a
direct correlation between the Jews' impurity and their exclusion from Christian
liturgical assemblies; spatial separation is a logical consequence of pollution, Cyril
implies, because pollution is transmitted through physical proximity and contact.

In the Glaphyra as well Cyril identifies the Jews as the figural referents of those
who are tainted by contact with a corpse. Cyril is commenting on Num 19:14, which
concerns the pollution that ensues from death in the home. He draws special attention
to the fact that when a person dies in his domicile, all the household vessels become
unclean. According to Cyril, the polluted house along with its tainted vessels image the
"Lord-killing (κυριοκτόνον) synagogue of the Jews." According to this and the
foregoing readings, the Jews are polluted by their homicidal contact with Jesus' corpse,
and anyone who associates with them, at least in a religious context, will contract their
contagion. It is worth noting that in his reading of Num 9 Cyril identifies those who do
not celebrate the Passover because they are away on a journey with heretics and
pagans, whereas those who are unclean shadow forth the Jews exclusively. Clearly,
then, the Jews represent a particular danger to Christians that otherwise problematic
groups do not pose, at least not to a comparable degree.

Several other readings in the Glaphyra advance along the same lines. One of the
most notable is Cyril's interpretation of the cleansing of the leper's house in Lev
14:33-53. According to this passage, a priest must inspect a house that has become

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498 PG 68:1081d-1084a. By way of contrast, Origen, Ex. Hom. 7.4, contends that the figural referents of
those unclean in the soul are in fact Gentile Christians, who were once tainted by the idolatrous practices
that they cultivated prior to their reception into the church.

infected with a fungal disease, and upon detection of an outbreak the house must be
isolated for seven days; anyone who enters it during this period will be unclean until
the evening. After this time of quarantine, the infected stones of the house are to be
thrown into an unclean place outside the city. If an attack breaks out once again, then
the priest is to demolish the entire house and remove its ruins to an unclean place
outside the city. According to Cyril, this complex Mosaic prescription, when
understood spiritually, recapitulates the whole history of Israel: "In these things the
entire mystery of the Jewish synagogue is clearly manifested to us, both those things
that have already happened to it from the beginning to the end, and those things that
would be done by Christ." 500

The leprous house, of course, represents the synagogue of the Jews, which early
in its history became corrupted by its own passions. The first visitation of the priest in
Lev 14 signifies God's sending of the prophets to the Jews in order to exhort them to
repent and seek divine mercy, while the subsequent period of seven days represents
God's consigning of Israel to Babylonian captivity for seventy years. The priest's return
to and reinspection of the house after a further outbreak adumbrates God's sending of
his only-begotten son, who found the synagogue still mired in passions and suffering
from impurity (ἀκαθαρσία).501 The mandate for the priest to demolish the house in
which the leprosy still abides and to deposit its ruins in an unclean site outside the city
foreshadows the fact that because Jesus discovered the synagogue to be tainted by
corruption and because the Jews pertinaciously rejected the friendship with God that

500 PG 69:565c.
501 PG 69:573b.
Jesus made available, the entire polity (σύστασις) of the Jews was consequently dissolved, and the people (τὸ ἔθνος) of the Jews was dispersed in an impure place.  

Such a claim suggests that Cyril conceived of post Christum Judaism as an aberrant projection from the pre-Christian past into the Christian present; after their rejection of Christ the Jews maintain the pretense of peoplehood, even though they are no longer divinely constituted as the people of God. Cyril goes on to expound the figural significance of the fact that the one who enters the leprous house after it has been isolated by the priest is unclean until the evening. For Cyril, this stipulation "clearly intimates that everyone who is joined with the Jews [after the dissolution of the synagogue] in one's way of thinking will participate totally in their pollution (ἀκαθαρσίας)." Implicitly, then, this Mosaic regulation functions as a parable illustrating the dangers of intercourse with the Jews, since social interaction with Jews surely substantially increases one's chances of being infected with Jewish habits of thought.

In yet another passage from the Glaphyra Cyril deems an actual outbreak of leprosy to be a type of Jewish pollution and a figural epitome of the sordid history of the synagogue. Here Cyril probes the spiritual significance of Num 12, in which Aaron and Miriam remonstrate with God concerning Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian woman.


503 PG 69:573c-d.

504 Philo, Origen, and Didymus all comment on the regulations of Lev 14:33-53, but none of them find an image of Jewish impurity therein. While Philo, Quod Deus 135, and Didymus, Ecc. Com. A 74.13, both deem the law in question to be a figural affirmation of the importance of self-examination, Origen, Rom. Com. 1.10 (PG 14:836b-c), cites this passage as cogent evidence that "the law is weak according to the letter, that is, according to the flesh."
According to Cyril, in this instance Aaron is a figure of the priesthood of the Jews, while Miriam represents the synagogue as a whole.⁵⁰⁵ Their grumbling, Cyril contends, represents the petulance of the Jews with respect to the inclusion of the Gentiles among the people of God. As a result of her parsimoniousness, God struck Miriam down with snow-white leprosy, thereby portending God's indignation toward the temerity of the Jews who would reject Jesus. God's subsequent departure from the camp signifies God's withdrawal from the synagogue after the Jewish rejection of Christ, and thus the indefinite non-participation of the Jews in the ongoing story of salvation history.⁵⁰⁶

Moreover, Cyril maintains that the fact that Miriam did not merely have a typical case of leprosy, but rather snow-white leprosy, possesses spiritual significance:

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⁵⁰⁵ PG 69:596a. Once more, we see Cyril's hermeneutical flexibility at work; Aaron, who elsewhere serves as a type of Christ the great priest, is here a figure of Jewish chauvinism.

⁵⁰⁶ Origen, Num. Hom. 7.1-7.5, also comments on this pericope at length, and in this instance his figural interpretation is mirrored at several points by that of Cyril. For instance, Origen identifies the synagogue as the figural referent of Miriam; he views the cloud's departure from the camp as an icon of the Jews' squandering of the grace of God when they blasphemed Christ; and he understands Miriam's return to the camp as a type of Israel's eschatological redemption. However, the discrepancies between Origen and Cyril's readings are just as numerous. Origen asserts that in this passage Miriam and Aaron signify not only the Jewish people as a whole, but also those heretics who reject the law and the prophets, as well as those Christians who read the Pentateuch and do not "show how it is necessary to understand 'in reality' that which was written 'in enigmas,' that is to say, when one does not spiritually explicate the readings of the law" (7.2; SC 29:139). Furthermore, Origen and Cyril disagree on the manner in which the Jews denigrate Christ (as imaged by Moses); Origen insists that they do so by refusing to read the law spiritually, while Cyril sees the fault of the Jews indicated here not as hermeneutical, but rather communal, inasmuch as they refuse to accept the fact that thanks to Christ Gentiles can belong to the people of God. Finally, Origen's treatment of this text includes a passage that one cannot imagine finding in Cyril: "In truth, if one considers Israel's ancient honors, when God lavished on it the order of the high priest, the symbols of the priesthood, the ministry of the Levites, the majesty of the temple, the prophetic dignity, when on the earth they enjoyed heavenly privileges--what honor! what glory!" (7.4; SC 29:145). Thus even in one of the rare instances in which Origen invests a legal text with meaning prejudicial to the Jews, he also finds occasion to affirm the profound dignity and merit of the tabernacle cult.
And since the synagogue of the Jews was understandably cut off (ἀπενοσφίζετο), it was straightaway rendered unclean; and it was not simply unclean (ἀκάθαρτος οὐχ ἀπλῶς), but rather it attained to the height of that condition. For to say that the one who became a leper was made the color of snow is to say that she suffered the fullest extent of the disease. What could be whiter than snow?\footnote{PG 69:601c.}

Here Cyril is not content to affirm Jewish pollution, but goes on to assert that it is maximally rank. He then gives the spiritual translation of Miriam's separation from the camp for a seven-day period, only after which did the people set out: "we ourselves who believe in Christ await the purification (καθαρισμὸν) of the Jews."\footnote{PG 69:604d.} Hence Cyril intimates that the current relationship between Jews and Christians should imitate that which obtained between Miriam and the rest of the Jews during that seven-day period, which for Cyril images the course of history prior to the \textit{parousia}; that is to say, it is imperative that the two communities be spatially segregated, thereby ensuring the containment of Jewish pollution.

5.2.2: Boundaries and Exclusion

We have seen in the preceding section that in his figural ascription of pollution to the Jews Cyril stresses the spatial implications of impurity. Accordingly, his identification of the Jews as prime vessels of pollution provides the theoretical underwriting for the social and religious segregation of Christians from Jews; the former, who have been purified by the waters of baptism, must take pains to avoid
contact with the latter, who have refused purification and thus are agents of impurity. In this way the Mosaic cult, which maintains a zone of purity precisely by spatially isolating sources of pollution, emerges from Cyril’s spiritual exegesis as a template for the vigilant policing of the boundaries between the church and the synagogue for the sake of protecting purified Christians from Jewish taint.

Indeed, at numerous points Cyril reiterates the importance of maintaining the thoroughgoing separation of the pure from the polluted. When commenting on the consecration of the tabernacle as stipulated in Exod 30, Cyril remarks that "holy and priestly things are untouched by those who are still profane," and cites 2 Cor 6:14 as corroboration: "What communion does light have with darkness?" Cyril quotes this same Pauline text in a later passage, in which he elaborates the concept of impurity of soul; the choirs of the holy, Cyril admonishes, are not permitted to consort with the impure. While it must be conceded that Cyril rarely explicitly enunciates the socio-political implications of his mapping of the categories of purity and impurity onto the church and the synagogue, those implications are clear enough, at least in their broad outlines: Christians should avoid any sort of association with their Jewish counterparts lest they incur Jewish pollution, just as the Israelites assiduously shunned unclean persons and objects in order to maintain their state of purity.

Cyril's exegetical imagination is also captured by the enumeration of the bodily defects that disqualify a man of Aaronic lineage from the priestly office, as spelled out in Lev 21:16–24. According to Cyril, while the Aaronic priesthood spiritually signifies all

509 PG 68:645c.
510 PG 68:892c-d.
those "who have been sanctified in Christ the great and true high priest," that is, all baptized Christians, several of the classes of men excluded from that priesthood represent the Jews en masse. One such class is composed of the blind, who represent those who do not turn their eyes to what is just and right. Cyril notes that Jeremiah (22:17) leveled precisely this charge against Jerusalem, which Cyril dubs "the mother of the Jews (τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων μητέρα)." Likewise, the lame men who are debarred from the priesthood intimate the Jews, who were unwilling to walk on the straight paths that lead to Christ, but rather trod "deviant and limping paths." Cyril also finds the Jews to be imaged by the excluded hunchbacks, who represent those who are inclined to the passions of the flesh, fixing their eyes on earthly rather than heavenly things. Finally, Jews are also spiritually signified by those with diseased eyes, since the former believe in God the Father but "most mindlessly" reject his only-begotten Son. All of these somatic disqualifications practically function as ritual defilements, inasmuch as they entail the spatial exclusion of certain men of the priestly caste from approaching the altar or the veil of the sanctuary. If one bears in mind Cyril's figural correlation of the Aaronic priesthood with the entire body of Christian believers, then it becomes apparent that these figural identifications require as their practical corollary the preservation of distance between Jews and Christians, since the latter

511 PG 68:785a.
512 PG 68:785c.
513 PG 68:788a.
514 PG 68:789b.
515 PG 68:792a-b.
alone officiate at the veil and the altar of the true tabernacle. Moreover, it should also be noted that in the quotation from Linders reproduced above, he observes that Roman Jewry law sometimes used the language of deformity and illness to characterize Jewish belief and life. Once again, then, we find a point of convergence between Cyril's spiritual reading of the Mosaic law and contemporary Roman Jewry law.

It is worth pondering for a moment why Cyril is so keen to find figural warrants in the Mosaic law for the propriety and indeed necessity of maintaining imporous boundaries between church and synagogue. After all, Cyril's Alexandria appears by all accounts to be a place in which overt Judaizing was a negligible phenomenon. On the other hand, as we have seen in the Introduction, McGuckin contends on the basis of his early Festal Letters that Cyril was agitated over the phenomenon of at least some Alexandrian Christians taking part in Jewish festivals. It is certainly possible that such "leakage" occurred, in which case Cyril's treatment of pollution would have had immediate practical implications. However, even if McGuckin is overstating his case and the boundaries between church and synagogue in Alexandria were by Cyril's time rather impermeable, Cyril's anti-Jewish deployment of the category of pollution could reflect his solicitousness to justify and further shore up those boundaries. Cyril was no doubt aware that in other cities of the eastern empire, such as Antioch, the Christian and Jewish communities were rather more closely intertwined than those in Alexandria, and this cognizance alone may have been sufficient to foster worries about the potential for Jewish-Christian interpenetration in Alexandria. At any rate, we know from Socrates' narrative and Cyril's early Festal Letters that he took the Alexandrian Jewry seriously as a religious and socio-political rival to the church. In any event, then,
it is highly likely that his anti-Jewish deployment of the notion of pollution was animated at least in part by pastoral anxieties incited by the proximity of Jews and Christians in Alexandria, and in turn Cyril's Alexandrian milieu imbued his ascription of pollution to the Jews with resonances that it might otherwise lack.

5.3: Supersession and Banishment

For Cyril, Jewish pollution entails devastating soteriological consequences; by defiling their hands with the blood of Christ, the Jews have decisively renounced their protagonistic role in salvation history, which they ceded to the church of the Gentiles. Thus it will be fitting to commence our inquiry into Cyril's exegetical account of the theological eclipse of Israel with a piece of exegesis in which he explicitly yokes together the notions of Jewish pollution and supersession, both of which he posits as direct effects of Christ's death. The Pentateuchal text in question is Num 6:9-11, which decrees apropos a Nazarite that "if anyone should die suddenly nearby him, the head of his vow will be defiled immediately, and he will shave his head on whatever day he will be purified; on the seventh day he will be shaved." According to Cyril, this incurring of pollution foreshadows the impurity contracted by the Israelites from their killing of Christ. As a result of this pollution, the "pedagogy of the law" was necessarily "shaven," that is, nullified, since "seven days" denotes the era of the law, whereas Christ's resurrection is often signified in Scripture by the "eighth day." Cyril goes on to insist, however, that it is not only the pedagogy of the law that is "shorn," but also

516 PG 68:1048d.
517 PG 68:1049b-c.
Israel itself, "since it suffered pollution upon contact with the dead, that is, since it is liable to the charge of Lord-killing."518 Accordingly, the one whose hair is shaved and who offers the prescribed sacrifices on the eighth day is a type of the Christian, who has jettisoned "the crassness of the Mosaic history and of figural and shadowy worship" and possesses "the truly holy knowledge and pedagogy of the statutes handed down by Christ."519 In this way Cyril discerns in an arcane regulation concerning a Nazarite votary a figural representation of the annulment of the law and the displacement of Israel from salvation history, as well as the replacement of the law and Israel by the evangelical ordinances and the church.

Cyril finds images of Israel’s reversal of soteriological fortunes littered throughout the law. His interpretation of the two censuses of the Levites, described in Num 3:15-19 and 4:34-49, is a case in point. Cyril first establishes that the levitical clan of the Kohathites, who were responsible for the transport of the holiest implements of the tabernacle, signify those who have been sanctified in Christ through faith; the Gershonites and Merarites, on the other hand, represent the people of Israel.520 Cyril goes on to aver that the fact that the Kohathites were registered second in the first census but first in the second census intimates the fact that while Israel was called first, the throng of the Gentiles entered in the "middle time," with the result that the first

518 PG 68:1052a-b.
519 PG 68:1053b.
520 PG 68:856b-c. In a particularly vivid illustration of Cyril’s hermeneutical ductility, Cyril maintains in a passage just below this one that Korah, who was a Kohathite, spiritually signifies the entire synagogue, which proved itself unworthy of the divine service entrusted to it.
became last and the last first.\textsuperscript{521} Cyril even suggests that in the dominical saying to which he thus alludes (Matt 20:16) Jesus is referring directly to the inversion of the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles that would occur after his death.

For the remainder of this section, we will examine how Cyril construes images of civic banishment and exile in particular as figural confirmations of the \textit{post Christum} shunting of the Jews onto the sidelines of salvation history. In light of the events of 414/15 in Alexandria and the various affronts to the civic and legal status of the Jews throughout the increasingly Christian empire, such an exegetical strategy merits a probing for its socio-political resonance. To be sure, Cyril never explicitly asserts that the theological supersession of the Jews does or should entail concrete social and political corollaries for his Jewish contemporaries. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Cyril's figural correlations between instances of expulsion, dispossession, and exile in the Mosaic law and the status of the Jews in salvation history is entirely without social and political valences. It should emerge in what follows that there are certain parallels between the way in which Cyril evokes the \textit{post Christum} soteriological status of Israel and the declining legal and civic standing of the Jews in late antique society.

We may begin with Cyril's interpretation of Lev 25, wherein God enacts a number of regulations concerning the redemption of houses. If one who lives within a walled city sells his house, he can redeem that house during the year of remission; however, once that year has elapsed, the house can no longer be redeemed. On the other hand, houses in unwalled towns and Levitical houses are perpetually redeemable.

\textsuperscript{521} PG 68:857b-c.
After conceding that the spiritual significance of this passage is particularly recondite, Cyril interprets this ordinance as a coded reference to the different windows of time granted to Jews and Gentiles for the reception of Christ in faith. Those who possess homes in walled cities spiritually signify the Jews under the regime of the Mosaic law, which served as a sort of fortification, or wall, against the egregious ignorance of the nations and protected the Jews from satanic incursions into their minds.\textsuperscript{522} The Israelites, however, "indifferently throwing aside as worthless the possession that was assigned to them," sold themselves to Satan. Upon the advent of Christ, imaged by the year of remission, the Jews failed to reclaim their alienated possession by believing in him, and hence they "will be perpetually (διηνεκῶς) subject to the one who bought them, that is, to Satan."\textsuperscript{523}

In contrast, alienated houses in unwalled cities and Levitical property, both of which Cyril associates with the Gentiles, are perpetually redeemable "since the throng of the nations is without assistance, and since it suffers from a rude and ignorant mind. . . it is always redeemable, because God is compassionate."\textsuperscript{524} Thus Cyril has Palladius observe that "Israel will sell its own possession, not having recognized the year of salvation; but the nations will hold onto hope, and through Christ there will be a recuperation of the goods of nature." As in the case of the two censuses, here Cyril stresses how the relationship that now exists between Jews and Gentile Christians is one of inversion; the formerly privileged Jews appear to cede their pride of place

\textsuperscript{522} PG 68:869c-d.
\textsuperscript{523} PG 68:872a.
\textsuperscript{524} PG 68:872a-b.
permanently to the previously disadvantaged and benighted Gentiles. Furthermore, after the incarnation faith in Christ remains a live possibility for Gentiles, while in contrast it would seem to be out of the reach of the Jews, who have sold themselves into slavery to Satan.  

Cyril further develops his reading of Lev 25 by glossing Ezek 46:16-18, in which the Lord tells the prophet that if a prince gives a gift to his son, then the latter will keep it in perpetuity, whereas if the prince gives a gift to his slave, it will revert to the prince on the year of the slave's remission. Unsurprisingly, Cyril imposes the son/slave distinction onto Christians and Jews, respectively:

But for those who have a servile spirit, that is, for the Israelites, who do not accept free faith, but still lie under a yoke of profane and loathsome sin, the grace given through Moses, that is, knowledge in the law, which is a pedagogue leading to the truth, is cast aside and taken away. And there is absolutely no possession (κλῆρος) for them with the saints, and no portion (μερὶς) with Christ. Scripture says, For to those who have, it will be given and it will abound, but from the one who has not, even what he seems to have will be taken from him (Matt 13:12).

The Jews once possessed a precious gift from God in the law, but because they refused faith in Christ they are wholly bereft of the much greater gift made available through him. Here, then, Cyril employs the imagery of alienated property in order to evoke the Jews' soteriological poverty. It would seem from his citation of the Matthean verse that

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525 Philo and Origen both comment on this ordinance, but neither anticipate Cyril’s reading. Philo, Spec. Leg. 2.118, states that "the reason for these enactments is that God wills to give even strangers an opportunity of becoming firmly established in the land" (PCW:V.114; Yonge, 579). Origen, Lev. Hom. 15.1-3 (SC 287:250-60), bases an entire homily on this text, but his figural reading is not at all anti-Jewish, but rather pertains to Christian morality.

526 PG 68:872c-d.

527 PG 68:873c-d.
Cyril does not view this disinheritance of the Jews as a temporary chastisement, but rather a deprivation that can only be exacerbated.

Cyril's figural reading of the instructions of Deut 21:10-14 concerning the capture of a beautiful woman and her subsequent dismissal by her husband also exploits an image of banishment and exile in order to elucidate the soteriological repercussions of Israel's rejection of Christ. Cyril interprets this set of regulations as a figural resumé of the most pivotal moments in Israelite history, beginning with liberation from slavery in Egypt all the way to the _post Christum_ synagogue. For instance, the mandated shaving of the woman's head signifies how the pedagogy of the law removed all polytheistic notions from the Israelites' minds, and the month-long period of mourning granted to her calls to mind the initial wistfulness of liberated Israel for its old life in Egypt.\(^{528}\) Furthermore, if the husband no longer wishes to keep the captured woman as his bride, he may eject her from his house. Cyril clearly assumes that the expelled bride is sent away with no share in her husband's estate, and thus he construes the ejection of the bride as an intimation of how, when the synagogue acted violently toward Christ, it became hated (μεμίσηται) by and unwelcome (ἀνεθέλητος) to God, who expelled it from the divine hearth (ἑστίας).

Here, then, we have a clear example of Cyril lifting up an image of an impoverished refugee as a figure of the Jewish people _post Christum_.

Moreover, in several of the passages already canvassed for their anti-Jewish treatment of pollution, Cyril makes figural links between images of exile and the

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\(^{528}\) PG 69:653a-657b.

\(^{529}\) PG 69:657c-d.
soteriological plight of the Jews after the death and resurrection of Christ. For instance, in his interpretation of the regulations of Lev 14 regarding a domestic outbreak of leprosy, Cyril adverters to the fact that if there is a second outbreak of leprosy in a house, then the priest must tear down the entire edifice and deposit the rubble outside the city in an unclean place. According to Cyril, this ordinance hints at the current status of the Jews vis-à-vis the divine economy of salvation; when it acted insolently toward Christ, and thus decisively rejected friendship with God, the synagogue was dissolved and the people (τὸ ἔθνος) of the Jews was scattered abroad (διεσκορπίσθη), bereft of king, sacrifices, and all the accoutrements of the Mosaic cult. In other words, as punishment for their hostility toward Christ God sentences the Jews to exile, penury, and homelessness.

Cyril's reading of Num 12 unfolds according to the same pattern. One will recall that in this narrative Miriam is stricken with leprosy and banished from the Israelite camp for seven days because of her opposition to Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian woman. According to Cyril, this story is a parable of how the Jews, after rejecting Jesus and refusing to coalesce with the believing Gentiles to form the new people of God, were forsaken by God and thrust outside the boundaries of the true tabernacle of the church. The corollary of this interpretation, of course, is that the church is to keep its distance from the outcast synagogue. Once again, then, Cyril cites an image of banishment and exile as an apt figure of the marginalization of the Jews in the divine economy of salvation.

530 PG 69:573b-c.
When considered in the light of Cyril's Alexandrian context and the wider backdrop of Jewish-Christian relations in the Theodosian era, a period when the question of the place of the Jews in the civic milieu was a cause of consternation for ecclesiastical and imperial officials alike, then the ensemble of readings examined above take on social and political resonance. It is plausible, then, that Cyril's evocation of the soteriological status of the Jewish people by means of images of banishment and exile would have called to the reader's mind the plight of their Jewish contemporaries, whose legal and civic prerogatives were being increasingly contested, sometimes violently so. At the very least, such a pattern of interpretation shares an implication with Cyril's depiction of the Jews as the polluted people *par excellence*: it is incumbent on Christians to maintain spatial and social distance from the Jews. These observations are not meant to suggest that Cyril intended for these spiritual interpretations to elicit concrete actions that would exacerbate the already tenuous socio-political standing of the Jews in late Roman society. However, it seems unlikely that the rapidly deteriorating socio-political status of the synagogue in the late fourth and early fifth centuries did not in any way impinge on this line of interpretation.

5.4: Israel's Eschatological Future

In many of the readings we have already inspected and in yet other places as well, Cyril also makes it manifest that Israel's soteriological exile will have a terminus. Let us return for a moment to Cyril's treatment of the banished wife (Deut 21), and in particular his account of the figural significance of the stipulation that her husband must not sell her into slavery if he decides to send her away (v. 14). According to Cyril,
this proviso obliquely indicates that although Israel no longer enjoyed intimacy with the God's presence (the divine ἑστία), it was not sold to Satan on account of its persistent, if perverse, adherence to the one true God and the law of Moses. Cyril makes this observation against an eschatological horizon; the post Christum alienation of Israel from the divine presence, he implies, does not foreclose the prospect of ultimate reconciliation. Indeed, as we will see, Cyril returns almost obsessively to the question of the ultimate soteriological outcome for the synagogue, and here as elsewhere he finds in the Mosaic law figural hints of the possibility if not the certainty of the eschatological salvation of Israel.

Indeed, on numerous occasions Cyril finds in the same Pentateuchal passage figural indications of both Israel's soteriological dispossession and alienation from the divine presence on the one hand and its eschatological merger into the church on the other. Yet again, Cyril's exegeses of the cleansing of a leper's house and Miriam's punitive affliction with leprosy are germane. As noted above, Cyril discerns in the prescriptions for cleansing a house in which leprosy has broken out (Lev 14:33-45) a figural synopsis of Israel's entire history. After making a figural correlation between the removal of the rubble of the diseased house outside the city and the soteriological standing of Israel post Christum, Cyril goes on to note that the Jewish people will remain in a state of disarray and exile for an extensive period of time, indeed, until the fullness of the Gentiles enters in. Eventually, however, Christ will have mercy on them, as

531 PG 69:657d. This claim seems to contradict the passage in the De Adoratione et Cultu where Cyril clearly states that Israel sold itself into slavery to Satan and that the patrimony that it cast aside is irrecoverable (PG 68:869c-d).
prophesied in Mic 4:6 and Hos 3:4-5. Cyril takes the occasion to underline the desperate need of the synagogue for the purgation of Christ: "not otherwise could the synagogue be cleaned from the filth of infidelity and washed of its various stains of sin, except through the blessing of Christ alone, and through confession of faith in him, and sanctification by holy baptism." As we will see more amply below, Cyril's affirmation of the eschatological integration of Israel into the church is usually accompanied by an insistence that Israel must first undergo an especially extensive program of purification.

Cyril plots a similar narrative of exile/dispossession and reconciliation in his spiritual interpretation of Miriam's leprosy (Num 12:1-15). He claims that what transpires after the leprous Miriam is isolated from the community shadows forth the eschatological purification of the Jews. Ever sensitive to Pauline frequencies, he notes that Moses' supplication to God to heal Miriam's leprosy foreshadows the anguish of Paul, as voiced in Rom 10:1, for his afflicted kinsmen. Cyril goes on to claim that Miriam's healing after her seven-day banishment is a figure of Israel's ultimate purification (καθαρισμὸν) through faith in Christ, a moment that Christians anticipate. Both here and elsewhere, Cyril explicitly defers the integration of Israel into the church to the eschaton. Accordingly, until the last days Israel remains a dispersed and homeless people, spiritually diseased and hence estranged from the

533 PG 69:577a.
534 PG 69:604a.
535 PG 69:604d.
divine presence tabernacled in the church. It is noteworthy that Cyril remarks that Christians await (περιμενοῦμεν) the purification of the Jews; thus there is no indication that he considers it incumbent on Christians to hasten the Jews' purification through proselytism.

The foregoing two passages represent the mere tip of the iceberg constituted by the aggregate of Cyril's reflections, which invariably arise in the course of exegesis of the Mosaic law, on the eschatological destiny of Israel. Hence at this point we will canvass a wide range of texts in which Cyril finds images of Israel's eschatological fate in the precepts and narratives of the law. It should be noted from the outset that Cyril's treatment of this theological topos is not without a certain ambiguity. We have already seen that in several places in the De Adoratione et Cultu Cyril seems to suggest that the Jews are inexorably headed toward eschatological perdition. Especially noteworthy are the instances in which Cyril suggests that the son of lawlessness mentioned in 2 Thess 2 will figure prominently in Israel's eschatological future. For instance, when glossing Exod 30:9, which mandates that the Israelites not place another incense on the altar than the one expressly stipulated, Cyril declares the Jews to be violators of this law inasmuch as

they insult with their rebellions the incense that is compound and subtle, that is, Christ. And they have persisted in this, having no share in this truly holy and divine fragrance; but they will receive (παραδέξονται) another in his place, the son of lawlessness, who resists and is raised above everything called god or worship, so that he might sit in the temple of God, according to what is written, showing himself to be God (2 Thess 2:3-4).536

536 PG 68:624b-c.
The future tense of the verb παραδέξονται strongly suggests that Cyril is envisioning the Jews' reception of this figure in an eschatological context. Cyril levels the same charge with reference to a different law, Deut 17:14-15, which forbids the Israelites to appoint a foreigner (ἐπὶ σεαυτὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄλλοτριον) as their king. Cyril interprets the kinsman (ἀδελφός) whom the Israelites were instructed to appoint as a figure of Christ, whom the Israelites refused to accept as king, preferring instead to submit themselves to the son of perdition, the Anti-Christ, who is not of the blood of Israel, but rather is a foreigner (ἀλλογενῆ) belonging to another tribe (ἔκφυλόν).

Cyril's insistence that Israel will embrace the alien Anti-Christ in lieu of their kinsman Christ would certainly not seem to bode well for Israel eschatologically. Moreover, there are a few other passages in the De Adoratione et Cultu that could reasonably be taken to insinuate the conclusive elimination of the Jews from salvation history. For instance, in a passage in which Cyril identifies the "fornicating and profane wife" of Lev 21:14-15 with "the synagogue of the Jews," he interprets the burning of the rejected wife as a type of the fact that "the synagogue of the Jews is given to fire as something unholy and profane, inasmuch as it follows the judgments of the scribes and Pharisees and dedicates its whole mind to human ordinances. . . . Therefore that which prostituted itself and utterly disregarded the spiritual bridegroom from above is made food for fire." In another place, Cyril seems to affirm

537 PG 68:576b.

538 PG 68:576d. Thus Cyril contravenes the notion that the Antichrist would be a Jew, which goes back at least as far as Irenaeus, who cites Jer. 8:16 as evidence that the Antichrist would be from the tribe of Dan (haer. 5.30.2).

539 PG 68:813b. Origen, Lev Hom. 12.6, characteristically declares that Christians, not Jews, are figurally implicated by this passage: "If anyone of us should sin, he is 'cast out'; even if he is not cast out by the
the peremptoriness of Israel's ruin when he claims that God was not ignorant of "the disobedience and refractoriness of Jerusalem, and that on account of this fault those who are of Israel will be destroyed (ὀλοθρευθήσονται) as slayers of the Lord who acted savagely and disgracefully toward the Son."540 One should note once more the eschatological horizon implied by the future tense of ὀλοθρευθήσονται. Based on passages such as these, the eschatological prospects of Israel would appear none too bright.

However, the preponderance of Cyril's comments on Israel's eschatological destiny points in a more sanguine direction. Indeed, Cyril qualifies the passage quoted immediately above by conceding that "not the entire root of Jerusalem will be undone, but it will remain destitute of children, as it were, awaiting the final time in the last days, during which it will be saved, after the nations."541 Cyril's preoccupation with the ultimate salvation of at least a remnant of Israel is in large part a function of the deeply Pauline cast of his thinking. This is apparent from the fact that time and again Cyril returns to Paul's reflections on Israel's unbelief in Rom 9-11 as the locus classicus of Christian thinking on the ultimate soteriological outcome for Israel. However, we will discover below that Cyril does not present Paul as the exclusive touchstone of biblical teaching on the topic, but rather he frequently adduces several of the prophets, whose

bishop, either because it is secret or because he is meanwhile judged leniently, he is nevertheless 'cast out' by the conscience of sin. . . . She is called 'polluted' who, although she did not commit sin entirely, yet by what she thought, what she willed, what she chose, although she did not admit it, is 'polluted' and is not chosen by 'the great high priest'" (SC 287:190; Barkley, 229).

540 PG 68:704a.
541 PG 68:704a-b.
teaching about the return of Israel to the Lord in the last days, Cyril implies, Paul simply reiterates.

In order to place Cyril's comments on Israel's eschatological fate in their proper textual matrix, we must first take stock of his tendency to find in the law a cache of images that evoke the merging of Israelites and Gentiles in the church of Christ. Cyril rarely misses the opportunity to interpret any Pentateuchal instance of the conjunction of the numbers two and one as an enigma of this ecclesial integration. For instance, Cyril construes the two calves and one ram sacrificed on Passover in precisely this fashion: "And so there are two calves; for the people are two, I mean Israel on the one hand and the Gentiles on the other. But the ram is one; for we are united in Christ."\(^{542}\) Cyril also tends to interpret any yoking together of two animals along the same lines. Thus he cites the two heifers of Num 7:16 as a type "of the two peoples, having come together into one from two, connected in spiritual unity through the faith that is for us and among us."\(^{543}\) Later, in his exposition of the same text Cyril maintains that the calves yoked together in pairs obliquely signify "the two peoples, no longer separated by the unlikeness of dogmas and life, and brought together and assembled, patiently and vigorously, under the one yoke of the Savior."\(^{544}\) The accumulation of passages such as these\(^{545}\) leaves the distinct impression that for Cyril the coalescence of Jews and Gentiles in the church is an incontrovertible datum in the history of salvation.

542 PG 68:1089a.
543 PG 68:713a.
544 PG 68:716b-c.
545 See further examples in PG 68:612a; 1097d.
This positing of ecclesial integration is problematized, of course, by a fact that Cyril points out with alacrity: Israel in fact rejected faith in Christ and bears the guilt for his murder. I submit that the tension created by this dual affirmation is at least one reason for Cyril's preoccupation with the question of Israel's eschatological destiny. After all, if the merging of Israel and the nations in the body of the church is a basic biblical legomenon, but Israel's rejection of Christ and subsequent estrangement from God is undeniable as a matter of historical record, then one is faced with a paradox that admits only of an eschatological resolution: Israel and the church of the Gentiles will merge definitively in the eschatological consummation of salvation. Of course, it hardly needs to be pointed out that such a pattern of thought is strikingly reminiscent of that of Paul in Rom 9-11.

Now it remains to scrutinize Cyril's account of this resolution, images of which he finds woven throughout the law. In several cases, including the ones from the Glaphyra examined above, Cyril detects figures of the return of Israel to the Lord in the last days. Cyril finds such an intimation in Lev 22:12-14, which posits that if a priest's daughter who marries a foreigner is rejected by her husband or becomes a widow, then "she will return to her paternal home, as in her youth; she will eat of her father's food."546 According to Cyril, one can espy in these terse instructions the mystery of Israel's eschatological return to God. Cyril's opening exegetical gambit is to make a figural identification between the priest and Moses, and between the priest's daughter and Israel:

546 PG 68:805b.
The blessed Moses became like a father to the synagogue of the Jews. And so the latter was a daughter of a priest; for Moses was a priest, inasmuch as he was from the blood and tribe of Levi. But his daughter was joined with a man of another race. . . . it devoted itself to the teaching and ordinances of men, and it was fruitful in the traditions of others. . . . For by no means admitting the bridegroom from God the Father above, it accepts the words of the scribes and the Pharisees. For the widow cast out on account of impiety against Christ is taken to be the synagogue of the Jews, and it has remained in its sins, and while it has by no means acquired spiritual goods, it has persisted for a long time in this [state].

Cyril goes on to consider the spiritual meaning of the fact that the priest's daughter is allowed to return to the abode of her father, who now functions as an icon of God the Father rather than Moses:

But the synagogue will return to its paternal house; for it will be called to God through faith, and it will bear, along with us, the name of the Father, the demiurge of all things, and it will become a participant in the blessing of Christ. The word of the prophet will make this mystery clear to you, for it says, For the sons of Israel will sit for many days, without a king or a ruler, and there will be no sacrifice, nor altar, nor priest, nor manifestations, and after these things the sons of Israel will return, and they will seek the Lord their God and their king, and they will stand before the Lord and before his goods in the last days (Hos 3:4-5).

In this passage, at least, Cyril seems to envision the Israel who returns to the house of God simply as "the synagogue of the Jews," rather than as a handful of chosen Jews. However, in other places Cyril makes a clear distinction between the vast majority of the Jews, whom he portrays as a massa damnata, and a select remnant of Israel that will find eschatological deliverance. Cyril's interpretation of the survival of Joshua and Caleb alone out of their entire generation of Israelites is a good example.

547 PG 68:805c-808b.
548 PG 68:808b-c.
According to Cyril, their preservation signifies that Israel is not entirely without hope, inasmuch as they themselves prefigure the remnant of Israel that will be saved. Cyril corroborates his point with what is almost certainly a paraphrase of Isa 10:21-22: "For a remnant (κατάλειμμα) will be saved (σέσωσται), according to the voice of the prophet, whose type could be Caleb and Joshua, who alone out of all were preserved (καταλελειμμένοι)." Manifestly, then, it is not the entire synagogue that will return to the merciful arms of God, but rather only a quorum of its constituents.

This same notion is also expressed in a passage that has already received some attention, namely, Cyril's interpretation of Lev 22:27-28, which decrees that a calf or sheep should not be slaughtered on the same day as its young. Here Cyril's ambiguous stance on the ultimate salvation of Israel almost shades into contradiction. When Palladius inquires about the spiritual significance of this injunction, Cyril replies by noting that God was not unaware of the disobedience and the refractoriness of Jerusalem, and that on account of this fault those who are of Israel (οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ) will be destroyed as slayers of the Lord, who acted savagely and disgracefully toward the Son; however, not the entire root (εἰσάπαν ὁλόριζος) of Jerusalem will be undone, but it will

549 PG 68:352b. 550 PG 68:352b. For the purposes of comparison, here is the Septuagintal text of Isa 10:21-22: "And that which is preserved (τὸ καταλείφθην) of Jacob will belong to the mighty God. And if the people of Israel should become like the sand of the sea, a remnant (καταλείμμα) of them will be saved (σωθήσεται)." It is also worth noting that, as in his interpretation of Lev 22, Cyril supports his case for the eschatological salvation of (at least a remnant of) Israel without citing Paul, but rather adducing a single prophetic text. 551 Eusebius, Praep. 8.8., offers a moralizing interpretation of this ordinance, holding that it was intended to inculcate gentleness and humanity.
remain destitute of children, as it were, awaiting the final time in the last days on which it will be saved, running after the nations. . . . For all Israel (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ) will be saved, after a band from the nations has taken up residence in the divine precincts.  

Thus the mother cow or sheep represents the root of Israel to be spared, while their children signify all the Jews who will meet their demise on account of their culpability for the death of Christ. The ambiguity of this passage arises from the fact that Cyril first seems to assert the destruction of the entire synagogue (οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ), then concedes that not the entire root of Israel (εἰσάπαν ὁλόριζος) will meet this end, and finally asserts the Pauline dictum that all Israel (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ) will be saved. The simplest explanation for this ambiguity is that Cyril understands "all Israel" to be the entire remnant of Israel that will find eschatological redemption. At the very least, one can infer from this passage that Cyril wishes to hold in tandem the notions that the synagogue will undergo harsh chastisement if not total dissolution before the eschaton for its complicity in Christ's death, and that at least some Jews, perhaps all of those who survive this chastisement, will elude eschatological destruction, thus ensuring that God's election of Israel was not entirely in vain.

Whereas in this passage Cyril simply notes that the entrance of (some of) the Jews into the church is subsequent to that of the Gentiles ("after a band from the nations"), in other places he intimates that the Jews who are eschatologically incorporated into the church will remain in some fashion subordinate to the Gentiles who have preceded them. For instance, in his gloss on the order of the procession of

552 PG 68:704a-b.
tribal leaders in Num 7, Cyril observes that the tribes whose namesakes were born of free women led the way, while those tribes whose namesakes were born of slave women followed behind. Cyril elucidates the spiritual significance of this sequence thus, tacitly drawing on Paul's contrast of Sarah and Hagar in Gal 4:21-26:

It is perhaps an enigma, I think, of the fact that those things introduced by Christ have a higher rank with God than those things introduced by the law, and that the last were placed first, and the first last. For those who were older in age and were for this reason firstborn, that is, Israel, come behind the nations. And those who had a servile spirit, the sons of servile Jerusalem, will yield that which is eminent in glory to the sons of the free Jerusalem, which is the mother of those of us who have been justified in Christ, and they will defer to the free position of those of us who have been justified by Christ.553

A little further down Cyril makes the eschatological context of his remarks patent:

"And so understand that those who are from the free woman come first and are honored greatly, and those who are from a slave follow them; or is what the blessed Paul himself wrote to us not crystal-clear? For he says, When the fullness of the Gentiles enter in, then all Israel will be saved."554 It follows from this that Cyril understands the tribal procession of Num 7 as an image of the eschatological church; just as the descendents of free women have pride of place in the procession, so will the Gentile Christians possess "that which is eminent in glory" in the eschaton, despite the fact that Israel's election was chronologically prior. Already, then, we have a strong hint that a certain degree of asymmetry will obtain in the eschatological church after some portion of Israel is finally admitted.

553 PG 68:720c-d.
554 PG 68:721d.
Another such hint is Cyril's insinuation that the Israelites who will enter the
divine precincts of the eschatological church will do so in a servile manner. Indeed, he
gives no indication that the menial nature of the "sons of servile Jerusalem" will in any
way be mitigated upon their reception into the church. Such an intimation only
intensifies the impression of asymmetry between Gentile and Jewish members of the
eschatological church. Finally, it is worth noting that despite his quotation of Rom
11:25 in this passage, Cyril does not mention Paul's immediately antecedent analogy of
the cultivated olive tree and the wild olive shoot. Perhaps this is because Paul's
development of this imagery is in tension with Cyril's picture of the eschatological
redemption of Israel, inasmuch as Paul's identification of the wild olive shoots with
Gentile Christians seems to bias the asymmetry between Jews and Gentiles in the
eschaton in the favor of the former. Thus while for Cyril Israel's chronological priority
in the divine economy is ultimately of no salvific benefit for the Jews, and in fact even
seems to be a liability, for Paul the anteriority of Israel's election retains abiding
soteriological significance redounding to the Jews' advantage.555

In still another passage Cyril insinuates that Israel will possess a subservient
status in the eschatological people of God. I refer here to Cyril's spiritual reading of
Num 9:1-14, in which the Lord gives Moses instructions with respect to cases in which

555 It is worth underlining the fact that Cyril, despite circling back time and again to Rom 11:25-26,
consistently passes over in silence the image of the root and branches that Paul elaborates earlier in the
chapter. It is not difficult to speculate on why this might be the case; in his deployment of this image
Paul seems to posit the priority of Israel in the divine economy of salvation not only in a merely
chronological sense (which Cyril clearly affirms), but also in an ontological sense, insofar as the election
of Israel is and always remains the condition of the possibility of Gentile inclusion in the history of
salvation: "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their
place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember
that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you" (Rom 11:17-18).
certain Israelites are unable to celebrate the Passover in a punctual manner. We have already mined this text for its figural identification of those who are "unclean in soul" with the Jews. However, this passage also contains one of Cyril's most concentrated reflections on the eschatological fate of Israel in the works at hand. He avers that the Jews were absent and went astray at the time when the author of the life of all was perfected through sufferings; nevertheless, by the mercy of the one who desires to save all (1 Tim 2:4), they themselves will become participants in Christ in the times to follow, on the second month as it were, and together with the saints, who were called on time (the Gentiles, I mean), they will celebrate the feast. Notice that those who washed away the filth of idolatry in Egypt straightaway sacrifice the lamb on the first month, and occupy the first place in believing, and, anointed by the blood of the Lord, they disdain destruction and are victors over death and ruin. But these others barely approach on the second year and month, and they will confess their impurity, affirm clearly that they are impure in the soul of man, pray that it might be permitted for them to attain mercy, and celebrate the festal day at a later time and after the first group. For it says, "When the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, then all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25). The prophet also foretold these things: "And after these things the sons of Israel will return, and they will seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they will marvel at the Lord in his good and final days" (Hos 3:5). For the one from the seed of David, Christ according to the flesh, will be sought in the last times by the remnant [ὑπολειμμένων] of Israel.556

In this passage Cyril lays stress on the self-abasing supplications that the Jews will have to make before God in order to become participants in Christ in the last days. By way of contrast, the Gentiles who accepted Christ in a "punctual" manner and occupied "the first place in believing" were apparently not required to humble themselves in quite this manner before their reception into the church. Once again, then, we encounter an intimation of asymmetry between the standing of Gentiles and Jews in the

556 PG 68:1084a-c.
eschatological church. Furthermore, Cyril's observation that the Jews celebrate the feast "at a later time and after the first group (ὕστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ τοὺς πρώτους)" takes on additional significance in light of Cyril's figural reading of the procession of tribal leaders discussed above. In that passage, the reader will recall, Cyril correlates the Gentiles' temporally prior entrance into the church with their possession of greater glory and freedom in the eschaton. Thus while Cyril no doubt robustly endorses Paul's avowal that all Israel will be saved, he seems to hold that the Pauline notion that Israel will be saved subsequent to the entrance of the full number of the Gentiles entails as its corollary the subordinate place of Israel in the eschatological people of God.

At this point it is worth reflecting on the fact that Cyril consistently defers the salvation of (at least some) Jews to the eschaton; indeed, there is no indication anywhere in the De Adoratione et Cultu or in the Glaphyra that he anticipates, or even desires, any Jewish conversions to faith in Christ at any point before the last days. This expectation is consonant with Cyril's notion of the entropy of Jewish character, the very character that prevented Israel from accepting friendship with God through Christ. Cyril insinuates, then, that only the heat of God's eschatological mercy has the capacity to thaw the Jewish mind and render it receptive to this gift of divine friendship. The practical corollary of this apparent notion of the pre-eschatological incorrigibility of Israel, a corollary that Cyril admittedly does not explicitly posit, is a moratorium on the church's mission to the Jews. Despite the copious number of references to Jewish unbelief in the texts at hand, Cyril never once commends the proselytizing of Jewish contemporaries or even engagement with them in apologetically-motivated debate (this is true of the early Festal Letters as well). Although one could simply chalk up this
reticence to Cyril's dim view of Jewish character, it is worth pondering whether Cyril's conception of the Jews as the polluted people *par excellence* might have something to do with his lack of evangelical zeal toward them.557 After all, evangelism entails spatial proximity and social interaction, but Cyril, as we have seen, emphasizes that contact with the polluted Jews is to be avoided scrupulously. Thus there are grounds to suppose that Cyril's lack of interest in inducing Jewish conversions before the *eschaton* is at least in part symptomatic of his desire to keep the Jewish and Christians communities in Alexandria (and elsewhere) strictly segregated. Of course, Cyril's disinterest in proselytism might simply reflect the fact that such conversions were rare in Alexandria.

5.5: Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated how Cyril employs figural interpretation in order to inscribe in the law of Moses an exposé of the moral impurity of the Jews and the consequent supplanting of Israel by the church of the Gentiles in salvation history. If one also takes into view Cyril's exegetical account of the nature and soteriological value of the Mosaic law, as exposited in Chapter Four, then it becomes apparent that in the two works at hand he utilizes the spiritual exegesis of the law of Moses as a platform from which to narrate the entire history of Israel, from its life under the law, to its rejection of Christ, and finally to its eschatological integration into the church.

557 It is true that hearty exhortations to evangelize the Jews are not terribly common in late-antique Christian texts. However, for an argument that one of Cyril's most famous contemporaries did in fact envision and promote the conversion of Jews, see Franklin T. Harkins, "Nuancing Augustine's Hermeneutical Jew: Allegory and Actual Jews in the Bishop's Sermons," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 36.1 (2005): 41-64.
According to Cyril, then, the law of Moses does not only point forward to the mystery of Christ, but also contains in itself the entire "mystery of the Jewish synagogue." No other early Christian writer prosecuted this thesis at such length and with such exegetical thoroughness. The results of our inquiry thus have demonstrated how incomplete and inadequate is Cyril's explicit statement of his aim in writing the *De Adoratione et Cultu*, namely, to show how the life of Israel under the law of Moses shadows forth the evangelical ethos. While Cyril devotes a substantial amount of space to meeting this objective, this description of the text's scope belies the fact that it and the *Glaphyra* are saturated with extensive exegetical meditations on 1) the soteriological merits and demerits of the Mosaic law, and 2) the moral impurity, soteriological supersession, and eschatological prospects of the Jews.

I have also suggested that, in light of what we can ascertain about both Cyril's early episcopal career in Alexandria and the strained relationship between church and synagogue in general during the Theodosian era, it is appropriate to probe some of Cyril's spiritual interpretations for extra-theological valences and implications. Such sounding does not proceed from the premise that Cyril's figural exegesis of the law merely serves as a proxy by which he surreptitiously advances a socio-political agenda. Perhaps most evident in his reflections on the eschatological future of Israel, Cyril gives every indication of being deeply exercised at a theological level by the fact that the Jews have by and large rejected faith in Christ and hence integration into the church. Likewise, Cyril's account of the post-paschal soteriological status of the Jews is steeped

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558 PG 69:565c.
in the New Testament and the early Christian tradition. Put bluntly, if Cyril simply wanted to write a manifesto that would accelerate the socio-political marginalization of the Jews, he could have done so in a format more expeditious than a one-thousand page dialogue on the arcana of the Pentateuch.

For the foregoing reasons I make the more modest claim that the increasingly tense climate of contestation between Christians and Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere in the empire possesses some explanatory value for the outburst of exegetical creativity on display in the figural readings surveyed in this chapter. As we have seen in the Introduction, many late Roman Christians appear to have been increasingly perturbed by and intolerant of the presence of Jews in their midst. Moreover, what we know about Cyril's first decade as patriarch on the basis of Socrates' narrative and Cyril's early festal letters makes it rather dubious that Cyril's anxieties about his Jewish contemporaries were exclusively theological. Cyril clearly desired a rigorous religious and social separation of Christians from Jews, and his imputation of pollution to the Jews provided the theoretical underwriting for such strict segregation. Likewise, Cyril's selection of images of exile and banishment as apt symbols of the current status of the synagogue in the divine economy of salvation also points up the impropriety of Christians, who through Christ enjoy intimate access to the divine presence, intermingling with Jews, who have been banished from the divine hearth and whose reintegration into the people of God has been deferred to the eschaton. One must not forget, of course, that Cyril the contemplative exegete was also by leaps and bounds the most visible and powerful pastoral figure in the Alexandrian and Egyptian church.
None of the foregoing is meant to suggest that Cyril's operative theological assumptions and commitments did not substantially inform the spiritual readings that we have inspected in this and the previous chapter. Rather, the sounding of these texts for their socio-cultural implications is intended only to provide a richer understanding of these complex works, rather than to reduce them to thinly veiled polemical tracts written primarily to advance the cause of ecclesiastical hegemony. However, given what we know about the historical circumstances attending their production, it does not overstress the evidence to suggest that the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* provide, among other things, a window into Cyril's worries, not all of which were strictly theological, about the persistence of the synagogue.

Finally, I know of no other early Christian writer, save the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who so persistently discerned spiritual significance in the spatial features of the narratives and ordinances of the Mosaic law. In Chapter Four we observed how Cyril construes images of absence and distance in the law as figural indices of the Jews' past and present remoteness from the transforming presence of God. In the present chapter we have examined several instances in which Cyril ascertains in the Mosaic legislation on pollution a mandate for the spatial segregation of Christians from Jews. In addition, his depiction of Jews after the death of Christ as the quintessentially banished and exiled people furnishes a further rationale for the spatial segregation of the two communities. The net effect of these hermeneutical strategies is the emergence of a notion of Jewish space as intrinsically marginal, defiled, and cut off from the divine presence and the life of the true people of God. To be sure, such a notion does not lack theological and exegetical underpinnings. At the same
time, however, this conceptualization of Jewish space may also reflect the anxieties shared by many late-antique Christians about the proper "place" of the Jews in a predominantly Christian polity. Again, I am not suggesting that Cyril was exploiting spiritual exegesis to make coded recommendations for further social and political repression of the Jews. Rather, I am proposing that his worries about the synagogue as a religious and socio-political rival to the church seeped into his exegesis and, in combination with his operative theological conception of the unfolding of salvation history, helped to catalyze the spiritual readings that we have surveyed in this and the prior chapter.
CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have argued that in his two early works on the Pentateuch Cyril of Alexandria broke new ground in the Christian exegetical tradition by contending that the law of Moses was inscribed with the entire "mystery of the synagogue." That is to say, through the accumulation of a score of figural readings Cyril attempts to demonstrate how the law itself narrates the entire history of the Jews, from their exodus from Egypt, to their life under the law, to their rejection and murder of Christ, and finally to the eschatological absorption of at least a remnant of Israel into the church. More specifically, we have seen how Cyril finds the *topoi* of the soteriological impotence of the law and the moral pollution of the Jews, which reached its nadir after the death of Christ, to be major themes of the ordinances and narratives of the law, once they are modulated into a spiritual key. By prosecuting such a hermeneutical strategy, Cyril implies that a coherent and comprehensive indictment of *post Christum* Judaism is latent in the law itself.

As I argued in Chapter Three, in order to sustain this case Cyril was not required to pioneer an innovative hermeneutical approach. Indeed, Cyril's spiritual negotiation of the Mosaic law was not predicated on a figural method that diverged significantly from his most influential Alexandrian precursors. Moreover, the major features of Cyril's account of the place and function of the law in salvation history, as well as his
prognostications concerning Israel's eschatological destiny, are heavily dependent on the writings of Paul (including Hebrews, which Cyril deemed to be Pauline) and thus do not constitute a significant revision of prior Christian thinking on these matters. However, Cyril's conservatism with respect to his hermeneutical approach and his theological account of the Mosaic law is complemented by a high degree of exegetical creativity. Cyril utilized the style of figural exegesis that was his patrimony as an Alexandrian hierarch to generate copious novel readings of Pentateuchal passages. For Cyril, Paul's theological assessment of the soteriological limitations of the law and his account of the incorporation of Israel into the eschatological church constitute the hermeneutical keys by which a vast treasury of arcane passages of the Pentateuch are unlocked. However, we have also examined several motifs in Cyril's figural reading of the law that cannot claim a Pauline provenance, one of the most salient of which is the notion of Jewish pollution.

Cyril's claim that a figural reading of the law exposes Jews as the polluted people *par excellence* brings us back to the starting point of the dissertation, which was the temporal coincidence of Cyril's composition of his two weighty texts on the Pentateuch, both of which are heavily invested in a theological critique of Judaism and a moral indictment of the Jewish people, and his active role in the violent expulsion of at least some Jews from Alexandria and the ecclesiastical sequestration of several synagogues. What, if anything, do the synagogues of Alexandria have to do with the tabernacle of the ancient Israelites? In answering this question, one has to steer between the Scylla of the reductionism of a thoroughgoing hermeneutics of suspicion and the Charybdis of a non-contextual approach that artificially divorces Cyril the
contemplative exegete from Cyril the patriarch of the Alexandrian church, which had for some time been locked in a struggle with the Alexandrian Jewry for cultural and socio-political dominance in the city. I have maintained that while there is no warrant internal or external to the works at hand for the idea that Cyril's exegesis of the Pentateuch was merely a smokescreen for a sheerly political agenda, many of his figural interpretations, when read against the backdrop of the state of Jewish-Christian relations in the eastern empire in general and in Alexandria in particular, take on extra-theological valences.

These valences are perhaps most conspicuous in those spiritual readings in which Cyril maintains that the law of Moses reveals that the Jews, who for Cyril have always been notable for their moral turpitude, became supremely and uniquely morally impure subsequent to the death of Christ, for which Cyril holds them responsible. Here Cyril strides beyond Paul and strikes off into terra nova untrod by any of his predecessors. The implications of this ascription of pollution to Jews can be drawn out easily enough; Christians are to maintain strict separation from their Jewish counterparts, especially in a cultic context, lest they incur their pollution. This anxiety about the spatial separation between Christians and Jews is also evident in Cyril's figural treatment of Israel's sacred topography, in which he allocates to the Jews those penumbral regions alienated from both the divine presence and those Christians who inhabit the true tabernacle, and in his contention that a bevy of images of banishment and exile in the Pentateuch are symbols of the status of the Jews in the Christian epoch. Although there are indications that by the early fifth century the Jewish and Christian communities in Alexandria had quite effectively battened their hatches, Cyril's keen
interest in putting the Jews in their "place" in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra, as well as the tone and substance of his early festal letters, raise the possibility that some Alexandrian Christians were comfortable with rather more permeable boundaries between church and synagogue. We have also observed that, although Cyril stops short of positing concrete socio-political corollaries for his theological conception of Jewish space as marginal, impure, and severed from the divine presence and the life of the people of God, an inspection of the Jewry laws emanating from Constantinople in the early fifth century suggests that Cyril's theological construal of Jewish space was finding at least a partial translation in the political sphere.

It is my hope that the findings of this study will enrich several related fields of study. For one, I hope that specialists in the field of Jewish-Christian relations in late antiquity as well as historians of patristic exegesis will pay more notice to Cyril's early works on the Pentateuch. As I have just suggested, these texts afford a case study for the ways in which Christian biblical exegesis and the socio-political shifts in the relationship between church and synagogue impinged on one another. In addition, Cyril's texts should be placed alongside the letters of Isidore of Pelusium as evidence that Christians in late-antique Egypt continued to engage in exegetical battles with their Jewish contemporaries, regardless of the extent to which the latter actively participated. Historians of Jewish-Christian polemics would also do well to take note how in Cyril's hands the exegesis of the Pentateuch becomes, in an unprecedented manner, the locus of the Christian contestation of Judaism. Of course, Jews and Christians had been arguing over the interpretation of the Torah from the very beginning of the church's existence, but with the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra
one encounters a *novum* in the history of Christian exegesis of the law: the attempt to adduce the law as a whole as a witness to its own failings and to the moral impurity of those who continue to valorize its letter at the expense of the beauty of the truth. Although Cyril does not pretend to provide an exhaustive interpretation of the entirety of the Mosaic law, he nevertheless marshals a whole dossier of passages from the law that had never before been pressed into the service of a polemic against Judaism. Of course, the irony of Cyril's selection of the site of contestation should not go unnoticed; the Torah, the touchstone of Jewish identity, when contemplated spiritually, delivers a coherent and comprehensive indictment of the very project of Judaism. Although Christians had long maintained that the Jews misunderstood their own texts, Cyril's exegesis of the Pentateuch ratchets up that accusation in the most provocative way possible, insofar as it proposes that the very texts on which the Jews have staked their identity over against the Christians actually testify time and again to the perversity of the maintenance of Jewish identity on this side of the resurrection of Christ.

Although the scope of this dissertation has not permitted an examination of Cyril's later, more famous Christological works, connoisseurs of Cyril's mature theology may well find much of interest in the works at hand. Cyril's rather pessimistic account of the soteriological efficacy of the law is, as Wilken has noted, the obverse of his understanding of the salvific import of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. By casting the law as a foil for the saving riches of Christ, Cyril broaches themes that would figure prominently in his anti-Nestorian writings. For example, we have seen that Cyril is particularly insistent on the inability of the law to grant intimate access to the presence of God, access that first becomes available upon the advent of
the incarnate Logos. This understanding of the soteriological significance of the incarnation is, as B. Daley points out, fully consistent with Cyril's "predecessors' resistance to any theological position that would weaken the identification of Jesus or the Spirit with the transcendent God" and with their emphasis on "the saving, life-giving, immediate presence of that God, through Jesus and the Spirit, within history and at the heart of the Church's daily life."559 It was precisely this emphasis, Daley notes, that "set Cyril on a theological collision course with the Antiochene school, and which would lie at the heart of his quarrel with Nestorius."560 Therefore the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra should commend themselves to those who wish to trace the development of Cyril's soteriologically-driven Christology, which would receive its full articulation once the Nestorian controversy was underway. This study suggests that Cyril's understanding of the salvific significance of the incarnation may well have developed in tandem with his endeavor to expose, by means of figural exegesis, the crucial redemptive deficiencies of the law of Moses.

I will close by raising a question that cannot help but occur in the minds of those who have an interest in the viability and implications of Christian figural exegesis when they are confronted with Cyril's use of spiritual interpretation not only to delineate the salvific defects of the Mosaic law, but also to attribute to the Jewish


560 Daley, "Fullness," 129. McGuckin, Saint Cyril, 188, highlights the centrality of the notion of proximity to the Logos in Cyril's eucharistic thought: "The believer is deified by the encounter [with Christ in the Eucharist], for the encounter brings him into life-giving proximity with the Logos, and this proximity (for all the Alexandrian theologians) was the metaphysical root and sustenance of all being."
people in toto the highest conceivable level of moral baseness. Do the spiritual readings canvassed in this dissertation represent the intrinsic dynamics of Christian figural exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures taken to their logical conclusion, or do they represent instead a contingent instantiation of a mode of interpretation whose results vary, sometimes dramatically, in accordance with the presuppositions, theological and otherwise, of the particular reader? In recent times Christian figural interpretation has come under heavy fire for its alleged anti-Jewish implications, and one could take the findings of my study as prima facie evidence for just such a charge. To be sure, as J. D. Dawson has pointed out, there is a kind of inexorable logic of superiority built into virtually all Christian figural readings of the Hebrew Scriptures; the fulfillment represents a more soteriologically momentous divine action in salvation history than its figure, inasmuch as the former brings humanity even closer to its true telos than does the latter.

Nevertheless, a cursory glance at any number of examples of patristic spiritual exegesis reveals the impressive latitude afforded by figural reading. This diversity at the level of substantive interpretation testifies to the importance of the individual exegete's assumptions concerning the divine economy (and other matters besides). As Wilken has pointed out, and as my study has amply corroborated, Cyril approached the Pentateuch with a highly antithetical understanding of the soteriological value of the


562 John David Dawson, Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 216: "Imbedded in figural practice is all the drama of discerning the point of existence and identifying one’s place in it, figured as a journey from a former mode of existence through various states of transformation toward some ultimate end."
law on the one hand and of the person and action of Christ on the other; while not entirely without positive effect on the Israelites, the law is most notable for its utter inability to mediate any of the salvific benefits that would be accessible on the near side of Easter. Had Cyril been operating with a notion of salvation history that was more appreciative of the continuities between the law and Christ, it is doubtful that his figural reading of the Pentateuch would have taken quite the same course.

Finally, it is important to underline the fact that in this dissertation I have scrutinized but one strand, albeit a major one, of Cyril's interpretation of the Pentateuch in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra. Interwoven with the polemical readings that I have examined are numerous other figural interpretations that deliver on Cyril's promise in Book I of the De Adoratione et Cultu to demonstrate how the evangelical way of life is figurally anticipated and further specified by the life of Israel under the tutelage of the law. Indeed, it is worth quoting once more Cyril's claim that "those longing to see the beauty of the way of life in Christ would attain what they desire in the best way possible by using the law as if it were a mirror. For by remolding the very image of things into the truth, they will see clearly that which seems best and well-pleasing to God."⁵⁶³ Such an assertion, when considered in conjunction with the interpretations we have studied, highlights the paradoxical nature of Cyril's treatment of the Pentateuch. On the one hand, Cyril places the law in general and the tabernacle in particular at the center of Christian contemplation as inestimable illuminators of the evangelical ethos; his high assessment of the spiritual

⁵⁶³ PG 68:141c.
value of the Pentateuch is of course reflected by the mere fact that he (probably) elected to write his first works on it, and his first work on the question of the Mosaic law in particular. On the other hand, it is difficult to think of another early Christian text that goes to such pains to belittle the soteriological contribution of the law and to point up the moral depravity of the Jewish people.

It may well be premature, I submit, to foreclose the possibility of isolating the strand of Cyril's exegesis that has been the subject of this dissertation from other strands in the De Adoratione et Cultu and the Glaphyra that have been outside my purview. These other strands may in fact not be logically dependent on the strand to which we have attended. Indeed, studded throughout the works at hand are figural interpretations in which Cyril endeavors to configure the Christian way of life according to the template provided by the communal and cultic life of the ancient Israelites. For Cyril, by so reading the Pentateuch the contemplative exegete not only confirms what she already held with respect to the evangelical ethos, but she also deepens and broadens her understanding of what is entailed by a commitment to undergoing the transformative action of Christ. In this sense, at least, the law has not been superseded but continues to make stringent demands upon its Christian readers, who are obliged to discern the congruence between the way of life imposed by the law and that which is cultivated in the confines of the church. Though it may be tempting to view Cyril's most polemical figural readings as in some way a pernicious byproduct of this conception of the law, our survey of Cyril's historical context suggests that those readings may be more the bitter fruit of his pastoral anxieties about his Jewish contemporaries than the necessary correlate of his conception of the life of Israel.
under the law as a mirror image of the life of the Christian. In any event, while the *De Adoratione et Cultu* and the *Glaphyra* do not definitively clarify (as if any text ever could) the relationship between Christian figural exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures and hostility to Judaism, they do raise the question with particular urgency.
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