

Cyril Against Julian: Traditions in Conflict

By

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in Religion in the Graduate School  
of Duke University

2020

ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

When the Roman Emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus—better known to many as Julian the Apostate—perished on a Persian battlefield in 363 CE, his efforts to turn back the Christianizing currents of the Roman Empire died with him. In the final decades of the fourth century, subsequent Christian emperors only further solidified the political and social status of Christianity. Julian’s *intellectual* challenges, however, lingered longer. In the 420s, Cyril, the new bishop of Alexandria, composed a colossal response to one of Julian’s final compositions, the anti-Christian *Against the Galileans*. My dissertation is a study of Cyril’s little-examined and untranslated text, known as *Against Julian*, and of the intellectual conflict that he and Julian engaged.

Drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre’s analysis of conflict between strong traditions, I argue that the rivalry that obtains between Julian and Cyril is “narrative conflict.” Close reading reveals that Julian and Cyril did not share adequate criteria by which their most central intellectual disagreements could be adjudicated, and as a result their arguments most fundamentally disputed the details of the narrative backdrops to their traditions and rationalities. Neither of their texts are narratives per se, but the implicit framework that makes their arguments intelligible lie in their respective maximal narratives. Through philosophical arguments, historical vignettes, *ad hominem* insults, and more, Julian and Cyril each attempted to outnarrate their rival—they tried, that is,

to reconstrue “episodes” from their rival’s tradition-constitutive narrative as episodes in their own tradition’s narrative.

The first chapter opens with an illustrative case study of narrative conflict, focusing on Julian’s and Cyril’s competing and confident interpretations of an exceedingly vague biblical text. It then explains the conceptual apparatus of traditions, rationality, and narrative, before introducing the details of Julian’s and Cyril’s contexts and texts, and the relevant larger questions in scholarship on late antiquity. The second chapter is entirely devoted to a comprehensive, narrative-conflict analysis of Julian’s *Against the Galileans*, the rhetorical heft of which has regularly been overlooked by Julian’s modern readers. Chapters 3 through 5 focus on Cyril’s arguments in *Against Julian*, with Chapter 3 tracing key features of the narrative backdrop to Cyril’s arguments, and Chapters 4 and 5 focusing on clusters of renarrated “episodes.” These latter two chapters track how Cyril rebuts Julian’s attempts to subsume Christian episodes within the Hellenic narrative and how he simultaneously dislodges episodes from Julian’s narrative and re-explains them on Christian terms. The concluding chapter introduces Cyril’s *Against Nestorius* as a point of comparison with *Against Julian*—the striking formal similarities between Cyril’s two polemical texts provide a backdrop against which the features of his *inter*-tradition conflict with Julian stand out even more clearly, by contrast to his *intra*-tradition conflict with his fellow bishop, Nestorius. The comparison further clarifies the dynamics of intellectual conflict between narratives—dynamics which I then enumerate before, finally, concluding with

suggestions about the implications of my study for scholarship not just on Julian and Cyril, but on the relationship between their respective traditions, Hellenism and Christianity.

For Erin, *sine qua non*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## I. What is an ἀποπομπαίος?

The Septuagint (LXX) text of Leviticus 16:7–10 reads as follows:

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7 καὶ λήμψεται τοὺς δύο χιμάρους  
καὶ στήσει αὐτοὺς ἔναντι κυρίου  
παρὰ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ  
μαρτυρίου·

8 καὶ ἐπιθήσει Ααρων ἐπὶ τοὺς δύο  
χιμάρους κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ  
κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ.

9 καὶ προσάξει Ααρων τὸν χίμαρον,  
ἐφ' ὃν ἐπῆλθεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὁ κλῆρος  
τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ προσοίσει περὶ  
ἁμαρτίας·

10 καὶ τὸν χίμαρον, ἐφ' ὃν ἐπῆλθεν  
ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὁ κλῆρος τοῦ  
ἀποπομπαίου, στήσει αὐτὸν ζῶντα  
ἔναντι κυρίου τοῦ ἐξιλάσασθαι ἐπ'  
αὐτοῦ ὥστε ἀποστεῖλαι αὐτὸν εἰς  
τὴν ἀποπομπήν· ἀφήσει αὐτὸν εἰς  
τὴν ἔρημον.

7 And he [Aaron] shall take the  
two goats and set them before  
the Lord at the door of the tent of  
witness,

8 and Aaron shall place on the  
two goats one designation τῷ  
κυρίῳ, and one designation τῷ  
ἀποπομπαίῳ.

9 And Aaron shall present the  
goat on which the designation τῷ  
κυρίῳ came and he shall offer it  
for sin.

10 And the goat on which the  
designation τοῦ ἀποπομπαίου  
came, this one he shall set alive  
before the Lord to make  
atonement over it, to send it  
away εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπήν—he  
shall let it go into the  
wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

---

The passage is unclear—even enigmatic—because a key word is ambiguous:

ἀποπομπαίος, in verses 8 and 10 (and the related ἀποπομπή, in verse 10). The fault for this ambiguity does not lie solely with the LXX translators. The Hebrew word which ἀποπομπαίος renders (אָזָזִל, often transliterated and vocalized as *Azazel*) is itself

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<sup>1</sup> NETS translation, with modifications.

ambiguous. It occurs in this one passage in the Hebrew Bible and a few times in the Qumranic literature with a variety of connotations.<sup>2</sup> The LXX translators coined “ἀποπομπαίος” for its occurrence here in Leviticus 16.<sup>3</sup> Theories about what *Azazel* means vary: from it being (1) the proper name of a personal being; to it being (2) an etymological mashup of the words for ‘goat’ (*ez*) and ‘to go away’ (*zal*), such that *Azazel* becomes the descriptive name for one of the goats, roughly equivalent to the English word “scapegoat.”<sup>4</sup> The LXX translators seem to have been after something between these two possibilities when they coined ἀποπομπαίος. Corresponding to the latter option (2), they created a word that, etymologically, includes the notion of being sent (from πέμπω, “to send”). But a difficulty with this option is that nothing, etymologically-speaking, indicates that they intended “ἀποπομπαίος” to label one of the goats itself, meaning the *ez* component of this theory for *Azazel* is not incorporated in the construction of “ἀποπομπαίος.” Corresponding to the former option (1), another possibility is that the ἀποπομπαίος is *not* itself one of the goats, and is rather another being, parallel to τῷ κυρίῳ, “the Lord.” The parallel syntactical structure of verse 8

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<sup>2</sup> It occurs in the *Ages of Creation* (4Q180), *Enoch*<sup>a-c</sup> (4Q201, 202, 204), *Enoch Giants*<sup>a</sup> (4Q203), and *Temple Scroll*<sup>a</sup> (11Q19). In these passages *Azazel* is the proper name of the leader of those angels that sinned and fell away. See Alexander Maurer, “Azazel,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford University Press, 2000); Bernd Janowski, “Azazel,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn and Bob Becking (Leiden: Eerdmans, 1999), 128–31. For a brief study of the places that *Azazel* (or at least very close variations) appear in ancient literature, see also Lester L. Grabbe, “The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 18, no. 2 (1987): 152–67.

<sup>3</sup> “Ἀποπομπή” occurs only here within the LXX, and only three or four times before the LXX translation appeared, according to a search run by the *Thesaurus Lingua Graeca* (TLG) June 11, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> For several different ways of construing the etymology, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus, Anchor Bible* 3, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1020–21. Maurer suggests the *ez* plus *zal* possibility in “Azazel.”

supports this possibility: one goat is designated τῷ κυρίῳ, “for the Lord,” and one is designated τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ, “for the ἀποπομπαίος.” However, this parallelism fails to obtain in verses 9–10, where the first designation is, again, τῷ κυρίῳ (in the dative), but the second designation is τοῦ ἀποπομπαίου (now genitive). The Hebrew underlying each instance of ἀποπομπαίος in verses 8 and 10 is exactly the same (אזאזל, “for Azazel”), so the LXX translators presumably wanted to indicate *something* when they rendered it in Greek with a dative in verse 8 and a genitive in verse 10. Furthermore, they used a different, though very close, phrase in verse 10—εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπήν—where the underlying Hebrew is, again, the same.<sup>5</sup>

I am yet to see a modern solution that adequately accounts for all the peculiar linguistic details at play with “ἀποπομπαίος” in Leviticus 16. This ambiguity did not, however, prevent interpreters from different religious traditions in the ancient world from confidently incorporating Leviticus 16 into their communal practices or religious imaginations. The way two such interpreters did so illustrates a central claim of this dissertation, which has little to do with goats but much to do with how traditions of life and thought make meaning out of texts, history, experience, and reason. These two interpreters—the emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus, or “Julian the Apostate”; and Cyril of Alexandria—are also the main characters of this study. Their respective interpretations of Leviticus 16 offer not only a lucid window onto how meaning can be made from even the most ambiguous words and texts. Their interpretations also

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<sup>5</sup> The same Hebrew construction also occurs in verse 26, where it is rendered in the LXX with εἰς ἄφεσιν.

illustrate what can happen when rivaling modes of meaning-making come into conflict. Each author interpreted Leviticus 16 as part of a polemical exercise against a traditional rival—Julian, against the Christian world in which he was raised; and Cyril, half a century later, in direct response to Julian’s provocation.

In one respect, this dissertation is simply an account of Cyril’s understudied response to Julian. His lengthy text, entitled *Against Julian* (AJ), is virtually the sole repository of Julian’s better-known *Against the Galileans* (AG), which Cyril quotes at length to refute.<sup>6</sup> But in another respect, this study is about conflict between traditions and their modes of meaning-making. What happens when developed, all-encompassing traditions of life and thought disagree about how to understand central texts? Or how to explain pressing questions about history, identity, virtue, wrongdoing, politics, or death? What happens, in sum, when they disagree about how to speak about and perform a life?

I do not answer these questions programmatically or comprehensively in this dissertation. Though it is, I hope, somewhat more than just an account of an ancient text, this study is never less than that, and the following pages remain mostly deep in the weeds of Cyril’s sprawling text. But that text—and Julian’s provoking arguments preserved therein—also offers an opportunity to explore these larger questions. Julian and Cyril were each representatives of highly developed traditions. Furthermore, their

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<sup>6</sup> I refer to *Against Julian* by “AJ” for shorthand. In scholarship it is sometimes referred to as “CI” (for the Latin “*Contra Iulianum*”) or “CJ” (for the French, “*Contre Julien*”). Similarly, I will refer to *Against the Galileans* as “AG”; it is elsewhere sometimes shortened to “CG” (for “*Contra Galilaeos*”).

disagreements range far and wide, and their engagement is somewhat unique in the centuries-old conflict between Christians and (as Julian would call members of his tradition) Hellenists. In *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*, we have direct polemical engagement from two traditions; furthermore, to an unprecedented degree, these two Hellenic and Christian disputants knew their rival's tradition intimately. Ignoring for the moment the polemical cheap shots that are endemic to this kind of conflict, neither Julian nor Cyril dealt in shallow caricatures of their rival. *Against Julian*, in other words, instantiates robust intellectual conflict between rival traditions of life and thought.

To see why I will be characterizing this intellectual conflict as “narrative conflict”—the framing analytical tool of this dissertation—we must return to the ambiguous “ἀποπομπάιος” and the ritual of Leviticus 16:7–10 that it befores. The term did not so obscure the import for Julian or Cyril, and the way they confidently use this passage to support central features of their larger arguments illustrates the nature of the conflict between them.

Before considering Julian's and Cyril's interpretations, let's briefly consider how Leviticus 16 was interpreted by the late antique Jewish community that had the most straightforward claims to the text and whose interpretation accentuates what is distinctive about Julian's and Cyril's. Leviticus 16 informed a central ritual of Yom Kippur. A more-or-less clear description of this ritual as practiced in late antiquity can

be gleaned from the Mishna tractata *Yoma*.<sup>7</sup> Two ritual movements, built on the two goats, centered the complex practice. The first goat (the one to be sacrificed) anchored a “centripetal” movement: it was sacrificed before the tabernacle, and the high priest took its blood into the holy of holies. The second goat (on which was laid the sins of the whole people) was *sent out* into the desert, thus anchoring a “centrifugal” movement. In the desert, a designated person pushed it off a cliff.<sup>8</sup> In this ancient Jewish practice, the force of *Azazel* seems to have correspond to the passive etymological sense of “ἀποπομπάιος,” naming the goat itself which ‘was sent’ (-πομπ-) ‘out’ (ἀπο-) into the wilderness.<sup>9</sup> Also of note is that each of these “movements” were carried out with respect to one God: the sacrificed goat seems to have “cleansed and rededicated the temple,” while the “scapegoat expiated the sins of the people.”<sup>10</sup> We’ll briefly return later to consider *how* this Jewish community seems to get from ambiguous text to concrete ritual, but only after tracing what Julian and Cyril do with the text.

Leviticus 16 played an important, if brief, role in Julian’s *Against the Galileans*, which Chapter 2 examines in its entirety. For now it will suffice to note that Julian’s fundamental accusation was that Christians were apostates from both Hellenism and

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<sup>7</sup> For a reconstruction of the practice, see Grabbe, “The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation,” 158–59. Grabbe also lists several other rabbinic texts that comment on *Azazel* and this Leviticus 16 ritual. For a treatment of the earliest Jewish practices derived from and reflected in Leviticus 16, see Milgrom, *Leviticus, Anchor Bible 3*, 1:1059–66.

<sup>8</sup> For this analysis, see Daniel Johannes Stökl, “The Christian Exegesis of the Scapegoat between Jews and Pagans,” in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, Studies in the History of Religions 93 (Boston: Brill, 2002), 208–10.

<sup>9</sup> As opposed to the *active* etymological sense wherein the ἀποπομπάιος refers to a being that (actively) sends away other things.

<sup>10</sup> As claimed by the *Massekhet Shevu’ot* and explained in Stökl, “The Christian Exegesis of the Scapegoat between Jews and Pagans,” 210, note 14.

Judaism: having started out with the most refined and gifted tradition in the world (i.e., Hellenism), those who became Christians ill-advisedly joined the inferior Jewish tradition, from which they also departed in a second apostasy to innovate the new, Christian mode of worship. Julian knew that Christians asserted direct continuity with Moses, and he exerted much exegetical energy to undermine these claims. His accusation of Christians' second apostasy (from the Jewish tradition) relied on rupturing this claimed continuity. To accomplish this end, Julian went a step further: he also argued that Moses's laws generally cohered with his own tradition of Hellenism. According to Cyril's summary of Julian's twofold strategy, Julian argued that "the [teachings] of the Christians do not agree with the laws of Moses, and they do not deign to live by the customs of the Jews (τοις Ἰουδαίων ἔθει), though these are in harmony with the Hellenes themselves (καίτοι τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσιν αὐτοῖς συμπεφωνηκότων)" (AJ 9.13.7–9). The ambiguity of Leviticus 16 plays its role for Julian within this larger project of exegeting Moses's writings. Since, as Julian thinks, Moses knew and honored "the methods of sacrificing" (AG fr. 71.1–2) found among the Hellenes, he thought that, amid accretions and distortions, the Mosaic texts still held hints of the earlier, original divine revelations delivered to Moses for the Jewish people.<sup>11</sup>

To substantiate his claim that Christians do not live by the teachings of Moses, who in fact honors Hellenic sacrificial customs, Julian turns to Leviticus 16. He quotes

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<sup>11</sup> Julian's subtle strategy bears striking resemblance to certain forms of modern historical criticism of this passage. For example, Jacob Milgrom suggests that the Jewish rituals of Yom Kippur as outlined in Leviticus 16 probably was "in its original form a pagan rite," but that the "demonic powers" of Azazel in the original rite were "eviscerated" by the Priestly legislators. See *Leviticus, Anchor Bible 3*, 1:1020–21 and 1071–79.

directly from verses 5–8, 15, and 16, and he paraphrases briefly from vs. 10.<sup>12</sup> His brief, introductory comment to the Mosaic passage is key: “Listen, now, to all that [Moses] says about the ἀποτροπαίων . . .” (fr. 70.10–11). As Cyril will adamantly point out, Julian has introduced a term that is not in Leviticus (i.e., “ἀποτρόπαιος”) in order to interpret that passage, and specifically to interpret the ambiguous term, “ἀποπομπαίος.”<sup>13</sup> The equation of “ἀποτρόπαιος” and “ἀποπομπαίος”—an equation that Cyril will firmly reject—is understandable. Etymologically, both are similar, joining the prefix ἀπο- to the root τροπή and πομπή, respectively; each can have a sense of averting or turning. Τροπή most basically means “turning” but is frequently used to indicate a turning away of a hostile force. Similarly, πομπή (linked to the verb πέμπω) most literally means a “sending,” though it often means “conduct” or “escort.”

Even within these basic etymological strictures, “ἀποτρόπαιος” has many semantic valences.<sup>14</sup> But Julian clearly invokes an older usage, as a substantive, referring to divine beings who divert evil. We might translate Julian’s introductory statement as directing a reader’s attention to Moses’s comment about the “apotropaic beings,” or even (to stretch it a bit) to what Moses says about “evil-diverting gods.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1 for Julian’s comments in fr. 70 laid beside the LXX text of Leviticus 16:5–16.

<sup>13</sup> The syntactical placement of “ὑπὲρ . . . ἀποτροπαίων” at the beginning of the sentence further stresses that Julian takes the ἀποτρόπαιοι, whatever *they* are, to be the central point.

<sup>14</sup> The most consequential flexibility of the term lies in the fact that it can have different meanings with respect to evil: it can refer to something that repels evil, or to something that is repulsive because it is itself evil. For more information on the terms, see Christoph Riedweg, “Exegese als Kampfmittel in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Heiden und Christen: Zum „Sündenbock“ von Lev 16 bei Julian und Kyrill von Alexandrien,” *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 16, no. 3 (2012): 449–54.

<sup>15</sup> Marie-Odile Boulnois pointed out to me that Julian could be referring to apotropaic *sacrifices* (not *beings*), which is also a possible interpretation. Just before introducing fr. 70, Cyril says that Julian had

With the reader thus primed, Julian quotes from Leviticus, having lit a fuse that will lead directly to the ambiguous “ἀποπομπαίος” and that will prove, he thinks, Moses’s status a proto-Hellenic lawgiver, thereby demolishing any notions of Mosaic monotheism.

With Julian’s introductory comment in mind, Leviticus 16 gains some possible clarity. Verse 8, again, reads: “Aaron shall place on the two goats one designation τῷ κυρίῳ, and one designation τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ.” Based on Julian’s subtle equation of “ἀποπομπαίος” and “ἀποτρόπαιος,” this verse explains that one goat is designated “for the Lord” and one “for the evil-averting being.” One goat, that is, is for the κύριος of Israel, whom Julian portrays elsewhere as simply a localized god charged with governing the small Hebrew nation. The second goat is for another divine being that probably dwells on the borderlands of the people in the desert, perhaps protecting

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listed several kinds of sacrifices from Moses’s writing (AJ 9.13), and commentary from Julian on “apotropaic” sacrifices could naturally follow. However, Julian also likes to find hints in Moses’s texts that he was aware of many gods (see fr. 6.34, discussed in Chapter 2, where Julian takes Moses’s God as only the “shaper of the underlying matter,” who received materials to work with from other beings; see also my discussion in Chapter 4 about fr. 27 wherein Julian takes God’s comment in *Genesis* 11:7, “Let us...,” as indicating a plurality of gods). Interpreting ἀποτρόπαιοι as “evil-averting gods” fits this pattern. Whatever the case, either interpretation serves the same purpose with respect to the ambiguous term, “ἀποπομπαίος.” For Boulnois’s treatment of Cyril’s response about Leviticus 16, see Marie-Odile Boulnois, “Étude du Contre Julien (IX, 13–20) de Cyrille d’Alexandrie: le conflit pagano-chrétien sur l’interprétation du « bouc émissaire », l’originalité et la postérité de la lecture cyrillienne,” *Annuaire de l’École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), Section des sciences religieuses. Résumé des conférences et travaux*, no. 126 (September 15, 2019): 223–37.

their outer boundaries from malevolent forces or disposing of evil accumulated within the community.<sup>16</sup>

Compared to interpretations that treat the ἀποπομπάιος *as itself* the goat that is sent out into the desert (*as itself*, in other words, a “scapegoat”) Julian’s interpretation more faithfully renders the syntactical structure of verse 8, since the dative τῷ ἀποπομπάιῳ parallels the dative τῷ κυρίῳ.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the first goat’s relation to the κύριος (presumably the goat is sent “to,” or is perhaps “for” the κύριος), the parallel in syntax would suggest that the same relation is supposed to obtain between the second goat and the ἀποπομπάιος—an outcome that does not obtain if the ἀποπομπάιος is treated itself as the second goat.

Much more could be said about this passage of *Against the Galileans*, but the foregoing adequately sketches one option for understanding what an ἀποπομπάιος is. For Julian, who is confident that Moses’s original laws were perfectly consonant with Hellenic customs, an ἀποπομπάιος is but one of the many divine beings in the Neoplatonic divine hierarchy. In a display of his Hellenic way of thinking and

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<sup>16</sup> To a reader familiar with the whole of Leviticus 16 and sympathetic to Julian’s interpretive drift, the second possibility might be verified by Lev. 16:21–22, where Aaron is commanded to place the misdeeds of the community on the second goat and to send it into the desert.

If Julian did not think the apotropaic god’s function was to dispose of accumulated evil or impurity, he might have (especially given his enthusiasm for divination) thought this being would keep away unwanted omens from divinatory sacrifices—which is how apotropaic gods seem to function in Xenophon’s *Hellenica* 3.3.4. See Robert Parker, “Apotropaic Gods,” in *Brill’s New Pauly*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmut Schneider (Brill, October 1, 2006), <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/apotropaic-gods-e128980>.

<sup>17</sup> But it’s also worth noting that Julian has strategically left out Lev. 16:9–10 (see Appendix 1). As I pointed out above, the neat parallelism of verse 8 is absent in verses 9–10, where the first “designation” is, again, τῷ κυρίῳ (in the *dative*), but the second “designation” is τοῦ ἀποπομπάιου (now *genitive*).

legislating, Moses gave sacrificial laws that correspond to a cosmos full of gods, spirits, and daemons. Moses “knew the methods of sacrificing” (fr. 71.1–2).

Unsurprisingly, Cyril of Alexandria will have none of Julian’s creative interpretation. In his response to fr. 70 in *AJ* 9.15–21, Cyril offers a counter-explanation that, like Julian’s interpretation, centers and builds on the flexibility of “ἀποπομπάιος.” Before providing his own interpretation of Leviticus 16, Cyril first points out that Julian’s mistake is, at one level, a failure to note that this sacrificial ritual might be a “riddle” or a “symbol” and that there might be more to it than first meets the eye. He briefly detours through how even within Julian’s tradition wise people recognize that many laws, aphorisms, and rituals have a symbolic quality (9.15.9–16.26). Julian, Cyril argues, is too obtuse for such interpretive finesse, even though a good Hellene should know to look for something under the surface. Cyril then explains how Leviticus 16 *should* be read, namely in light of the “mystery of Christ” that is “imprinted in the words enigmatically.” To find this deeper meaning, Cyril explains, one has to refine the “materiality of the account” (Τὸ . . . τῆς ἱστορίας πάχος).<sup>18</sup> I will have more to say about this “refining” of the story and what it tells us about the narrative structure of Cyril’s reasoning in Chapter 3. For now we only need note how Cyril develops the argument at hand.

For the process of refining Leviticus 16, Cyril turns to Paul’s statement about Christ in Philippians 2:5–8, and he emphasizes Paul’s dual presentation of Christ who,

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<sup>18</sup> *AJ* 9.17.2–5. Cyril’s interpretation occurs throughout 9.17–20.

first, was incomparably superior to all things; but who, second, nevertheless “emptied himself” to the point of death. Cyril suggests that this passage unlocks the mystery of the two goats in Leviticus 16. He explains: “For ‘two’ goats are taken . . . since instead it was necessary for him [Jesus] to be seen both [as] sacrificed for us and dying according to the flesh on the one hand, and as living according to the spirit, on the other hand.” The twofold-ness of Christ illuminates the two goats in Leviticus 16, one of which is τῷ κυρίῳ and the other of which is τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ. Parallel to several ancient Greek grammarians, Cyril suggests that the κληροὶ mentioned in Leviticus 16:8–10—which I translate above as “designations,” rather than the common option of “lots”—can be “names” (ὀνόματα) for the goats.<sup>19</sup> He says that the name given to the first goat is “the lord,” and the name given to the second goat is “the ἀποπομπαίος” (perhaps “the Sent Away”). The first name indicates the “lordly” status of Christ who, despite that lordly status, was slaughtered. And the second name indicates the fact that Christ was removed—“Sent Away”—from death through the resurrection. Christ himself, then, is both: the κύριος who was slaughtered for sins, like the first goat; but also the ἀποπομπαίος, not in the sense of the English word “scapegoat,” but, as Cyril says, as

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<sup>19</sup> Commenting on Leviticus 16:8 (which says, “. . . κληρον ἓνα τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ κληρον ἓνα τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ”), Cyril says, “Κληροὶ δὲ καὶ ὀνόματα τοῖς τράγοις . . .” (9.18.11–12). Matthew Crawford unlocked Cyril’s curious equation of κληροὶ with ὀνόματα by discovering that Greek grammarians sometimes make the same identification between the terms. See, for example, Philoxenus, fr. 117 Theodoridis; Orion, Etymologicum s.v. κληρος; Etymologicum gudianum s.v. κληρος; Etymologicum Magnum s.v. κληρος. See also Crawford’s and Aaron Johnson’s forthcoming translation of *Against Julian*.

“one who was sent away (ἀποπεμπόμενος) from the slaughter” (9.18.16) as he showed himself stronger than death in the resurrection.<sup>20</sup>

Cyril also offers a second possible way to make sense of Leviticus 16, building again on Scriptural (especially Pauline) linguistic patterns. In this second interpretation, the slaughtered goat stands for Christ, and the ἀποπομπάιος goat stands for all humans.<sup>21</sup> Again, the etymology of ἀποπομπάιος is the key: Christ as the first goat is slaughtered on behalf of humanity, and the other goat who “was sent out (ἐξεπέμπετο) from the slaughter” (9.20.9) is those who are rescued by Christ’s sacrifice. Redeemed humans, says Cyril, became the ἀποπομπάιοι when Christ sent them away from death and corruption (9.20.46).

Cyril has much more to say about Leviticus 16, but this should illuminate at least the basic contours of how he rebuts Julian’s interpretation and, relying on the ambiguous word “ἀποπομπάιος” confidently offers an alternative explanation of the passage. Now that we have seen three ways of interpreting this passage, we can return

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<sup>20</sup> As did Julian (see note 11 above), Cyril also anticipates certain features of modern research on Leviticus 16. Though scholarly consensus has not been reached, several scholars in the last decades have detected allusions to the ritual of Leviticus 16 in the passion narratives of the Synoptic Gospels. None quite make Cyril’s argument, but Cyril’s detection of a “mystery” that anticipates Christ has certain interpretive resonances with these suggestions that the passion narratives allude to the ritual. For an overview of this scholarship, see Hans Moscicke, “Jesus as Goat of the Day of Atonement in Recent Synoptic Gospels Research,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 1 (October 1, 2018): 59–85.

<sup>21</sup> For his scriptural reasoning in this second interpretation of Leviticus 16, Cyril builds on two further scriptural identifications: *Jesus* himself as *sin* itself in 2 Corinthians 5:21; and *sin offerings* (especially sacrificial goats, says Cyril) as *sins* themselves in Hosea 4:8. Cyril thus can identify Jesus as a goat by connecting scriptural linguistic dots: via Paul he identifies Jesus with sin itself, which in turn can (via Hosea) be represented by a sacrifice offered for sin (which sacrifice is in fact often a goat). Jesus’s identification as one goat alongside a second goat representing all humanity shows how Jesus “appeared to us in a form like ours, and ‘was reckoned with the lawless’ (cf. Isaiah 53:12), and according to the meaning of the law-embedded enigmas became . . . a goat among goats” (9.19.35–38). I also treat Cyril’s second interpretation below in Chapter 3.

to the central question: what, then, is the meaning of Leviticus 16? Even more modestly, what is the meaning of the single word, “ἀποπομπαίος”? Did the rabbis understand the passage correctly, or did Julian, or did Cyril? What avenues, if any, would have lain open to Julian and Cyril when they faced off against rivals over interpretive differences? It should be evident by now that the text of Leviticus 16 alone cannot answer these questions. Yet despite these vagaries, each of the interpreters confidently incorporates Leviticus 16 into their tradition. What grounds this confidence?

It is easy to grasp the difficulty of this question because Leviticus 16 involves inherently ambiguous terminology. As already noted, the LXX translators coined “ἀποπομπαίος” for an equally difficult linguistic quandary embedded in the Hebrew text. A central question of this dissertation, however, is whether this interpretative difficulty is purely a function of the patently ambiguous “ἀποπομπαίος,” or whether the ambiguity surrounding this term might aggravate a deeper interpretive problem—one that draws in other words, sentences, images, and topics that, unlike “ἀποπομπαίος,” appear to share a clear meaning across different religious communities of language-use. Might it be the case that more common words—θεός, πλεονεξία, πρόνοια, Σωκράτης, ἐγκράτεια, are examples that will appear throughout the following chapters—are also implicated in part of the same interpretive challenge as is ἀποπομπαίος?

After spending quite a bit of time in Julian’s and Cyril’s arguments, I have concluded that the difference between them is such that whole episodes—not merely

individual words—of their traditions have the same kind of problem that arises around Leviticus 16. The lexical ambiguity of “ἀποομπαίος” merely calls attention to the systemic impasse. Since the term had no clear history of use that its interpreters had to navigate as they offered interpretations, it was a ready candidate to center rivaling interpretations.

I will be arguing throughout this dissertation that this intellectual conflict between Julian and Cyril should be characterized as “narrative conflict,” which has arisen because the disputants did not share enough intellectual territory to be able to adjudicate differences on matters of importance to their tradition. But before I say more about “narrative conflict” in the abstract, it will be helpful to return one more time to Julian’s and Cyril’s treatment of Leviticus 16. We have seen *what* they conclude about the passage, but we need to step back and consider *how* they reach these conclusions. What is the larger context of meaning-making that allows them to confidently clarify such an ambiguous text?

The resolution of the interpretive ambiguities depends, for each interpreter, on the larger frame of understanding in which this passage is read. More specifically, the resolution of ambiguity stems from the particular commitments of each tradition, which, in turn, was grounded in an overarching narrative that provided the fundamental framework by which members of traditions understood themselves, their neighbors, and the whole cosmos.

The Jewish community that produced the Mishna tractata *Yoma* reasoned within a narrative which included a single God, who through Abraham called out the Jewish

people from the nations as his special people. They developed the practices of Yom Kippur as a mode of faithfulness to Moses, who had mediated the laws of that God to them. This community coherently treated the ambiguous language of *Azazel/ἀποπομπαίος* from Leviticus 16 as part of the larger structure of practices by which they maintained a right standing before God.

Chapter 2 explores the narrative backdrop of Julian's *Against the Galileans* at greater length, but in the barest form of its relevant details, it begins with the neo-Platonic one, the "common king and father of all things" (fr. 20). This common king is the source of a cosmos densely packed with spiritual agents of varying power, characteristics, and roles. Among these beings are the "ethnarch" gods, who rule over their appointed nation with a subordinate divine bureaucracy of sorts, and their individual characteristics determine the unique differences of each nation. In Julian's Hellenic narrative, the ancient Hebrew people were one nation within this expansive, cosmic hierarchy, and Moses was clearly their chief legislator and founding figure. For Julian, Moses attained some success in philosophical speculation, and he also received laws from the Hebrews' ethnarch god, their κύριος. That philosophical speculation and those laws are uniquely Hebraic, in one sense; but more generally they are obviously consonant with Hellenic thought and practice. The apparent monotheistic and even proto-Christian teachings that might seem to be in Moses stem from the fact that later generations distorted Moses's teachings and even corrupted his very texts.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See fr. 34 for Ezra's rewriting of at least parts of Moses's texts. I explain this further in Chapter 2.

With this back-story in mind, it becomes clear how Julian confidently discovered the meaning of “ἀποπομπάιος.” He read Leviticus looking for evidence of Moses’s awareness of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of divinities and the accompanying ritual laws, and he found just such evidence in Leviticus 16, where Moses commands one goat to be sent to the local ethnarch god of the Jews, their κύριος, and the other to be sent to another member of the governing spiritual bureaucracy off in the desert. This being, the ἀποπομπάιος, is an apotropaic being, quite literally, and Julian discerns this against the backdrop of his tradition’s narrative.

Similarly, the narrative backdrop to Cyril’s tradition is what enables his confident interpretation of Leviticus 16. I will explore the details of his narrative framework in Chapter 3, but it is also well known, since it is in its general contours the prevailing Christian position of his day. What bears emphasizing is how Cyril, working from the transformative vantage point of the aftermath of Jesus’s ministry, thought that the laws of the Hebrew Scriptures are in fact “but a shadow of the good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1).<sup>23</sup> The Mosaic law’s worship that was rooted to a particular place and to materialistic rituals was always intended to be temporary and to lead towards a worship that is “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)<sup>24</sup>—and all of this has been made clear

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<sup>23</sup> Lee Blackburn has called attention to “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.” Lee Blackburn, “The Mystery of the Synagogue: Cyril of Alexandria on the Law of Moses” (PhD diss, University of Notre Dame, 2010), 57–58.

<sup>24</sup> Cyril had earlier written a lengthy treatise titled after John 4:24: *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate*. See ch. 4 of Robert L. Wilken’s *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria’s*

in the “mystery of Christ.” When Cyril reads Leviticus 16, then, he looks for how the details about the promised Christ were foreshadowed in the details of the ritual. He has reason to see, in other words, a μυστήριον in the text. That mystery, “sketched (σκιαγραφούμενον) in the two goats” (9.18.1–2), was illuminated in Christ, and that illumination initiated the uncovering of a “second narrative” upon a rereading of the Old Testament law, to use David Steinmetz’s phrase, about which I’ll say more in Chapter 3.<sup>25</sup>

Cyril thus noted that there were two goats and further noted that many biblical presentations of Jesus give a twofold account of him, as a character who died and came back to life, as both a man and God. Though I skipped over these details earlier, in his response to Julian Cyril also tracked how numerous details about Moses’s levitical ritual connect in a systematic and orderly way to various features of Christ’s life and death, to his ministry, to the work of his apostles, and so forth.<sup>26</sup> All these commitments were connected to Cyril’s larger narrative of a Triune, creative God, and of this God’s continual rectifying of human sins throughout history. This narrative tells of a salvation which had to be revealed gradually, in shadows and enigmas, due to God’s

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*Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) on the centrality of this passage for Cyril’s interpretation of the Old Testament and Judaism.

<sup>25</sup> David C. Steinmetz, “Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen. F Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 54–65.

<sup>26</sup> See *AJ* 9.18.20–43

willingness to accommodate the epistemically weak state of his people.<sup>27</sup> All these commitments were fundamental in Cyril's interpretation of Leviticus 16 and the ἀποπομπαίος. As with Julian, it is the larger narrative of Cyril's tradition that shows him how to read the Mosaic law.

## II. Narrative Conflict: Thesis and Chapter Summaries

All the pieces are now in place to see how the intellectual conflict between Julian and Cyril is a “narrative conflict.” I loosely derive the concept from Alasdair MacIntyre and his insistence on the necessity of narrative for intelligibility (more on which in the next section). From this basic epistemological point, MacIntyre analyzes conflict between traditions of life and thought and presumes that something like a narrative backdrop frames and informs the patterns of living and reasoning in a given tradition. The particular shape of that tradition's rationality is tied to the community's history and the maximal narrative whence it derives meaning. When developed traditions come into intellectual conflict, he explains, there may not be enough overlap between their rationalities—between their language or their criteria for adjudicating disagreements—by which to resolve the conflict. In such cases, intellectual conflict will sometimes proceed at the level of the narrative backdrop. In this kind of conflict, MacIntyre suggests that “that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include

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<sup>27</sup> The theme of progressive revelation is scattered throughout *Against Julian*. I will explore it more extensively in Chapter 3.

its rivals within it,” which includes the attempt to “retell their stories as episodes within its story.”<sup>28</sup>

This formulation explains not just Julian’s and Cyril’s interpretations of Leviticus 16. It also explains the larger dynamics of intellectual conflict between them. And it structures the rest of this dissertation.

In the terms of “narrative conflict,” the ritual of Leviticus 16:6–10 constitutes an “episode” from (what was, by Julian’s time) Christian Scripture—a textual part of the Christian “story” which Julian attempts to retell as an “episode” that has been reconstrued to fit within his own story.<sup>29</sup> As I will be arguing at greater length in Chapter 2, Julian’s *Against the Galileans* as a whole amounts to a sustained effort to demonstrate that *all* the episodes of Christianity’s constitutive narrative make better sense within his own Hellenic narrative. The significance and meaning of those episodes in their Christian rendering must be drastically reoriented, of course—to see how the ἀποπομπαίος is a divine, evil-averting being, you have to see how Moses is a very different kind of character than how Christians ever understood him. But Julian thinks that such a drastic reorienting of Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Jesus and his disciples, and fourth-century Christians will produce a more plausible and compelling way of making sense of the cosmos and its history. Julian’s literary attack on

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<sup>28</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 81. My framing is also informed by Kavin Rowe, who further developed MacIntyre’s arguments for *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), in which see chapter 7, “Can We Compare?” and especially 199–205.

<sup>29</sup> This kind of “narrative analysis” is also fruitful for considering the relationships of late antique Christians and pagans to Jews, though I do not pursue this complex question here.

Christianity is much more than a rejection of the claims of Christianity, one-by-one. The strategy latent within the polemics of *Against the Galileans* is to comprehensively subsume the whole thing.<sup>30</sup>

Cyril's response in *Against Julian* matched Julian's argumentative strategy. Unlike Julian, Cyril was responding to a long set of direct and detailed attacks on his own tradition, and thus his rebuttal is more defensive than Julian's. Responding to Julian's attempts to implicitly offer better explanations for a variety of Christian episodes, Cyril had to show that the episodes selected by Julian for reinscription in the Hellenic narrative *did*, in fact, make perfectly good sense within the Christian narrative. But the broad structure of the conflict in *Against Julian* is the same as in *Against the Galileans*: though Cyril was on the defensive and resisting Julian's fracturing efforts by demonstrating the continued coherence of his own narrative and tradition, he simultaneously set about dismembering and subsuming Julian's Hellenic narrative. Cyril worked to fragment *that* narrative and to reconstrue the individual "episodes" within a Christian accounting—a move which fully changed the significance and import of those episodes in their Hellenic configuration.

The following chapters of this study are primarily a substantiation of these claims, through interpretation of the texts. Chapter 2 reinterprets Julian's provoking *Against the Galileans* as advancing narrative conflict against Christians—who are, he says,

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<sup>30</sup> Of course, Julian (or Cyril) did not *consciously* think of his argumentative strategy as "narrative subsumption." This labeling describes what I take him and Cyril to be doing within the polemical arguments, even if they did not think of it in the precise terms of a narrative analysis.

double apostates from both the Hellenic and then from the Hebrew tradition, itself an ethnically-transposed, inferior version of the Hellenic tradition. Chapters 3–5 are dedicated to Cyril’s response in *Against Julian*. Chapter 3 lays the groundwork, first by abstracting and examining the “narrative structure” that frames his arguments; and, second, by focusing on two leitmotifs that do heavy lifting in Cyril’s rebuttals. Chapters 4–5 then focus on specific arguments within *Against Julian*. They revolve around clusters of “episodes” that anchor many of Cyril’s re-narrating battles: Chapter 4 focuses on a cluster of episodes that are broadly “cosmological,” and it also clarifies and illustrates how analysis of narrative conflict relates to other argumentative “layers,” as I call them. Chapter 5 is organized around one of Julian’s own categories: the “gifts of the gods.” It tracks Cyril’s dogged re-explanation of the wide variety of phenomena that Julian presents as evidence of the gods’ favor to the Hellenic tradition and, implicitly, as evidence of the truth of his tradition. In the sixth and final chapter, I turn first to Cyril’s *Against Nestorius* as a point of comparison with *Against Julian*. There are striking formal similarities between the two texts, though in MacIntyrean terms, Cyril and Nestorius are decidedly *intra*-traditional rivals. *Against Nestorius* thus provides broad similarities to *Against Julian* that can ground and accentuate the contrasts between its argumentative dynamics and the *inter*-traditional conflict carried on in *Against Julian*. This final chapter then summarizes the findings of Chapters 2–5 and concludes with suggestions about what the narrative conflict of *Against Julian* might suggest about larger questions of intellectual conflict in late antiquity and about the relationship between strong traditions of life and thought.

Before getting to the texts, however, further words of introduction are in order: first, about traditions, rationality, and narratives; second, on modern scholarship about Julian and Christians; and third, about the texts and contexts of *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*.

### III. Tradition, Rationality, Narrative

Before proceeding to *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*, the central terms “rationality,” “tradition,” and “narrative” need further explanation. Though the philosophical issues surrounding these terms largely fade into the background throughout the following chapters, they deserve further definition.

There is, of course, an enormous mountain of writing on the topics of rationality, tradition, and narrative. I am using these concepts primarily as they appear in Alasdair MacIntyre’s corpus (the trilogy of *After Virtue*, *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?*, and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry*, specifically) and as they are developed (and, in one key way, challenged) by Kavin Rowe in *One True Life*.<sup>31</sup>

In my framing, Cyril and Julian are each representatives of strong traditions of life and thought. Cyril was one of the most influential bishops of the fifth century and is, to this day, regarded as a touchstone of orthodoxy by most streams of Christianity. Though Julian was raised and educated as a Christian, his adolescent turn to Iamblichan Neoplatonism launched him onto the path of a philosopher-king in the platonic mold.

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<sup>31</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989); MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*; Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*.

Both were self-conscious recipients of a store of teachings and authoritative texts—Cyril, those of the Bible, foremost, and also of the earlier fathers of the church; Julian, those of the Hellenic corpus of texts, including Plato, Homer, Hesiod, etc., and of the more recent Iamblichus of Chalcis. Both were also active architects within their communities, making life-shaping decisions and writing prolifically.

These characteristics and more contribute to Cyril's and Julian's statuses as representatives of strong, developed *traditions*, in the MacIntyrean sense. In his best known and pithiest definition, MacIntyre defines a "living tradition" as "an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition."<sup>32</sup> Traditions are thus in large part constituted by a certain kind of disagreement, a certain kind of intellectual conflict, though it is far from flatly intellectual. It is, rather, an existentially thick conflict, embedded in the unreflective (for many in the tradition) practices of their community as much as in the discourse of those who theorize about the tradition—the argument is "socially embodied." The argument also has a history, and in that history the contours of *rationality* come into view. MacIntyre's explanation of the process by which rationality emerges within a developing tradition illustrates the relation of rationality and the community's history, which points towards the role of narrative.

Communities in the early stages of forming a rational tradition exist, says MacIntyre, "in and from some condition of pure historical contingency, from the

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<sup>32</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.

beliefs, institutions, and practices of some particular community which constitute a given.” MacIntyre presumes no mythic state of nature or pre-social unit of humans: rather, “Within such a community authority will have been conferred upon certain texts and certain voices.”<sup>33</sup> There are always structures of authority and decision-making, that is, even if the sustained “rational enquiry” that gives a tradition its necessary constitution and continuity has not yet emerged. A likely way it *will* emerge stems from the inevitable existential challenges that the authorities or authority-structures of a community will face—perhaps from “incompatible interpretations” of authoritative texts; or perhaps from “confrontation by new situations” which the community’s beliefs and practices turn out to be inadequate to address. Whatever the case, challenges always arise, and how the community responds will depend partially on their existing modes of problem-solving, but also on their “inventiveness,” as MacIntyre calls it. Challenges force any number of possible changes and new inventions in a community: “the rejection, emendation, and reformulation of beliefs, the reevaluation of authorities, the reinterpretation of texts, the emergence of new forms of authority, and the production of new texts.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 354. What to say about non-literal traditions (if they can even satisfy MacIntyre’s definition of a “tradition”) is an interesting question, but not finally relevant to this study, in which both traditions under scrutiny are highly textual.

<sup>34</sup> MacIntyre, 355. Of course, in some traditions—including Christianity and Neoplatonism—some texts are taken to be divine and are thus, says MacIntyre, “exempt from repudiation.” I will consider in later chapters some of the similarities in the exegetical methods that Cyril and Julian deploy to interpret their respective authoritative texts. Such similarities *in method* are sometimes taken as evidence of substantive overlap between figures like Cyril and Julian, even when they posture as diametrically opposed. But these similarities in interpretive methods don’t have to indicate anything more than the (frankly, banal) fact that each tradition has texts that are, within that tradition, “exempt from repudiation.”

The key link between history and rationality comes next in the process of a tradition's development. Anyone who has passed through a community's existential challenges and emerged with a modified set of commitments and practices will now have a new kind of perspective: they "become able to contrast their new beliefs with the old." This new perspective grounds the operation by which traditions can (and do) make claims and build lives which are not purely relativistic, sunk in nothing metaphysically deeper than pure historical contingency.<sup>35</sup> The perspective of being able to contrast new to old beliefs and practices is one which grounds existentially-reliable judgments of *falsity*, which themselves provide a way to make judgments of *truth*.

There is, says MacIntyre, between the new and old beliefs of this community a "radical discrepancy." That which was once thought to be *adequate* for sustaining a life in the world is then seen to be *inadequate*—and, as inadequate, thereby false.<sup>36</sup> Such a judgment of falsity about the past grounds a corollary judgment: "To claim truth for one's present mindset and the judgments which are its expression is to claim that this kind of inadequacy, this kind of discrepancy, will never appear in any possible future situation." This is, of course, a *negative* judgment of truth—a judgment about what *won't*

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<sup>35</sup> MacIntyre's entire reflection in this chapter on the "Rationality of Traditions" is framed as a response to the charge that his position is inevitably perspectivalist or relativist.

<sup>36</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 356. The role that "adequacy" plays in MacIntyre's account cannot be overstated. His conception of "mind" is emphatically "not Cartesian"—it is a conception of "mind as activity, of mind as engaging with the natural and social world in such activities as identification, reidentification, collecting, separating, classifying, and naming and all this by touching, grasping, pointing, breaking down, building up, calling to, answering to, and so on." It is, I might add, a conception of "mind" which belong to concrete, finite creatures, trying to make their way in the world. I will return to the centrality of "adequacy" shortly.

happen. But it also suggests an intellectual mechanism by which positive judgments of truths can be evaluated (though not definitively proved). “The test for truth in the present,” MacIntyre says, “therefore, is always to summon up as many questions and as many objections of the greatest strength possible; what can be justifiably claimed as true is what has sufficiently withstood such dialectical questioning and framing of objections.”<sup>37</sup> To justify a claim of truth is to imagine as many ways as possible how that truth claim could become inadequate in the future. This is certainly a chastened view of truth. But it is chastened due to its attention to the fragile, contingent, and limited perspective of the human condition, and to its existentially thick understanding of truth as, to put it bluntly, what “works”—though, “works,” in the maximal sense of allowing a community to carry out lives indexed to the way the world actually is.<sup>38</sup>

With these outlines on how communities make judgments of “true” and “false,” the main ingredients are in place for understanding what “rationality” is, in MacIntyre’s sense. The working out of which beliefs are false, what practices inadequate (and of *why* they are false and inadequate: because a long-revered text is actually misleading? because we imprudently placed trust in a leader who

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<sup>37</sup> MacIntyre, 358.

<sup>38</sup> MacIntyre’s is thus an epistemologically *coherentist* position, but it is no less metaphysically *realist* than the most committed of philosophical fundamentalists. In this respect, MacIntyre’s position can be described well by Susan Felch’s language of “perspectival realism.” This position, she writes, “retains a correspondence view of truth—that the world is a certain way regardless of our thinking about it—but it substitutes a realist epistemology (that the world is the object of our awareness) for a representational epistemology (that appearances and concepts are the objects of our awareness). . . . Language, then, is seen not as an end in itself but as one of the media, or means, by which we respond to and act in the world.” See Susan M. Felch, “Words and Things: The Hope of Perspectival Realism,” in *Faithful Imagination in the Academy: Explorations in Religious Belief and Scholarship*, ed. Janel M Curry and Ronald Wells (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 26.

misinterpreted an otherwise reliable text or long-held practice? because some feature about how we live has blinded us to a looming challenge? etc.) and the working out of which beliefs and practices are strong alternative candidates to hold as true—these are some of the complex arguments that make up a living tradition. The interminable (at least in terms of the whole process) and demanding process of resolving such arguments is the domain of rationality, and rationality takes its shape from the ongoing history of those arguments and resolutions. Thus—and here lies the link between history and rationality—to be a participant in theorizing within that tradition, you have to know the tradition’s history and arguments, solutions, ongoing disputes, and so forth. To reason, you have to know where you came from.

Before moving to “narrative,” it’s worth noting that this quick explanation of rationality as MacIntyre understands it also provides the pieces to see why MacIntyre insists on the existence of many rationalities, not of a singular rationality-as-such. There is, he says, an “inescapably historically and socially context-bound character which any substantive set of principles of rationality, whether theoretical or practical, is bound to have.”<sup>39</sup> In other words, a community’s rationality is indelibly shaped by the course of its history: of the challenges it has faced, of the explanatory resources it has developed to make sense of those challenges and how to continue on the other side, of the authorities that have emerged intact, and so forth. This raises the obvious question of whether different traditions can reason with one another, of whether their modes of

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<sup>39</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 4.

adjudicating disagreements share adequate criteria to reach resolutions. To be sure, MacIntyre thinks that “common characteristic, if not universal, patterns” will emerge among different traditions, like “standard forms of argument,” “requirements for successful dialectical questioning,” “appeal to authority,” “the identification of incoherence,” and so forth.<sup>40</sup> These characteristics, however, are largely formal—of themselves they provide little or nothing of the “substantive set of principles of rationality” that give durable shape to lives. MacIntyre notes at the beginning of *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?* (in some tension with his insistence later in the book on the emergence of common patterns of reasoning) that “observance of laws of logic is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition for rationality, whether theoretical or practical.” As with the “laws of logic,” so, too, perhaps, with the “common characteristic, if not universal, patterns” of reasoning: they are only necessary and not sufficient conditions for a traditional enquiry.<sup>41</sup> Whether *rational* conflict can be carried out between traditions must, for the moment, remain an open question, while we turn to “narrative.”

We must take care here, for several kinds of a community’s story-telling are at play. A tradition’s history—the history that one has to know to be able to reason within the tradition—is one kind of story. This is a story about a community’s journey through challenges, the resolutions of which have given the community’s rationality its distinctive shape. This is a “narrative” of sorts. But I will largely be using the term

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<sup>40</sup> MacIntyre, 359.

<sup>41</sup> MacIntyre, 4.

“narrative” in a more fundamental way, as the precondition for intelligibility, *sine qua non*. It’s a bit of an artificial simplification, but we might say, on the one hand, that *history* of a certain kind is necessary for *rationality* to emerge, and to understand the *rationality* one thus have to understand the *history*; and, on the other hand, that *narrative* of a certain kind is necessary for the even more basic *intelligibility* of words, concepts, and actions.<sup>42</sup>

Though not unique to MacIntyre, the connection between narrative and intelligibility is also one he develops at some length. The complete argument need not detain us, but his basic point is that “narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions.”<sup>43</sup> MacIntyre illustrates his point about the intelligibility of “human action” with his better known example of the young man who, at a bus stop, comments to his neighbor that “The name of the common wild duck is *Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*.” MacIntyre suggests that “the meaning of the sentence he uttered” holds no problem, but the

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<sup>42</sup> This isn’t precisely MacIntyre’s usage of the terms, but it is, I think, amenable. My use of “narrative” is further elucidated by the sense Kevin Vanhoozer (who draws from Paul Ricoeur and Nicholas Wolterstorff) gives for *mythos*. In contrast to even the positive sense of “myth” (as a sacred story which perhaps conveys existential truths or even gestures towards acts of God), *mythos*—“narrative,” in my lexicon—“configures human action so as to create a form of wholeness (i.e., a unified action) out of a multiplicity of events.” It thus “‘configures’ a totality of time out of a succession of events” and “serves as a cognitive tool to project a sense of the world as an ordered whole.” See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3–7.

<sup>43</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 208.

problem of “what was he doing in uttering it?” is a different matter, requiring a narrative to make the utterance intelligible.<sup>44</sup>

But MacIntyre’s insistence on narrative for the intelligibility of *human action* needs to be extended even further. The “meaning” of his fictive young man’s sentence is also a problem, as becomes evident if we recall the puzzle of Leviticus 16. What if this young man had commented to his neighbor that, “The most important part of Yom Kippur is the ἀποπομπαίος”? His neighbor would certainly wonder “what was he doing in uttering” such a sentence, but he would also wonder what such a sentence *means*, even if he knows something about Hellenistic Greek. In terms of MacIntyre’s example, even the terms “duck” and “*histrionicus*” are intelligible only against a narrative backdrop. This point about narrative and intelligibility is banal when applied to ducks, but that is because the subject-matter does not get very close to words that bear weight within a tradition. The point is less banal with Leviticus 16 and “ἀποπομπαίος,” the meaning of which seems closely tied to words like “θεός/θεοί.” But in both cases narrative is epistemically fundamental at even the word-level.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> MacIntyre, 210.

<sup>45</sup> On this point, I agree with Rowe, who similarly points out: “On the face of it, the simple meaning of ‘the common name . . . *histrionicus*’ is clear. But on closer inspection the clarity is only because we have a sense of how to talk that way at all. It may be that we now talk that way for X or Y purpose . . . , but utter that sentence prior to the development of modern scientific classification, and the priority of ‘meaning-in-light-of-a-particular-history’ to ‘meaning’ is immediately evident. Insert it into a first-century text, and the point is even clearer. *Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus* means no more and no less than what it means in the narrative(s) that tells one what it means.” See C. Kavin Rowe, “Making Friends and Comparing Lives,” in *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, Library of New Testament Studies 600 (London: T & T Clark, 2020), 25.

With strong traditions of life and thought—as in Julian’s and Cyril’s cases—the narrative can become plainly maximal, offering an all-encompassing story of everything.<sup>46</sup> That maximal *narrative* will include, of course, a tradition’s relevant *history* that one must know to reason within the tradition. But the story will be much bigger than just the history of the community itself. It will extend backwards and forwards (prospectively, at least) in time to provide the framework to make intelligible, as much as is possible, *everything* that the tradition takes to exist. Of course, many of the details of that narrative will be disputed, parallel to the ongoing argument that constitutes a tradition—people might even dispute which among a variety of important plot lines constitutes the *main* plot(s). But one of the ways to discern the existence of a more-or-less stable tradition of life and thought is by identifying broad enough agreement about the features of a maximal narrative, within which agreement members can dispute how to arrange or prioritize this or that component.

A tradition is thus an “argument” (socially-embodied, historically-extended, etc.), and the shape of the rationality of the tradition is tied to how that argument has developed so far. The tradition’s narrative is the backdrop by which all the terms, events, and characters derive their intelligibility and meaning. These expanded

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<sup>46</sup> Of course, the narrative backdrop which makes words intelligible is not *always* “maximal.” Nor do all people everywhere belong to a strong tradition (whether as only practitioners of or also as theorists about it), and thus their lives are not intelligible to themselves, even implicitly, *only* on the basis of a maximal narrative. This point is important for the question about *what*, precisely, is shared between people who belong to traditions that are potentially incommensurable. At the very least, enough of a narrative is shared to make “duck” intelligible in the same way to people across traditions or of no strong tradition at all. Whether or not that overlap can become a foundation to also make ‘god(s)’ or ‘ἀποπομπάιος’ or weightier words mutually intelligible in a commensurate manner is the pressing question.

definitions should begin to provide more clarity to the claim that the intellectual conflict on display within *Against Julian* is “narrative conflict.” To push further, we need to return to the question raised a few paragraphs back about the possibility of rational conflict between strong traditions of life and thought.

This, too, is a question that MacIntyre has considered, and it is a question that Kavin Rowe has recently formulated for deployment in historical scholarship on the ancient and late ancient world.<sup>47</sup> The question centers on the possibility of translation between strong traditions. Having traced the dominant influences from traditions on the modern, western world, MacIntyre turns in the penultimate chapter of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* to “Tradition and Translation.” He considers how those in a tradition might prove their tradition’s rational superiority over another’s. The problems for this endeavor are multiple. Not only might it be the case that each tradition’s criteria for adjudicating disagreements are incompatible (which makes *rational* conflict a challenge). Before getting to this point, it must first be confirmed that adherents from rival traditions even *understand* one another when they speak about commitments central to their tradition. “Every tradition,” MacIntyre notes, “is embodied in some particular set of utterances and actions and thereby in all the particularities of some specific language and culture.” This applies not only to different languages, but also (potentially) to different communities of language-users *within* the

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<sup>47</sup> MacIntyre worked out his theses in conversation with pre-modern texts, of course (as in the first two thirds of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* or the focus on Aristotle and Augustine and Aquinas throughout his corpus). As will become evident, though, Rowe has taken MacIntyrean insights and applied them through second-order reflection on the practice of historical scholarship itself.

same language. In MacIntyre's understanding, there is no such thing as language-as-such—only language-in-use. As such, "The boundaries of a language are the boundaries of some linguistic community which is also a social community."<sup>48</sup> Two communities of English-speakers (or Chinese-speakers, or Wolof-speakers, etc.) might have passed through sufficiently different existential challenges that the shape of their reasoning and even vocabulary begins to take on significantly different forms, even when they are using a shared pool of words and syntactical structure.

Given these dynamics, MacIntyre thinks that a language-in-use might, in fact, be untranslatable into another language-in-use. He does think, though, that a way lies open for rationally justifiable claims that one tradition is superior to another. For someone to make such a claim on behalf of their own tradition, they have to learn the language of their rival's tradition "as a second first language."<sup>49</sup> They have to learn, that is, the patterns of use within the second language as if from the inside—not as words and phrases that are substitutable for other words and phrases in the person's *first* first language, but as the words are used in the nexuses of speech and practice of the lived, second tradition. As becomes clear in the opening of MacIntyre's Gifford lectures, published as *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, he thinks that this exercise of learning a second first language does, indeed, make rational debate possible. Furthermore, he thinks that the possibility of rational debate makes possible the conclusive demonstration of rational superiority of one tradition over the other, "if only because

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<sup>48</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 371–73.

<sup>49</sup> MacIntyre, 374.

exposure to such debate may reveal that one of the contending standpoints fails in its own terms and by its own standards.”<sup>50</sup> Someone who speaks the language of both traditions as if from the inside (their “second first language”) can, on this model, perhaps show how the commitments and rationality of one tradition addresses the failures of the second tradition. In this way, the first tradition can be shown, rationally, as superior—in its superior adequacy to explain and resolve existential challenges faced by a community.<sup>51</sup>

Rowe follows MacIntyre until this final point in the argument, where he diverges: “Even MacIntyre, however, does not seem to reckon concretely enough with the consequences of his own insights into the linguistic nature of traditions and the indispensability of initiation into a pattern of life for the shape of reason’s working.”<sup>52</sup> The extent to which we can learn a *second* first language is always bound to the extent to which our reason is tied to the lived shape of our *first* first language’s community. (Or inversely, as pertains to Julian as a convert from Christianity to Hellenism, the extent to which one continues to understand his *first* first language is bound to the extent that his reason is now tied to the lived shape of his *second* first language’s community.) As MacIntyre acknowledges, reasoning in at least certain kinds of

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<sup>50</sup> MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 5.

<sup>51</sup> See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 365. MacIntyre says that “in this kind of situation the rationality of tradition requires an acknowledgement by those who have hitherto inhabited and given their allegiance to the tradition in crisis that the alien tradition is superior in rationality and in respect of its claims to truth to their own. What the explanation afforded from within the alien tradition will have disclosed is a lack of correspondence between the dominant beliefs of their own tradition and the reality disclosed by the most successful explanation . . . .” On this topic, see also the postscript to the second edition of *After Virtue* at page 270 in the third edition.

<sup>52</sup> Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 204.

tradition requires (by the demands of the tradition itself) becoming a certain kind of person—submitting, often, to the instruction and practices of teachers. In this sense, reasoning is like a craft with masters and apprentices. Crucially, in this process “the apprentice learns what it is about him or herself that has to be transformed, that is, what vices need to be eradicated, what intellectual and moral virtues need to be cultivated.”<sup>53</sup> But, to Rowe’s point, what if traditions have determined what constitutes a vice and what a virtue with significantly different conclusions? What if incompatibilities emerge between the respective regimes of practices required to make you the “right kind of person” for reasoning? What if the philosophical “imagination”—the central faculty by which one can understand another tradition “from the inside,” according to MacIntyre—is itself, according to a tradition, broken, the fixing of which requires (according to that other tradition) abandoning one’s present tradition for the moral therapy of the other?<sup>54</sup> What if this imagination is part of what needs to be “transformed” for one to be a skilled reasoner within the tradition?<sup>55</sup> As Rowe says, the “inability to live more than one tradition at a time means that in a crucial and, truth be

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<sup>53</sup> See MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 61–63.

<sup>54</sup> See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 394: the testing of a tradition that is not one’s own “requires a work of the imagination whereby the individual is able to place him or herself imaginatively within the scheme of belief inhabited by those whose allegiance is to the rival tradition, so as to perceive and conceive the natural and social worlds as they perceive and conceive them.”

<sup>55</sup> MacIntyre’s analysis of one version of the Augustinian tradition comes close to exactly this kind of scenario: if divine illumination is said to be necessary for knowing (and if, for the sake of argument, divine illumination were to require baptism and the further practices of the Christian church), then how could someone outside the Christian church *imagine* themselves into this community? See Chapter 4 in *Three Rival Versions*, “The Augustinian Conception of Moral Enquiry” (82–104).

told, rather sobering sense, even the central patterns of reasoning in one tradition—as that tradition understands them—will not be understood in another.”<sup>56</sup>

We have passed through this circuitous route to provide a more textured sense of what I mean when I claim that the intellectual conflict between Cyril and Julian is “narrative conflict.” Such conflict is *not*, in other words, *rational* conflict, strictly speaking in the sense that their differences cannot be adjudicated by shared criteria. But this does not make the intellectual conflict automatically *irrational*. It might be, rather, still intellectual conflict of a different sort—namely, a conflict at the level of the maximal narratives that give their words, histories, characters, and their whole traditions their basic intelligibility. This is a scenario that MacIntyre envisaged, even though he held that rational resolution was possible (at least in principle), given a powerful enough imagination. In this kind of conflict, “that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, not only to retell their stories as episodes within its story, but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 204. As Rowe explains in further detail in “Making Friends,” such an impasse of understanding does not preclude all sorts of fruitful relationships between members of rival traditions—most importantly, friendship. But *understanding* in an existentially thick way may not be possible: “What if the longer you study something the more you understand that you do not understand it because you discover that it is calling you to live in a certain way of life, to become a different sort of person – that understanding in this deeper sense would mean becoming what you are being summoned to become – and you say *no*? The door to that becoming is then closed, and you are shut out.” See Rowe, “Making Friends and Comparing Lives” (quotation from page 34).

<sup>57</sup> MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 81.

Dante's *Commedia* provides for MacIntyre a stark instance of such a rivalry, though in the form of a "dramatic enacted narrative."<sup>58</sup> The *Commedia*, with its exhaustive eschatological mapping of the entire cosmos, takes important figures from the ancient classical world and reinterprets their significance on medieval Christian terms. Dante has, to put it in MacIntyre's terms, told a narrative that takes a wide assortment of the key stories from the ancient world and retold those stories as "episodes" within his own maximal narrative. For example, early in the *Inferno* Dante reconfigures the significance of the Aeneas-episode: before Dante enters onto the "deep and savage way" (2.142) into Hell, he has a moment of self-doubt, wondering why he should be allowed to pass through Hell *alive*, given that this honor has heretofore been reserved for only two extraordinary actors in the history of salvation. One such actor, Aeneas, had his journey through Hell narrated by Dante's guide, Virgil, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. But Aeneas was allowed to make this journey, Dante explains, so that he could "father holy Rome and her dominion, both of these established . . . to be the sacred precinct where the successors of great Peter have their throne" (2.21–24). With these few lines of poetry, Dante thereby takes a central episode from classical antiquity—the founding narrative of the Roman Empire—and reconstrues it on uniquely medieval Christian terms, so that now the whole purpose of Aeneas's legendary journey is oriented to the founding of the seat of Christ's vicar on earth.

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<sup>58</sup> MacIntyre, 142.

The conflict that Julian originally pursued with the Christians of his day, and that Cyril later took up with Julian, occurs at this plane of conflict, though in a mode that is not outwardly narrational. The conflict was carried out in polemical refutations, but to provide an adequate account of the conflict, we must notice the implicit narrative conflict, wherein a disputant is attempting to “out-narrate” his antagonist, to tell his own tradition’s story in such a way that it includes the significant “episodes” of his antagonist’s tradition-constitutive narrative. By doing so Julian and Cyril fundamentally reconstrue those episodes of their antagonists in such a way that increases the expansive scope of their own story, with the byproduct of undermining the coherence and adequacy of the antagonist’s account.

I briefly mentioned already how central “adequacy” is for MacIntyre’s analysis of the rationality of traditions. Adequacy is similarly the central, implicit criterion in conflict at the narrative plane—at the narrative level, each disputant attempts to demonstrate an “explanatory adequacy.” By trying to renarrate central episodes of Christianity, Julian was implicitly trying to demonstrate the superior explanatory power of his Hellenic narrative and the rationality which it grounds. Cyril’s responses tried to show that Christianity could give a fully adequate account of the Christian episodes that Julian selected; and, at the same time, his responses also sought to demonstrate a Christian narrative with greater explanatory power in its ability to give a better narrative account of Julian’s central Hellenic episodes.

Neither *Against the Galileans* nor *Against Julian* are written in a “narrative” genre, of course. They are, in many ways, typical instances of ancient polemical writings.<sup>59</sup> Each includes historical surveys, close readings of relevant texts, dense philosophical argumentation, direct personal attacks, and much more. But my argument throughout the following chapters is that these varied pieces contribute to the more fundamental conflict of the narratives that frame Julian’s Hellenism and Cyril’s Christianity.<sup>60</sup> It is the narrative conflict, in fact, which holds together the sometimes wildly varying subject matter that Julian and Cyril consider—without the argumentative strategy of narrative conflict, it would be difficult to read these texts as coherent wholes.<sup>61</sup>

Before advancing to two case studies in modern scholarship that have treated intellectual conflict between Julian and Christians, a few more words about MacIntyre’s and Rowe’s arguments as they relate to modern scholarship are in order. Drawing on MacIntyre’s characterization of three of the dominant traditions of inquiry that still shape the western world in *Three Rival Versions*, Rowe dwells on the fact that scholars are in the same boat as the rest of humanity—we can exercise only *traditioned* reason. However, modern scholarship on the ancient and late ancient world often fails to

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<sup>59</sup> On *Against Julian* as an instance of classical ἔλεγχος, see Christoph Riedweg, Wolfram Kinzig, and Thomas Brüggemann, eds., *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, GCS, N.F. 20–21 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 1:CXX.

<sup>60</sup> In *One True Life*, Rowe considers a similar objection, i.e., that none of the primary texts he considers (by Paul, Luke, Justin Martyr, and by Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus) tell exactly what the “Stoic and/or Christian narrative is.” He responds: “Such an objection is understandable given the way narrative has commonly been understood as a type of surface-level genre, as if one has narrative only when one can actually read it on the very top of the text. This shallow understanding, however, ignores the deeper sense in which narrative is the substructure of nonnarrative texts—making possible the particular shape of the speech in the latter’s actual structure—and thus is present throughout the text even where the textual surface looks quite different.” *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 201.

<sup>61</sup> Nothing guarantees that they are coherent wholes, of course, but they deserve the benefit of the doubt.

realize that conflict between traditions might extend deeply enough that comparing them by strictly-speaking “rational” standards might not be possible. This failure has two, related components that are relevant to the present study.

First is the assumption that *ancient* traditions of life and thought (like that of the imperial Stoics and earliest Christians, in Rowe’s study; or, of a late-antique Platonist and Christian, in my case) are commensurable as traditions. We must rather remain open to the possibility that different traditions may make truth claims that resist assimilation into some more expansive scholarly rubric which would, in turn, allow comparison of these truth claims to those of another tradition. Rowe’s theoretical arguments cannot determine *a priori* if two seemingly different communities are in fact incommensurable, of course, but there are powerful currents in academic thought (“encyclopaedist” thinking, as MacIntyre labels it) that resist even the possibility of incommensurability.

This leads to the second and related failure: it is possible not only that ancient traditions were incommensurable with one another but also that the tradition(s) of the ancients are incommensurable with the tradition(s) of modern scholars. If this turns out to be the case, then the presumed “translucifying power of scholarly reasoning,”<sup>62</sup> vis-à-vis any object of study, turns out to be illusory, resulting in what Rowe calls “encyclopedic distortions.”<sup>63</sup> If some claims of an ancient tradition simply are not translatable into scholarly language, then the attempt to so translate will necessarily

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<sup>62</sup> Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 175.

<sup>63</sup> See Rowe, 191–99.

produce distortions. Said otherwise, the “Etic language” of a scholar might turn out to be “not the outside presentation of something inside (emic)” but rather “simply a rival construal of true knowledge.”<sup>64</sup>

If all these possibilities turn out to be true, then can a scholar compare ancient traditions? How does one even determine if a disagreement among figures from history is the kind of conflict that occurs within and is constitutive of a tradition, or the kind of conflict that exposes rationally irresolvable difference? We return now to why “narrative” as an analytical category is so important in scholarly work that aspires to characterize intellectual conflict. Rowe suggests that “narrative juxtaposition” enables a mode of analysis that does not foreclose the possibility of incommensurability from the get-go.<sup>65</sup>

Given the central epistemological point about narrative and intelligibility, “narrative” as an analytical tool avoids foisting on ancient traditions those alien analytical categories that often ground scholarly comparative endeavors—MacIntyre’s and Rowe’s favorite example of which categories being “morality.”<sup>66</sup> In a certain way “narrative,” in the sense that I’m using it, is also foreign to the ancients. Its strength as an analytical category, however, lies in the fact that all it presumes about traditions of life and thought is that their practitioners reason about the good of their (and their community’s) lives. Using “narrative” in this MacIntyrean manner scrupulously avoids

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<sup>64</sup> Rowe, 195.

<sup>65</sup> Rowe, 199–205.

<sup>66</sup> On the weakness of “morality” as a category for comparison see MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 174–91; followed by Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 192–93.

attempting to predetermine even what that “reasoning” of the tradition will look like. This should be contrasted with assumptions in modern scholarship about universalized categories that attempt to provide wide enough (abstracted) background against which the particular positions of different traditions’ representatives can be compared.

As Rowe suggests, use of narrative analysis imports no more analytical baggage than what has already been brought to a scholarly conversation which uses the terms “Christian” or “Stoic” or “Platonist.” These terms are unintelligible without a narrative “that makes a life locatable in a specific way,”<sup>67</sup> and so a scholarly conversation that considers “Christian” and “Platonist” matters has already presumed some minimal narrative to provide intelligibility.<sup>68</sup> That the boundaries of “Christian” or “Platonist” are blurry and contested does not undermine this point. Just by arguing over what

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<sup>67</sup> Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 199. He further clarifies: “Narrative is not, therefore, something separable from ‘Christian’ and from ‘Stoic.’ No Christian story, no possibility for understanding ‘Christian’ as a way to describe how my community has been and is in the world. No Stoic story, no possibility for the understanding ‘Stoic’ as a way to describe how I am in the world. In a crucial sense, to know the story is to know the thing itself.”

<sup>68</sup> In one of the less confused criticisms of *One True Life*, John Barclay argues that abstractions like “morality” are unavoidable in scholarly interpretation—“abstractions are both necessary and valuable for organizing thought”—and that Rowe himself ends up using his own abstractions even as he critiques others. But it’s a category mistake to suggest that “morality” and the concepts connected to narrative analysis (Barclay singles out Rowe’s “pattern of life” phrase) are equivalent: the latter are part of the very structures of intelligibility, while “morality,” as it is frequently used in comparative scholarship, is not necessary for intelligibility.

Rowe’s and MacIntyre’s criticism is that “morality” and the like is used to “provide the single framework within which difference/similarity is constructed,” even though there is no such thing as “the moral life in general” which might provide the generic background for comparison (Rowe, 192). Talk of a “pattern of life” does different analytical work—without some kind of “pattern of life,” explained by a narrative, an individual simply must be unintelligible. The same does not go for “morality.” For Barclay’s criticism, see “‘O Wad Some Pow’r the Giftie Gie Us, To See Oursels as Others See Us!’ Method and Purpose in Comparing the New Testament,” in *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, Library of New Testament Studies 600 (London: T & T Clark, 2020), 15, note 22. For Rowe’s response, see “A Response to Friend-Critics,” in *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, Library of New Testament Studies 600 (London: T & T Clark, 2020), 136.

should merit the label “Christian,” we presume some criterion of adjudication, and the intelligibility of that criterion will, at its most fundamental level, lie in a narrative about the tradition.<sup>69</sup>

These arguments about traditions of life and thought and about narrative analysis will not be palatable to all, of course. Even if the hermeneutical arguments are persuasive, they do not prove *a priori* that Julian and Cyril are members of rival traditions of life and thought such that an adequate explanation of their conflict-advancing texts must extend its analysis to the plane of narrative conflict. To objections that might arise from either of these worries, I offer one other defense of using narrative as the framing analytical tool of my study, and it is pragmatic in nature: I invite you to simply look at all that “narrative” as an analytical category can do to explain these texts. If this dissertation is successful, then it will have uncovered all kinds of things about *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*—things that would not have been evident without the analytical tools that I have prioritized. In a key sense, the

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<sup>69</sup> Rowe considers Charles Taylor’s suggestions that the interrelationship of thought and practice within a community relies on “a wide, metaphysical understanding of the world that makes normative judgments normative (rather than just one opinion among others).” But he also points out that even the widest metaphysical understanding of the world implies and depends upon narrative—a narrative, moreover, that will inevitably include, at least by implication, origins and ends (and thus at least imply the resultant implications for the time in which we ourselves currently live).” *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 200.

Taylor’s prioritizing of the “wide, metaphysical understanding of the world” might yield somewhat similar results if used to analyze the intellectual conflict in *Against Julian*. That conflict would not be understood as “narrative conflict”—rather, “worldview conflict,” perhaps?—but one might imagine traditional rivals as reconstruing different pieces of a metaphysical scheme in a parallel manner to how I say that Julian and Cyril re-tell episodes. Still, Rowe’s point about the epistemic priority of narrative is, I think, right. The deepest possible intellectual conflict reaches to the most basic building blocks of intelligibility, and those lie in narratives, not worldviews (which themselves depend on narratives).

proof of the pudding of this thesis will be in eats eating. If narrative is fundamental for intelligibility and if “narrative conflict” accurately construes what’s going on in and between Julian’s and Cyril’s texts, then the evidence for both of these claims will be in the explanatory power they provide for the actual texts.

#### IV. Writing Against Julian in Modern Scholarship: Two Case Studies

Normally in a study such as this one, a review of previous research would be appropriate. There is, however, very little scholarship on *Against Julian*, though that situation is changing since the publication of the first modern critical edition in 2016–17. There is, of course, an enormous amount of scholarship as soon as we step one contextual level out from *Against Julian*, but Cyril’s text itself has been little studied.<sup>70</sup> In light of this dearth, and in light of my interest in the framing of comparative studies, I turn now, instead, to two case studies. The first is of William Malley’s *Hellenism and Christianity: The Conflict Between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the Contra Galilaeos of Julian the Apostate and the Contra Iulianum of St. Cyril of Alexandria*, which is the only

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<sup>70</sup> The GCS edition of *Against Julian* has a 43-page bibliography in the first volume (CLXXXVII–CCXXIX)—and a few updates in the second volume (XI–XV)—that covers studies completed through 2016 and directly pertaining to *Against Julian* and (in much greater number) studies reaching several contextual layers out from Cyril’s text. Of note since then is the collection of studies by Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich and Stefan Rebenich, eds., *Interreligiöse Konflikte im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert: Julian “Contra Galilaeos” - Kyrill “Contra Iulianum,”* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 181 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020). Though her work appears in the GCS bibliography and in *Interreligiöse konflikte*, the French scholar Marie-Odile Boulnois (who is publishing an on-going French translation of *Against Julian* for *Sources Chrétiennes*) deserves additional comment for her prolific publication record of short, close-reading-based studies of portions of *Against Julian*.

modern, book-length treatment of the literary dispute between Cyril and Julian.<sup>71</sup> Though it is now over 40 years old and offers little self-reflection on theoretical method, it bears at least one crucial feature with the second point of reference, Susanna Elm's recent *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*.<sup>72</sup> Elm's treatment of Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus does not engage Cyril's later text, but its theoretically self-conscious analysis of Julian and one of his learned Christian critics offers a useful point of reference. Both Malley's and Elm's studies presume a basic comparability, built on what is shared between Julian and his respective Christian critics. Though they use rather different sets of shared features as wider backdrops for comparison, this basic agreement allows me to further elucidate my own commitments by contrast, now with respect to concrete historical studies rather than in theory.

#### *IV.A. Hellenism and Christianity*

Malley's lengthy *Hellenism and Christianity* opposes Julian's *Against the Galileans* to Cyril's *Against Julian*, spending roughly half of its girth on each author. Its strengths lie, with respect to Julian, in its thorough and organized summary of Julian's intellectual and religious commitments in *Against the Galileans* and in its careful placement of this final text of his short life in the larger sweep of his large corpus. Its strengths with

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<sup>71</sup> Malley, William J. *Hellenism and Christianity: The Conflict between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the Contra Galilaeos of Julian the Apostate and the Contra Julianum of St. Cyril of Alexandria*. *Analecta Gregoriana*; V. 210: Series Facultatis Theologiae, Sectio B; N. 68. Roma: Università gregoriana, 1978.

<sup>72</sup> Elm, Susanna. *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*. Vol. 49, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.

respect to Cyril lie in the fact that it provides a comprehensive overview of a text that was then only available in a premodern Greek edition.

Malley's organization is relatively simple, despite the book's length: he summarizes Julian's polemical program in *Against the Galileans*, with frequent concern to show that Julian's arguments therein are congruous with his other writings and concludes with a brief analysis of what a σοφός, a "wise man" or "sage," is in Julian's Hellenism. He then introduces and provides an extensive overview of Cyril's response to Julian before summarizing the features of a σοφός in Cyril's system of thought. These sketches of a "wise man" provide the backdrop for his concluding comparison of Cyril's and Julian's basic positions, which in turn provide the backdrop for a more general comparison of "Hellenic and Christian wisdom."

*Hellenism and Christianity*, however, has weaknesses, several of which were noted in the reviews of Robert Louis Wilken and Robert Eno.<sup>73</sup> These weaknesses are partially connected to the comparative structure. Eno aptly notes that the study is impressive in its "presentation of raw material," but that it "remains for the most part just raw material for a future study." Indeed, though extensive in its scope and comprehensive in that it treats Julian's and Cyril's respective works as textual wholes, it is ultimately little more than highly-organized summaries, juxtaposed to one another through the cipher of the σοφός—a cipher which certainly illuminates one feature of the conflict

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Louis Wilken, "Malley, W. S.J., *Hellenism and Christianity* (Book Review)," *Theological Studies* 41, no. 2 (1980): 410–11; Robert B. Eno, "Reviewed Work: *Hellenism and Christianity. The Conflict between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the Contra Galilaeos of Julian the Apostate and the Contra Julianum of St. Cyril of Alexandria* by William J. Malley," *The Catholic Historical Review* 66, no. 3 (1980): 472–73.

between Julian and Cyril, but which, as an organizational and analytical tool, is hardly capacious enough to organize the sprawling subject matter of *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*.<sup>74</sup> The subject matter is admittedly vast, and it resists easy organization. But as my study should make clear, the figure of the σοφός is simply too limited a concept to frame the sprawling content. I aim to improve in this dissertation on each of these weaknesses in Malley's work, even if only incrementally. My depiction of Julian and Cyril as each stewards of rival intellectual traditions which are brought into narrative conflict in these texts offers a frame that is broader than Malley's in its capacity to account for the disparate subject matter, and it also provides a systematic way to move beyond summarizing (which is still no mean feat, given the enormous scope of *Against Julian*) and into a more perspicacious explanation of the literary dispute.

My framing, however, does more than attempt to improve on Malley in these respects. I also self-consciously diverge from key (if implicit) assumptions that Malley makes for his juxtaposition of Cyril and Julian. The inadequacy of those assumptions can perhaps best be seen by several kinds of remarks he makes throughout the study.

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<sup>74</sup> Wilken also justifiably complains that Malley fails to consider "the spiritual and intellectual milieu which prompted Cyril's apology and shaped the character of his response." Another complaint (i.e., that Malley's presentation doesn't consider *Against Julian* with any reference to Cyril's other concerns, most especially his Christological emphases) is also justified, though it is also worth pointing out that one likely reason for the lack of scholarly attention to *Against Julian* is the eclipse of other avenues of research on Cyril by narrow attention to his role in Christological doctrinal development, and (more recently) his extensive exegetical works. These components of Cyril's life and thought are, of course, critical in our understanding of the history of doctrine and of late antiquity; however, one goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate the importance of pagan-Christian intellectual conflict to Cyril and to show the colossal effort he invested in managing this conflict.

To start with, one of Malley's opening claims is that *Against Julian* "affords the opportunity to observe at close hand the struggle between the representatives of two different mentalities that shared the same language and culture."<sup>75</sup> In a basic sense, this claim is, of course, unproblematic. Julian and Cyril were each leading, Greek-speaking intellectuals in roughly the same era of the Roman Empire. But it is nonetheless worth noting that this claim is both imprecise and introduces problems. Even given the likely theoretical background behind Malley's comment (which we have to presume—he gives no explicit explanation) of the Annales school and its emphasis on "mentalité," we are still left with the question of how, more precisely, the language and culture might be shared, and whence the difference of mentality if such vast constructs are shared?<sup>76</sup>

The problem with this framing becomes apparent in the way Malley is bumfuzzled by the apparent inability of Julian and Cyril to engage with one another's tradition in a congenial, rational manner. In his concluding comparison of the two, Malley lists as an unfortunate similarity that, "Neither St. Cyril nor Julian approached the faith and doctrine of his opponent with objectivity and sympathy. In fact both of them frequently engaged in polemical argumentation that falsified the position of his

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<sup>75</sup> William J. Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity: The Conflict Between Hellenic and Christian Wisdom in the "Contra Galilaeos" of Julian the Apostate and the "Contra Julianum" of St. Cyril of Alexandria*, *Analecta Gregoriana* 210 (Roma: Università gregoriana, 1978), 12.

<sup>76</sup> If Malley was evoking the Annales school, then Ricoeur's criticism applies: "The notion of mentality represents, in fact, one that is particularly vulnerable to criticism owing to its lack of clarity and distinctness, or, if one is charitable, its overdetermination." See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 188.

adversary and made a parody out of his thought.”<sup>77</sup> Malley frequently critiques Cyril’s engagement with Hellenism (and Julian’s engagement with Christianity, though less frequently) by calling it a “caricature” and a “parody.”<sup>78</sup> As I suggested above, Julian’s and Cyril’s texts have polemical features. But the language of “caricature” sidesteps the deeper work being done by the re-inscription of a rival’s episodes within one’s own tradition and narrative. This renarration may bear superficial resemblances to “caricature,” but it performs much more powerful argumentative work than can be captured by the dismissive label.

Malley would have preferred, it seems, a more civil, charitable, and reasonable exchange out of Cyril and Julian. But he not only would have preferred such an exchange—he furthermore thinks that the grounds for such a dialogue existed in their “shared language and culture.” The difference between a Hellenic and a Christian σοφός, he suggests, “does not consist in the definition nor the goals [of a σοφός], but rather in the implementation of the goals.”<sup>79</sup> According to Malley, in both Cyril’s and the Hellenic philosophy, the goal is to come into relationship with “the transcendent,” which is carried out in the νοῦς through θεωρία, which brings about “a type of γνῶσις,”

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<sup>77</sup> Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity*, 366.

<sup>78</sup> At one point he suggests that a tendency of Cyril is “to “make a caricature of Hellenism. St. Cyril has given no evidence of making an effort to appreciate the spirit or vision that motivated Julian and his contemporary Hellenists. When he rejects the Homeric gods for their immoral behavior he is failing to come to grips with the real issues that Julian is raising. The Hellenism that Julian believed in was far richer and more subtle than the superficial Hellenism that St. Cyril thought he was refuting” (277). See also page 43 for the claim that “. . . both Julian and St. Cyril really parodied the position of each other to such an extent that the true thought of the opponent was hidden behind a caricature.”

<sup>79</sup> Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity*, 403.

but which relies on the ἀπάθεια of the νοῦς through “μίμησις of the divine.”<sup>80</sup> There was indeed, “irreconcilable conflict” between a Cyrilline and a Julianic σοφός, he says, but the entire premise of Malley’s long juxtaposition is that the shared ground, rooted in language and culture, and more specifically in the details about a Christian and a Hellenic sage’s philosophical life, provide adequate material for straightforward comparison.<sup>81</sup> An extensive shared framing of philosophical and religious life, even if “irreconcilably different” in its “implementation,” is nonetheless a first principle of Malley’s study.

My study questions the extent to which the language and culture of Julian and Cyril were shared. Indeed, as we have already seen, there clearly is no independent meaning of ἀποπομπάιος outside the community that employs this term. Might the same also be true of other words that bear weight in traditions, even if those other words (unlike ἀποπομπάιος) appear with great frequency across traditions of life and thought in late antiquity? Might it be the case that when Julian and Cyril both deploy terms like (as Malley centers) σοφός, νοῦς, θεωρία, γνῶσις, ἀπάθεια, or μίμησις, the similarity between their respective uses goes little deeper than the fact that letters or phonemes have been assembled in identical patterns? Malley never asked this question, but it is an objective of this dissertation to discern with deeper sophistication and

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<sup>80</sup> Malley, 401.

<sup>81</sup> Further evidence of the limited power of Malley’s framing to produce insightful analysis of the conflict between Julian and Cyril can be seen in his summary of Cyril’s response to Julian’s provocations: the “irreconcilable conflict” between the two amounts, Malley says, to the fact that Cyril “did think that it did make a difference whether you welcomed Christ or Helios as your guide to truth and goodness, i.e. to wisdom” (399). Indeed, he did. But this is a rather anticlimactic summary, after almost 400 pages of analysis.

sensitivity to linguistic use the extent to which the appearance of similarity of speech and practice between Cyril and Julian is genuine or merely illusory—the extent to which, that is, words and practices are genuinely shared between traditions or are little more than tools which, though they may bear superficial resemblances, are deployed by individuals and communities in the pursuit of rival forms of life.

#### IV.B. *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*

Susanna Elm's 2012 *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church* has garnered wider attention than did Malley's *Hellenism and Christianity*, and it is more self-consciously sensitive to historiographic convention. Elm compares Julian not with Cyril but with Gregory of Nazianzus, and the comparison is of two individuals through their entire corpuses and not simply two texts.<sup>82</sup> Still, in this comparison Elm broaches broader questions about Christianity and Hellenism. And like Malley, she presumes that Julian and his Christian critic are most fundamentally similar, though she locates that basic similarity not in a shared framing of the philosophical and religious life (as does Malley) but in the claim that each shared the same pursuit of the political and cultural power to define and shape Rome.

That Julian and Gregory (or Julian and Cyril) shared quite a few features is not, of course, controversial. In fact, one of the greatest values of Elm's study is the way it

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<sup>82</sup> Gregory's literary responses to Julian, *Orations* 4 and 5, show no knowledge of *Against the Galileans* and thus there is no opportunity for text-to-text juxtaposition, as there is with Cyril and Julian. Elm's study has a certain advantage, then, in that it can consider the individuals more holistically and separate from the heat of polemical engagements. But this also means that the juxtaposition of Gregory and Julian is largely imagined (excepting Gregory's *Or.* 4 and 5), based on abstractions of what the comparer takes to be the most relevant features.

shows through a close reading of Gregory's and Julian's texts how they were shaped by the same classical authors and debates, through their shared course of study and formation in *paideia*. It also shows substantial overlap in their goals of exerting influence over the known world, as "both claimed to have been divinely chosen philosophers, endowed with the mandate to mediate between the divine and mankind for the common good and the salvation of all in their keep, the *oikoumene* of the Romans."<sup>83</sup> The contribution of these discoveries to the history of late antiquity and to historiography is even more evident in an earlier article in which the seeds of *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church* are evident. Here Elm notes how Julian and Gregory have each been given by historians a "historiographic persona, the specifics of which placed them in separate camps."<sup>84</sup> The "historiographic Julian" functions as a crucial interpretive moment for gauging "the viability of Hellenism and 'paganism', of which Julian is seen as the embodiment." The historiographic 'persona' of Gregory, similarly, functions to (among other things) "judge the desirability of 'Greek' (and that means 'pagan') learning or *paideia* in a Christian context."<sup>85</sup> In such scholarships, she writes, Julian and Gregory each function as conventions for exploring the abstracted questions of (pre-constructed) categories like "Christian" and "pagan," which are presumed to be diametrically opposed. For scholars, "conversion to Christianity" by an ancient figure,

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<sup>83</sup> Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 10.

<sup>84</sup> Susanna Elm, "Historiographic Identities: Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Forging of Orthodoxy," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 7, no. 2 (2003): 263.

<sup>85</sup> Elm, 264, 269.

she notes critically, “effectively marks the end of the effects of that tradition for historiographical purposes: since Hellenism remains synonymous with paganism, and therefore opposed to Christianity, a post-conversion influence of the belief-systems associated with Hellenism on Christians needs not be discussed – it falls under the rubric of Christianity.”<sup>86</sup> Yet, despite these scholarly conventions, Elm also notes that Julian and Gregory are, as the scholarly community acknowledges, *paradoxical* while being paradigmatic. “While both Julian and Gregory are seen as the virtual embodiment of certain historiographical personae, pagan and Theologian, they are, at the same time, considered utterly peculiar: Julian is as strange a pagan as Gregory is a strange bishop.”<sup>87</sup> This odd fact, however, has not deterred scholars in proceeding with the largely “binary narrative” of the two, she claims. Elm proceeds to sketch “a set of alternative categories” to better make sense of Julian and Gregory, a down payment towards the much more sustained work of *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*.

Insofar as it goes, this is unproblematic and even a helpful corrective. Whatever the descriptors “Christian” and “Hellenist” might mean with respect to Gregory and Julian, it cannot mean that they were comprehensively different from one another. But in *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church* Elm pushes the analysis further, claiming that the vast extent of shared educational and cultural heritage between these two Roman

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<sup>86</sup> Elm, 266.

<sup>87</sup> Julian, while being the “historiographic paradigm of Neo-Platonic paganism,” is also “frequently described as an ‘inauthentic’ pagan, since his prior Christianity has influenced his paganism” (264); and, Gregory fails to fit especially the larger model of bishop as it fits into the developing “formation of episcopal authority.” Elm, 270–71.

elites effectively shows the traditionally understood differences between Julian and Gregory, supposedly grounded in their rival religious commitments, to be illusory. “Focusing on what united rather than divides Julian the emperor and Gregory the Theologian,” she suggests in the introduction, “reveals that the boundary between pagan and Christian was so porous that these terms lose their analytical value.”<sup>88</sup>

Elm concludes her otherwise illuminating study by again suggesting that what is shared between Gregory and Julian (and other cultural elites) is so central to their identity and the shape of their lives that it exposes the other apparent differences to be, in fact, trifling: “Indeed, though they exercised power to different degrees, all the principals of this book (most of whom were bishops) had one dominant concern: how to govern the *oikoumene* of the Romans the right way.”<sup>89</sup> This “one dominant concern” constitutes, for Elm, the touchstone of both what was shared and what was not. The meaningful differences between Gregory and Julian, in other words, did not lie in their religious beliefs, philosophical commitments, or membership in rival traditions of life and thought, but rather only in the ways in which they attempted to gather and deploy political and cultural power and the extent to which these attempts were effective. All other differences—like that implied in the traditionally dichotomous descriptors “pagan” and “Christian”—are sidelined in Elm’s study as obscuring and misleading.

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<sup>88</sup> Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 11.

<sup>89</sup> Elm, 480.

There is, of course, nothing *a priori* impossible about Elm's analysis. If anything, it is a paradigmatic example of a trend in early Christian studies.<sup>90</sup> And though the stark, if still subtle, nature of the claim may be troubling to modern members of strong traditions who see the dichotomies of insider/outsider with reference to their religious tradition as communicating real differences, the historical claim about Gregory and Julian may, of course, still be true. It cannot be ruled out, *a priori*, that to give an adequate account of the totality of Gregory's (or Julian's) life, we have to regard the features his life that we tend to label "Christian" (or "Hellenist") as entirely subordinated to a more immanent and political drive.

Though Elm does a great service to historical studies by showing the many facets of life that were shared across actors who have often been assigned to diametrically opposed camps like "Christian" and "pagan," this trend runs the risk of over-correcting and of making the ethical mistake of producing, to use Paul Ricoeur's language, an "excess of remembering here, and an excess of forgetting there."<sup>91</sup> By too much "remembering" how much figures like Gregory and Julian shared, historians can

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<sup>90</sup> Studies of Synesius of Cyrene are a favorite for troubling a pagan-Christian dichotomy. Other studies of material culture or "lived religion" can ground larger claims about Christianity and paganism in the unsurprising discoveries of shared practices "on the ground." See, for example, David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity*, Martin Classical Lectures (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). For an example akin to Elm's of downplaying the difference between "Christianity" and "paganism," see Maijastina Kahlos's *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007). Of course, to claim that paganism is merely an invention of Christians (see 18–19), Kahlos has to treat Julian's Hellenism like a papered-over Christianity (otherwise, what could be fueling Julian's clearly vibrant life?). Features of Julian's post-conversion life were, of course, influenced by his upbringing as a Christian. But Kahlos's suggestions ignore the independent vibrancy that Julian discovered in Hellenism—on which, see (for one example) Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

<sup>91</sup> *History, Memory, Forgetting* xv.

“forget” how deep their differences might have actually run. Ricoeur’s goal of “a policy of the just allotment of memory” is also a goal of this dissertation with respect to the larger field of early Christian and late antique studies. Elm’s correction of a prior “excess of forgetting” about how much figures like Julian and Gregory shared has, perhaps, amounted to an over-correction, resulting in new loci of “excess” in historical forgetting and remembering.

The present study is not about Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian. It will be up to someone else to take Elm’s reading of this pair and see how adequate is her corrective—committed, as it is, to an analysis based on what is shared between the two—for explaining the many details (textual and otherwise) we know about the rich lives of these two men. But Elm’s study is relevant to mine because a parallel version of her analysis is entirely possible with the pairing of Julian and Cyril. Though Cyril’s education is not as evident as is Gregory’s, the new visibility of *Against Julian* is likely to lead to a re-evaluation of his education wherein he will be judged a creative interpreter of the classical tradition and a skilled navigator of high intellectual Roman culture.<sup>92</sup> He will probably not be judged Gregory of Nazianzus’s or Augustine’s intellectual equal, but he will certainly be seen as a figure of cultural formation and social attainment parallel to the likes of Julian and the persistent representatives of the pre-Christian religious and philosophical order. As such, I have no doubt that a study of Cyril and

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<sup>92</sup> See below at note 120.

Julian, parallel to *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of Church*, could produce a similarly vast spread of shared features of Cyril's and Julian's formation.

What my study, if successful, will do is hedge against the kind of totalizing tendencies that are evident in Elm's study of Gregory and Julian. My thesis about their intellectual conflict suggests that Julian and Cyril were stewards and architects of incommensurable traditions. In the terms of a narrative-conflict analysis, much material is shared. Their thought will share "episodes," in the sense of narrative pieces will show up in each interlocutor's thought. So too will they share words, tools for interpreting words, texts, analytical and conceptual categories, and so forth—even aspirations for socio-political or cultural influence. But the dynamics of a narrative conflict also give reason to question how much can be concluded from this kind of "sharing" between rivals. It may be that some of the language used by interlocutor A to give communicable form to subject matter was shared by interlocutor B only enough to make that articulation into a viable candidate for hostile incorporation by interlocutor B in a reconfigured way in his own narrative, which rivals that of interlocutor A.

In this respect, my approach may appear to resemble Jeffrey Stout's notions of "hermeneutical enrichment" and "bricolage."<sup>93</sup> Stout recognizes that two "moral languages" might be so different as to be untranslatable, at least at a point in time. He imagines the impasses that might arise between two groups: "Old World Corleones"

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<sup>93</sup> See Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 60–77. For Rowe's engagement with Stout on "bricolage" and translatability, see *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*, 239–46.

and their lives and language built around honor, purity, and family obligations; and Kantian “Modernists” whose “moral talk is all about human rights, respect for persons, freedom, and what individuals . . . morally ought to do.”<sup>94</sup> Such impasses are always in principle resolvable, he thinks, because languages adapt and develop in relation to other languages, resulting in enrichment. Put the Corleones and Kantians together for long enough, and they’ll start to understand one another.<sup>95</sup> The thought experiment can be accelerated by noting that “we should probably have an easier time translating Corleone and Modernist moral discourse into our language than they have translating each other’s utterances,” because we have inherited aspects of each. We “can find traces of many sorts of moral concepts surviving in our own speech.”<sup>96</sup> How we ended up with these surviving concepts can be explained by the process of *bricolage*. Stout suggests that the activity of philosophers (though really of *all* of us, “insofar as we are capable of creative thought at all”) proceeds by “taking stock of problems that need solving and available resources for solving them. Then they proceed by taking apart, putting together, reordering, weighting, weeding out, and filling in.” Such creative thought draws on “fragments” from varying moral languages and uses the fragments to address the problems that need solving. Though there are different “ways of arranging and rearranging fragments of moral language in relation to each other and to the

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<sup>94</sup> Stout, *Ethics after Babel*, 62.

<sup>95</sup> Stout says, “If, at a given time, a proposition expressible in one language,  $L_1$ , is not expressible in another,  $L_2$ , this need not be so at some later time.  $L_2$ , after all, can be developed hermeneutically. . . . Nothing in the nature of conceptual diversity itself prevents one culture from developing the means for expressing an alien culture’s moral propositions or grasping their truth.” Stout, 64–65.

<sup>96</sup> Stout, 65.

whole,”<sup>97</sup> the shared material makes it possible to identify commonalities between moral languages, and for Stout the commonalities make the languages translatable.

Though we are both interested in translatability between traditions—Stout focusing on the portability of “fragments” between traditions, and I of “episodes”—we still come to rather different conclusions. Stout’s position, like Elms’, has a problem that a narrative-conflict analysis exposes. In his account, the “fragments” that make up the material of a *bricoleur*’s work readily pass from tradition to tradition largely intact as problem-solving tools. The fragments themselves then constitute grounds for translation between traditions that have otherwise different moral languages and grounds for scholarly comparison (the fragments being the common point of reference). But the dynamics of narrative conflict show otherwise. These fragments—like MacIntyre’s “episodes”—are intelligible within the larger context of their tradition. They derive their meaning from that context, so a snatch of moral language from one tradition that is then incorporated within another may have its significance drastically changed. Elements may appear “shared” between a tradition because two different *bricoleurs* have incorporated them, but Stout critically overlooks how the shape of the new “structured whole” that emerges from *bricolage* might entirely change the

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<sup>97</sup> Stout, 75.

significance and meaning of its composite pieces.<sup>98</sup> Julian and Cyril each have a “Moses” in their narrative, but Julian’s “Moses” is not Cyril’s “Moses.”

There is, of course, a vast range of shared material between Julian and Cyril—including rhetorical conventions, knowledge of the canon of the classical texts of *paideia*, an inheritance from the classical philosophical tradition about how to organize and balance life as including “practical” and “theoretical” dimension,<sup>99</sup> and so forth. But this range of what is shared cannot necessarily provide a historiographical frame with which to render an adequate account of Cyril’s *Against Julian*. In other words, to make sense of a wide range of the features of *Against Julian*, we must attend to much more than what its author and its polemical target shared. We must allow the possibility that Cyril and Julian were practitioners and stewards of incommensurable traditions of life and thought, and as such, that the most pervasive patterns that make their lives and writings intelligible may not overlap with one another at all. Throughout the following study, I will argue that only through such attention can we provide an analysis that is expansive enough to take in the host of complex topics and features of the literary conflict carried on in *Against Julian*.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> For Stout, *bricolage* is “the process in which one begins with bits and pieces of traditional linguistic material, arranges some of them into a structured whole, leaves others to the side, and ends with a moral language ready to use, possibly a quite novel one” (74).

<sup>99</sup> This distinction between the active and theoretical life and the way Gregory and Julian actually agreed upon how to appropriately weight the two is a key discover of *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church* (see especially Chapters 2 and 4). It is, furthermore, a feature of Cyril’s argumentation; see *AJ* 1.17, 2.6 and 2.12.

<sup>100</sup> By doing so we will also be able to move beyond Malley’s stupefaction at the rampant parodying and caricaturing of Julian and Cyril—the “misrepresentations” of each polemicist may, indeed, have been bad-faith engagements. But they may rather have been good faith re-representations of how their rival’s

## V. *Against the Galileans* and *Against Julian*. Contexts and Texts

The last business to attend to is a brief introduction to the most salient details about Julian's and Cyril's historical contexts and about their texts themselves.

### V.A. Julian and *Against the Galileans*

The details of Julian's life have been studied repeatedly; they have been creatively elaborated for novels and plays; they have been summoned in Christian hagiographical writing—all many centuries after he died. Julian is, as one of his recent biographers writes, “without question one of antiquity's most enigmatic and compelling figures.”<sup>101</sup> This is due, in part, to the coexistence of a relative wealth of information about Julian—much of it from his own, prolific pen—and the paradoxical dearth of information about what we'd really like to know about him. We know the itinerary of his childhood in effective exile, of his return to the imperial court, of his military success as Caesar, his acclamation as Augustus, the mechanics of his reform after becoming sole Emperor, and his surprising death on a Persian battlefield. Less clear, though, is the way Julian related to the Christianity of his upbringing and, as a result, how to characterize his adolescent embracing of a ritualistic Iamblichan Neoplatonism. Less clear is whether he, desirous of greater power, orchestrated his

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tradition's key “episodes” can be given a more satisfying explanation as reconstrued episodes within their own tradition's narrative.

<sup>101</sup> Glen Warren Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), xi.

acclamation as Emperor in Gaul, or whether, as one who preferred the contemplative life, reluctantly accepted what his adoring troops demanded. Less clear is the extent to which his Neoplatonism shaped his brief reign,<sup>102</sup> or what led him to burn his ships on campaign in Persia,<sup>103</sup> or at the end, how he died. Did he fall to an enemy Persian? Or did a disgruntled Christian in his own ranks deliver his death blow?<sup>104</sup> We know enough about Julian to inspire endless ways to fill in the alluring gaps of what we don't know.

In light of the many specialized studies that are available for those who want to know more about Julian, I offer here only a brief sketch of the most relevant details of his life.<sup>105</sup> Julian had the near misfortune of being the non-nuclear relative of a recently deceased Emperor, Constantine the Great. Julian barely escaped the bloodshed occasioned by Constantine's death when his succeeding sons had plausible rival rulers killed—including Julian's father, Constantine's half-brother. Being only five or six years when Constantine died in 337, Julian was spared, probably because of his young age.

Julian was sent away from the capitol and raised largely under the supervision of bishops, first in nearby Bithynia, and, starting in 342, in more distant Cappadocia. He seems to have been absorbed with learning from an early age—certainly in lessons in

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<sup>102</sup> For example, Bowersock says that “The Neo-Platonic background is important for Julian only in the study of his emotional life and of those self-revelations which he not very artfully concealed in his reflective treatises” (xi). Contrast this with Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden's entire biography of Julian, *Julian and Hellenism*. See, for one example, her claim Julian's “philosophical disposition and religious convictions are nowhere more evident than in his abundant legislative work” (118).

<sup>103</sup> See Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, 114–15.

<sup>104</sup> See Bowersock, 116–18.

<sup>105</sup> I take most of the following details from Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*.

scripture (he is reported to have been an official reader in the church<sup>106</sup>), but also in the classics of the Greco-Roman educational tradition. His studies were influential factors in his return to Constantinople, to Nicomedia, and to Pergamum, where he came within one degree of separation from Iamblichus, through association with the latter's former student, Aedesius. One of Aedesius's students, Maximus, was probably most influential in Julian's conversion, dated to 351.

Throughout his twenties, Julian continued his itinerant life of study that turned out, eventually, to have an upward trajectory in the empire. In 355 he was appointed as Caesar and sent to lead armies in Gaul, where uprisings and military challenges were causing problems for Emperor Constantius. He enjoyed several years of remarkable military and political victories—so much so that Constantius's eventual order for Julian to send over half his troops eastward looks suspiciously like the containment strategy of a ruler concerned with a subordinate's successes. Constantius's mistake was in calling away troops that were native to the western part of the empire, whom Julian had promised would not be required to leave their homelands for military service. Whatever the inner workings of the process, Julian was acclaimed Emperor in 360 by his troops who were dissatisfied with this order. If there was ever a chance of a Diocletianic co-rule of the Empire, it quickly dissipated, as by the middle of 361 Julian was advancing toward Constantinople from the western front. Constantius, who had

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<sup>106</sup> Cyril shows very little knowledge about Julian other than what can be inferred from *Against the Galileans*, but he does note in his preface that Julian was baptized and trained in Scripture, in both the "holy churches" and in "monasteries" (*AJ praef.*3.22–4.6).

been on campaign on the eastern, Persian front, was also returning to Constantinople for the confrontation. But Constantius died en route, leaving Julian the uncontested sole Emperor.

Many of Julian's writings from this time and afterward make clear that he saw his trajectory as guided by the gods: they had selected him to lead and rebuild the Empire. His reforms were widespread and hardly limited to what we would think of as narrowly "religious."<sup>107</sup> But his religious and philosophical commitments were also on full display in his reform efforts, starting most publicly with his reopening of temples and his prodigality with animal sacrifices. With respect to many of the classical philosophical schools of thought, Julian's program was largely inclusive.<sup>108</sup> There were two exceptions, though: the Cynics, against whom he wrote two orations; and Christians, whom he preferred to call derisively "Galileans." Julian seems not to have punished Christians simply for their belonging to the church, but it was quickly clear that the structures of social and political privilege were being shifted back towards the pre-Constantinian arrangement, in which Christians had no privileged standing, making their treatment in society widely varied and largely dependent on how local rulers regarded Christianity.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See especially Bowersock's Chapter 7, "Justice and Reform," *Julian the Apostate* 66–78.

<sup>108</sup> See *Or. 4: To the Uneducated Cynics* 184c–186b for an example of Julian's attempt to bring together different philosophical "paths," as he says, that lead toward the same truth.

<sup>109</sup> For the conclusion that Julian did not directly punish Christians, see H. C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War against Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). See also Fergus Millar's conclusion: "Julian himself explicitly intended not to create Christian martyrs. His pagan subjects, however, had other ideas, and had local scores to settle," in "The Jews of the Graeco-

In the middle of 362, Julian arrived in Antioch, his base of operations for a new campaign against Persia. Things did not go well—neither in the logistics of bringing an army to town, nor concerning Julian’s expectations for the revival of pagan practice. When he left in 363, he shook the proverbial dust off his feet. But it was during his stay in Antioch that Julian seems to have composed *Against the Galileans*.<sup>110</sup> As Ari Finkelstein has recently argued, the setting of Antioch illuminates several features about Julian’s anti-Christian polemic—especially “the prominent role assigned in it to Judaism as a third term in the argument,” as Rowland Smith has put it.<sup>111</sup> As the next chapter will explain in much more detail, Julian’s narrative subsumption of Christianity hinged on identifying Mosaic Judaism as a legitimate religious tradition—Julian especially approved of its sacrificial regime—even if it was inferior to the Hellenic tradition. In Antioch, a large enough group of Christians to draw the church leadership’s ire seem to have happily joined in with Jewish practices. These social factors were likely part of Julian’s strategy in arguing that Hellenism or Judaism were both valid options, over against an entirely confused Christianity.

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Roman Diaspora: Between Paganism and Christianity, AD 312-438,” in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 2002), 104.

<sup>110</sup> For further details on its composition, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:LXXXVIII-XCII.

<sup>111</sup> Rowland Smith, *Julian’s Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London: Routledge, 1995), 191. For Finkelstein’s overview, see Chapter 2, “Setting the Stage Hellenes, Christians, and Jews in Cosmopolitan Antioch” in *The Specter of the Jews: Emperor Julian and the Rhetoric of Ethnicity in Syrian Antioch* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018), 28–44.

In the spring of 363, Julian departed Antioch for Persia. His assault force included a fleet that sailed as far as the city of Ctesiphon. Inexplicably, Julian had the fleet burned, cutting off an avenue of escape if circumstances deteriorated—which they did. In June of 363, Julian was struck in battle with a spear. Rumors abounded in the aftermath about who had thrown the spear, but Julian’s body did not care whence came the mortal blow. He succumbed to the wound, and the army retreated, securing eventual peace only by ceding large swathes of territory to the Persians. The last pagan emperor of the Roman Empire was dead, and his pagan reform effort with him.

Still, his anti-Christian text had a long and popular afterlife, even though the possibility of wholistic political and social reformation along the lines Julian desired was defunct. This popularity is probably the only reason we still have portions of *Against the Galileans* extant—though not because it was preserved by a sympathetic community. Its extant fragments derive entirely from hostile refutations, prompted by the apparently troubling popularity of the text. A vast majority of these fragments come from Cyril’s response of some sixty years later. Why it has not been preserved in its entirety is unknown, though it has been speculated that Justinian’s re-consignment (after Constantine’s original condemnation) of Porphyry’s works to the flames might also have applied to *Against the Galilaeans*.<sup>112</sup> However, in this sixth-century edict, only

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<sup>112</sup> See the *Justinian Code* 1.1.3. Masaracchia raises this possibility (*Giuliano Imperatore: Contra Galilaeos, Introduzione, Testo Critico e Traduzione, Testi e Commenti* 9 [Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1990], 14–15). A later, Coptic history suggests that Cyril successfully petitioned Theodosius to have the text collected and burned (B. Evetts, ed., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria II: Peter to Benjamin I (661). Arabic Text Edited, Translated and Annotated by B. E.*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1.4 [Paris, 1948], 432). But it is difficult to determine how late are the sources for this collection of histories (on which, see J. Den Heijer,

Porphyry is mentioned by name, and it is probably just as likely that Julian's treatise was lost simply through a failure of scribes to make new copies.<sup>113</sup> Whatever the case, for all intents and purposes Cyril's rebuttal is the only mechanism by which most of Julian's argument was preserved. It was probably published posthumously, since a bishop as connected as Gregory of Nazianzus shows no awareness of it in his invectives against Julian written in the early years following Julian's death. Whenever it did begin to circulate widely, it certainly made waves, though. Several Christians are reported to have written or contemplated writing a response, though Cyril's is the only one that survives.<sup>114</sup>

Many modern editions of *Against the Galileans* have been reconstructed from its hostile, fragmentary homes.<sup>115</sup> Johannes Neumann's 1880 edition was the most influential until Emanuela Masaracchia produced a new one in 1990. As I will note further in the next chapter, Neumann made several editorial decisions that have misshaped interpretations of *Against the Galileans* in modern scholarship. Before

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"History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* [New York: Macmillan, 1991], <http://cdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cce/id/985/rec/1>.

<sup>113</sup> For more on the loss of books in late antiquity (by active destruction or by failure to preserve), see Dirk Rohmann, *Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity: Studies in Text Transmission*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 135 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016).

<sup>114</sup> For the argument about AG's posthumous publication, see *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:LXXXIX. For an overview of other writings against Julian, see "Les Réfutations de Julien antérieures au *Contre Julien* de Cyrille" in Paul Burguière and Pierre Éviéux, trans., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien Tome I, Livres I et II*, *Sources Chrétiennes* 322 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1985), 52–58.

<sup>115</sup> For a history and list editions, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:LXXXIV-LXXXV.

beginning this exploration, though, let us turn to a final few introductory words about Cyril and *Against Julian*.

V.B. Cyril and *Against Julian*

Cyril's life was no less dramatic than Julian's.<sup>116</sup> His mother and uncle were orphans of Christian parentage and from the Egyptian city of Memphis. As adolescents they moved to Alexandria, where Cyril's mother would eventually be married and where his uncle, Theophilus, began his ecclesial climb, culminating in 385 as the third bishop of Alexandria after Athanasius, for whom Theophilus had clerked for several years. Cyril's birth-year is normally estimated to 378, and his upbringing seems to have been heavily influenced by his bishop uncle.

Cyril's childhood and adolescent education poses a particularly interesting question, given the character and scope of his eventually prolific corpus. Though not a precise measure, the size of that corpus can be gaged by the number of volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca* dedicated to Cyril: whereas Origen has nine volumes; Eusebius of Caesarea, six; Gregory of Nazianzus, four; and Athanasius, five—Cyril's corpus extends into its tenth volume. Only the golden-mouthed John Chrysostom's is longer, at eighteen. Though Cyril has long been known primarily for his Christological writings from the last fifteen years of his life, recent decades have seen an increasing interest in

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<sup>116</sup> The following is taken from John McGuckin's and Norman Russell's introductions to Cyril's pre-Nestorian-controversy life in, respectively, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 1–20; and *Cyril of Alexandria, The Early Church Fathers* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3–6. Both contain extensive references to the studies of the past century that have clarified various details about Cyril's life.

his extensive exegetical commentaries.<sup>117</sup> The publication of a modern edition of *Against Julian*—more on which momentarily—is increasing awareness of his apologetic endeavors. Still relatively little-explored are his dogmatic, theological works.<sup>118</sup>

Most of what we know about Cyril's education must be inferred from the learning he demonstrates in his corpus. It is generally agreed that he must have passed through most of the traditional course of education, including grammatical and rhetorical stages. His familiarity with the Christian theological and biblical-exegetical tradition is also impressive and, together with other circumstantial evidence, hints at some length of training among monasteries in Egypt. Whether he had much formal philosophical training—and if so, what mark it left on his thinking—is an open question. Scholarly thought on his facility with philosophical texts stems largely from Robert M. Grant's study of his use of such texts in *Against Julian*. Grant concludes that Cyril's normal operating procedure was to glean excerpts from pagan philosophers from the works of his predecessors, though he also clearly followed many citations to the original source and read further than what he acquired second-hand.<sup>119</sup> This has

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<sup>117</sup> See, for example, Hauna T. Ondrey, *The Minor Prophets as Christian Scripture in the Commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>118</sup> The prominent exception to this claim is Marie-Odile Boulnois's *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection des études augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1994). Still, many of Cyril's non-exegetical treatises are rarely studied, especially in Anglophone scholarship (such as his *Thesaurus* or *Dialogues on the Trinity*).

<sup>119</sup> Robert M. Grant, "Greek Literature in the Treatise 'De Trinitate' and Cyril 'Contra Julianum,'" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 15, no. 2 (1964): 265–79.

led, however, to treatments of Cyril as something of an unimaginative magpie.<sup>120</sup> Though he certainly doesn't show the speculative, system-building interest evident in Origen, or Augustine, or Gregory of Nyssa, for example, I suspect that growing attention to *Against Julian* will lead to greater nuance in our evaluation of Cyril's engagement with philosophy proper.<sup>121</sup> He was certainly much more of a creative interpreter of texts than the image of a largely unoriginal, doxography-driven polemicist might lead us to believe.<sup>122</sup>

Whatever the shape of Cyril's education, it probably formally concluded by 403, when he was made a reader in the Alexandrian church—the same year he attended John Chrysostom's deposition at the Synod of the Oak. He must have continued to climb the ranks quickly, since he was able to secure the throne of St. Mark when Theophilus died nine years later, despite opposition from a rival contender who was backed by Alexandrian civic authorities.

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<sup>120</sup> Grant calls Cyril's method "a simple process of plagiarism," but he does not thereby condemn Cyril, exactly. "Cyril's mind," he says, "is much more interesting than that of a simple plagiarizer"—rather faint praise. Grant, 271.

<sup>121</sup> See now Matthew R. Crawford, "Reconsidering the Relationship Between (Pseudo-)Didymus's *De Trinitate* and Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Julianum*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (April 1, 2020): 236–57. Crawford focuses on Cyril's likely use of (Ps.)Didymus' corpus but also uses the analysis to speculate about Cyril's educational milieu. See also Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Païens et Chrétiens En Concurrence: L'instrumentalisation de La Philosophie Dans Les Controverses d'Origène Contre Celse et de Cyrille d'Alexandrie Contre Julien," in *Philosophia in Der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften Und Religionen: Zur Pluralisierung Des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit Und Spätantike*, ed. Christoph Riedweg (Berlin Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 217–56.

<sup>122</sup> See my argument in Chapter 5 about Cyril's attack on Socrates for an example of his creative and, as far as we can tell, entirely novel use of sources from Plato's corpus. As I point out there, this creativity is overlooked by the editors of the GCS edition of *Against Julian*, who, in this case, insist without evidence that Cyril was probably using now-lost doxographical material to assemble his excerpts from Plato.

Not unlike his future arch-nemesis, Nestorius, would do a decade and a half later in Constantinople, Cyril quickly set about stirring up controversy along old fault lines in Alexandria—against the small group of Novationists, according to the historian Socrates (whose critical account is admittedly biased against Cyril, as McGuckin points out<sup>123</sup>). Even if Socrates was far from an impartial observer, there can be no denying that Cyril’s influence was generally inflammatory in the social body of Alexandria during the first several years of his bishopric.<sup>124</sup> He quickly found himself facing off with the urban prefect, Orestes—the events behind which suggest preexisting bad blood. Shortly thereafter, a group of Jews allegedly lured Christians into the street at night with claims that the church was on fire, only to attack and kill several of the impromptu fire brigade. In response, Cyril reportedly led the way in driving some portion of the Jewish population out of Alexandria. He is probably most infamous for his link to a travesty which, compared to the prior events, he was probably least directly involved in: the violent murder of the philosopher Hypatia by a Christian mob in 415.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 8.

<sup>124</sup> Of course, Alexandria itself was a frequent locus of social conflict. For more about its long history—particularly as entrenched in tensions between Christians, Jews, and pagans—see Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

<sup>125</sup> Edward Watts’s comments on the historical sources and the role they assigned to Cyril in Hypatia’s killing probably best express the extent of Cyril’s involvement: “Aside from Damascius, who wrote more than a century after the attack, no source claims that Cyril ordered the attack on Hypatia—but all agree that he was ultimately responsible for creating the climate that caused it.” See his chapter on Hypatia’s death in *Hypatia: The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher*, *Women in Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 107–20, quotation at 117.

The furor surrounding these events—which, in the last case, evoked direct imperial intervention—seems to have largely subsided by 418. It was probably sometime in the following decade that Cyril composed *Against Julian*. Scholars used to think that it must have been finished in one of two windows of time after the Council of Ephesus of 431: between 434 and 437 or 439 and 441, the only times after the Council of Ephesus that Cyril was on good terms with John of Antioch. Our earliest reference to *Against Julian* mentions that Cyril had sent his apologetic treatise to John and requested that he share it with other teachers in his geographical area.<sup>126</sup> However, in two articles, Markus Vinzent has established a new consensus that Cyril composed the treatise *before* the Nestorian controversy.<sup>127</sup> Vinzent traced several parallels (largely thematic parallels, but even some corresponding phrases) between parts of *Against Julian* and other works in Cyril’s corpus, most importantly his datable festal letters. Vinzent concludes that *Against Julian* was probably completed between 423 and 428.

As for the text itself, until very recently *Against Julian* has received very little attention by scholars. This is due partially to the lack of a reliable edition—the only available text for most of modern history was that of Jacques Paul Migne, whose

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<sup>126</sup> This reference is from *Letter 83* of Theodoret, written to Dioscorus of Alexandria. For the relevant section of the letter and an overview of the current consensus on the dating of *Against Julian*, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CIX–CXVI.

<sup>127</sup> See Markus Vinzent, “Halbe Heiden-Doppelte Christen. Die Festbriefe Kyrills von Alexandrien und die Datierung seines Werkes ‘Contra Iulianum,’” in *Christen und Nichtchristen in Spätantike, Neuzeit und Gegenwart: Beginn und Ende des Konstantinischen Zeitalters*, ed. Angelika Dörfler-Dierken et al., *Texts and Studies in the History of Theology* 6 (Mandelbachtal: Edition Cicero, 2001), 41–60; Markus Vinzent, “Vom philosophischen Apologeten zum theologischen Ketzerebekämpfer: Zur biographischen Verkirchlichung von christlichen Amtsträgern am Beispiel Kyrills von Alexandrien,” in *Literarische Konstituierung von Identifikationsfiguren in der Antike*, ed. Barbara Aland, Johannes Hahn, and Christian Ronning, *Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum* 16 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 173–94.

version of the text seems traceable directly to the edition of Jean Aubert, who published his edition at the University of Paris in 1638. The lacuna has finally been filled in 2016–17 with the publication of a new, two-volume edition in the *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (GCS), the fruit of more than two decades of work of a European team of scholars.<sup>128</sup> Cyril’s apologetic tome is now drawing more attention, though it will probably never be as popular as his succinct Christological works like the letters to Nestorius—another reason for the relative disinterest in *Against Julian* is its enormous length, composed in Cyril’s infamously tedious prose.

Though Vinzent suggested 428 as a likely *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the treatise, Wolfram Kinzig points out that it’s hard to know what exactly “complete” would mean for a work like *Against Julian*, for several reasons.<sup>129</sup> Kinzig’s main point is that we don’t actually know how long Cyril’s original text was. Ten full books (and a preface) are extant, though we know from fragments that there were at least nineteen books originally. Julian’s first modern editor, Neumann, speculated that Cyril wrote (or at least planned to write) thirty books in total—ten for each of the three books of *Against the Galileans*. But there is no substantive evidence for anything beyond nineteen, currently. The editors of the 2016–17 critical edition of *Against Julian* suggest

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<sup>128</sup> Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*. See 1:LXIII–LXVIII on the early editions. In 1985, a minor edition of the first two books of *AJ* (with a French translation) was published in *Sources Chrétiennes* (Burguière and Évieux, *Cyrille d’Alexandrie, Contre Julien Tome I, Livres I et II*). Marie-Odile Boulnois has picked up the project, publishing *Tome II* (books 3–5) in 2016 (*Cyrille d’Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, *Sources Chrétiennes* 582 [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2016]). Boulnois is in the process of publishing the remainder of *Against Julian* for *Sources Chrétiennes*. Complete English and German translations are also currently underway.

<sup>129</sup> Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CX.

that its physical form came in groupings of five books—“pentads”—and that the third and fourth pentads (books 11-20), at least, are now lost.<sup>130</sup>

Beyond Kinzig’s material problem with determining “completeness” is another difficulty, tied to the way that Cyril has taken on the dynamics of the underlying narrative conflict between him and Julian. Unlike Augustine’s *City of God* or Theodoret’s *Cure for Pagan Maladies*—two roughly contemporary, large-scale anti-pagan works, to which I will occasionally refer as points of reference—*Against Julian* has no discernible structure other than the fact that it roughly follows the text of Julian’s *Against the Galileans*. Outside of book 1 (an important exception that I will return to in Chapter 3), in *Against Julian* Cyril simply quotes a passage from *Against the Galileans*, then responds at length.<sup>131</sup> He does sometimes stray far from the explicit content of Julian’s excerpt; and he did seem keen to force a systematic treatment of some topics (like his lengthy arguments about the Trinity and incarnation in book 8, built off a few, tangential fragments of *Against the Galileans*). But he always returns to the next excerpt from Julian. Though at the narrative level, Cyril insists on setting the framework, at the level of the text’s organization, he largely lets Julian set the agenda.

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<sup>130</sup> On the original scope of *Against Julian*, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, 1:CXVI-CXVIII.

<sup>131</sup> Cyril says in *AJ* 2.2.13–23 that he has rearranged Julian’s repetitive, disorganized argument in his response. But with only a few exceptions (see my organization of *AG*’s fragments in Chapter 2), he seems to have left Julian’s argument largely in its original order. Riedweg concurs—see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, 1:LXXXVIII.

Unlike Augustine’s “panzer” of the two-cities motif,<sup>132</sup> which orders all relevant historical details around itself, Cyril’s mode of waging narrative conflict is largely reactive: letting Julian’s text set the initial agenda, he works to show over and over again that the Christian narrative is *not* vulnerable to Julian’s attempts at renarration and that it can, in fact, better account for the episodes that Julian centers. The latter half of Augustine’s *City of God* shows the narrative conflict within his argumentative structure itself—the argument explicitly starts with the beginning of the narrative and ends with the end. But Cyril’s method is open-ended. It suggests implicitly: keep bringing objections, and I’ll keep showing how they’re mistaken. How could such a text be “complete”? To modulate MacIntyre’s idea that claims of “truth” become justified by their withstanding of “dialectical questioning,”<sup>133</sup> we might say that the “explanatory adequacy” of a strong tradition’s framing narrative is also justified by its ability to demonstrate how, in the face of objections, it can maintain its own coherence and better account for episode after episode after episode of its rival’s narrative. If the *City of God* makes implicit claims to rational superiority in its demonstration of organized comprehensiveness—no small feat, and in some ways more impressive than Cyril’s—the “incomplete” material form of *Against Julian* metaphorically embodies its implicit claim

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<sup>132</sup> Drawing on Alois Grillmeyer’s conceptual categorization of all early Christologies into two, all-encompassing categories Lewis Ayers adopted the “panzer” imagery for Augustine’s interpretative strategy in his Christological formulation of the Son who, as incarnate, is both “above himself” in the form of God and “below himself” in the form of man (see *Augustine and the Trinity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 146). The metaphor is equally apt to the *City of God*’s two cities.

<sup>133</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 358. See above.

to superiority, which is grounded precisely in its confident openness to fielding ever new objections.

My many suggestions about the argumentative strategy of *Against Julian* presume several things about Cyril's intended audience, about which a few words should be said before concluding the Introduction. They presume primarily that Cyril's intent was to persuade and, thus, that he had an audience with an interest in the content of his arguments. His audience and purposes may have been larger—Kinzig plausibly hypothesizes, for example, that Cyril hoped *Against Julian* would continue to ameliorate his standing with the imperial court that he had irritated in the 410s, and that he perhaps hoped to further solidify the preeminence and intellectual prestige of the Alexandrian see when he sent *Against Julian* to other prominent bishops.<sup>134</sup> But it's also easy to imagine several groups that Cyril hoped would find *Against Julian* persuasive in its content. First are the members of his church that he describes in the preface: Julian's text, he says, was causing problems for those who are "fickle and easily carried off," and even, occasionally, those "who are grounded in faith" (*Praef.*4.18–21). The later *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church* claims that Cyril was prompted to write *Against Julian* when philosophers arrived in Alexandria, claiming that no Christian had ever been able to refute Julian. Even if this story is not accurate,<sup>135</sup> fifth-century Alexandria certainly still had a prominent intellectual scene where arguments like

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<sup>134</sup> See Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1: CXII–III and CXLVIII.

<sup>135</sup> For the relevant comments on Cyril and Julian, see Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria II: Peter to Benjamin I (661). Arabic Text Edited, Translated and Annotated by B. E.*, 430–32. As Kinzig notes, the text has "legendary features," *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1: CXIV.

those that Cyril engaged in *Against Julian* could certainly have addressed live questions. Kinzig surveys more than a dozen pagan intellectuals from fifth- and early-sixth-century Alexandria who might have engaged in such arguments.<sup>136</sup> It is neither implausible nor difficult to imagine formal or informal school settings where a treatise by the Alexandrian bishop, responding to a philosopher-emperor, might have been read and discussed.<sup>137</sup>

Much more could be said, of course, about the philosophical and cultural currents of Julian's and Cyril's context. But the foregoing should be adequate to allow us to turn, now, to the texts themselves: first, Julian's *Against the Galileans*.

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<sup>136</sup> Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CXLIX-CLII. Kinzig says on 1:CXLIX that "Wir wissen immerhin, dass das philosophisch gebildete Heidentum zur Zeit des Patriarchats Kyrills in Alexandrien noch über bedeutende Vertreter verfügte."

<sup>137</sup> For further details on the imperial and educational context, see Matthew R. Crawford, "Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Iulianum*: Imperial Politics, and Alexandrian Philosophy (c. 416–428)," in *Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy*, ed. Ken Parry and Eva Anagnostou-Laotides, *Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity* 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 110–32.

## **Chapter 2: Julian's *Against the Galileans***

### **I. Introduction**

The intellectual conflict between Emperor Julian the Apostate and Cyril of Alexandria was, at a fundamental level, one of “narrative conflict.” Each set out to defend their tradition’s master narrative, and they did so by showing how their own narrative could include the rival within it, by retelling the rival’s stories as reconstructed episodes within their own story. This chapter shows how Julian’s anti-Christian treatise, *Against the Galileans*, pursues this strategy of narrative conflict. The chapter follows a relatively simple plan. I first lay out the implicit narrative structure of *Against the Galileans*: Julian’s Hellenic narrative within which he tries to subsume key episodes of the Christian narrative. After summarizing this narrative, I then offer a reading of *Against the Galileans* in its entirety that shows how narrative subsumption is central to Julian’s argumentative strategy. Many modern scholars have questioned the quality and forcefulness of Julian’s arguments, but this chapter will show how Julian’s project did, in fact, produce a subtly powerful argument. Rather than merely take on Christian claims one-by-one, he worked at a deeper level, striving to break apart the fundamental coherence of Christianity and its rendering of the “episodes” that Christians took as central. That plan wasn’t merely deconstructive, though: Julian also offered a new coherence to the “episodes” that were important to Christians. That superior coherence lay in his Hellenic narrative.

### **II. *Against the Galileans*. Organization of the Original Text**

As Chapter 1 briefly notes, Cyril claims in *Against Julian* that Julian's original arguments were so disorganized that he had to reorganize the excerpts of *Against the Galileans* by "kind" to avoid endless repetition and confusion (AJ 2.2.13–23).<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, Cyril included enough of Julian's own plan for his argument that we can reconstruct the fragments, at least in general groupings. To that project we must first turn, since several of Julian's arguments can be (and have been) misinterpreted when misplaced within the overall structure of his argument.

Though Julian provides an outline of his argument in *Against the Galileans*, his modern readers are still left with several interpretive challenges at the level of the text. For one, though Cyril probably didn't rearrange Julian's text as much as he implies, it is still clear at several places that he did rearrange the fragments. Furthermore, the mere fact that Julian's text was preserved in a hostile source only increases the room that modern editors have to conjecture alterations to Julian's text. Such editorial speculations are always an option, given that even friendly transmitters of texts make mistakes. But a polemical context has a way of authorizing modern editors of going further in their speculative conjectures. As I'll point out throughout this chapter, *Against the Galileans* has acquired several editorial speculations that need to be reconsidered.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> He also claims to have intentionally left out parts of Julian's texts: Julian included, he says, arguments against Christ which could harm someone, even if such a reader "only came into contact" with the words, so Cyril says that he omitted these dangerous comments (2.2.5–12).

<sup>2</sup> Neumann's nineteenth-century edition (*Iuliani Imperatoris Librorum Contra Christianos Quae Supersunt* [Leipzig, 1880]) was the boldest attempt to reconstruct Julian's text. But his decisions have shaped subsequent interpreters and translations, like Wilbur Wright's for the Loeb Classical Library. Her

Even if offering a definitive reconstruction of the extant fragments of AG is no longer possible, that is not to say that any hypothetical reordering of the fragments is just as good as the next one. My reconstruction does not vary widely from other attempts to reconstruct AG, but I have made the occasional choice that subtly reframes Julian's arguments. In the following outline, each section is labeled according to what seems to be Julian's goal. Scholars have sometimes gotten off on the wrong foot by labeling Julian's treatment of Genesis as an "attack" or his way of relating Moses and Plato as a "contrast," as if they contradicted one another, but this kind of mistake can be forestalled by paying close attention to the larger purpose that Julian himself gives for each stage of the argument.

The numbering of the fragments below and throughout this dissertation follows the now standard edition of AG by Masaracchia, who numbered them simply by the order in which they appear in *Against Julian*, and whose number the GCS edition of *Against Julian* follows.<sup>3</sup> My reconstruction is as follows:

- I. **Introduction (Frs. 1–3)**
- II. **An Overview of How Humans Know About God (Frs. 7, 11)**
- III. **A Comparison of Hebrew and Hellenic Teachings (Frs. 6, 8–10, 4, 13–28<sup>4</sup>)**
  - a. Comparison of teachings about the origin of the cosmos (Frs. 6, 8)
  - b. Comparison of teachings about the origin of humans (Frs. 9–10, 4<sup>5</sup>, 13–18)

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organization, like Neumann's, presents *Against the Galileans* in a continuous format, largely obscuring its fragmentary nature.

<sup>3</sup> Masaracchia, *Giuliano Imperatore: Contra Galilaeos*.

<sup>4</sup> I do not include fr. 12, which is very brief and probably not a direct quote of Julian's anyways.

- c. Comparison of the nations (Frs. 19–28)
- IV. **A Puzzling Query as to Why the Galileans Prefer the Jews to the Hellenes (Frs. 29–57<sup>6</sup>)**
  - a. Transition: the (mostly) cosmopolitan Decalogue (Fr. 29)
  - b. The apparent wrathfulness of the Jewish God (Frs. 30–36)
  - c. The greater gifts from the gods to the Hellenes, compared to the Jews (Frs. 37–57)
- V. **An exposition of how the Galileans were not even faithful to the Jewish teachings (Frs. 58–88<sup>7</sup>)**
  - a. Thesis, concluding that the Galileans live base lives (frs. 58–59)
  - b. Jesus and the gods: how the Galileans depart from Moses about the gods (frs. 62–71)
  - c. How the Galileans depart from the Jews in religious practices (frs. 70–88)
    - i. Interlude on how Julian’s contemporary Galileans are not even faithful to their founders (frs. 79–82)<sup>8</sup>

The main four sections of this outline (after the introduction) are provided straightforwardly by Julian’s own comments in his opening remarks on how he will proceed. He says that he will first consider “from where and how the notion of God has

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<sup>5</sup> Placing fr. 4 is a bit difficult—it is highly likely that Cyril took this excerpt from its original context and placed it early in his refutation, since in this excerpt Julian admits that the Hellenes have created “myths,” and Cyril seizes on this admission as a confession of the *falseness* of Hellenic claims. It is plausible that Julian made this admission while he was treating the “mythic” elements of Genesis to show that Moses’s inclusion of mythic material is perfectly consonant with features of ancient Hellenic writing. It is grouped in my list accordingly.

<sup>6</sup> Within this group, frs. 32, 34, 44, 52 and 56 are all short asides that Cyril introduces (and are perhaps even simply Cyril’s summaries of Julian’s position and not Julian’s own words) to make a quick point within a longer response. They sometimes belong thematically in the general groupings I give, but they sometimes do not.

<sup>7</sup> Within this group frs. 60–61, 63, 66, 68, 73, 76–78 are also short asides that Cyril introduces (again, sometimes not even verbatim quotes) to make a quick point within sections which respond to a full-length excerpt from AG. As with above, they sometimes belong thematically in the general groupings I give, but they sometimes do not.

<sup>8</sup> I have not included the remaining fragments of AG, since they are either embedded in fragments of later books of *Against Julian*, or as fragments within different authors entirely. Masaracchia’s edition has 107 fragments in total, but for several new candidates, see Christoph Riedweg, “A German Renaissance Humanist as Predecessors & Some Further Surprises,” in *Interreligiöse Konflikte im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert: Julian “Contra Galilaeos” - Kyrill “Contra Iulianum,”* ed. Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich and Stefan Rebenich, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 181* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 257–85.

come to us” (§II in my outline), before then “comparing what has been said by the Hellenes and by the Hebrews about God” (§III), before finally “asking why those who are neither Hellenes nor Jews, but are from the sect (αἰρέσεως) of the Galileans, prefer to our own things those of the latter, (§IV) and why, for that matter, they do not abide with these latter, but departed from them and turned to their own way” (§V) (fr. 3.1-9).<sup>9</sup> In very broad terms, the argument works as follows: Julian establishes that everyone has access to divine knowledge (§II), a fact which grounds his generally *positive* appraisal of Moses, who somewhat successfully sought out divine truths and provided his people with fitting laws (§III). Still, though Moses’s discoveries are *mostly* genuine, they are relatively meager, especially when you compare him (and also the other gifts that the Hebrew people received from the gods) to the Hellenic wise men and their divine gifts. This relative inferiority makes it puzzling, furthermore, that the Galileans would opt to depart the Hellenic tradition to join with the Hebrews (§IV). What is even more puzzling, however, is the fact that the Galileans did not even faithfully observe the Hebrew tradition but innovated their own new tradition—a fact which can be seen in Julian’s detailed list of ways that Galileans fail to follow the laws and teachings that Moses provided (§V).

At the largest scale, then, Julian’s strategy was to explain that Moses was an exemplary wise man and lawgiver within the Hebrew tradition—having established this, Julian was thereby enabled to explain in detail that Christians were nothing more

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<sup>9</sup> All translations of Julian are my own (in consultation with other translations), unless otherwise noted.

than a further perversion of a distortion that later Jews had already made to Moses's original teachings. That is to say: Julian's strategy was to take a foundational "episode" of the Christian narrative (Moses and the law) and renarrate it as a minor subplot of a larger and more expansive narrative of the Hellenes.<sup>10</sup> This reframing of a fundamental episode in the Christian narrative gave him a position to endlessly re-explain other episodes of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

### III. *Against the Galileans*. Strategy and Argument

The rest of this chapter traces this narrative subsumption in *Against the Galileans*. The plan has two steps. I first briefly trace the details of the largely implicit narrative structure of Julian's text before moving to an extended analysis of its explicit arguments. Just as the most important structural supports of a house are often not

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<sup>10</sup> I focus on Julian's renarration of Moses specifically in my forthcoming article, the content of which is drawn from this chapter. See Brad Boswell, "Moses the Hellenic Sage: Re-Reading *Against the Galileans*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 30, no. 3 (Forthcoming 2022).

<sup>11</sup> One possible problem with my reconstruction (and all other modern reconstructions that I know of) is that it accounts for the *entire* plan that Julian laid out in his introductory remarks—even though the extant text of *AG* is probably only one third of the original work. What did Julian do for the remaining two thirds, when (according to our modern reconstructions) he had already worked his way through the entirety of his plan? We know from a few scattered fragments from the later books what some of the content of it was—he seems, for example, to have commented on more material from the New Testament in many of the remaining fragments. But this fact still doesn't explain how these later books fit with his own outline.

My thesis about narrative conflict might offer insight: the first and extant book established the narrative framework for his critique (and executed many of those critiques, of course). Once the main support structures of the renarration are in place, then what remains is simply showing, in detail after detail after detail, how Julian's narrative accommodates or accounts for the data—how, in other words, Christian teaching and practice is really one big collection of apostasies. To be more concrete, I suspect that the rest of Julian's argument probably moved into further criticism of the New Testament documents to build up the pile of evidence that says that Christianity is really just an erroneous offshoot of Mosaic Judaism. It is very likely that *SV* could have continued for several more books—the more details Julian could construe as further plot points in the narrative of apostasy, the more powerful would be his overall case.

visible to the eye, likewise the key narrative structure of Julian's strategy is often obscured by his varied asides and polemical points. And as I discussed in the introduction, AG is by no means a "narrative" on its surface. But if we want to see what would have been so existentially powerful about this text that Cyril would feel the need to write a colossal response, we have to look beyond the vituperative barbs (of which there are plenty) and see the larger strategy that begins to come into view when we attend to the implicit narrative structure. Some of Julian's particular arguments are like the furniture in this metaphorical house—as the furniture does not always contribute to a house's architectural structure, so too do some of Julian's arguments not contribute to the narrative structure of his treatise. But in both cases every particular piece still has its place within the whole, even if some pieces do not directly contribute to the overall structure.

To sketch this structure, I will mostly limit myself to Julian's comments in AG. The main reason for doing so is that in *Against Julian* Cyril himself betrayed very little knowledge of anything specific about Julian's life or his other writings.<sup>12</sup> Cyril's reading, therefore, took no recourse to other of Julian's text. As my focus is on Cyril's response to Julian, so, too, will my interpretation focus only on AG. This is, of course, not the best way to get a sense for Julian's thought as a whole—there are several places in AG where

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<sup>12</sup> There is one interesting exception, where Cyril seems to indicate knowledge of an event in Julian's life that, to my knowledge, has no attestation in other sources. Masaracchia labels this as fr. 89, though it is certainly not a verbatim quote. In AJ 10.42.1–2 Cyril claims that Julian says that "he was given the cries of birds, which informed [him] that he will sit on the seats of sovereignty." Other than this reference to an otherwise unattested (to my knowledge) event in Julian's life, Cyril betrays no knowledge about Julian other than what was general knowledge or what can be inferred from AG. Wolfram Kinzig agrees—see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CLXII.

ambiguities can be helped by recourse to Julian's other writings. But a central goal is to illuminate what would have been powerful about this text to Cyril and his contemporaries, and if Cyril didn't need recourse to other texts, then neither will my reading rely on them. This plan may, in fact, even have a certain advantage if it helps us to focus on the how fifth-century Christians might have read this text and not to get bogged down in questions about Julian's argument that, compared to Cyril's level of interest, are of relatively disproportionate interest to contemporary scholars (questions about, for example, how to locate minute details about Julian's cosmology within the Neoplatonic tradition).<sup>13</sup>

The first step in reconstructing Julian's argument—sketching the implicit narrative structure—requires departing from the sequence of AG as Julian wrote it and, instead, drawing from it piecemeal. After this, however, the second step can provide a more detailed overview of the text in the order that Julian himself seems to have presented it and in the order of its explicit arguments.<sup>14</sup>

### III.A. A Blueprint of the Narrative Structure

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<sup>13</sup> Drawing on Masaracchia, Cook notes that, "Julian directed his tractate against the Christians to the person in the street who would not be interested in the metaphysical system of the *Hymn to King Helios*" (which is a more philosophically dense oration, compared to AG). However, he thinks that Julian's learned use of Platonic texts presumes something of an educated audience. Still, Masaracchia's point should be heeded—the genre is not philosophical speculation, and the audience seems to at least include uneducated Christians. See *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 331–32.

<sup>14</sup> Scholars often treats the fragments of *Against the Galileans* piecemeal, which obscures Julian's strategy more than it illuminates. Cook's treatment of Julian, for example, is quite thorough, but it is all but impossible to keep track of a cumulative argument that Julian is making; Cook's organization, that is, makes *Against the Galileans* often seem like little more than a collection of small-scale arguments. For his commentary on AG, see Cook, 248–344.

The implicit narrative of *AG* has a maximal setting and slate of characters: the whole cosmos is its setting, and the main characters are the most powerful and enduring divine beings. After surveying narrative features, I will show how Julian narrates the place of the nations within this cosmic scene, and particularly where one small nation and its lawgiver, Moses, reside. For Julian, within this minor subplot, Moses gave mostly reliable guidance to the Jews, though subsequent generations distorted his teaching. This error provided the point of departure for the Galileans into further errors.

### III.A.1 *Setting: The Cosmic Scene*

Julian's cosmos is that of Plato, the origin of which is described in the *Timaeus*.<sup>15</sup> It is a cosmos packed with spiritual agents of varying power, characteristics, and roles. At the source of this richly-varied cosmos is the Demiurge who is also the "common king and father of all things" (fr. 21.7–8), or (as Julian calls him elsewhere) that "king of the all" (fr. 7.14). Drawing still on Plato, Julian explains that this common creator directly made the lower orders of immortal beings, and he enlisted these beings with

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<sup>15</sup> That the exact content, structure, and character of Plato's cosmos was not entirely agreed upon in late antiquity goes without saying (see Chapter 4 for further information on the role of the *Timaeus* throughout the history of Platonic cosmology). But Julian's goal in *AG* was not to explore the long exegetical history of the *Timaeus*, nor to contribute his own innovative reading. His goal was to persuade, and for that he relied on a relatively straightforward and simple explanation of the cosmos, without descending into contested details. His cosmology in other works—the *Hymn to Helios*, especially—is more expansive. John Finamore suggests that in *AG* Julian was "using a simplified model of the more complicated neoplatonic universe" ("Θεοὶ Θεῶν: An Iamblichean Doctrine in Julian's *Against the Galileans*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 [1988]: 398–99). Even the *Hymn to Helios*, however, was not meant to be novel. As Dillon has noted, "In the area of philosophy, Julian has no aspirations to originality. All he wishes to do, as he repeatedly assures us, is to set before us as faithfully as he can the divinely-inspired insights of his spiritual mentor, the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus" (John M. Dillon, "The Theology of Julian's Hymn to King Helios," *Ítaca: Quaderns Catalans de Cultura Clàssica*, no. 14–15 [1999]: 104).

derivative immortality to help create the remaining classes of existent things. The common creator thus assured that there would be vast variety among created beings, since the created things bear the marks of their creator, and now many creators are involved. The common creator also assured that some beings will be mortal, since creators with only derivative immortality do not pass on immortality to their creatures (frs. 9–10).<sup>16</sup>

Just as the activity of creating was shared with other beings by the common father across several stages of creation, so too was subsequent governance shared. Each people (ἔθνος) in the cosmos is overseen by a divine bureaucracy of sorts: the father, being “one” and “perfect” gives the various nations oversight by gods who are also varied and who correspond in character to the unique features of the people. It is the characteristics of these “nation-ruling and city-protecting gods” (ἐθνάρχαις καὶ πολιούχοις θεοῖς) that thus explain local features of nations: Ares rules over warlike peoples, Athena over those that are characteristically wise, and so forth (fr. 21.9–15). But under each of these gods are a variety of sub-rulers: a messenger, a daemon, and a whole “distinctive subordinate and service-class of spirits” (fr. 26.2–6). He elsewhere includes a “hero” in this list, showing that the governing bureaucracy extends into at least the upper strata of the human realm.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This seems to be the implicit rationale for how variety emerges. We will return to this argument at greater length in Chapter 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Hymn to King Helios*, 145c.

According to Julian, it is the role of humans to imitate these ruling gods, as much as possible—a feat which is achieved “in contemplation of what is” (ἐν θεωρίᾳ τῶν ὄντων) and which requires passionless-ness (ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ). Such attainment was sought after and exhorted by the philosophers (fr. 36.7–8).

### III.A.2 *Characters: Moses and the Jews among the Nations*

Within this expansive, cosmic hierarchy are numerous nations. From the beginning, these nations have been governed by their overseers and have received all kinds of gifts and interactions with them. The Hellene nation was particularly gifted, having received the blessing of descendants of the most-wise Cheiron, the centaur-instructor of Achilles<sup>18</sup>—but so, too, were the Egyptians (among whom Hermes Trismegistus and his successors dwelt), and the Chaldeans, and Assyrians (fr. 37). The Hellenes were given wise philosophers, generals, leaders, and lawgivers: Plato, Socrates, Aristeides, Cimon, Thales, Lycurgus, Agesilaus, Archidamus (fr. 39), Lycurgus, Solon (fr. 35), Perseus, Aeacus, Minos, Rhadamanthous (fr. 40), and so forth. The Hellenic superiority can also be seen in that the gods have given to Rome the job of ruling others (fr. 49), including the small, often-captive nation of the Hebrews.

The Hebrews are not, in Julian’s account, without their own divine oversight and gifts, from at least their origins with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—all of whom were originally Chaldeans and who took with them their theurgic arts when they traveled

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the *Iliad* 11.831 for Achilles’s instruction by Cheiron.

through Egypt (fr. 86).<sup>19</sup> But Moses is clearly the Hebrews' leading figure: a moderately impressive lawgiver to match a moderately (at best) impressive people, relative to the Hellenes and their long and famous hall of exemplary characters. In the grand scheme of Julian's vision, the Hebrews hold a minor position that only happens to take a more prominent role because of their historical connection to Christians.<sup>20</sup>

Julian treats Moses like a mostly successful investigator of divine matters in this cosmic scene. His laws and actual governance were sometimes harsh (fr. 34), and he was wrong to portray god as jealous and vindictive (frs. 30–35).<sup>21</sup> But he certainly understood right sacrificial methods (fr. 71), and he recorded genuine insights about creation (frs. 6, 9–10, 13–18). In short, the Hebrews received “precise laws for worship” (ἀκριβῆ τὰ περὶ θρησκείαν . . . νόμιμα) and commands for living well, which themselves require a “priestly life and conduct” (βίου καὶ προαιρέσεως ἱερατικῆς) (fr. 58.9–11).

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<sup>19</sup> As Cook points out, there was precedent for treating Abraham as an astrologer. See *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 278. See also Louis H. Feldman, “Abraham the Greek Philosopher in Josephus,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 99 (1968): 143–56; Jeffrey S. Siker, “Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18, no. 2 (1987): 188–208; Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews: Josephus, Ant. 1.154–168, and the Greco-Roman Discourse about Astronomy/Astrology,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 35, no. 2 (January 1, 2004): 119–58.

<sup>20</sup> Julian does speak positively of certain Jews in AG, and Ari Finkelstein has recently suggested that he actively drew from Jewish practice in a constructive manner for his renewal of Hellenism (*The Specter of the Jews*). Though an intriguing suggestion, I think it much more likely that Julian's admiration for the Jews was mostly affected for rhetorical purposes, and that when he “drew” from Jewish practice to inform Hellenic practice, he was only garnering further evidential support for practices he already knew and appreciated as Hellenic. This isn't to say that he disliked Jews, and only feigned admiration. But I suspect that he wouldn't have given the Jews, as a rather minor people in the cosmic setting, much thought, if there weren't pragmatic considerations. This is, of course, speculative. But it fits with Julian's implicit and condescending claims to best understand Judaism. As Bouffartigue comments, according to Julian “les Hellènes connaissent mieux la vérité sur la religion juive que les Juifs eux-mêmes” (*L'empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, Collection des Études augustinienes. Série Antiquité 133 [Paris: Institut d'Études augustinienes, 1992], 396).

<sup>21</sup> Though see page 129 below about how Julian insinuates textual corruption when he is considering these apparently impious comments, putatively from Moses.

Cyril tells us that Julian insisted repeatedly (in non-extant portions of *AG*) that Hellenic affairs concur almost entirely with those of the Jews (*AJ* 9.31.30–32). The one exception—that the Jews worship only one god, whereas the Hellenes worship many—leads to Julian’s creatively subtle treatment of Moses’s theology.

That Moses directed the Hebrews to worship only one god, their ethnarch god, is clear to Julian (see frs. 19 and 64, where he quotes numerous admonitions to monolatry from Deuteronomy). Whether, according to Julian, Moses thought this god was also the common creator of all is a difficult question, which we’ll return to later.<sup>22</sup> But Julian thinks that Moses certainly legislated that his people worship only this god and no others. Julian is emphatic, however, that Moses was fully aware of many other beings in the cosmic hierarchy. He points out that such beings are quite explicitly active in Moses’s writings, most especially in Genesis 6 where they intermarry with humans to produce giants on the earth (fr. 67). But Moses taught his people to only worship their local god—a teaching which was misconstrued by his direct heirs and, eventually, grossly distorted by the Galileans, as we’ll see next.

### III.A.3 (*Sub*)plot: *Apostasies from Moses*

Though Julian certainly thought that contemporary Judaism had much that he could approve of, by and large the story of post-Mosaic Judaism is one of successive apostasies, or at least distortions. The history of this people after Moses led them from Egypt was one of constant change—more frequently than a chameleon changes its

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<sup>22</sup> See page 124 below.

color, Julian insists. They were subject to other peoples, then ruled by judges, eventually ruled by kings (contrary to their god's preference), and then again by other peoples (fr. 49). But their central error came when certain people who "came after" Moses—the "ἐπιγινόμενοι"—distorted his theological teachings in a perversely monotheistic direction.<sup>23</sup> Against this deviant theological strain, Julian insists that Moses, though aware of the vast hierarchy of gods, instructed the Hebrews to serve only their local ethnarch god, whose "allotted possession" is Israel.<sup>24</sup> The error of the ἐπιγινόμενοι was to "think that *blaspheming* follows from *not worshipping* [other gods]" (ἀκολουθεῖν ἐνόμισε τῷ μὴ θεραπεύειν τὸ βλασφημεῖν) (fr. 58.12–17). Thus some of Moses's successors went beyond his injunction only to *serve* one god and extrapolated from it a belligerently exclusivist monotheism. Despite these reservations, Julian regards Moses as a relatively successful sage and lawgiver within the Hellenic cosmos. He insists that Moses himself didn't originate the anti-Hellenic blasphemy, since Moses elsewhere affirms his awareness of the plurality of gods about whom he expressly commands, "Οὐ κακολογήσεις θεούς" ("You shall not revile the gods," LXX Ex. 22:28; fr. 58.14).<sup>25</sup> Moses clearly *knew* that there were other gods; he simply commanded the Hebrews to only offer their pious worship to their local god. Still, says Julian, the "impudence and brazenness of those who came later (τῶν ἐπιγινόμενων)" turned the

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<sup>23</sup> Julian later mentions the "ἐπιγινόμενοις προφήταις," suggesting that he has at least the prophets in mind as the distorters of Mosaic teaching (fr. 62.9).

<sup>24</sup> Julian here alludes to LXX Deut 32:9.

<sup>25</sup> For more on LXX Exod 22:28, see Pieter Willem van der Horst, "Thou Shalt Not Revile the Gods': The LXX Translation of Exodus 22.28 (27), Its Background and Influence," *Studia Philonica* 5 (1993): 1–8.

people away from Moses’s teaching and instituted a false and impiously monotheistic teaching.<sup>26</sup>

Julian doesn’t clearly state where this distortion began, though it was certainly a feature by the time of the prophets. He describes the error of Christians by saying that they abandoned their “hereditary customs (τὰ πάτρια)” and, instead, “gave themselves over to what the prophets proclaim (δόντες ἑαυτοὺς οἷς ἐκήρυξαν οἱ προφῆται)” (fr. 58.3–5). From a brief fragment, we know that Julian thought that the prophet Ezra added to Moses’s text, thereby distorting it (fr. 34).

In fact, Julian narrates this first apostasy of the later generations after Moses as the original source of the Christian error.<sup>27</sup> These Christians followed the prophets, and they took up their blasphemous conduct towards the gods “from the innovation of the Hebrews” (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑβραίων καινοτομίας) (fr. 58.18–20). With these details, Julian gives an account of how Christians could so bizarrely lay claim to continuity with Moses, who (Julian points out) demanded steadfast and unchanging commitment to his commands and who would not have allowed a “second law,” as the Christians claim to follow (fr. 75.4). Julian furthermore suggests that understanding the Christians of his fourth-century context requires accounting for yet another stage of apostasy and distortion, since “those who came after (ἐπιγινόμενοι)” the apostles were not faithful to the

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<sup>26</sup> Fr. 79 (mentioned below) offers further evidence that Julian uses the term “ἐπιγινόμενοι” to refer to successive generations who characteristically distort the truths that had been passed on to them from their predecessors.

<sup>27</sup> Galilean *practice*, too, was informed by the objectionable practices of the later Jews of the prophet’s era—such as sleeping at tombs and caves to receive visions (a reference to incubation and perhaps Christian martyr veneration, which Julian sees presaged in Isaiah’s comments in Is. 65:4, “They sleep among tombs and caves for dream visions”) (fr. 82).

apostolic teachings (fr. 79; this argument is further worked out in frs. 80–81, and I suspect it was even further worked out in the books of AG that are no longer extant).<sup>28</sup>

Through all these interpretive details, Julian renarrates Christian history, teaching, and practice by first relocating the novel tradition’s ancestral source (centrally, Moses) as a minor player in the Hellenic world. The “Galileans” were initially Hellenes—members of the most impressive of the nations in the world. But for inexplicable reasons they decided to migrate to the tradition of the minor nation of Hebrews. Once there, however, they seized upon a deviant strand of Moses’s reception and further innovated new and grosser errors.<sup>29</sup> Insofar as Moses was a capable

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<sup>28</sup> In modern scholarship, Jay Bregman (“Judaism as Theurgy in the Religious Thought of the Emperor Julian,” *The Ancient World* 26, no. 2 [1995]: 147–48) and John Gager (*Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, SBL Monograph Series 16 [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972], 106) are the only scholars I have found who clearly trace Julian’s ranking of Moses and later Jews in terms of a declension narrative. Pieter W. van der Horst does note in passing that Julian uses LXX Exod 22.28 to show that “later generations had corrupted the original Mosaic religion” (“Thou Shalt Not Revile the Gods,” 8). But most scholars treat Moses and the prophets as holding the same doctrines, in Julian’s estimation. For example: Bouffartigue summarizes Julian’s understanding of the Old and New Testament as, respectively, “le monument de la fort défectueuse sagesse des Juifs” and “l’expression de la déraison et de l’infidélité chrétiennes” (*L’empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, 114), whereas the Old Testament for Julian is really a combination of the reliable (though somewhat corrupted) Pentateuch of Moses and other writings which distort Moses’s teachings. Malley speaks of “Julian’s criticism of the Jewish theologians” as if “Moses” and the “prophets” form one cadre of “theologians” (*Hellenism and Christianity*, 48). For another example, see Anthony Meredith’s oft-cited article which summarizes two of the major movements of Julian’s literary attack as “an attack on the Jewish notion of God and on Jewish history in general” and, then, “an attack on the Galileans for abandoning the traditions, bad though they were, of the Jews”—as if Julian thought “the Jews” to be a doctrinally coherent (though error-riddled) entity (“Porphyry and Julian against the Christians,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 23, no. 2 [1980]: 1140). Similarly, Finkelstein suggests that Julian is ambivalent towards “Judeans,” who are held in tension both as “examples of Hellenic orthopraxy” and as the sources of practices that became “the source for Christian apostasy” (Finkelstein, *The Specter of the Jews*, 24). However, Julian was not “ambivalent” in this respect so much as he distinguished at least two different strands of “Judaism,” one which exhibited true Mosaic wisdom and one which corrupted it.

<sup>29</sup> Further evidence that Julian thinks of Christians as tied to the prophets’ deviations from Moses can be found in his “Letter to a Priest” (as entitled in Wilmer Cave Wright, trans., *The Works of Emperor Julian, Volume II*, The Loeb Classical Library 29 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913], 297–339). Here Julian explains what kind of texts a priest should and should not study. In the latter category belong “the

lawgiver, they could have remained within the proper cosmic order, though taking a lesser place in the hierarchy (see fr. 47). However, they descended into pure madness, abandoning: first, correct worship of all the gods (as the Hellenes practiced); second, even the worship of one of the gods (as the Hebrews taught). This left them, instead, with the worship of a Jewish corpse (fr. 43.16).

The generic shape of Julian's implicit declension narrative was not unique to him. In all likelihood, he learned it from Eusebius of Caesarea, to whom *Against the Galileans* responds, if only obliquely. Strikingly, Julian takes on and inverts Eusebius's narrative mode of arguing, adapting Eusebius's rendering of Jewish decline for his own Hellenic master narrative.<sup>30</sup> Eusebius, too, had differentiated the true and divinely-favored teachings in Moses from divergent teachings of later generations.<sup>31</sup> But, as Aaron Johnson summarizes, in the Eusebian version the "Hebrews" possessed an ancient store of wisdom, scientific discovery, and philosophical acumen; and the "Jews" fell away from Hebrew wisdom when they became "Egyptianized" during their years of enslavement. In this account, Moses's law was a veiled accommodation to those who

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sort of thing our poets" wrote shamefully, as well as "such tales as the prophets of the Jews (οἱ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων προφήται) take pains to invent, and are admired for so doing by those miserable men who have attached themselves to the Galilaeans" (326–327; Wright's translation). Julian ties the prophets and Galileans together, but Moses is conspicuously absent from his list of disreputable texts and authors.

<sup>30</sup> Julian had read at least Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, as he alludes to it in fr. 53. The text was perhaps part of bishop George of Alexandria's library which Julian requested after George's death (see Julian's *Ep.* 38 [Wright, LCL 157, 122–125]). On the question of whether Julian was responding to Eusebius, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 306–12; see also Finkelstein, *The Specter of the Jews*, 55–63; for a dissenting position, see Bouffartigue, *L'empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, 385–88.

<sup>31</sup> See Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' "Praeparatio Evangelica,"* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 95–125.

did not preserve the ancestral purity and wisdom—it was a “middle ground” for the morally inferior Jews.<sup>32</sup> Those few who remained truly “Hebrews” did not need the law, but Moses still encoded their wisdom in it. The wisdom could then be accessed through allegorical interpretation.<sup>33</sup> For Eusebius, then, the original divine knowledge or revelation hidden among the Hebrews was brought back to light with the advent of Christianity. “Jews” (and Hellenes<sup>34</sup>) were the “apostates” from ancient wisdom, while Christians faithfully preserved the ancient “Hebrew” store of divine knowledge.

A reappraisal of Julian’s evaluation of Moses reveals that he reorganized these details of Eusebius’s declension narrative: in Julian’s rendering, the most ancient sources of divine knowledge did, indeed, include Moses. But infidelity to Moses was committed not by the “Egyptianized” Jews but rather by the monotheistic prophets. Those errors multiplied and finally culminated in the convoluted teachings of the Christian sect. Indeed, this narrative conflict that Julian engages in *Against the Galileans* was not even new to Eusebius, whose own iteration was partially a response to Porphyry’s earlier polemical provocations.<sup>35</sup> What was new in Julian’s account was the detail and creativity with which he advanced the anti-Christian form of narrative

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<sup>32</sup> Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 120.

<sup>33</sup> Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 121.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 3 (“Relocating Greekness”) and 5 (“Greek Descent Revisited”) of Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ “Praeparatio Evangelica.”*

<sup>35</sup> See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 307–12. In fact, in its general contours this strategy was much older still. Arthur Droge has traced this kind of competitive historiography seen in Cyril and earlier Christian apologists back to Jewish writers like Artapanus and Eupolemus, who were themselves adapting and responding to Hellenistic texts reaching back to the fourth-century BCE and Hecataeus of Abdera’s history of Egypt. See Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*, *Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie* 26 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

conflict.<sup>36</sup> With the broad sketches of the narrative strategy now in mind, we can move to those details.

### III.B. Analysis of the Text

The following overview of AG's arguments is necessarily selective. It covers most of the text, but close scrutiny is reserved for issues that either clarify Julian's overall argumentative structure or that will occupy our attention with Cyril in later chapters. The material here is organized according to the outline of AG provided above.

#### III.B.1 Introduction to Against the Galileans

The first three fragments of AG preserved in *Against Julian* readily work as a single, introductory unit. Julian states his goal, stipulates some boundaries for how someone might respond, and gives his general outline. His goal is to explain how he “was persuaded that the fabrication (σκευωρία) of the Galileans is a forgery (πλάσμα) of men, constructed by wickedness”<sup>37</sup> (fr. 1.1–4). It is thus clear from the outset that, for

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<sup>36</sup> Wilken rightly notes that “Few critics of the Christians could command such inside knowledge of biblical interpretation and theological reasoning” (Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 2nd ed. [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003], 191). Finkelstein notes that, not unlike Julian, Porphyry endeavored to show that “the Prophets are late and therefore lack authority” (*The Specter of the Jews*, 55). But as I argued above, Julian sharpened this line of attack by asserting an even stronger distinction between Moses and the prophets. Julian also improved on Celsus's strategies: Boulnois suggests that part of Julian's objective was simply to respond to Origen's critique of Celsus (*Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 30). This is not hard to imagine, since Celsus's *On True Doctrine* was not compelling in its use of Christian scripture (Origen frequently pointed out Celsus's lack of basic biblical literacy)—thus, Julian's creative and novel use of texts (such as Numbers 25 in fr. 33) for polemical purposes may have partially been in response to Origen's criticisms of Celsus. See also Marie-Odile Boulnois, “La diversité des nations et l'élection d'Israël: y at-il une influence du Contre Celse d'Origène sur le Contre les Galiléens de Julien?,” in *Origeniana decima: Origen as writer: papers of the 10th International Origen Congress*, ed. Sylwia Kaczmarek and Henryk Pietras (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 803–30.

<sup>37</sup> “Πλάσμα” can, of course, have a less sinister meaning of “something formed” or “made,” but Julian uses the term again in fr. 21.16 with negative connotations, which matches the negative sense here in fr. 1.

Julian, the Christian invention is a fabrication based on something that is, with a few exceptions, genuine and divinely-given material: namely, the Mosaic corpus.<sup>38</sup> The opening comments thus include hints that Julian will treat the texts, ideas, and practices of the Christians in a different way than that of (at least some of) the Jews; his accusation of “forgery” is narrowly deployed and does not necessarily extend to the writings of Moses.

That Julian is carefully delineating groups and their texts in this manner becomes clearer in the third fragment where he outlines his argumentative program (see above): the relevant character groups of the narrative are the Hellenes, the Hebrews/Jews,<sup>39</sup> and the Galileans. After giving his brief outline, Julian adds the comment that will become the thematic center of his arguments: the Christians took nothing good from either the Hellenic or Jewish traditions, but rather combined what was the worst in each and “opted to call it the best kind of religiosity” (τοῦτο τὴν ἀρίστην θεοσεβειαν ὀνομάζεσθαι ἠθέλησαν) (fr. 3.13–14).

In the second fragment, Julian sets up ground rules for how any attempts to refute him should follow: he stipulates that, should anyone want to respond to his critiques (which he labels as “an account about their so-called ‘first dogmas’”), they

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<sup>38</sup> In fr. 51.4, Julian explicitly references the “fabrication of the gospels” (τῆς τῶν εὐαγγελίων . . . σκευωρίας) which further suggests that Julian is referring in fr. 1 only to later Christian texts and not to the “true” Hebrew texts.

<sup>39</sup> I do not discern a meaningful pattern to Julian’s use of “Jew” and “Hebrew” that might parallel Eusebius’s. But Finkelstein does suggest that, “When Julian closely follows Celsus or is speaking in the present, he adopts the term *Ioudaioi*. Otherwise, when he refers to the biblical people and their beliefs and especially when he quotes or paraphrases the Bible he prefers the designation *Hebraioi*.” See *The Specter of the Jews*, 58.

must “as if in a law-court, neither examine anything external [to the charges] nor make counter-accusations, until they make their defense about the first things” (fr. 2.1–7). This opening framing creates an imaginative setting of a lawcourt, the language and imagery of which Cyril will often preserve for his own purposes. Juridical language abounds in both treatises, as do frequent bursts of direct address to the “Galileans” (on Julian’s part) and (on Cyril’s part) to Julian, even though he was long dead. Such rhetorical choices were perhaps intended to draw readers into a dispute that felt present and pressing and about which they had to make a decision. The difference that this rhetorical style makes can be felt by comparing Cyril’s response to Julian to, for example, Theodoret’s less lively fourth century anti-pagan treatise, *Cure for Pagan Maladies*.<sup>40</sup>

### III.B.2 *An Overview of How We Know about God*

From the extant fragments, it appears that Julian quickly dispatched the first step of his argument about theological epistemology. He stresses a general accessibility to basic knowledge about the divine, derived from observation of the orderliness of the cosmos. Cyril does not preserve the two fragments of this section (frs. 7 and 11) in sequence in *Against Julian*, but their closely correlating subject matter and their clear correspondence with Julian’s plan to explain “from where and how the notion of God

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<sup>40</sup> The most recent English translation is Thomas P. Halton, trans., *Theodoret of Cyrus: A Cure for Pagan Maladies*, Ancient Christian Writers 67 (New York: Newman Press, 2013). For more on the rhetorical choices Cyril made for his response to Julian, see Thomas Brüggemann, “Αποστροφή in *Contra Iulianum*: Julian als fiktives Gegenüber Kyrills,” in *Interreligiöse Konflikte im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert: Julian “Contra Galilaeos” - Kyrill “Contra Iulianum,”* ed. Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich and Stefan Rebenich, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 181 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 153–64.

first came to us” (fr. 3.1–2) makes it likely that they both belong together in any reconstruction of *AG*.<sup>41</sup>

Julian’s explanation of theological epistemology is not terribly novel, but nor was it likely that he intended it to be so.<sup>42</sup> His opening comments insist that human knowledge of God comes not from teaching (οὐ διδακτόν) but by nature (φύσει) (fr. 7.3–4). As I already suggested, the intent here was perhaps to undermine any (Christian, Jewish, or otherwise) exclusivist claims to revelation from and about the divine.<sup>43</sup> He thereby postures himself *not* in an initially antagonistic relationship to religious communities that may not seem to function or teach like his own, but as, at least in principle, in harmony with religious practice and thought world-wide.

As would be expected from the presumption of such a naturalistic mode of knowing the divine, all peoples do indeed give evidence of at least some minimal knowledge of the divine, according to Julian, as is evident in how they show reverence for the heavens and swear by god(s) who dwells there. Their knowledge may be limited, since both discovering such truths and communicating them, once discovered, is not

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<sup>41</sup> The second fragment appears in the middle of Cyril’s response to Julian on cosmogony. It is plausible that Cyril moved the fragment from its original location in *AG* to this part of his response because of its commentary on the heavens and (in Cyril’s hostile reading) the fact that Julian erroneously equates the heavens with God (*AJ* 2.49.22). These topics connect with Cyril’s larger points about the relationship between the creator(s) and the creation (including the heavens), and so he might have moved it to fit his own arrangement of themes.

<sup>42</sup> See the critical apparatus of the *GCS* edition of *Against Julian* for likely sources for Julian’s thought at *AJ* 2.23 and 2.50.

<sup>43</sup> Wilken writes that, “The reason for introducing such an argument in the work against the Christians is to expose the foolish idea that this one God revealed himself in a specific historical revelation.” See *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 180.

easy.<sup>44</sup> But still, this universality of behavior is quite understandable, he suggests, given that all people can at least behold the perfectly harmonious and regular movements of the heavens, which do not deviate and which, as a whole, neither wax nor wane (fr. 11). Furthermore, suggests Julian, even those who think and speak as if there are some other gods (other than those that are, says Julian, evident in and through the heavenly bodies), such people cannot help but think of the heavens as the home of those other gods.

### III.B.3 *A Comparison of Hebrew and Hellenic teachings*

After this brief epistemic primer of sorts, Julian begins the first major section of his argument: comparing the Hebrew and Hellenic doctrines to emphasize their basic consonance, though he finds the insights of the Hebrews more limited in scope than those of the Hellenes. Julian's comparisons can be categorized, broadly, into three areas: doctrines about creation, doctrines about the nations, and a brief set of comments on Moses's Decalogue, which naturally lead into the next stage of the argument (where he will shift to emphasizing the superiority of the Hellenes to the Hebrews).

#### III.B.3.i Creation

For Julian's fragments on creation, Neumann (and, following him, Wright) reorganizes the engagement with Genesis 1–3 slightly differently, but reading the fragments in the order Cyril provides (excepting fr. 4) is preferable. Cyril's order

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<sup>44</sup> Julian is almost certainly alluding to *Timaeus* 28c, a passage that Cyril himself will deploy in support of his own argument (see *AJ* 1.42).

naturally follows the progression of Genesis, which is Julian's focus as a source of Hebrew doctrine about creation. This order also naturally flows from the creation writ large to the more specific creation and initial institution of humanity.

Julian begins his treatment of cosmogony with an explicit transition: "At this point, if you like, let us bring in (παραβάλωμεν) the discourse of Plato. Look, then, at what he says about the creator (ὑπὲρ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ) and what discourses he attributes to him in his cosmogony, so that we can set the cosmogony of Plato and of Moses alongside (ἀντιπαραβάλωμεν) one another." By doing so, he suggests, we will be able to determine who was better (κρείττων) and more worthy of God (ἄξιος τοῦ θεοῦ μᾶλλον) (fr. 6.4–8). The grammatically comparative forms are telling—it is evident at the beginning of this section that Julian is not asking who is true and who false, but who is superior.

He goes on to quote from Gen. 1:1–17, pointing out that Moses *does* specifically name some things that god fashioned (e.g., light). However, he also points out that Moses seems to presume that other elements pre-existed this god's limited role in creation: Moses does not tell us who created "the deep," or "the darkness," or "the waters." Their existence is simply assumed, and given that Moses goes out of his way to name things that this god *does* seem to personally concoct, an easy implication is that this god did *not* itself make the other elements that are part of the narrative.<sup>45</sup> Julian

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<sup>45</sup> See also Julian's lexical categorization in fr. 18.11–14: he sorts the differing elemental pieces into things that Moses's god "ordered to be" (κελεῦσαι . . . γενέσθαι) (like, says Julian, day, light, and the firmament), and "fashioned" (ποιῆσαι) (like the heaven, earth, sun, and moon), and "separated" (διακρίναι) (like the

also points out that Moses does not mention the origin of angels, nor how they were brought into being, but Moses talks “only about the bodies (σώματα)<sup>46</sup> in heaven and earth.” Julian’s conclusion, then, is that the god in Moses’s account doesn’t create anything that is incorporeal (ἄσώματα); this god is only the “shaper of the underlying matter (ἕλης δὲ ὑποκειμένης κοσμήτορα).” Julian takes the statement from Gen. 1:2 that the earth was “unformed” as further evidence, suggesting that this phrase must refer to the “wet matter” (ὕγρὰν οὐσίαν ἕλην<sup>47</sup>), of which Moses’s god is simply the shaper (fr. 6.31–37).

Having considered Moses’s contribution, Julian then paraphrases several passages from the *Timaeus* 28 and 30. These suggest that Plato’s account pertains not to just one stage of creation (the forming of matter into distinct things) but to the entirety of it: Plato comments on the creation of “the entire (ὁ πᾶς) heaven or cosmos” (fr. 8.2–3). Julian seems to want the reader to realize that Moses’s account does not contradict this—it simply must be read as commenting on a limited part of the complete details of

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water and dry land). This last category is, Julian glosses, those things that “until now have not been mentioned”—implying that this last category (and perhaps the second, as well) is probably the elements that were created by a different god and then delivered to Moses’s god for simple arrangement. Julian’s exegesis here is attentive and clever—he uses the different verbs that Genesis 1 uses to describe god’s actions (γενέσθαι, ποιῆσαι, διακρίναι) to categorize the resultant elemental pieces. An educated Christian might be tempted to regard such a reading as plausible (if still objectionable), in that it uses the Scriptural vocabulary and categories with great care and attention to build its hostile conclusions.

<sup>46</sup> Manuscripts Ψ and M have σκήνωμα (probably ‘dwelling’ place), which Masaracchia (and the GCS edition of *AJ*) prefers to V’s σώματα. Though this alternative removes the neat parallelism with ἄσώματα in the next sentence, it wouldn’t change the point.

<sup>47</sup> I am here following the GCS edition of *Against Julian* (against Masaracchia, who includes possible extra text: ὑγρὰν <καὶ ξηρὰν> οὐσίαν ἕλην).

creation. Moses’s cosmogony, in other words, fits perfectly well as one component piece of a more expansive Hellenic cosmogony.<sup>48</sup>

It is essential to see in fr. 8 that Julian is, in fact, *harmonizing* Moses and Plato, because he next suggests that we “complete a comparison, one by one (ἐν ἐνὶ παραβάλωμεν)” (fr. 9.4–5)—though *what* exactly Julian wants to compare is debatable. The manuscripts witness that Julian proposes comparing the kind of δημιουργία, “creation,” that god fashions. Neumann conjectures (and Wright and Masarrachia follow) that Julian originally wrote δημηγορία, or “speech” (and Riedweg in the GCS is tempted to agree).<sup>49</sup> Neumann’s suggestion is certainly possible, but it fits all too well with his tendency to see Julian as contrasting Moses and Plato. If, as Neumann would have it, the following section of Julian’s argument is comprised of a comparison of what Moses’s god and Plato’s god *say*, then obvious differences arise. The gods in each account don’t speak the same words—they don’t *say* the same thing. However, if the comparison is of what Moses’s god and Plato’s god *created*, then their accounts are much more easily harmonized, since both comment on the creation of humans next.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Julian’s argument about Moses’s cosmogony is a textbook case of what George Boys-Stones calls “subordination.” He notes that “It has come to be widely recognised that one characteristic trope of post-Hellenistic philosophical polemic involves ‘subordination’: the claim that one’s own philosophy (or some particular theory within it) explicitly or effectively includes everything that is to be found in that of one’s rival, but adds to it relevant extra layers of philosophical context.” See “Difference, Opposition, and the Roots of Intolerance in Ancient Philosophical Polemic,” in *Intolerance, Polemics, and Debate in Antiquity, Themes in Biblical Narrative 25* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 265–66.

<sup>49</sup> Riedweg keeps δημιουργία but comments in the apparatus that Neumann “fort. recte?” conjectured δημηγορία.

<sup>50</sup> In Neumann’s favor, however, is the fact that, within this fragment, after quoting from Genesis, Julian seems to introduce next the “Πλάτωνος δημηγορία” (fr. 9.16). This might suggest that, having quoted Moses’s “speech,” Julian now claims he will move to Plato’s “speech.” But at this point the manuscript

The difference does not make or break any particular reading of Julian, but it does have subtle implications for describing Julian’s evaluation of Moses and Plato.

Whatever the case, Julian begins with Moses’s and Plato’s treatment of the creation of humans. He first quotes Genesis 1:26–28, which includes the brief statement that “God fashioned man, according to the image of God he fashioned him; male and female he fashioned them . . .” No further comment is extant, and it seems likely that Julian provided nothing further—he simply includes Moses’s quite brief comment on the creation of humans, perhaps again to implicitly emphasize the narrow scope of Moses’s commentary. He moves on to Plato’s much more expansive account, which emphasizes again Plato’s Demiurge as the “creator of all things (τῷ τῶν ὅλων . . . δημιουργῷ)” (fr. 9.16–17). Julian begins with a version of *Timaeus* 41<sup>51</sup> which details a speech by the creator to the “gods of gods” (θεοὶ θεῶν), deities who have been made by the creator. Their immortal status is explained, and then they are given the task of assisting in creating the “remaining three mortal races” (θνητὰ ἔτι γένη λοιπὰ τρία). As explained above, these remaining races will be mortal, since they are partially created by beings whose own immortality is only derivative. Julian goes on to further exegete

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history is less clear, two Renaissance translations or editions giving evidence for “δημιουργίας” at this second instance (see the GCS apparatus, at AJ 2.33.1).

<sup>51</sup> On the editorial difficulties for this passage (which, in Julian’s quotation, deviates from the best manuscripts of the *Timaeus* and was perhaps Julian’s recitation from memory), see Christoph Riedweg, “Julians Exegese der Rede des Demiurgen an die versammelten Götter in Platons *Timaios* 41A-D,” in *Culture classique et christianisme: mélanges offerts à Jean Bouffartigue*, ed. Danièle Auger and Étienne Wolff (Paris: Editions Picard, 2008), 83–95.

this passage (fr. 10) in typically neoplatonic fashion.<sup>52</sup> We will examine the details of Julian’s argument in Chapter 4 since Cyril takes issue with several of them, but the main point for now is how Julian compares a limited statement about the creation of humans by Moses to a complicated and rich account by Plato.

This concludes Julian’s examination of Genesis 1. The next set of fragments (4 and 13–17) treat material in Genesis 2–3. It is important to note that frs. 13–17 constitute one of the clearest unities of *AG*, as fr. 17 sums up the content of 13–16. Modern scholars, however, have sometimes pulled individual statements from this unity and drawn conclusions about Julian’s position—conclusions that are unwarranted and even contradictory to Julian’s argument. Within this unity, placing fr. 4 is a bit difficult (as already noted, Cyril almost certainly took it out of its place in *AG*), but since fr. 4 comments on the fact that Hellenes have mythic texts, it fits well with frs. 13–17, which treat mythic material in Genesis.

Modern scholars frequently overlook Julian’s continued harmonization through these fragments, concluding instead that in this part of *Against the Galileans* Julian “criticizes”<sup>53</sup> the Mosaic portrayal of the divine as impious or laughable.<sup>54</sup> There are, indeed, understandable reasons for overlooking the fact that Julian continues subtly to

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<sup>52</sup> For several neoplatonic interpretations of this passage (especially its opening words, θεοὶ θεῶν), see Finamore, “θεοὶ θεῶν.”

<sup>53</sup> So suggests Pieter Willem van der Horst, “The Pagan Opponents of Christianity on the Book of Genesis,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 72, no. 3 (2018): 333, *et passim*. Finamore also says that Julian “contrasts” the respective accounts of creation in Genesis and the *Timaeus* and that his point is “to criticize Moses’ account of creation” (“θεοὶ θεῶν,” 393).

<sup>54</sup> So says Klaus Rosen, *Julian: Kaiser, Gott und Christenhasser* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006), 316. Susanna Elm also cites several of these fragments as evidence that, according to Julian, Moses’s “god is angry, jealous, vengeful . . .” (*Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 315).

affirm Moses's wisdom. Julian underscores several apparent problems with the Edenic narrative, though his actual point is different from what is often asserted. He takes issue with: first, the implication that god lacked foresight when he created Eve as Adam's *helper*, given that she instead prompted the fall (fr. 13); second, god's injunction against eating from just one tree (fr. 14); third, a serpent talking (fr. 15); fourth, god withholding access to the knowledge of good and evil (fr. 16); and, finally, the implication that god ejected Adam and Eve from Eden so he could jealously hoard immortality (fr. 17).

On a cursory reading, Julian's criticism of Moses's writing in Genesis 2–3 appears unmitigated. However, while summing up these problems with the narrative, Julian adds an underappreciated statement that:

These accounts are full of much blasphemy about God—unless, each of them were a μῦθος which has a secret reading, which is what I think.

Τούτων τοίνυν ἕκαστον, εἰ μὴ μῦθος εἶη ἔχων ἀπόρρητον θεωρίαν, ὅπερ ἐγὼ νενόμικα, πολλῆς γέμουσιν οἱ λόγοι περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημίας (fr. 17.10–12).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Pace* Christoph Riedweg, who entertains several grammatically possible interpretations of the relative clause “ὅπερ ἐγὼ νενόμικα” (“which is what I think”) and reaches a different conclusion. He thinks that Julian continues to criticize Moses in this fragment, and he thus suggests that the relative clause modifies the negation within the conditional clause—yielding a loose English translation: “Each of these, if it is *not* (as I think) a myth with a secret reading . . .” Though perhaps technically possible, this interpretation is syntactically strained. Furthermore, Julian also uses a similar relative clause (“ὄνπερ οἶμαι”) in AG fr. 80.14 in a way that can parallel my interpretation of fr. 17.

As Riedweg notes, though, ultimately the grammar is inconclusive, and context must be the final arbiter. His deciding argument is that if Julian were acknowledging that Genesis 2–3 truly has a secret reading, then “nimmt Julian mit dem kleinen Relativsatz ὅπερ ἐγὼ νενόμικα seiner Polemik einiges von ihrer Schärfe.” However, as I have been arguing, Julian's confession that these texts of Genesis do have a “secret reading” instead contributes to a deeply cutting argument against Christians, since such a claim further substantiates Julian's subsumption of Moses into a Hellenic narrative. See Riedweg, “Mythos mit geheimem Sinn oder reine Blasphemie?” 371–2. Marie Odile-Boulnois also briefly (and inconclusively) comments on this possible ambiguity in “Genèse 2–3: Mythe ou Vérité? Un Sujet de Polémique Entre Païens et Chrétiens Dans Le *Contre Julien* de Cyrille d'Alexandrie,” *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et*

Julian does not, in other words, think that Moses’s account of the creation of humans is unbelievable, or ridiculous, or a mark against him in any way.<sup>56</sup> He does think that to read Moses’s account of Eden straightforwardly must be impious towards the divine.<sup>57</sup> But, if anything, Julian’s comments in other writings suggest that the

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*Patristiques* 54, no. 1 (2008): 111–33. For a longer list of how various scholars have interpreted “ὅπερ ἐγὼ νενόμικα,” see the critical notes on *Against Julian* 3.29.11–15.

<sup>56</sup> In his section on “The Criticism of Moses’ Theology of Creation”—the title itself is telling—William Malley presents this backwards, suggesting that “Julian refused to admit for polemical reasons a symbolical or mythical interpretation of this text.” Malley further asserts that, per Julian, Moses made “egregious errors” about creation. Malley had earlier acknowledged that Julian thought a “hidden interpretation” could be found in the Old Testament, but this simply illustrates how little his study captures Julian’s larger, consistent and coherent strategy. See *Hellenism and Christianity*, 51, 49, and 28, respectively.

<sup>57</sup> Of course, Julian’s suggestion that Genesis 2–3 has a “secret reading” would have worked against more than just Christian literalist interpretations. If my argument is correct, then Julian’s point in fr. 17 is not simply that Genesis 2–3 can be read allegorically but rather that these passages, when read allegorically, continue to reveal Moses as a Hellenic-style sage.

Unfortunately, Julian’s explanation of the “secret reading” (which could verify my hypothesis) is not extant—if he even provided it in *Against the Galileans*. I suspect, though, that the mere insinuation that Genesis 2–3 could be read allegorically on Hellenic terms was adequate for his rhetorical purposes. Whatever the case, Julian’s co-opting interpretation of Genesis 2–3 shows that he does not merely critique certain interpretive tools that Christians use with their texts. He is disputing *what is to be learned* from those texts—and the same interpretive apparatus (e.g., allegorical reading) can turn up rather different results.

With that said, though, Julian probably *did* have literal interpreters of Genesis 2–3 in mind. Diodore of Tarsus (whom Julian knew and directly wrote against in *Ep.* 55 [Wright, LCL 157, 186–91]) was a likely target. In his *Commentary on the Psalms* Diodore explicitly mentioned Eve’s conversation with the serpent and insisted that one should not think that “there was no serpent.” Rather, he wrote, “there was a serpent, but the devil acted through it. . . . The truth is that there was both a reality and an enigma” (*Commentary on Ps. 118, Prologue*, in Louis Mariès, “Extrait du Commentaire de Diodore de Tarse sur les Psaumes Préface du Commentaire. Prologue du Psaume CXVIII,” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 9 [January 1, 1919]: 79–101; ET in Karlfried Froehlich, ed., *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church, Sources of Early Christian Thought* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 87–94.) John Behr has suggested that “the issues [Julian] raised [in *Against the Galileans*] are clearly ones with which Diodore grappled,” including “the nature of scriptural language” (*The Case against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and Their Contexts*, Oxford Early Christian Texts [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 69). See also Felix Thome, *Historia contra Mythos: die Schriftauslegung Diodors von Tarsus und Theodors von Mopsuestia im Widerstreit zu Kaiser Julians und Salustius’ allegorischem Mythenverständnis* (Bonn: Borengässer, 2004).

labeling of Genesis 2–3 as “entirely mythic” (μυθώδης παντελῶς) compliments Moses, marking him as a successful and prudent author about divine matters.<sup>58</sup>

In his clearest treatment of “myth,” *Oration 7: To the Cynic Heracleios*, Julian rebukes the eponymous Cynic’s improper myth by explaining the history and purpose of the mythic genre.<sup>59</sup> This complex treatment of myth retains the possible benefits of myth-making while also noting its lowly origins and misuses. Myths, Julian explains, are historically associated with the kind of tales that nurses sing to children and have a rather plebian origin. Their first authors wrote them for “childish” people to accommodate their inability to grasp the complete, unveiled truth. In Julian’s historical perspective, this early form was then adopted by the Greeks who developed it into the “moral tale” (αἶνος), best exemplified in the writings of Aesop (*Or.* 7.206d–207a).

In this first, historical treatment of myth Julian suggests that this mode of storytelling is for the immature. But he also reminds that noteworthy authors still used myths in adaptive and appropriate ways. Later in the oration Julian shifts his analysis to consider myths within a philosophical program. He concludes that myths are appropriate within two branches of philosophy: the practical, when it focuses on the ethics of the individual person; and the theological, when it pertains to initiatory and

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<sup>58</sup> For general overviews of the interpretation of myths in the classical through late antique era, see Jean Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1976); and, more recently, Luc Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology*, trans. Catherine Tihanyi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, ed., *Julianus Augustus Opera*, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 16–54. For more on Julian’s treatment of the Cynics in *Or.* 6 and 7, see: Arnaldo Marcone, “The Forging of a Hellenic Orthodoxy: Julian’s Speeches against the Cynics,” in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (Llandysul, Ceredigion, Wales: Gomer Press, 2012), 239–50; Smith, *Julian’s Gods*, 49–90.

mystical matters. Regarding the latter, he says that “nature loves to conceal itself, and it does not allow the hidden aspects of the being of the gods to be thrown before unclean ears with unveiled speech” (*Or.* 7.216c). These secret and lofty truths—otherwise inappropriate to the masses—can be explored with myths.

Julian’s qualified appreciation of myths is not innovative, and he himself notes that Iamblichus shared his approach. Based on Iamblichus’s example, he notes that the “incongruity in myths (τὸ ἐν τοῖς μύθοις ἀπεμφαῖνον)” (*Or.* 7.217c) is what leads toward the truth of the matter;<sup>60</sup> later he even comments that in myths about the gods “incongruous is better than the majestic” language, since there is always a danger that humans might take majestic language as adequate to their referent, while the gods actually transcend all description. Within “theological” philosophy such storytelling is thus valuable and requires sophistication to compose and interpret. Myths can both bolster practical philosophy and serve theological inquiry (*Or.* 7.222c-223a).

This background shows that by classifying some of Moses’s writings as “μυθώδης παντελῶς,” Julian probably associates Moses with other Hellenic ancients who discovered and then skillfully hid lofty, divine truths.<sup>61</sup> Julian’s descriptions of

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<sup>60</sup> See also *Oration 5: On the Mother of the Gods* 170a-b, where Julian explains how the wise ancients sought and discovered “eternal causes” but then “veiled them in paradoxical myths (μῦθοι παράδοξοι), so that through paradox and incongruity the fiction that has been detected might lead us on to the searching out of the truth.”

<sup>61</sup> Julian’s distinctive use of μῦθος is evident through comparison to Celsus and Porphyry. Celsus, too, calls the details of the Eden story a “myth”—but unlike Julian, he clearly intends a critique, pure and simple. Origen reports in *Contra Celsum* 4.36 that, for Celsus, this biblical account is “most unpersuasive and discordant,” “a myth (μῦθος) like what is told by old women and which treats most profanely God, who is from the outset weak and unable to persuade the one man whom he himself created” (Borret, Marcel, ed., *Origène: Contre Celse, Tome II, Sources Chrétiennes* 136 [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968], 274).

myth are not all unequivocally laudatory, but given that Moses’s myths seem to deal with “theological” philosophy, Julian probably means to subtly mark Moses as a decent philosopher from ancient times.<sup>62</sup> Though Julian’s extant commentary on Genesis 2–3 is not prolix, the available evidence belies an interpretation of Julian as judging the biblical account to be blasphemous. Rather, according to Julian, the blatantly incongruous elements of the Edenic story alert the sensitive reader to the existence of a “secret reading.”<sup>63</sup>

Though some scholars note that Julian believes such a “secret reading” to be behind the events of Genesis 2–3, they generally fail to see the larger positive role that

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In general, Celsus and Porphyry are united in denying that Christian scriptures can be allegorically interpreted (see Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 61–64 and 163–67).

On “myth,” then, Celsus and Porphyry differ from Julian—yet modern scholars still often treat all three as if they were in agreement, as in Robert Berchman’s suggestion that for Celsus, Porphyry and Julian (and Galen), the “problem was not the allegorical method itself, but rather its appropriateness for the Bible” (*Porphyry Against the Christians*, Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 1 [Leiden: Brill, 2005], 9). Gager similarly lumps Julian with Galen and Celsus as interpreters who refused “to accept allegorical interpretation” for Moses’s texts (Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 111–12).

<sup>62</sup> In the opening fragment of *Against the Galileans* Julian does critique Christians for preying on the “myth-loving” (φιλόμυθος) part of the soul (fr. 1.4–6). How this charge relates to Julian’s comments on Moses’s myth-making in frs. 13–17 must be carefully parsed. Importantly, in fr. 1 Julian addresses Christians’ (and not Moses’s) strategy. As *Or. 7* makes clear, myths are more appropriate in theologically primitive contexts—like that of ancient Moses—as opposed to the relatively late date of Christianity. In light of *Or. 7*’s nuanced treatment of myth, it is entirely possible to read Julian as *critiquing Christians* for misleading people by appealing to their “myth-loving” proclivities and, later in the same text, as implicitly *complimenting Moses* for his appropriate use of myths in his ancient context.

<sup>63</sup> Julian does give further guidance in *Or. 7* on how a myth should be properly constructed, and he suggests that the incongruity which signals a deeper meaning should lie in the story’s διάνοια, while the “words” (ῥήματα) and “style” (λέξις) of the myths should be fitting to the gods (*Or. 7.218d–219a*). Were Julian evaluating Moses rigorously by these standards, he would probably have to fault Moses’s placement of incongruity in his “words” about god. Still, Julian was probably not being so rigorous. He doesn’t seem to apply these standards in fr. 4 when he sketches several Hellenic myths (as Riedweg points out in “Mythos Mit Geheimem Sinn Oder Reine Blasphemie?” 373). And, again, in Julian’s treatment Moses is only a decent and minor sage from whom we might expect the occasional infelicitous slip.

Julian's ascription of "myth" to Moses plays in his overall evaluation of the Jewish sage.<sup>64</sup> Instead, they still regularly treat Julian as criticizing Moses and the Edenic narrative, which makes Julian's overall treatment of Moses appear inconsistent. One relatively recent study, for example, notes that "Julian believed the entire creation narrative cried out for allegorical interpretation." Though this summary is correct (with the exception that Julian seems to think that only Genesis 2–3 require "allegorical" interpretation, not Genesis 1), the author elsewhere suggests that "Julian was highly critical of certain parts of the creation narrative — particularly in Genesis 2 and 3."<sup>65</sup> Another recent study similarly notes correctly in reference to fr. 17 that Julian "believes Scripture has secret or hidden meanings." But it fails to apply this insight when commenting on "Julian's arguments *attacking* the Creation myth, the Garden of Eden, and the Tower of Babel."<sup>66</sup> In such accounts, Julian appears to evaluate Moses haphazardly. But Julian is better interpreted as treating Moses consistently, whom he implicitly honors (not "attacks") for his mythic material. In Julian's account, Moses himself, like other great and ancient myth-writers, probably intended to compose myths for his theologically primitive people who needed a more accessible mode of teaching about the divine.

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<sup>64</sup> For a list of modern scholars who grant that Julian acknowledges that Genesis might have a "secret reading," see Riedweg, "Mythos mit geheimem Sinn oder reine Blasphemie?" 371, note 25 (see note 24 for dissenting interpretations).

<sup>65</sup> Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 264, 252.

<sup>66</sup> Finkelstein, *The Specter of the Jews*, 57 (emphasis added).

The challenge with seeing Julian’s careful treatment of Moses only continues with the next fragment. This excerpt (fr. 18) has given commentators and translators endless trouble, and some of the conjectured solutions again indicate a bias toward reading Julian as critical of Moses. Its opening lines are worth quoting in full:

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὧν ἐκεῖνοί τε ἀληθῶς ὑπὲρ θεοῦ δοξάζουσιν ἡμῖν τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἱ πατέρες παρέδοσαν, ὁ μὲν ἡμέτερος ἔχει λόγος ὡδί τὸν προσεχῆ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου δημιουργόν. ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀνωτέρω τούτου Μωσῆς μὲν εἶρηκεν οὐδὲν ἄλλως (fr. 18.2–6)<sup>67</sup>

For his edition, Neumann replaced ὡδί (underliend) with οὐδὲ (and made a few other changes<sup>68</sup>) which produces, in English:

In what the Jews rightly believe and what our ancestors have handed down to us from ancient times, our investigation cannot even reveal the immediate creator of this world. Of the gods, of course, who are elevated above this, Moses was completely silent.<sup>69</sup>

As there is little manuscript evidence for his change, subsequent editors have reverted to ὡδί, but not without making renewed attempts to sort out the meaning. Wright altered her translation to follow an earlier suggestion that there is a lacuna between the first and second sentence, and that this lacuna includes the “pagan theory.” This yields:

Next to consider the views that are correctly held by the Jews, and also those that our fathers handed down to us from the beginning. Our account has in it

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<sup>67</sup> This is Masaracchia’s version; Riedweg includes a semicolon after ὡδί and an em dash between δημιουργόν and ὑπὲρ.

<sup>68</sup> Neumann also questions the accuracy of including ὑπὲρ θεοῦ (and leaves it out of his translation) and also opts for ὑπὲρ γὰρ τῶν <θεῶν> ἀνωτέρω τούτου (Masaracchia emends the τῶν to τοῦ).

<sup>69</sup> Neumann’s German translation is: “In dem, woran die Juden mit Recht glauben und was auch uns von Alters her die Väter überliefert haben, kann unsere Untersuchung nicht einmal den unmittelbaren Schöpfer dieser Welt aufweisen. Von den Göttern natürlich, welche noch über diesen erhaben sind, hat Moses vollends geschwiegen.”

the immediate creator of this universe, as the following shows . . . [ellipsis in original] Moses indeed has said nothing whatsoever about the gods that are superior to this creator.<sup>70</sup>

Other modern commentators agree that something must be missing from Julian's text.<sup>71</sup> Such an assumption would make sense, perhaps, if one were expecting Julian to provide Hellenic material that contrasts to Moses's. But there simply isn't such contrastive material in the text.<sup>72</sup>

It is entirely possible, however, that none of these editorial acrobatics are necessary. The opening of fr. 18 is, indeed, puzzling, and probably at least one sentence is missing between frs. 17 and 18 (the concluding comment of 17 does not neatly lead into the opening of 18). However, if we treat 18 as a conclusion for Julian's entire preceding treatment of Platonic and Mosaic cosmogony (unlike Neumann and Wright, who place this fragment in the middle of Julian's section on cosmogony), the knot begins to loosen. The key interpretive move turns on the ὡδί which Neumann opted to replace, and which Wright took to mean "in the following way," as if it points *forward* to (no longer extant) text which explains Julian's Hellenic material which *contrasts* Moses's material. However, though ὡδί often refers forward to an upcoming statement (and can be translated as "as follows" or "in the following way"), it sometimes also refers to

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<sup>70</sup> Wright, LCL 157, 329.

<sup>71</sup> Boulnois summarizes several proposals and briefly describes her own (in agreement with Jean Bouffartigue) at *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 240–41, note 2.

<sup>72</sup> Riedweg's solution in the GCS is more reserved, suggesting simply that there is an anacolouthon, such that τὸν προσεχῆ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου δημιουργόν stands grammatically alone, though it anticipates the coming note about Moses, namely that he said nothing "about those [gods] that are above *this one*."

*preceding* material.<sup>73</sup> With this in mind, we might consider Julian to be offering a brief summary statement about the preceding arguments he has covered. We thus might translate the opening sentence as follows:

And, about the things that both they [the Jews] teach correctly about God and which our fathers handed down to us from the beginning, our account has the immediate creator of this cosmos in this way . . .

In other words, Julian says that the Jews who follow Moses teach things that agrees with what “our fathers” taught, and this is evident “ὠδί,” *in what we’ve been generally examining for the past several paragraphs*. On this interpretation, Julian then proceeds to teachings that Moses had nothing to say about:

. . . For about that which is higher than this one [i.e., the “immediate creator”], Moses has said nothing at all—he who also ventured nothing about the nature of angels.

Julian goes on to mention several sub-topics of cosmogony that Moses does and does not address: he doesn’t talk about how the angels were “generated,” but he does relate, in detail, how the heavens and earth were arranged; in a jab at contemporary Christian theological disputes, Julian notes that Moses does mention the “Spirit of God,” but only that it “hovered over the waters” and *not* whether or how it had been begotten;<sup>74</sup> and so forth.

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<sup>73</sup> See the LSJ entry on ὠδέ, I.3: “sts. referring to what goes before.”

<sup>74</sup> The statement is probably a sneering allusion to the early rumblings of the various controversies over the divine status of the Spirit, which would become known as the “pneumatomachian” or “Macedonian” controversy. Wilken notes that “Julian is no doubt being sarcastic at this point, for as one who had been raised a Christian he knew that the term ungenerate (*agenetos*) was a point of contention among Christians.” See *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 183. For a brief evaluation of Julian’s familiarity with Christian theological disputes, see David Hunt, “The Christian Context of Julian’s *Against the*

In my interpretation, this passage serves as a general summative statement of Julian’s evaluation of Hebrew doctrine: Moses commented correctly on several aspects of creation, but to anyone familiar with Plato’s and other Hellenic contributions, it is clear that Moses’s commentary is limited in its scope. And, indeed, fr. 18 quite naturally flows into fr. 19 (though Neumann and Wright separate these fragments with frs. 6 and 8–10, obscuring the continuity). Fr. 19 says that, “Since, then, Moses seems not to have mentioned<sup>75</sup> *everything* concerning the immediate creator of this cosmos, let us compare and contrast (ἀντιπαραθῶμεν) to one another what the Hebrews and what our fathers taught” about the nations (fr. 19.11–14).<sup>76</sup>

To that project of comparing the Hebrew and Hellenic doctrines about the ἔθνη we will turn in a moment, but only after summarizing what Julian’s first comparison of Hebrew and Hellenic doctrine (i.e., about creation) reveals about his larger strategy. Contrary to many scholarly accounts that treat Julian as more-or-less ambivalent about what Moses has to say about creation (or at least somewhat inconsistent in his evaluation of Moses), Julian has a clear and consistent (if nuanced) account of the

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*Galileans*,” in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate*, ed. Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2012), 251–61.

<sup>75</sup> Wright’s translation is problematic. She proposes: “Accordingly, since Moses, as it seems, has *failed* also to give a complete account . . .” (emphasis added). But to portray Julian as saying that Moses *failed* is, again, to make Julian sound more critical of Moses than he was. Julian says, rather, that, “Moses” simply “seems not have mentioned (οὐδὲ . . . διειλεγμένος Μωσῆς φαίνεται) *everything*” that there is to say about this creator.

<sup>76</sup> Neumann conjectured that Julian originally wrote “about these nations (ὑπὲρ ἔθνῶν τούτων)”, rather than “about these very things (ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τούτων),” as the manuscripts attest. Even if the textual conjecture is not correct, Julian does seem to shift from a comparison of the cosmogonical questions to Moses’s and the Hellenes’ teachings about the nations.

Hebrew doctrines about creation. Moses's writings, in short, are restricted in scope, but they are also entirely compatible with Hellenic cosmogony. Like many of the philosophers, he wrote some discourses that require a close, philosophical reading (namely, Gen. 1); but he also wrote some things (in Gen. 2–3) in mythic form, as did those Hellenes who wrote about Cronos eating his children or Zeus sleeping with his own daughter.<sup>77</sup> In these writings, Moses put clear impossibilities on the surface of the narrative so that readers would be driven to search for an appropriate, hidden meaning. But Julian detects nothing in Moses's teaching here that is false or unbelievable—Moses was a generally trustworthy guide to certain questions about the origin of the cosmos, even if he only gave a limited account.<sup>78</sup>

### III.B.3.ii The Nations

In Julian's treatment of the nations a new feature of his argumentative strategy emerges: it becomes increasingly evident that Julian is simultaneously rendering Christian positions as incoherent or implausible and, at the same time, laying out a coherent and plausible alternative which can pick up and rearrange the fractured pieces. His account of the nations of the cosmos has two primary focuses: first, the vast

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<sup>77</sup> I use this distinction between “discourses” (λόγοι) and “myths” because Julian himself thusly organizes modes of speech in *Or.* 7 205B when he suggests that Cynics should have no need of the mythic genre but should simply write “discourses.”

<sup>78</sup> Julian's generally positive assessment of Moses's cosmogony stands in stark contrast to Celsus's assessment. In *Contra Celsum* 6.50 he says “concerning the origin of the world and of mankind” that “Moses and the prophets who left our books had no idea what the nature of the world and of mankind really is, and put together utter trash (λήρον βάθύν).” Just before this (6.49), Celsus called Moses's cosmogony “stupid” (εὐηθική). M Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*, 4 vols., Sources Chrétiennes 132, 136, 147, 150 (Éditions du Cerf, 1967); ET: Henry Chadwick, trans., *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For more on Celsus, see also Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 64–65 and 80.

diversity visible therein; and, second, their providential governance by the divine hierarchical bureaucracy. His argument shows, again, that the Mosaic teaching on this topic agrees with his own doctrine. However, this comparative work is mostly limited to showing Moses's awareness that his god was but one of many. Alongside these comparisons, Julian grows more aggressive against Christians, suggesting that, compared to the perfectly coherent and adequate Hellenic teaching, the Christian teaching simply cannot hold up.

One of the central details of the framing narrative structure outlined above appears at the beginning of this next section of *AG*: the governance of the cosmos by a complex hierarchy of agents tasked with oversight of particular nations. Julian begins in fr. 19 by granting Moses's claim that the Hebrews are uniquely the wards of the creator. "But [Moses] makes no mention," Julian insists, "of the other nations, [i.e.] how or by which gods they are managed." Unless, suggests Julian we "allow that he *did* grant to them the sun and moon" (fr. 19.18–19). Julian puts his knowledge of Christian exegetical disputes to use with this allusion to Deuteronomy 4:19, which had a controversial interpretation history among Christians. (Moses was sometimes interpreted as suggesting that God granted the heavenly bodies as objects of worship to the nations, to keep them from worshipping even more base creatures.<sup>79</sup>) In this way,

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<sup>79</sup> See, for example, Origen's interpretation in the *Commentary on John 2.25–27*. See also Marie-Odile Boulnois's note "Les astres donnés en parage aux nations" in *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 575–76.

Julian again narrates a scriptural “episode” (i.e., Deut. 4:19) as a supporting feature of his own narrative.

Julian proceeds to suggest that a careful reading of Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and even Paul<sup>80</sup> will reveal that they knew their god to be but one of the gods, the one who was in charge of just one particular people (frs. 19–20). He marshals texts from Moses first. The rhetorical work here is implicit—Julian does not (in the extant text, at least) explicitly exegete the passages that he presents. His selection, though, is carefully curated so that each of the statements that Moses provides would be perfectly intelligible if Moses were referencing one god among a whole network of divine beings. An example can clarify: Julian first references Exodus 4:22–23 which relates the story of Moses delivering god’s message to Pharaoh (fr. 19.25–30). Through Moses, this god tells Pharaoh that “Israel is *my* firstborn son. Send out *my* people, so that they might worship me.” Moses then refers to this god as “the god of the Hebrews” (ὁ θεὸς τῶν Ἑβραίων). Such texts, Julian savvily implies, fit perfectly well within the Hellenic narrative, full as it is of varying gods assigned to the different nations. Within such a context it makes perfect sense for a lawgiver like Moses to specify which θεὸς he is speaking about by identifying him as “the god of *the Hebrews*.” It makes perfect sense, furthermore, for that god to speak possessively about “my people,” without acting as if it had direct claims on the Egyptians or any other people. Julian implies that god’s

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<sup>80</sup> Though, we only have extant examples from Moses (fr. 19) and Paul (fr. 20) and nothing from the prophets (whom Julian elsewhere accuses of distorting Moses on this point) or Jesus. Julian diverges in strategy from Celsus in claiming that Jesus himself—like Moses—knew that the god of the Jews was but one of many gods. In *Contra Celsum* 7.18 Celsus argues that Moses and Jesus are not in continuity in their teaching and rather contradict one another.

naming of one group of people as “my people” implies that the other group(s) are not “its people.” Paul is said to speak in the same way, though Julian also explains that Paul is not completely consistent with Moses. Rather, Paul is opportunistic (which Julian might expect from someone further along in the degeneracy from Moses’s teaching). Paul “alters the dogmas about god according to the situation (πρὸς τὰς τύχας),” saying sometimes that “the Jews alone (Ἰουδαῖοι μόνον) are god’s portion.” But, when in different company, when he’s trying to persuade Hellenes, Paul says that “He is not god of the Jews alone (μὴ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον), but also of the nations.”<sup>81</sup> Julian pauses here from his larger comparative project to briefly pursue a direct attack on Paul and Christians, and by doing so he subtly combines his *coherent* Hellenic renarration with the exposure of the *incoherence* of the Christian position: if Paul’s god is, indeed, the god “of the nations,” Julian asks, then why did he provide those nations with no gifts, while he gave the Jews “the prophetic gift,” and “Moses,” and “anointing” and “the prophets and laws,” and the “paradoxes and marvelous features of their myths (τὰ παράδοξα καὶ τὰ τεράστια τῶν μύθων)” (fr. 20.2–23)?<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> This seems to be an adaptation of Romans 3:29, in which Paul says: ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν; ναὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν

<sup>82</sup> This passage provides further evidence that Julian takes the Jewish Scriptures to be full of “myths”—though “myths” in Julian’s positive sense, as I explained above. Wright is consistent in her translation practice, rendering τὰ παράδοξα καὶ τὰ τεράστια τῶν μύθων as “the incredible and monstrous elements in their myths.” This translation misunderstands Julian’s use of μῦθος, and it furthermore creates an inconsistency within Julian’s listing of the “gifts” that (according to Paul) were given only to the Jews: the first several items listed are clearly beneficial, and then the final item is “incredible and monstrous elements in myths,” which would be harder to categorize as a “gift.” If “τὰ τεράστια τῶν μύθων” is translated as the “marvelous features of their myths,” Julian’s list of “gifts” becomes consistent again.

In fr. 21, the comparative project resumes, and Julian lays out the divine bureaucratic system, with the common father, the ethnarch gods, and so forth. Here and in the following fragments he is chiefly concerned with explicating the vast kinds of variety among the nations and then showing (1) how his position fully accounts for this diversity and reveals the divine providence (προνοία) at work; and (2) that a Christian-monotheistic reading of Moses (which is a misreading of Moses, of course) can offer no similarly adequate account for the diversity, nor can it maintain divine providence.

Julian surveys the kinds of variety at length, vividly documenting differences in disposition (ἦθος), custom (τρόπος), orderliness (εὐνομία), political institution (πολιτική κατάσταση), and more (see fr. 24, as well as frs. 21, 22, 26): Celts and Germans are fierce, while Hellenes and Romans are more political and philanthropic; Egyptians are more wise and skilled, while Syrians are war-averse and delicate (fr. 21); in Persia, it is thought good for one to marry his sister or mother or daughter, while no Hellene would do this (fr. 24); and so forth. Julian's own solution, again, lies in the fact that each of the nation-ruling and city-protecting gods "manages its own assigned portion in a way corresponding to itself (ἐπιτροπεύει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ λῆξιν οἰκείως ἑαυτῷ)." Whereas "in the father all things are complete and all things are one, but in the separate [deities] one faculty dominates, and then another"—this variety among the individual gods accounts for the varieties among the nations (fr. 21.9–12).

Julian also comments on the variety of languages, and this brings him again to Moses, who provided no explanation, he says, for the "difference in customs and laws"

among the peoples (fr. 24.9). Moses did, however, explain the cause for the differences in languages—though it is, Julian thinks again, an “entirely mythic (κομιδῆ μῦθῶδη)” explanation (fr. 23.5).

As with the Eden story, scholars regularly treat Julian’s comments on the story of the tower at Babel in Genesis 11 as criticisms and attacks.<sup>83</sup> Julian does, indeed, raise serious problems with the story: he points out that even were one to grant perfect cooperation among a monolingual society, there could never be enough bricks to reach the *moon*, let alone the *heavens*, which was the stated objective of the people of Babel in Gen. 11:4. It is an error, says Julian, to think that “this thing which is so clearly a myth (οὕτω φανερόν ὄντα τὸν μῦθον) is true” (fr. 23.34). In his estimation, the story of Babel belongs to the class of stories that includes Homer’s account of the Aloadae giants, who are said to have stacked several mountains on top of one another to climb to and attack the gods.

This argument reveals again that the ascription of “mythic” to a text does not amount to criticism for Julian but is rather a way of categorizing according to genre; myths are not necessarily objectionable, as long as you know how to read them. In fact,

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<sup>83</sup> Joseph Hoffman translates that Moses gave a “preposterous explanation” for the difference in languages (*Julian’s “Against the Galileans”* [Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004], 103). Cook, again, exemplifies the odd coupling of (1) awareness that Julian treats a Mosaic story as containing a secret reading and (2) the suggestion that Julian is criticizing Moses. He correctly notes that, according to Julian, Christians should admit “that the narrative of the tower of Babel is a myth.” But he also says: “For Julian the story is clearly mythical, and the God of Genesis is *naively* portrayed as being afraid of the tower” (Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 272, emphasis added). However, the portrayal of god as frightened stems not from naiveté on Moses’s part but rather from his prudent sense of how to write myths. Malley comments on Julian’s “contemptuous interpretation of the myth of the Tower of Babel.” See *Hellenism and Christianity*, 48. Rowland Smith says that, in Julian’s treatment, “The Judaic account of the Tower of Babel is dismissed as absurd.” Smith, *Julian’s Gods*, 200–201.

Moses's myth of Babel suggests to Julian that Moses's account of linguistic diversity accords with Julian's Hellenic, broader account of diversity, even if Moses, "understanding such things, drew a veil (ἐπεκάλυπτε)" over the matter—just as Julian might expect from a wise sage. Julian discovers evidence of Moses's wisdom within the *multiplicity* of divine figures that he portrays in Genesis 11—Julian thinks that this diversity of gods explains the new diversity of languages. Noting the plural of Gen 11:7 ("Let us go down . . ."), Julian interprets Moses as obliquely acknowledging that the creation of several languages required the involvement of multiple deities. By so teaching, Moses parallels the pattern that requires numerous deities for the proliferation of other characteristics, as Julian taught (fr. 27.4–12).

Once again Julian simultaneously points out the limited scope of Moses's account while also suggesting that Moses still has some inkling of the bigger picture: even though Moses doesn't comment on the source of differences in customs, laws, etc., he betrays an awareness of how such differences come about, namely through the plurality of ruling divine beings. Moses's commentary about the nations is sparse, but his Hebrew doctrine remains consonant with Hellenic doctrine. Julian does not critique the Babel narrative to refute Moses; rather, he presents it as further evidence that Moses is a relatively minor sage who nonetheless interprets social phenomenon in the

same (albeit more limited) manner as Hellenes. To read Julian as critical of Moses here is to distort Julian's larger strategy.<sup>84</sup>

This section of AG also introduces one wrinkle into my account, and it relates to the longstanding question of how, in Julian's reckoning, Moses relates the local god of the Hebrews to the common creator and father. The question is if, per Julian, Moses thinks the god of the Hebrews is *also* the common creator of the universe, who belongs at the top of the divine hierarchy. In Julian's normative account, the god of the Hebrews is just one, minor nation-ruling god. But as he claims in one place,† “Moses says that the Demiurge of the cosmos (τὸν τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργὸν) chose the nation of the Hebrews and attends to it alone” (fr. 19.14–16; see also fr. 25). Of course, as we have seen, Julian thinks that Moses knew that his god was only one among many. What Julian seems to suspect is that Moses has conflated the common creator and the Hebrew ethnarch god. Moses thinks, that is, that while other nations are governed by a variety of deities, the Hebrews have the unique status of being governed by a more elevated god, and maybe even the common creator and father. Fr. 28 contains the clearest set of options given by Julian:

“If the immediate creator of the cosmos were (εἶη) the one proclaimed by Moses, then we have better teachings about him . . . . But if he [Moses] honors (τιμήσας) some sectional (μερικόν) [god] and attributes (ἀνατίθησιν) to him the lordship of all things, it is better for us to be persuaded to acknowledge the god of all things (τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν), while also not being ignorant of that [other]

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<sup>84</sup> Celsus again interprets differently: he claimed that Moses's account of Babel “contains no hidden truth but . . . is obvious”; and, furthermore that Moses simply “corrupted the story about the sons of Aloadae when he composed the narrative about the tower” (*Contra Celsum* 4.21, Chadwick's translation). Julian did link the Babel story to the story of the Aloadae giants—but not to criticize Moses as corrupting this Hellenic story. Furthermore, Julian rather strongly implies that this story *does* contain a “hidden truth.”

one or honoring the one who received lordship in a lesser degree, instead of the creator of all things” (fr. 28.2–12).<sup>85</sup>

Julian seems to think that there is some ambiguity in Moses’s account and that it’s hard to tell what Moses truly wants to say. Given that Julian is, as I’ve been arguing, trying to take a variety of “episodes” (we might simply think of it here as “data points”) from Moses and reconfigure them within a different narrative, we might expect some slippage with his program. Some of the Mosaic “data” just will not cleanly fit Julian’s norming scheme. But part of the genius of Julian’s project is that he has already provided explanatory resources for when such slippage occurs (we’ll see another such resource shortly): he has already made fairly clear that Moses is only a decent sage and lawgiver, one who is relatively unimpressive, and thus we are primed to expect some ambiguity or even minor mistakes from him.

In this passage from fr. 28, though, Julian subtly acknowledges Moses’s ambiguity while also indicating his own final decision about Moses. Each of the two conditional clauses considered separately give no syntactical hints about what Julian thinks. However, given that the first conditional has an optative verb in protasis (εἴη), while the second has an indicative (ἀνατίθησιν) in its protasis, it seems that Julian thinks that Moses’s writing actually does speak of a merely “sectional” god (the second

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<sup>85</sup> This passage includes another odd emendation by Neumann, which Wright also followed. This emendation replaces ἀνατίθησιν with ἀντιτίθησιν (Neumann suggests that Oecolampadius’s sixteenth-century Latin translation of *Against Julian*, which was based on manuscripts of *Against Julian* that are no longer available, took the same reading). This editorial move perhaps again evidences the presumption that Julian was more hostile towards Moses; but, its deeper problem is that it simply does not make sense, as it leaves Moses “contrasting to him the lordship of all” (in attempting to deal with this, Wright glosses “to his power” for αὐτῷ).

option), but Moses then tries to regard this “sectional” god as if he were the higher-ranking god who properly has lordship (ἡγεμονία) over the cosmos.<sup>86</sup>

This confusion on Moses’s part, however, does not change the general pattern of Julian’s treatment of Hebrew doctrines, derived from Moses: they are the fruits of divine and philosophical discoveries that are mostly correct and compatible with Hellenic doctrine, even if they are limited in scope and, at times, a bit rough. But they do not contradict Hellenic doctrine, and even when this ambiguity arises from Moses, it is only intelligible as an ambiguity within the Hellenic framework.

In summary, in the extant fragments from the comparative stage of Julian’s larger argument, his primary concern is to demonstrate that Hebrew doctrines, stemming primarily from Moses, are entirely compatible with Hellenic doctrines. Moses’s doctrines are clearly less sophisticated and expansive than the Hellenic doctrines about both creation and several issues relating to the varieties among the nations and to their providential governance. But Julian shows that the Hellenic narrative (which explains the wide access to divine knowledge among all peoples) is clearly expansive enough to give a coherent and detailed explanation of Moses the Hebrew. In other words, Julian’s effort has been spent showing that if one has the hermeneutical key to read Moses’s texts—the key provided by the larger Hellenic narrative—then it becomes evident that those texts are perfectly intelligible on terms

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<sup>86</sup> It was also probably strategic for Julian to not resolve Moses’s tension. When garnering favor with the Jews, he could simply go along with Moses’s apparent placement of the Hebrew god at the top of the divine hierarchy, but when he needs to accentuate Hellenic superiority over Jews, he could point out Moses’s confusion. For a similar interpretation, see Finkelstein, *The Specter of the Jews*, 101–2.

different than those the Christians used to incorporate Moses's writings into their tradition.

#### III.B.4 *A puzzling query as to why the Galileans prefer the Jews to the Hellenes*

In the portion of *AG* just covered (§III from my outline), Julian emphasizes the basic consonance between Hebrew and Hellenic doctrine. With that general and foundational point made, he moves next to emphasizing the most significant difference between the two traditions, namely the glaring inferiority of the Hebrew to Hellenic. His narrative about Christians is, after all, one of consistent decline and successive apostasies. In this telling Christians started out as Hellenes, and their first mistake was of degree rather than kind: they opted for the lesser Hebrew tradition, rather than the Hellenic one. It was not a move from truth to falsehood, but rather a move from a more gifted, wise, and powerful tradition to its inferior neighbor. But that lesser tradition also had its own internal problems which were the catalyst for a new kind of enervating error.

Julian transitions from emphasizing Hebrew and Hellenic compatibility to Hellenic superiority with an “episode” that exemplifies both aspects: the “marvelous law, the decalogue” of Moses (fr. 29.4–5). Julian here quotes all ten commandments to prove his point that almost every one can be found among all the nations of the world. He asks, “Excepting the [commands] ‘Do not worship other gods’ and ‘Remember the sabbath day,’ what nation is there, by the gods, who do not think it necessary to keep the other commandments?” (fr. 29.15–17). Again Moses teaches something that is entirely compatible with the rest of the (Hellenic) world. But Julian also finds here a

problem: regarding the command to not worship other gods, “he”—presumably *Moses*, though more on this in a moment—“speaks with great slander about god” (μετὰ μεγάλης τῆς περὶ τὸν θεόν φησι διαβολῆς). Namely, he also says that “God is jealous” (Ex. 20:5) and, elsewhere, that “Our god is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4:24). But, as Julian insists, jealousy cannot be a divine quality, for it implies powerlessness to achieve what is desired (fr. 30.1–14). If, indeed, Moses’s god does *not* want any other gods to be worshipped, then the fact that all the nations *do* worship other gods shows him to be powerless.

Julian elaborates further, drawing on the depiction of Phineas from Numbers 25. Upon striking down a Hebrew man and the Midianite woman who had persuaded him to be initiated to Baalpeor, Phineas was commended by god as having “turned away my wrath (θυμὸν)” (fr. 33.10). Julian finds the story entirely improper to god, who thought it fitting that 600,000 be destroyed because maybe (but probably not even) 1,000 erred against a single law. Given that right living consists in imitation of the gods and that such imitation requires passionless-ness, those who imitate a god who commends Phineas’s impassioned wrath are left in pitiable straits (fr. 36).

A brief excursus is called for at this point. Julian is, in some ways, still thinking about Moses in terms of “better” and “worse” (a sliding scale rather than dichotomous “true” and “false”)—for instance, he points out, based on the Phineas affair, “how much our [teachings] are better (κρείττονα) than theirs” (fr. 36.5). Still, there is a difference in the evaluation that Julian provides for Moses’s limited account of creation, for example, and the critique here that god has been falsely (οὐκ ἀληθῶς) depicted as

wrathful (fr. 33.13). Julian has not been so bluntly critical of Moses thus far, and his stark criticisms in these fragments threatens to undermine the suggestion that Julian regards Moses as a lesser, though still generally reliable, sage and lawgiver. What explains his markedly more critical treatment of Moses?

#### III.B.4.i Excursus: Moses and Textual Corruption

There are several possible explanations, each of which (individually, or in a combination) could resolve this interpretive problem. After briefly considering several initial suggestions, I will give a longer treatment of the most intriguing explanation. A first possibility (and probably the least likely) is that Julian also took the account of Phineas as “mythical.” Julian walks through the problems with Numbers 25 much like he walks through the problems with Genesis 2–3. If he concluded for the latter that the surface-level problems simply indicated a deeper meaning, then perhaps he did the same with Numbers 25, and we simply do not have extant his writings to that effect. However, this possibility (1) relies on a weak speculation that Julian *might* have called this section μυθωδή, and (2) still has the problem that in the listing of the commandments (which is not a story and as easy a candidate for the categorization of “myth”) god is straightforwardly said to be jealous.

Another possible explanation is, as suggested above, that Julian’s careful program of explaining Moses as a minor sage simply has some slippage: much of the “data” about Moses can be finessed into Julian’s construal of Moses, but given the size of the Mosaic corpus and the ambitious scope of Julian’s re-narrating program, some of the things Moses wrote simply cannot be smoothly reconfigured. This is a more likely

explanation, and it does not undo my account of Julian, whose objective was probably not total and ironclad consistency so much as rhetorical effectiveness. This is not to say that his account of Moses and the Hebrews is inconsistent, but only that tension between what he says at different points about Moses would not necessarily have been damaging to his rhetorical goals. And, indeed, though Julian is at pains to present Moses as generally reliable, he still takes jabs at his rough edges.

The final possibility is both the most intriguing and, though still somewhat speculative, the most promising. It relates to a brief fragment that is possibly only a summary from Cyril and not Julian's actual words.<sup>87</sup> It raises the possibility that Moses's texts were at least corrupted and were, perhaps, entirely rewritten by Ezra, one of the ἐπιγινόμενοι ("those who came later") who was not faithful to Moses's original teaching. Julian thus could have had these corruptions in mind when he critiques "Mosaic" texts which depict god as wrathful—texts which, in their objectionable content, might not be authentically Mosaic.

In *Against Julian* 5.23, Cyril has been responding to Julian's allegations about Phineas and Moses's portrayal of god as wrathful (fr. 33 of AG) when he comes to fr. 34. Late in his rebuttal, he notes that Julian "perhaps thinks it is possible . . . to lead away the meaning of the divine 'judgments' to whatever seems good to himself" (5.23.6–8)—Julian, in other words, thinks that he can change the "meaning (δύναμις)" so that it suits his own purposes, suggests Cyril. Cyril then explains further:

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<sup>87</sup> Masaracchia treats the entirety of fr. 34 as Cyril's paraphrase of Julian; the GCS treats "Μωσέα . . . γεγονότας" and "τὸν Ἐσδραῖον" as Julian's verbatim statement.

While writing falsely everywhere about the inspired Scripture, [Julian] says at one point that the hierophant Moses fashioned for himself words about God to curry favor with the people (δημαγωγοῦντα) instead of speaking truly— [words] which weren't correct and which were not fitting to him. And at another point [Julian] insists that Ezra also added some things from his own way of thinking (ποτέ δὲ τὸν Ἑσδραν ἀπὸ γνώμης ἰδίας προσεπενεγκεῖν τινα διατείνεται) (*AJ* 5.23.8–13).

The first sentence exemplifies one reason that Julian thinks of Moses as only a mediocre sage: he sometimes lacks integrity, preferring to curry favor with the people than to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.<sup>88</sup> Even more suggestive, though, is the reference to Ezra.

Nehemiah 8 famously depicts Ezra reading the law of Moses before the assembly of the Jewish people shortly after their return from exile in Babylon. Though the text does not explicitly say so, there are various hints that immediately prior to Ezra's reading, the law of Moses had been neglected or not understood—or perhaps even lost. It explains, for instance, that the people need Ezra and other Levites to explain the meaning which is, presumably, otherwise inaccessible to them (see verses 8 and 12). And upon understanding the law, the people weep in response (verse 9). In later traditions and especially Rabbinic texts these dynamics lead interpreters to treat Ezra as the restorer of the law of Moses and even a second Moses.<sup>89</sup> Such traditions

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<sup>88</sup> Julian's suggestion that Moses was occasionally more concerned with currying favor than with proclaiming the full truth presents another option for the question considered above at page 124, about whether Julian thinks that Moses treats the ethnarch god of the Hebrews *also* as the common creator of the universe, at the pinnacle of the divine hierarchy. What Julian may suspect is that Moses sometimes (perhaps to flatter his people) conflates the creator god with the Hebrew ethnarch god.

<sup>89</sup> See Robert A. Kraft, "'Ezra' Materials in Judaism and Christianity," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 19, no. 1 (1979): 121. Nehemiah 8:8 is also traditionally taken as evidence of the first translation of the Pentateuch into Aramaic and the Targum tradition, on which see Arie van der Kooij, "Nehemiah 8:8

doubtlessly spawned the apocalyptic text *Fourth Ezra*, which was probably composed around 100 C.E. and is now sometimes preserved as 2 Esdras 3–14.<sup>90</sup> The contents of *Fourth Ezra*, furthermore, illuminate Julian’s brief comment from fr. 34.

*Fourth Ezra* consists of seven visions. In the seventh, Ezra relates that he heard a voice from a bush while sitting under a tree. This voice identifies itself as the same Lord who: revealed himself to Moses from a bush, sent Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, and sent him also to Sinai where he was given revelation (14:1–7). The Lord then admonishes Ezra to preserve all the prior signs and dreams so that he can reprove his people and set things in order before being taken away (14:8–18). Ezra agrees, but he asks also for instruction for the people who will come after he is gone and can no longer teach them. For, he says, “the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. For your Law has been burned, and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by you.” He continues: “Send the Holy Spirit to me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in your Law” (14:21–2). Ezra then retreats with five scribes, and for forty days he speaks non-stop as they transcribe, resulting in ninety-four books,

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and the Question of the ‘Targum’-Tradition,” in *Tradition of the Text. Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of His 70th Birthday*, ed. Gerard J. Norton and Stephen Pisano, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 109 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 79–90.

<sup>90</sup> For an introduction to *Fourth Ezra*, see Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, vol. 41, *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). For information on the text’s composition, see also Bruce Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 521.

twenty-four of which were for public publishing and the remaining seventy of which were to be reserved to the wise (14:27–48).

The seventh vision of Ezra gives the vague allusions in Nehemiah 8 a further back-story: the law of Moses had not simply been forgotten or neglected but had rather been entirely lost to flames—burned, presumably in the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>91</sup> Ezra, then, had the singular distinction of not merely restoring a forgotten law to its prior prominence. Through the Lord’s inspiration he rewrote the law which had been lost.

The suggestion that Ezra restored or, in the version of *Fourth Ezra*, fully rewrote the law has had a long afterlife in late antiquity and beyond—well into the early modern period.<sup>92</sup> Many early Christians alluded to Ezra’s role, though normally not in enough detail to discern if they thought he replaced what had been fully lost, or simply restored and reorganized what had been neglected and was perhaps fragmentary.<sup>93</sup> Whatever the case, this Ezra-tradition also appears in anti-Christian polemics, and not only in Julian. Macarius Magnes’s pagan interlocutor in the *Apocriticus* references Ezra in even greater detail than does our brief fragment from Julian. This pagan was, since

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<sup>91</sup> 2 Kings 25:8–9, which recounts the burning of the “house of the LORD” by King Nebuchadnezzar’s captain may also have inspired the suggestion in *Fourth Ezra* that the law was totally burned, as suggested by R. J. Coggins and M. A. Knibb, eds., *The First and Second Books of Esdras*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 272–83.

<sup>92</sup> For the polemical usage of this Ezra tradition by the eleventh-century Muslim Ibn Ḥazm, see Martin Whittingham, “Ezra as the Corrupter of the Torah? Re-Assessing Ibn Ḥazm’s Role in the Long History of an Idea,” *Intellectual History of the Islamic World* 1, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2013): 253–71; for a similar use in early modern biblical criticism, see Noel Malcolm, “Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea,” in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 383–431.

<sup>93</sup> For a non-exhaustive list of references, see: Montague Rhodes James and Robert L. Bensly, eds., *The Fourth Book of Ezra; the Latin Version, Edited from the Mss.*, vol. 3, No. 2, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature (Cambridge: The University Press, 1895), xxxvii–xxxviii.

Adolf von Harnack, thought to be none other than Porphyry, though more recent scholarship since Timothy Barnes's challenges has presented this as unlikely.<sup>94</sup> It has even been suggested that Julian's anti-Christian writings were the source for the pagan material that Macarius incorporates into his (probably) imagined debate, though the most recent evaluation identifies the source as the third- or early-fourth-century pagan Sossianus Hierocles.<sup>95</sup> Whoever it is, this pagan interlocutor takes issue in *Apocriticus* 3.3.1 with Jesus's statement that "If you believed in Moses, you would believe in me, for he spoke concerning me" (John 5:46). For, the pagan explains, "nothing written by Moses is extant. For all his writings are said to have been burned in the temple, while whatever is written under the name of Moses was written 1,180 years after Moses's death, by Ezra and those in his circle."<sup>96</sup>

Thus, in Macarius's text, Ezra is treated by a hostile interpreter not as the restorer of the law but as the one who provided a forgery of it. The *Apocriticus's* pagan argues that Christians cannot trace the ancestry of their tradition back to Moses because they only have access to inauthentic simulacra of Moses's texts. In this example, a pagan critic subverts a Christian narrative about the preservation of Moses's teaching. The theme of Ezra-as-a-second-Moses becomes, instead, a key transition in a

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<sup>94</sup> T. D. Barnes, "Porphyry *Against the Christians*: Date and Attribution of Fragments," *The Journal of Theological Studies* XXIV, no. 2 (October 1, 1973): 424–42.

<sup>95</sup> See Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Makarios Magnes' *Apokritikos*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 53, no. 2 (October 2002): 466–501.

<sup>96</sup> Translation (slightly modified) from *Apocriticus*, *Translated Texts for Historians* 62 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

declension narrative, wherein whatever wisdom was recorded by Moses has long been lost, and only unreliable corruptions remain.

This background opens new possibilities for explaining why Julian seems to bluntly criticize Moses's comments about god's anger and jealousy. Julian, who "insists that Ezra added some things from his own way of thinking," according to Cyril, thinks that portions of Moses's texts (though probably not *all* of it, as in the *Apocriticus*) were corrupted by this prophet.<sup>97</sup> And, indeed, certain lexical oddities further suggest that Julian may be generally suspicious of the authenticity of parts of Moses's texts. On three occasions in AG Julian uses a curious circumlocution of πεποιήται with a participle.<sup>98</sup> Of note is how this lexical pattern avoids directly ascribing the action of the main verb to the subject:

1. "Moses is fashioned as saying (πεποιήται λέγων) not infrequently in his writing these things and other such things about god." (fr. 36.15–16)<sup>99</sup>
2. [After Phineas kills the Israelite and Midianite pair] . . . "god is fashioned as saying (πεποιήται λέγων), 'Phineas, the son of Eleazar son of Aaron, turned away my wrath . . .'" (fr. 33.9–11)

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<sup>97</sup> Though *Fourth Ezra* depicts Ezra as entirely rewriting Moses's texts, Julian probably takes him as only modifying it (as did others). "Προσεπενεγκείν" in fr. 34 is indeterminate as to whether Ezra simply "added" things to Moses or "brought in" a whole new rewriting. But the indefinite "τινα" suggests not a complete rewriting, but simply the addition of "some things." With that said, AG fr. 106.1–3 (preserved by Theodore of Mopsuestia) might evince that Julian thought that Moses's writings were completely lost. Julian asks how the disciples at Jesus's transfiguration were able to recognize Moses and Elijah, "since they did not know them or have their γραφάς." If by "γραφάς" Julian means "writings," then this might suggest that, in his mind, Moses's own writings were completely unavailable. He could, however, simply mean "portraits" by "γραφάς," meaning that the disciples couldn't have recognized Moses or Elijah because they didn't know what they looked like.

<sup>98</sup> Fr. 64 has a fourth instance of this circumlocution, though it does not alter my argument.

<sup>99</sup> The sentence preceding this one is of interest, too, for it similarly phrases things in a roundabout manner: "For God, upon discovering one who is similarly angry and grieved, *appears* to let go (φαίνεται ἀφείς) of his wrath" (fr. 36.13–15).

3. “What is more trivial than the reason that god is falsely fashioned as being angry (ὀργισθεὶς . . . πεποίηται) by the one who wrote these things?” (fr. 33.12–31)

In the first excerpt, Julian overtly avoids direct ascription of the preceding statements about god to Moses—πεποίηται λέγων (“is fashioned as saying”) is not simply a rhetorical flourish, semantically equal to λεγεί (“he says”).<sup>100</sup> The next two examples further illustrate how Julian uses this circumlocution (perhaps even unconsciously) when he thinks there would be a problem with a more direct statement. In the second excerpt, he avoids suggesting that god would claim that Phineas assuaged god’s wrath by killing two people—in Julian’s theology, a true god would never act in such a human, impassioned manner. In the final example, Julian similarly avoids saying directly that “god was angered,” for in his theology god is not subject to ὀργή. Combined with Julian’s brief comment about Ezra, it seems increasingly plausible that Julian regarded the texts of Moses as partially corrupt, which helps explain the tension evident in Julian’s treatment of Moses. On this reading, Julian approached the Mosaic texts in a way parallel to certain modern historical critical methods, looking for traces of the authentic and original writing that lay behind or within a text that has been altered through later emendations or accretions. But for Julian, “authentic” also means normatively true, and with the backstory of corruption of Moses’s texts, he can explain why some of the writings of Moses—a genuine sage—seem to say false things: some of

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<sup>100</sup> Julian’s language is admittedly less circuitous elsewhere. See the straightforward comment in fr. 33.5 that “. . . ὁ Μωσῆς φησὶν ἐπὶ τοῦ Φινεὲς . . .” (Masaracchia, *Guiliano*, 128). I am grateful to Prof. José M. González for helping to sort through these linguistic nuances.

those writings are “inauthentic,” meaning they can be judged “false” without slight to Moses.

Even with this new interpretive possibility in mind, it is still safest to suggest that Julian regarded Moses not as a sage on par with Plato or other Hellenic masters, as if he was equally wise with these Hellenes but was then distorted by later forgers. Rather, Julian probably regarded Moses as a moderately wise sage that was occasionally boorish—but that has been made to look worse than he is by an aberrant stream of his tradition. We should also not lose sight of the polemical genre in which Julian is writing—absolutely air-tight and fully-articulated theories are not central to polemics. A plausible backstory, even if implicit, is often central to polemics, and what I’ve sketched here is certainly a plausible and suggestive back-story that would have allowed Julian to creatively account for the wide range of “data” about Moses within his Hellenic rubric of a sage.

With this excursus concluded, we can now return to the progression of Julian’s argument. The analysis thus far has been tracking how Julian shows the Hellenic tradition to be superior to the Jewish tradition(s), which superiority makes the Galilean’s choice to leave the Hellenes for the Jews entirely puzzling. The next section of AG shows how the Galileans didn’t even remain with the Jews but further apostatized by creating their own, new tradition(s). First, though, we should note the other arguments that Julian makes to prove the superiority of the Hellenes over the Jews.

The next group of fragments (frs. 37–57) revolves around the theme of the “gifts” given by the gods to the Hellenes, which are superior to those given to the

Hebrews. This section was anticipated in fr. 25, where Julian mentions the many “greater goods” (both of “soul” and in “externals”) that god has given to the Hellenes—goods “that we will speak about shortly” (fr. 25.11–14) At fr. 37, he turns to this task, noting that “God did not care only for the Hebrews, but he showed concern also for the nations, and he bestowed on them [the Hebrews] nothing serious or great, though to us he gave things far greater and more varied” (fr. 37.4–7).

Chapter 5 will analyze more closely the argumentative logic of Julian’s “gifts of the gods,” but a brief survey here is still in order. Most of these fragments are spent enumerating and comparing the gifts: first is the wise men (σοφοί) given to the peoples. The Egyptians had Hermes and his successors, the Chaldeans and Assyrians had Oannes and Belos and their successors, and the Hellenes had Cheiron and his followers; the Hebrews thought they alone had sages, but that clearly wasn’t the case (fr. 37). The Hellenes have knowledge about philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, music, an understanding of the “principles of harmony” (fr. 38)—a point that Julian will circle back on at fr. 55, when he asks why the Christians “nibble” at Hellenic learning, if their own writings are sufficient for them. In fr. 39 he names famous philosophers, military commanders, magistrates, and lawgivers, then (in fr. 40) great kings and their feats—Minos, who advanced civilization in the Mediterranean; Perseus; and Aeacus. This moves toward the founding of Rome (as Cyril summarizes in *AJ* 6.14), and its expansion and the founding of religious laws by Numa (fr. 42), the reception of oracles even when they had fallen silent everywhere else (fr. 43), and similarly “sacred arts” for communion with the gods (fr. 45). Julian mentions Asclepius, who provided healing (fr.

46), the advanced state of governance, law, and the liberal arts (fr. 53), the imperial success of Rome (frs. 49, 51), and more. We need not walk through them all in detail but only note that Julian is not only narrating the inferiority of Christians (via the inferiority of the Jews). He is also supplying a mass of examples in his favor—as he adduces more and more examples of his general point, he thereby makes the probability that his account is trustworthy only grow.

While he enumerates all these details about the gifts given to the Hellenes, compared to those given to the Hebrews, he also interlaces his commentary with exasperated asides about the unintelligibility of the Galileans' preference of Hebrews to Hellenes. These asides draw our attention back to the implicit narrative structure of his argument, obscured as it may be at times by the triumphalistic litany of Hellenic achievements and successes. A central point of this exercise is to place the major episodes of Christianity within the Hellenic narrative—and not only to place them there, but to give them an inferior and downgraded status vis-à-vis the enviable Hellenic people.

For example, Julian interjects at one point, “Would not someone understandably despise your wiser representatives or pity the more foolish ones who, following after you, have gone to such extensive destruction, such that they abandon the eternal gods and turn to the corpse of the Jews?” (fr. 43.13–16). And at another point, he anticipates his next argument by reminding that the Galileans didn't even remain among the Jews. Had they done so, he suggests, they would have been “not wholly unfortunate,” since they would then have worshipped still a single god (if only one of the gods) rather than

“many unfortunate men”—a jab at Christian practices of reverencing of the martyrs, in all likelihood (fr. 47.5–8). But rather than remain with the Hebrews, they only took their worst practices, having “like leaches, drawn the worse blood from the source but left behind the purer blood” (fr. 47.11–13).

These interjections continually habituate the reader to understand Christian episodes by a different rubric, in a different framework. The martyrs are not commendable but simply dead people; Solomon was not wise, compared to Isocrates (fr. 54); the Jewish kings and judges were neither mighty nor very successful in light of the Hellenic accomplishments; and so forth. If Julian wanted to show earlier in his text that there was, in fact, wisdom among the Hebrews in the person of Moses, he now forcefully reminds that this wisdom becomes evidently paltry when viewed in its true, Hellenic context. Moses (or at least what we can authentically know about Moses) might have been a decent sage and lawgiver, but he and the tradition that followed him are not noteworthy, compared to the Hellenes. Why, then would anyone ever want to identify with the Hebrews instead of the Hellenes?

### III.B.5 *An exposition of how the Galileans were not faithful to Jewish teachings*

This rhetorical question goes unanswered by Julian. The implicit answer is, perhaps, that there is no intelligible reason that can be given—to be Christian is to be unreasonable. Whatever the case, fr. 58 marks a clear shift to the next step in Julian’s

argument<sup>101</sup>: to show that the Galileans, who left the Hellenes for the Jews, did not even remain faithful to the Jews, particularly to Moses’s teachings.<sup>102</sup> This section includes many clear instances of Julian renarrating Christian and Jewish episodes as reconstrued episodes in a different, Hellenic narrative. The story of Christianity is, from Julian’s perspective, a subplot of a larger Hellenic narrative, and that story is one of successive apostasies—first from the Hellenes to the Jews, and then (building on Jewish departures from Mosaic teaching) from Moses and Hebrew wisdom to Jesus and his apostles and Paul. Julian also thinks that further apostasies followed. But by this point in Julian’s argument, the narrative stage is fully set: Moses was a sage and lawgiver, by Hellenic standards. Now he presents still more detailed examples about how the Christians, with their claims to the Hebrew heritage, should be understood within the Hellenic narrative.

Frs. 58–88 are, by and large, organized around two themes: Moses’s understanding of divinity (frs. 62–71), and Moses’s teaching about pious rituals (frs. 70–88). In both categories, Christians are shown to stray far from Moses. Julian introduces

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<sup>101</sup> Julian’s use of the same verb in fr. 3 (where he outlines his complete argument) and in fr. 58 further substantiates that fr. 58 marks a transition in Julian’s argument, as he outlined it. In fr. 3.7, he says “nor do they abide with (ἐμμένουσιν)” the Jews. In fr. 58.2, he says, “why do you not abide by (ἐμμένετε) the Hebrew principles?”

<sup>102</sup> This argument (that the Christians are apostates from Judaism) shows up in cursory form in the *Contra Celsum* 2.4, where Celsus’s fictive Jew is said to ask, “Why do you take your origin from our religion, and then, as if you are progressing in knowledge, despise these things, although you cannot name any other origin for your doctrine than our law?” (Chadwick translation). The details of the Christian apostasy from Judaism, as recounted by Celsus and by Julian, however, are different at key points. For instance, whereas Julian insisted that Moses was aware of the multitude of gods, Celsus seems to have thought that Moses held that only one god existed (see *Contra Celsum* 1.23, where the “goatherds and shepherds who followed Moses” are said to have been tricked into thinking that there is “only one God”). For more on Celsus’s treatment of “Moses’s monotheism,” see Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 93–95.

the main arguments with prefatory remarks (frs. 58–59) and includes, later, an interlude on how his contemporary Galileans were not even faithful to the founding figures of Christianity (frs. 79–82). The key in these sections is to see how Julian narrates in detail the Mosaic evidence about divine beings and about ritual practices as Hellenic episodes, thereby pulling the rug from underneath Christians who claim continuity with Moses’s writings.

Several of the main claims from fr. 58 are already emphasized in the “narrative blueprint” above. Centrally, Julian asks why Galileans do not keep the “Hebraic principles (τοῖς Ἑβραϊκοῖς λόγοις)” or the laws given by god to the Hebrews. These laws are accurate (ἀκριβής) and instruct in worship, priestly life, and piety.<sup>103</sup> Instead, the Galileans follow the “preaching of the prophets” and the “innovation of the Hebrews.” Those prophets knew that Moses commanded them to serve only one god, whose “portion is Jacob and allotment of possession is Israel” (quoting Deut. 32:9). But they ignored Moses’s other command to “not speak evil of the gods” (quoting Ex. 22:28), thinking erroneously instead that “blaspheming follows from not worshipping.” Such impious activity was attached to their generally lax lives, modeled on “hucksters, tax collectors, dancers” and so forth (fr. 58.2–27). Fr. 59 is one of Julian’s more merely

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<sup>103</sup> Modern scholars sometimes treats Julian’s regard for the Jews as stemming primarily from their antiquity and their maintaining of traditional customs. While this is not false, Julian is more concerned with the ἀκρίβεια, the “precision” of the Jewish rituals, which, he thinks, are consonant with Hellenic customs. For an example from modern scholarship, see Smith’s suggestion that, for Julian, Jewish doctrines “have some truth (96c) and at least have the virtue of being ancient (141c)” (*Julian’s Gods*, 193). But, in the referenced 141c (=fr. 25), Julian simply comments (without treating it as reason for praise) that the god of the Hebrews has been “honored from the beginning.” Julian cares some about the antiquity of the Jews, but his appreciation of the Jews based narrowly on their antiquity is easily overstated.

polemical moments, for here he tries to substantiate these charges of immorality by quoting Paul, who admitted that Christians were once idolaters, adulterous, cowardly, etc. (I Cor. 6:9–11), even though they were then “washed with water”—as if, Julian sneers, water could do anything to cure an adulterous person (fr. 59.16–18).

Julian’s elaboration of Galilean unfaithfulness to Moses will only further demonstrate that his most rhetorically powerful weapon in these sections is his ability to creatively interpret Moses’s texts. His time as a “reader” in the church and his other studies of the Christian scriptures are evident, for he knows precisely which passages to interrogate.<sup>104</sup> He doggedly endeavors to smash the coherence of the Christian attempt to plausibly draw on Moses, while indicating all along that his subsuming Hellenic narrative can pick up the pieces of this broken coherence and reorder them with greater plausibility. We just saw this maneuver as he juxtaposed a passage on monotheistic worship (Deut. 32:9) to a passage (Ex. 22:28) that clarifies how such singularity of worship does not imply the existence of only a single divine being. In Julian’s account, the Christian treatment of Moses as strictly monotheistic cannot remain coherent in light of Ex. 22:28. Julian’s own interpretation, by contrast, easily holds together the singularly-directed worship of the Jews (from Deut. 32:9) alongside Moses’s awareness of a plurality of divine beings (in Ex. 22:28). This kind of creative

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<sup>104</sup> Wilken comments that Julian “singled out the weak points in the Christian interpretation of the Bible, attacking passages that the most astute Christian exegetes had been wrestling with for generations.” *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 191.

interpretation only continues as Julian writes further about Christ and the gods and about pious rituals.

### III.B.5.i Moses on Divinity: Christ and the Gods

Frs. 62–71 are, in some ways, simply a further working out of Julian’s evocation of Deut. 32 and Ex. 22, but now with a particular focus against Christian Trinitarian doctrine. Noting in fr. 62 that Galileans claim to be “different from the Jews” but “accurately-speaking (ἀκριβῶς) Israelites in accordance with their prophets,” and to “obey Moses most of all,” Julian proposes to test the claim, beginning with Moses and his putative prophesy about the future birth of Jesus (fr. 62.7–9).<sup>105</sup> Julian marshals his knowledge of Moses’s texts (and of standard Christian usage of those texts) to expose the Galilean interpretation as impossible. Julian reminds that Moses “many times” insists that his people honor only one god. And, though Moses clearly “mentions angels and lords and even many other gods,” says Julian (a claim we’ll return to shortly), Moses never presumes a “second, either like or unlike” him (οὔτε ὅμοιον οὔτε ἄνόμοιον)—a clear jab at contemporary Trinitarian debates (fr. 62.15–16).<sup>106</sup> Julian then walks through several passages that a Christian might take to be prophecies about Christ and shows that they cannot be so. He notes that the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:18 (“The lord your god will raise up for you a prophet from your brothers, like me”) does not refer to “the son of Mary.” Even if it did, he continues, it indicates a future prophet *like Moses*—namely, a human, and not one born of god. Similarly, he points out,

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<sup>105</sup> On this material, see also Wilken, 190-1.

<sup>106</sup> See Hunt, “The Christian Context of Julian’s *Against the Galileans*.”

the passage “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor a leader from his loins” (Gen. 49:10) cannot refer to “the son of Mary,” but referred instead to David’s descendants, and these came to an end with Zedekiah (fr. 62.18–32).<sup>107</sup> Of note once again is how Julian does not simply reject the Galilean reading—he offers an alternative reading as well. He deconstructs one attempt at a coherent interpretation to replace it with another. Julian points next to Gen. 49:10 and Numbers 24:17 (another prophecy that refers to David, Julian explains) to continue this task (fr. 64.7–14). Notably, Julian does not object that Moses was a prophet or a reliable seer into the future—he just thinks that Moses’s prophecies came true in a very different way (accurately predicting *David*, in the case of Numbers) from how the Galileans claim they were fulfilled.

Julian then collects more statements by Moses to the effect that god is singular and alone in his role as lord of the Hebrews,<sup>108</sup> and he juxtaposes these to several New Testament texts that treat Jesus also like an additional god.<sup>109</sup> The passages from Moses make clear, insists Julian, that there is no room for a “second” god—and, in any case, such a god certainly could not be born from a god-birthing (θεοτόκος) virgin (fr. 65.2).

Julian moves next to two of his more creative renarrations, and both are clear examples of a scriptural episode reconstrued inside a different narrative. The first picks up again the suggestion that Moses *does* mention other gods, lords, and angels. Julian’s eventual point will be that, if Moses discussed all of these spiritual and divine beings,

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<sup>107</sup> He also points out here that Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies for Jesus are different – a problematic fact for the Galileans if they are intent on tracing out Jesus as the descendant of Judah.

<sup>108</sup> He quotes here Deut. 4:35, 4:39, 6:4, and 32:39, and several sentences later Is. 26:13 and 37:16.

<sup>109</sup> He draws from John 1:1, 1:18, Col. 1:15.

then he surely would have discussed a unique “son” of god, the “only begotten Word,” if he knew of such a being—especially given that Moses himself spoke elsewhere of god’s “first-born” (who is identified, however, as Israel; see Ex. 4:22) (fr. 67.17–25). But first, Julian sets out to substantiate his claim that Moses was fully aware of the whole range of beings that exist in Julian’s cosmos. To do so, he turns to Genesis 6, where Moses “names angels as gods.” Julian’s reasoning is either condensed or has been cut short by Cyril, but he seems to suggest that the references to the “sons of god” in Moses’s text clearly refers to “angels,” who must be gods, based on their immortality. Julian quotes from Gen. 6:2 and 6:4 to make this point:

Seeing the daughters of men, that they are beautiful, the sons of god (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) took for themselves wives from all those that they chose.

And after that, when the sons of god (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) went in to the daughters of men, they also bore children for them; and they were giants, from of old and of great fame.

Julian thinks it implicit in the text (and is not “foisted from without,” he says<sup>110</sup>) that these “sons of god” must, in fact, be angels, given that “not men, but giants were born from them.” Moses’s message is, it seems to Julian, that “the race of giants came to be from the mixture of mortal and immortal (ἐκ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου μίξεως” (fr. 67.5–17). At least in our extant text, Julian does not close the loop explicitly on how this

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<sup>110</sup> Marie-Odile Boulnois has suggested that Julian (and Cyril, in his response) are engaging in technical text-critical arguments about the authentic, Mosaic phrase (“angels of god,” or “sons of god”) in “The Biblical Text and Its Variants at the Heart of the Debate between the Emperor Julian and Cyril of Alexandria: The Case of Genesis 6, 2 and 49, 10” (XVIII. International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 22, 2019). This only further accentuates Julian’s scholarly familiarity with the biblical text. For further information on the state of this text in late antiquity, see L. W. Wickham, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI.2 in Early Christian Exegesis,” *Oudtestamentische Studien* 19 (1974): 135–47.

shows Moses to identify “angels” as “gods,” but presumably the immortal (ἀθάνατος) character of these beings indicates that they are, indeed, divine. However this minor question is answered, it should be clear that Julian’s strategy was, again, to take a scriptural episode and explain it as an episode that is entirely coherent and intelligible within the Hellenic narrative. We are meant to learn from Genesis 6 that the Mosaic data simply cannot be assimilated coherently within a Christian Trinitarian narrative but that it resides perfectly well within a Hellenic narrative and its diffuse range of divine beings.

I have already treated Julian’s next argument in the Introduction, but it is worth rehashing and noting a few additional points. This argument bridges Julian’s two major focuses within his exposition of how the Galileans were not faithful to Moses: he takes Leviticus 16 as further evidence of Moses’s awareness of the multiplicity of the gods, and this fragment also begins his treatment of how Moses “understood the methods of sacrifices” (fr. 71.1–2). As Cyril makes clear, Julian means that Moses understood and was a skilled practitioner of the *Hellenic* sacrificial system.<sup>111</sup> Julian himself comments that, apart from the Jewish belief in one God, Jews “agree with the nations (τοις ἔθνεσιν),” since “shrines, temples, altars, ceremonies, and certain commandments” are common among them (fr. 72.15–21).

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<sup>111</sup> See *AJ* 9.13.1–20. According to Cyril, Julian also listed several specific kinds of sacrifices that appear in the Mosaic law to suggest that, among the Hebrews as among the Hellenes, such “sacrifices are equally honored.”

Julian’s argument in fr. 70 hinges on the ambiguous word that the LXX translators coined for this very passage: ἀποπομπαίος. In the ritual of Lev. 16, Moses commands two goats to be taken, with lots placed on (or “designations given to,” to preserve Cyril’s alternative) each: one lot τῷ κυρίῳ, and one τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ (Lev. 16:8). Julian quotes sections of Lev. 16 (including vs. 8) to show, as he says in his introductory comment, “how much Moses says about the ἀποτροπαίοι” (fr. 70.10–11)—that is, how much Moses knows and talks about the “apotropaic” or “evil-diverting” divine beings. The word “ἀποτρόπαιος” does not occur in Lev. 16, and Julian clearly takes this word as a synonym for the ambiguous “ἀποπομπαίος.” Thus lots are placed on the two goats, one of which is “for the lord” (i.e., the local ethnarch god of the Hebrews), and one of which is “for the evil-averting god” (some other divine being who, presumably, dwells out in the desert, or on the wandering people’s flanks). Julian’s leveraging of Lev. 16 is creative and crafty. He quotes only excerpts, and he leaves out vs. 10, which speaks of the lot “τοῦ ἀποπομπαίου,” the genitive inflection of which makes it harder to identify “ἀποπομπαίος” as a concrete being, parallel to the “Lord,” which has a dative inflection (“τῷ κυρίῳ”) in both verses 9 and 10. Still, the overall effect of Julian’s brief introductory comment to a set of quotations from Leviticus is clear. If anything, his case probably appeared all the more persuasive for the brevity of his “argument”—if this can even be called an “argument,” since it is more like the effortless adducing of evidence that appears to interpret itself. It took hardly any effort in this instance to show that the episode of Lev. 16 coherently and properly resides within the Hellenic narrative.

### III.B.5.ii Pious Rituals

In frs. 70–88 Julian focuses on discontinuities in rituals between Hebrews and the Galileans, who have not remained faithful to Moses’s teachings. But to avoid breaking up the continuity of Julian’s focus on rituals, we first briefly turn to his interlude within this thematic section (frs. 79–82), where he suggests that his contemporary Christians did not even remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus’s apostles. The original apostolic teachings, says Julian, “were undone by those who came after” (ὕπὸ τῶν ἐπιγινομένων ἐξεργάσθη<sup>112</sup>) (fr. 79.7–8). In Julian’s portrayal, the Galileans seem to have fallen into the ineluctable habit of apostasy: first from the Hellenes, then from the Jews, and then even from their very own founders.

Julian proceeds to explain this charge of an additional layer of unfaithfulness. “Neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark dared to say that Jesus is god,” he insists (fr. 79.8–9). The distinction of making Jesus out to be a god belongs, rather, to John, who only did so in reaction to popular piety towards the tombs of Paul and Peter. Julian seems to imply that John noted this sickness (νόσος) among the people (i.e., worshipping the dead) and jumped on the bandwagon, simply reacting to the public movement and providing more theoretical plausibility by naming Jesus a god. But even then, Julian cautions, if we read John’s Gospel closely, we’ll see that John didn’t directly call Jesus a god (he was in fact “ashamed” to do so, says Julian). Rather, John the Apostle

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<sup>112</sup> ἐξεργάζομαι often simply has the meaning of “accomplishing” or “bringing to completion.” But the context suggests that its other possible meaning of “undoing” or “destroying” is at play here—unless he means that the process of distortion begun by the apostles was “completed” by their fourth-century heirs.

covertly put this proclamation of apotheosis into the mouth of John the Baptist (fr. 79.16–20). Whatever Jesus’s original teachings were, Julian insists that they were distorted by the ἐπιγινόμενοι to the effect that Jesus was a god—not unlike how Moses’s teachings were distorted by “those who came after” him. This original sin of the new apostates then multiplies *ad infinitum* among the Galileans, who went on to “fill all places with tombs and memorials” for the worship of the multiplying corpses (fr. 81.6). Such practice, says Julian, has no countenancing in the writings of Jesus’s apostles, and in their veneration of the dead the later Galileans ignore Jesus himself, who thought tombs to be unclean (Julian references Matt. 23:27 and Matt. 8:21–22). Here again, Julian pinpoints the source for this disgusting practice with Jews at the time of the prophet Isaiah, who notes that his contemporaries “sleep among tombs and caves for dream visions” (Is. 65:4). The apostles simply adopted the “magical trickery (μαγανείας)” associated with this incubation (fr. 82.4–7).

Surrounding this interlude in Julian’s thematic complaint in frs. 70–88 is his focus on the Galileans’ failure to follow Moses in matters of practice. He bolsters this argument, as we just saw, by showing such unfaithfulness to be deeply-ingrained—the Galileans didn’t even follow their own founders. Julian’s overwhelming concern while treating Galilean discontinuities with Moses is with sacrificial practice. He does comment on how the Galileans don’t follow dietary laws (frs. 71 and 74) and on how they do not practice circumcision (frs. 85–86), but the rest of this section is tied tightly together by the theme of sacrifice. Before looking at these particular complaints, though, Julian does raise one higher-level, formal complaint about law-observance in

fr. 75. As with earlier arguments, Julian designs this accusation to dissolve the coherence of a Christian account. In fr. 75, Julian critiques the Christian idea that Moses instituted a first law, which was “circumscribed in time and place,” and that god then instituted a “second” law. Of the “not just ten, but countless” statements of Moses that Julian says he can produce in support of the permanency of the first law, Cyril has preserved only a few, such as Ex. 12:14–15, where the institution of the Passover is instituted as an “eternal custom” (νόμιμον αιώνιος).<sup>113</sup> Julian juxtaposes this to Paul’s statement that Christ is the “end of the law” (Rom. 10:4), and he insists that Moses never foresaw *any* end to his law (fr. 75.4–18).

Surrounding this dissolution of coherence connecting Moses to Christians are several scriptural episodes relating to sacrifice, each of which Julian shows as easily compatible with his Hellenic narrative. His first point, though, is simply that Jews do continue to sacrifice, even without the temple, and instead in their homes (fr. 72).<sup>114</sup> But even though the Galileans invented a “new sacrifice” (i.e., eucharist, which doesn’t count in Julian’s reckoning), and even though by their own standards they don’t need Jerusalem to be able to sacrifice, *still* they don’t carry out actual sacrifice, he complains. To frame just how extensively the Galileans have gone astray by neglecting sacrifice, Julian moves the timeframe back to the “sons of Adam.” He quotes the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4, keying in on God’s question to Cain: “Is it not the case that, if you

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<sup>113</sup> He also quotes Deut. 4:2 and 27:26 to illustrate intended permanence of Moses’s law.

<sup>114</sup> Finkelstein canvasses scholars’ theories about which practices Julian may here refer to. See *The Specter of the Jews*, 72, note 60.

offer rightly, and do not divide rightly, you sin?” (Gen. 4:7). Some Christians, says Julian,<sup>115</sup> interpret the error of Cain (who offered plants to god) in a way which has nothing to do with the *kind* of sacrifice itself. But Julian, for whom animal sacrifice was a powerful feature of proper religious life, knows otherwise: Cain’s sacrifice was inadequate and not “divided rightly” because god prefers offerings that are “alive” (ἔμψυχος), since such things are more precious to the god who “gives life and is the cause of life,” and who himself partakes of “life and soul” (fr. 84.3–26). Galileans have one way of trying to read this episode, but it simply does not make sense without Julian’s own understanding of the Hellenic logic of sacrifice.<sup>116</sup>

The next two fragments rebuke the Galileans for their failure to keep Moses’s commands about circumcision (frs. 68–69). This leads Julian to a comment which frames the next several (and the final extant) arguments: namely, that he himself “reveres the god of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who were themselves Chaldeans, of a holy and theurgic stock (γένουσι ἱεροῦ καὶ θεουργικοῦ), and [that] they knew about circumcisions, having lived abroad with the Egyptians” (fr. 86.9–11).<sup>117</sup> This sets up another renarration of a Jewish and Christian episode that, in scale and significance, perhaps matches the subsumption of the episode of the character Moses. By Julian’s time, it was a standard Christian apologetic trope to argue that Christian doctrine,

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<sup>115</sup> Wright suggests Julian has the bishop Aetius in mind (LCL 157, 419, note 6). Whether or not this is the case, Julian seems to relate an actual conversation with a bishop, whom Julian embarrassed by asking about Cain’s failed offering. The bishop was unable to give an answer, which Julian supplied—an answer that makes sense, not surprisingly, in the terms and frame of Julian’s Hellenism.

<sup>116</sup> As Bouffartigue has noted, Eusebius of Caesaria gave a similar explanation about “dividing rightly.” See *L’empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, 388.

<sup>117</sup> For Julian’s treatment of the Jewish tradition as “theurgic,” see Bregman, “Judaism as Theurgy.”

nascent in Jewish writings, was older than the sources of Hellenic wisdom.<sup>118</sup> Cyril also centered this strategy. Julian here turns the tables by going well before Moses to the founding patriarchs of the Hebrews: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These three, he says, were Chaldeans, whose wisdom Julian esteems. In virtue of their Chaldean status, they were also, says Julian “theurgic,” which places them squarely within Julian’s Iamblichan-neoplatonism.<sup>119</sup> To Julian’s Christian audience, which makes Moses antecedent to (and often even the source of) the founders of the Hellenic tradition, Julian responds by going even further back: the very origins of the Hebrew people lie in the Chaldeans, themselves a sacred race who already practiced their devotion to the gods in the same way that Julian does. The Galileans do not—like Abraham *did*—“erect altars” to god and “build sanctuaries” and “worship with holy rites” (fr. 86.13–15).

Julian, on the other hand, does practice as Abraham did. Having now made the general claim that Abraham performed rituals like a Hellene—Julian says that Abraham “sacrificed regularly like we do, constantly and continuously (ὡσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀεὶ καὶ συνεχῶς)” (fr. 87.1–2)—Julian now gets into specific, exegetical detail. He briefly mentions the fact that the servant whom Abraham sends to find a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24 was, for Abraham, a συμβολικός (fr. 87.4–5)—probably “one who practices divinatory sign-reading.”<sup>120</sup> “Συμβολικός” does not occur in the LXX. Wright suggests it

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<sup>118</sup> On which, see Droge, *Homer or Moses?*

<sup>119</sup> For more on Julian’s Iamblichan (and not Porphyrian) approach to sacrifice, as it relates to his regard for Judaism, see Bregman, “Judaism as Theurgy,” 145.

<sup>120</sup> For this definition for an obscure noun form, I draw from the LSJ entry for συμβολικός, which lists συμβολική, ἢ as a “mantic art which employs σύμβολα.”

is from the Hebrew,<sup>121</sup> though it is not clear which Hebrew term might have been translated in this way (and Julian did not seem to know any Hebrew). It seems more likely that Julian is simply applying the label “συμβολικός” to the pattern of activities that he discerns between Abraham and his servant, since the pattern fits the model of what a Hellenic diviner/sign-reader would do, according to Julian. The servant does go on, after all, to select Rebekah for Isaac’s wife through a process that could easily be described as “reading signs.”<sup>122</sup>

Whatever the case, in Julian’s explanation, Abraham quite frequently relied on complicated and esoteric sign-reading practices, especially “divination with shooting stars (μαντική ἢ τῶν διαττόντων ἀστέρων)”—and “even more so,” Julian says, Abraham “bird-augured (οἰωνίζετο δὲ μειζόνως)” (fr. 87.2–4). Julian explains how Abraham was promised by god in Genesis 15 that he would have a “great reward,” in the form of his own offspring. When Abraham wonders how he, being childless, could have offspring, “immediately the word of god came to him” and reassured him, Julian says. Julian is not sure if the texts of Genesis means that god or, rather, an angel came to Abraham, but whoever it was then immediately showed Abraham the stars. Julian, skilled in giving close readings to sacred texts, wonders: didn’t Abraham already know, even before he left his tent, how many stars there are in the heavens? He reasons that

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<sup>121</sup> LCL 157, 424, note 1.

<sup>122</sup> Abraham’s servant prays that the right woman would be revealed to him when, as the story goes, “the daughters of those who live in the city are coming out to draw water, and it shall be that the maiden to whom I should say, ‘Incline your jar to me in order that I may drink,’ and she should say to me ‘Drink, and I will water your camels until they stop drinking,’ and this one you prepared for your servant Isaak, and by this I shall know that you did mercy toward my lord Abraam” (Gen. 24:13–14, NETS translation).

there must then be some other reason that this messenger (or god) showed Abraham the stars. Julian suggests that this reason was to give a “clear assurance of the words (τῶν ῥημάτων ἐναργῆ πίστιν)” of the promise, presumably through signs in the heavens (fr. 87.5–21). According to Julian’s interpretation of this episode, the scriptural account itself portrays Abraham as a divinizer.

Julian is not yet finished with his renarration of Abraham. He next notes a similar occurrence, but this time bird-auguring is central. Again, Abraham has received a promise that he has a hard time believing, namely that he will receive the land to which god took him, after he left the Chaldeans (Gen. 15). To assure Abraham, god tells him to arrange a careful sacrifice with a heifer, a young goat, a young ram, a dove and a pigeon. Birds then fly down among the animal corpses prepared for the ritual, and Abraham sits down (συνεκάθισεν<sup>123</sup>) among them (fr. 88.14). In Julian’s rendering, this is clear evidence of Abraham’s predilection for understanding the divine through bird-auguring, since he not only received the message about preparing sacrifice but also had this pronouncement “strengthened through augury (διὰ τῆς οἰωνιστικῆς . . . κρατυνομένη)” (fr. 88.15). Julian, again, put great stock in divination and especially

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<sup>123</sup> Julian uses the same verb (συνεκάθισεν) that Rahlfs-Hanhart *Septuaginta* has preserved. However, as Cyril’s response makes clear, there was a tradition that records that Abraham “drove off” (σοβέω) the birds (see *Against Julian* 10.41.1–3). In all likelihood, Cyril represents a tradition that had tried to correct the LXX towards the Hebrew. This is an instance where such correction also had significance for exegetical disputes—in Julian’s version, the fact that Abraham “sat down” with the birds can be plausibly read as Abraham’s accepting the birds as an affirming sign from the gods. But, as Cyril will suggest, there is nothing at all remarkable about Abraham “scaring off” (as his version of the text has it) fowl birds that were trying to eat his carefully-prepared sacrificial animals—and thus, he concludes, we shouldn’t detect any auguring practices at play here. For information on later LXX variations as evidence of attempts to correct the Greek interpretation more into line with the Hebrew, see Martin C. Albl, *And Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections*, Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 100–101.

interpreting the activities of birds.<sup>124</sup> So, when he reads this episode in Gen. 15, he has no trouble in showing how Abraham performs a characteristically Hellenic practice. Abraham was, by virtue of his Chaldean heritage and his obvious ritualistic proclivities, a proto-Hellene.

For all practical purposes, Julian's extant account here comes to an end. There are a handful more fragments, culled from within small fragments of books 11–20 of *Against Julian* and from a few other sources. But at this point, we lose all trace of the thread of Julian's argument.

#### IV. Conclusion

As should be clear by now, Julian's strategy for *Against the Galileans* was subtle and sophisticated, in ways that only become fully evident when we notice the implicit narrative structure.<sup>125</sup> By noticing this structure, we can see that Julian set out to dismantle the coherence of a Christian narrative that traces its history back through the prophets, Moses, and the patriarchs. The various kinds of arguments he advances work together to show that the individual episodes that make up that narrative simply

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<sup>124</sup> See Ammianus' *Res Gestae* 22.12 for the report that, before setting out on his fateful Persian campaign, Julian "drenched the altars with the blood of an excessive number of victims, sometimes offering up a hundred oxen at once, with countless flocks of various other animals, and with white birds hunted out by land and sea," and that he also "entered upon a new way of consultation, and thought of opening the prophetic springs of the Castalian fount." Translation from John C. Rolfe, trans., *Ammianus Marcellinus, History*, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library 300, 315, 331, 1939.

<sup>125</sup> To emphasize again how significant a revision this judgment is with respect to modern scholarship, we might consider Joseph Hoffman's concluding remarks to the introduction of his translation of *Against the Galileans*: "For all that, it is not clear that the *Contra Galilaeos* shows Julian at his best. Like the Christian apologists or the invectives of his more famous predecessors, Celsus and Porphyry, Julian is determined to win his case without subtlety." He suggests that "The result is a hodgepodge of accusations, specious arguments, sarcasm, unargued propositions, adventitious allusion, and special pleading. . ." *Julian's "Against the Galileans,"* 84–85.

cannot be worked together into a coherent plot like the one Christians try to construe—the data, so to speak, simply does not fit the narrative model that the Galileans offer. Far from this Christian narrative being coherent, the only way to understand the Galilean tradition of the fourth century is to see it as a series of ruptures and apostasies.

But Julian's program is not merely deconstructive, an attempt merely to render the Galilean position as absurd. Other Christian critics perhaps pursued such a course—Lactantius summarizes the strategy of one such critic as an attempt “to prove the falsehood of sacred Scripture, as though it were altogether contradictory to itself” (*Inst.* 5.2.12; *ANF*, vol. 7 translation). As others have rightly pointed out, Julian's objective was much larger than a simple defeat of the Christians. He wanted to bring them back into his new Roman Empire, restored to its former glory. And for this he needed to not only render the Christian narrative as implausible: he also had to chart how these Galileans could reform their self-understanding within the Hellenic narrative. To do so, he endeavored to show them that they had never actually left the Hellenic narrative but were rather unwitting characters in it the whole time. Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and even Jesus himself derive their most plausible intelligibility not from Eusebius's contorted attempts to paint contemporary Christians as direct heirs of the Mosaic tradition. For Julian, these individuals and all the details that we know about them can only be coherently explained as characters of a Hellenic world.

Scholars have, to date, often picked up on pieces of this strategy. But all the dots have not yet, to my knowledge, been connected. Lacking a view of the whole strategy of

Julian's argument, many studies make misleading claims about *Against the Galileans*. One relatively recent (and otherwise good) treatment of Julian's religious and philosophical thought wonders if his "principal aim in writing *Against the Galileans* was ever to produce a refutation of Christianity that was intellectually compelling to any real degree."<sup>126</sup> Judging by Cyril's reports of Julian's posthumous influence fully 60 years later, we can affirm not only that such an intellectually compelling refutation was, indeed, Julian's objective: we can also affirm that he pulled it off. To Cyril's response we now turn.

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<sup>126</sup> Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 200. Smith also asks the puzzlingly dichotomous question, "Was it at root intellectual conviction of a Neoplatonist Emperor that prompted him to act against Christians, or was it rather that he felt compelled to offer an intellectual pretext for actions which really stemmed from feelings unamenable to argument?" (190).

## Chapter 3: *Against Julian*. Narrative Structure

### I. Introduction

I have been arguing thus far that the intellectual conflict between Julian and his target Christians, and then between Cyril and Julian, is one of “narrative conflict”—a concept drawn from Alasdair MacIntyre’s suggestion that the type of conflict that sometimes arises between rival traditions of life and thought is one wherein “that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it,” which includes the attempt “to retell their stories as episodes within its story.”<sup>1</sup> The prior chapter illustrated in detail how Julian’s *Against the Galileans*, though polemical in its literary form, philosophical in many of its arguments, historical in others, and so forth, pursued just such a strategy of narrative subsumption. A wide variety of “episodes” (understood broadly as characters, events, and themes) from Christianity were forcibly reconstrued and fitted within Julian’s own Hellenic narrative. Abraham was merely a divinizing Chaldean; Moses was no monotheistic legislator, but merely a minor Hellenic-style, polytheistic sage; the prophets were distorters of Moses’s Hellenic-style wisdom and laws; and, Jesus and the apostles only extended prior perversions of Moses. Julian’s polemical refutation was an attempt to dismember the narrative of Christian history and reorient the homeless “episodes” as pieces of a more expansive, more

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<sup>1</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 81.

adequate (in terms of its explanatory power), and more morally acceptable Hellenic narrative.

Given that the intellectual conflict on display between Julian's Hellenism and Cyril's Christianity is of this kind, proceeding directly to a close analysis of Cyril's response in *Against Julian* would run two possible risks. The first is that Cyril's responses might look like a series of disconnected and sometimes unfair rebuttals—polemics at its worst, often without genuine engagement with the substance of an adversary's argument. Indeed, *Against Julian* sometimes seems to invite such a reading, composed as it is (excepting book 1) as a series of quotes from *Against the Galileans* which are each given extensive, individual responses. The second, related risk, is that moving directly into the details of Cyril's response might give the impression that Cyril more-or-less accepted the general framework within which Julian launched his attack. Were that the case, then some of Cyril's responses would look peculiar, or even as though they were built on a sloppy misreading of Julian (for example, Cyril responds to Julian as if he were merely criticizing and degrading Moses rather than subtly coopting him for a minor place in the Hellenic hall of heroes).

Both mistakes would stem from a failure to take adequate account of how Cyril's response to Julian amounts to a fundamental objection to the narrative that frames Julian's particular objections. Cyril's argument, furthermore, amounts to more than a defense of the coherence and plausibility of his own tradition's narrative frame. It was (and perhaps *had* to be, insofar as the demonstration of the continuing viability of his tradition was at stake) also the refutation of his rival's narrative framework. Insofar as

each narrative was maximal—insofar as it implicitly claimed to be *the* narrative of all things—they were mutually incompatible, and the inability to provide an account for the existence and inadequacy of a rival tradition which similarly claimed to provide *the* true framework for all thought, practice, and judgments in the world would seem to cede to the superiority of that rival.

Cyril's refutation worked much like Julian's initial provocation. Unlike Julian, Cyril was responding to a long set of direct and detailed attacks on his own tradition, and thus his response is more defensive than Julian's. He needed to defend the coherence of his own tradition while also fracturing and subsuming Julian's. But the broad structure of the conflict was the same: Cyril worked to dismember the coherence of Julian's narrative and reconstrue the individual "episodes" within a Christian accounting—a move which fully changed the significance and import of those episodes in their Hellenic configuration.

Thus, before considering selections from Cyril's response to Julian, it will be helpful to first consider the basic sketches of Cyril's narrative frame. With the Church of the East being a key exception, almost every Christian community throughout history has regarded Cyril as an exemplary exponent of Christianity. In some ways, the following is simply an account of the well-known contours of orthodox teaching in the early church. Still, several distinct advantages come from such an analysis of Cyril's thought, organized by narrative elements. First, I draw almost exclusively from *Against Julian* to illustrate the central elements of Cyril's narrative frame. This provides detailed coverage of topics contained in *Against Julian*, which has been understudied to date.

Second, this chapter will provide opportunity to exemplify in further detail how a “narrative structure” or “backdrop” lies implicit in something like a polemical treatise. Finally, though Cyril’s teaching has generally been taken by subsequent Christian communities as representative of orthodox Christianity, he still had many unique and idiosyncratic perspectives, some of which play central roles in *Against Julian*. An analysis of Cyril’s writing in terms of its narrative structure will allow us to go beyond his typically Christian commitments and into the textured details of his arguments.

This chapter begins, though, with a further defense of my choice to use “narrative” as a central analytical category of choice. I have given my philosophical reasons for doing so in the introduction, and Chapter 2 has illustrated the fruits of such a choice with respect to one text, i.e., *Against the Galileans*. But before beginning a systematic survey of the narrative elements (setting, characters, plot) of *Against Julian*, examining a few patterns throughout *Against Julian* can further illustrate and substantiate the approach of narrative analysis. There are several “narrative moments” (as I’ll call them) in *Against Julian* where the narrative substructure rises quite close to the surface of the text, even though Cyril’s treatise is not a story on its surface.

After this theoretical section, the rest of this chapter is organized similarly to the opening overview of the narrative structure of Julian’s *Against the Galileans*. I begin with the “setting” of Cyril’s narrative, including the creation and creator of that setting and its initial constitution. After this, I consider the cast of “characters,” about whom it

will be impossible to say much without getting into the “plot.”<sup>2</sup> It is of course, impossible, to treat each of these narrative elements discretely. The significance and intelligibility of a setting is tied to the characters who populate it and what they do there; similarly, little more than a name and basic description can be said about a character without some kind of storied background or dramatic action. Still, these sections of the chapter will remain mostly focused on the distinct elements of the blueprint of Cyril’s narrative structure. After this, I trace two leitmotifs that are crucial for understanding the storied background to Cyril’s arguments in *Against Julian*. This includes longer examinations of: God’s accommodating mode of relating to humans (including centrally Cyril’s understanding of Moses and the law); and, pagans, polytheism, and sin.

## II. “Narrative Moments” in *Against Julian*

Though *Against Julian* is not a story on its surface, there are places throughout the text where the narrative backdrop of the arguments lies very close to the surface. They are not as numerous or structurally-important as in, for example, Augustine’s *City of God*, but *Against Julian* does have several narrative moments.<sup>3</sup> Some of these moments

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<sup>2</sup> These categories of narrative elements are, in a sense, imposed on Cyril’s (and Julian’s) texts—since he wasn’t writing a “narrative,” genre-wise, Cyril (and Julian) don’t present people as “characters” or events as part of a “plot.” However, such categorization was not foreign to ancient literary criticism, on which see René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).”

<sup>3</sup> Augustine’s *City of God* is a useful point of comparison on this point. On its surface, it more closely resembles a “narrative” (suffused with many non-narrative stretches as it is). It tells the “story” of the two cities, from their origins in Adam through their eschatological destinies. Cyril’s text is different, in that it is not on its surface so narrational (structured as it is by being a direct rebuttal to another text). But it presumes a narrative generally like Augustine’s: in its Christian version of universality, in its aspirations to not only note pagan errors but also to narrate the reason for those errors, and so forth.

play such a role in the larger argument that we can see more clearly how “narrative” (whether implicit or explicit) provides the basic frame of intelligibility for modes of thought and argument in texts which are not on their surface “narrative.”

The two examples that follow are of slightly different kinds, both in the way they appear in *Against Julian* and in the way they illustrate the narrative dimension of Cyril’s arguments. But each illustrates how a polemical text like *Against Julian* has a narrative substructure or backdrop. The first example is the first half of book 1 of *Against Julian*, and the second example is a collection of instances where Cyril appeals to the category of οἰκονομία as a necessary background for understanding a point.

#### II.B *Against Julian* Book 1: Narrative, Traditions, and Epistemic Authority

The most important of *Against Julian*’s narrative moments comprises the first sustained piece of Cyril’s rebuttal to Julian. As already noted, the vast majority of Cyril’s treatise is composed of excerpts from Julian and direct responses. Cyril quotes normally several sentences (even a few paragraphs or pages) from *Against the Galileans* and then responds at varying length. The exception to this compositional method is book 1—a fact which Cyril feels the need to apologize for when he opens book 2,<sup>4</sup> and

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Matthew Crawford’s forthcoming article suggests another, intertextual parallel between the narrative structure of Augustine’s and Cyril’s treatises: both seem to have relied on Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Chronicle* for their histories. See “The Influence of Eusebius’ *Chronicle* on the Anti-Pagan Treatises of Augustine of Hippo and Cyril of Alexandria,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 71, no. 4 (October 2020): 693–711.

<sup>4</sup> Cyril concedes that book 1 might have seemed “sometimes to get diverted far beyond [Julian’s] preceding ideas.” But he also insists that such a diversion was necessary, since Julian had so frequently mentioned the Greek sages, over and against Moses’s writings and all the saints. This called for, he says, a

especially when he addresses Julian's arbitrary (as Cyril argues) stipulation that any response to *Against the Galileans* only address Julian's specific accusations before even attempting counter-charges (AG fr. 2; Cyril's response is in AJ 2.7–8). Julian wanted to lock down the course of the dispute, and Cyril would have none of it.

Cyril's mode of objecting to Julian's strictures is noteworthy. After a few introductory remarks (1.1–5), book 1 launches into a historical recounting which starts with the flood of Noah's time and indexes events as recorded in Greek history to those of biblical history (1.5–19).<sup>5</sup> His primary purpose in doing so was to show that Moses was older than all the Hellenic sages.<sup>6</sup> In the latter two thirds of book 1, Cyril compares the Hebrew and Greek doctrines about God/gods and the cosmos. This juxtaposition allows him to contrast (1) the doctrinal continuity running from Abraham to Moses and through the prophets, apostles, and evangelists down to Cyril's own time with (2) the record of internally inconsistent Hellenic opinions (some of which are correct, Cyril claims, which shows their dependence on Moses). In a sense, we might say that Cyril validates his recounting (of how wisdom was passed down in a first tradition and was distorted in a second tradition) by then demonstrating the coherence of the doctrine of the first tradition (in 1.22–34) and of the error-riddled doctrine of the second tradition

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“plain and most clear demonstration” of Moses's chronological anteriority and related doctrinal superiority, for which Cyril claimed to “heap up” (προεσωρεύσαμεν) evidence (2.1.15–30).

<sup>5</sup> Even though Cyril quotes from several historians (including non-Christian ones), this history is heavily reliant on Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle* and Pseudo-Justin's *Exhortation to the Greeks*. For more on Cyril's sources, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CXXII.

<sup>6</sup> This was, of course, a common early Christian apologetic strategy, on which see Droge, *Homer or Moses?*; Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*.

(in 1.35–41—though he also points out true insights of the Hellenes, especially in 1.41–49).

Cyril's choice to initiate his response to *Against the Galileans* in this manner (instead of immediately beginning to respond point-by-point to Julian's charges) thus already hints that the conflict between him and Julian is at the narrative level. As Chapter 2 showed, Julian's attempt to subsume the Christian "episodes" into a Hellenic counter-narrative focused heavily on a re-narration of Jewish and Christian origins and, by means of that rival story, a counter-explanation of their authoritative figures and texts. Moses was shown to be a minor Hellenic-style sage whose texts display meager, though largely accurate, philosophical insights; the prophets were distorters of his teachings (and, in Ezra's case, a corruptor of his texts); Jesus and the apostles furthered the distortions of the prophets; and, the Christians of Julian's age pushed the apostasy even further. Julian's declension narrative, largely implicit in *Against the Galileans*, attempts to fracture the coherence of any broadly Christian history of creation, ongoing revelation, and providential care by God. Cyril's first sustained argument of *Against Julian* does not yet tackle the many details of retelling that history (and thus this narrative moment of book 1 does not quite surface the entirety of the narrative substructure, even in summary form), but it does reorient the fundamental epistemic questions about how one might know what the main story is: it is concerned specifically with which authors and texts to trust. For Christians like Cyril, the relationship between Moses and Jesus and the church was explained in terms of "fulfillment" (or, more narrowly for Cyril, progressive revelation). Moses's writings

counted as genuine revelation from God, but (to use Cyril’s favorite language from Hebrews) they were only “shadows” of the complete truth.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Julian’s manner of explaining the relationship between Moses and Jesus was in terms of “apostasy,” of falling away and of declension.

For Cyril (as it was for Julian), the question of who teaches right doctrine—primarily about the god(s), but also about creation, right living, etc.—is ineluctably tied up in the question of who has the right story about Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, and about Homer, Plato, and other Hellenic sages. Julian’s charge of Christian doctrinal error is fully embedded in a narrative hostile to Christians and the sources of wisdom that they take as reliable. Cyril’s response, then, cannot merely be to respond to the charges of doctrinal error; he also has to challenge the narrative that enables Julian’s accusations of doctrinal error and, instead, show how his own narrative can account for Julian’s errors. The framing pieces of that project are put in place in book 1 of *Against Julian*, the basic details of which we can now survey.

Cyril’s recounting proceeds under the principle captured in the terse proverb (already deployed by Clement of Alexandria in *Strom.* 5.68.5) that “One wise man comes from another” (σοφὸς ἄλλος ἀπ’ ἄλλου) (1.4.2).<sup>8</sup> By this principle, the true wise men of his present day (and their doctrines) must have a genealogy that leads back to some

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<sup>7</sup> See below for more on Cyril’s understanding of divine accommodation and how it informs his thinking about progressive revelation.

<sup>8</sup> Such a position immediately puts Cyril (and a great many, if not all, of his contemporary philosophy) into what MacIntyre calls a “craft tradition,” where the craft to which one is apprenticed is the possession of and advancement in wisdom. As MacIntyre also notes, “the standards of achievement within any craft are justified historically.” Cyril’s project of 1.6–19 might be described as a recounting of the historical justification of Christian wisdom. See *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 60–65.

original time(s) when the doctrines were received. Cyril's story thus tells of the continuity of the Hebrew tradition, in which Moses is a shining midpoint. In its outline Cyril's history is comprehensive, beginning with Adam (whom he mentions in 1.6.2). However, it is also sketchy, often making jumps like the opening one from Adam to Noah, who was "tenth" in line "from those [born] from the first man." Even this early, Cyril introduces extra-biblical sources (Alexander Polyhistor and Abydenos), first to substantiate the historicity of the flood in Noah's times and to satisfy "superstitious" people who say that the biblical accounts are "vain myths and have in no place anything either persuasive or true" (1.6.14–15). He does already point out the error with the pagans' stories (which mistakenly say that "Cronos" instructed the Noah-character), and the point of mentioning extra-biblical literature will shortly shift from its verifying purpose to showing how late it was written, relative to Moses. But at the opening, and running through his tracking of Noah's descendants and the Tower of Babel (1.8–9) up to Abraham, the extra-biblical sources allow Cyril to compare timelines and to substantiate the historical validity of the biblical narrative.

Cyril initially forgoes extensive discussion of Abraham (who receives more attention at 1.22–27) and skips forward to Moses, whom he treats as "another chronological beginning point" (1.11.7). The following several sections continue to index major world events (largely from Greco-Roman and Egyptian history) to events from the Bible, leading to the concurrent events of Augustus Caesar's rule and the birth of Christ "according to the flesh" (1.16). Here Cyril pauses to make the point of his

historical overview clear: “. . .how is it not clear to all that the divine Moses was older than all the wise men among the Hellenes . . .?” (1.17.1–4).

This chronological point is the central piece in Cyril’s rubric for explaining the range of data in the Hellenic texts. Fielding an imagined objection, Cyril allows that Moses’s anteriority to the relevant Hellenic sages does not *de facto* prove that their correct doctrines were derived from Moses. He buttresses the plausibility that the Hellenes did in fact get doctrines from Moses, first, by pointing out that in their quest for wisdom they traveled the whole world—including to Egypt (which would have taken them into contact with Moses’s writings); and, second, by noting that many Hellenes explicitly mention Moses, proving their familiarity with him (1.18–19). His interpretive rubric, then, is entirely tied to his universal history, and especially to the history of true doctrine. Both true and false doctrine exist among the Hellenes, and, based on the principle that “One wise man comes from another,” Cyril needs an explanation about which sage began that wisdom. Moses is a clear answer (though Moses himself had antecedents, as Cyril will explain).

Cyril also describes (in narrative form) where the Hellenic *errors* derived, given that their true insights came from Moses. He explains that people up until the time of Noah worshipped only one God, but “after the flood and the building of the tower and the differentiation of languages, those who had been scattered over all the earth held an opinion about God which was itself irreconcilable.” Cyril’s rationale is condensed, but following on this multiplication of languages and geographic expansion, people gave increased attention “to transient and earthly affairs and bodily pleasures (ταῖς τοῦ

σώματος ἡδοναῖς),” all of which Cyril can summarize as the “crimes of the polytheistic error” (1.21.4–11).<sup>9</sup>

The rest of book 1 illustrates in concrete, doctrinal details the more general and formal points that Cyril’s narrative has made. Abraham now receives more attention, and Cyril shows, for example, through exegesis of Genesis 18 (the visitors at the Oaks of Mamre) that Abraham was aware of the fundamental Trinitarian doctrines about God (1.22–27). He shows Moses to be similarly knowledgeable about God as well (1.28–34). Though it only receives passing comment, Cyril’s concluding comment about this true Hebrew wisdom is, in light of Julian’s narrative-level objections, one of the most epistemically fundamental points of the entire treatise:

Therefore, the all-wise Moses has truly instructed us in the mysteries, and those who came after him (οἱ μετ’ αὐτὸν γεγονότες)—the holy prophets and the apostles and the evangelists—thought nothing different from his [teachings], and absolutely one method of speaking about God (τῆς θεολογίας . . . τρόπος) is evident among them, and one cannot at all find them opposing one another on any matter (1.34.1–5).

Before this comment, Cyril sketched the continuity from Abraham through Moses to Christ and his apostles. This crowning point, furthermore, is one place where the narrative conflict with Julian is clear. As already shown, Julian’s narrative of

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<sup>9</sup> Though Cyril does not here work out the precise causality between the shift to polytheistic beliefs and the people’s increased fixation with “earthly affairs and bodily pleasures,” he has already made clear in 1.20 its general contours: the truths humans seek are beyond human understanding, and so humans must rely on God to “infuse the mind with light.” But God only grants this gift to those who have advanced in pious living. Impious living is thus intertwined with decreasing knowledge about God, which is replaced by erroneous doctrines claiming that there are many gods. For more on the important role polytheism plays in Cyril’s arguments, see page 237 below.

Christianity relates Moses and “those who came after” (ἐπιγινόμενοι) him in a very different way, construing them so that their teachings are unreliable.

We might ask at this point how an ancient reader might adjudicate between the claims of Cyril and Julian, presuming that both claim to be living and explicating the truth of all things. Given that their arguments about Moses and the apostles and Plato and Homer are arguments about who are reliable guides for how to think and live, it’s hard to imagine external and mutually agreeable criteria that would allow for adjudication between the narratives. Any appeal that might allow for adjudication is an appeal to a criterion that is already embedded in a traditioned rationality that has been built from the authoritative figures and texts of the tradition. As best I can tell, the proof of a narrative like one Cyril provides in book 1 lies in its explanatory adequacy. Cyril has been laying the foundations of an argument that says, “This is how to see and make sense of the world.” The testing of that argument lies in how well Cyril’s suggestions *work* to make sense of the world—it lies in how well his claims can satisfactorily account for any data from the world that calls for explanation. This is, in fact, one way to describe the bulk of *Against Julian*: whereas Julian had argued that his Hellenic interpretive grid could much more adequately and expansively account for the important data of the world and the way people experienced it, Cyril’s response is a sustained attempt to show (1) that Christianity’s narrative and the doctrinal commitments that are tied up with it *can* adequately account for all the problems that Julian brought up; and, (2) that Julian’s interpretive grid itself has deep inadequacies.

But we get ahead of ourselves. The main point for now is simply to see how book 1 of *Against Julian* is a narrative moment within the treatise, and one that comes close to the surface of the text. This section should also begin to show the fruitfulness of narrative analysis. Cyril's arguments in *AJ* book 1 are not particularly original, and they don't make for exciting reading.<sup>10</sup> But by attending to the narrative dimension of the conflict he is engaging in with Julian, we can see how these long sections play an important role in laying the groundwork for a conflict that reaches down to the narrative bedrock of traditions of life and thought.

### II.C Οἰκονομία and Intelligibility

The first narrative moment example above is, in its form, an actual narrative, though it's not the surfacing (even in summary form) of the whole narrative. The next few instances do demonstrate how the complete narrative occasionally rises to the surface in summary fashion. Important about these following examples is the function that Cyril himself understands the summary to perform. He brings it up on several occasions to answer a question or explain an event, and a quick recounting of the "main point" (the σκοπός, as Cyril calls it) of the narrative serves to make Cyril's answer intelligible.

Two examples are particularly clear, though there are other similar instances. In each Cyril has been offering an explanation in response to one of Julian's criticisms

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<sup>10</sup> Cyril himself seems to be aware of this fact, since before he begins the historical recounting, he (unprompted) exhorts his readers to "not to become quickly overloaded with the reading and the list of names and the tracking of dates. Rather, eagerly thirst," he encourages "for a good and useful confidence in each one" (1.5.9–12).

and then suggests that it is necessary to know the οἰκονομία to understand his point. Cyril uses the central idea of οἰκονομία in a range of ways. Of just over 20 instances in *Against Julian*, about a third of the instances link directly to the incarnation: he speaks formulaically of ἡ μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομία. In about as many instances Cyril brings up the notion of οἰκονομία when he is explaining why God acted in a certain way when that way seems unbecoming to divinity.<sup>11</sup> In several other places οἰκονομία describes how Paul or the apostles spoke or acted in a way that was befitting to their context, even if their actions might seem inappropriate from the perspective of later readers.<sup>12</sup>

The common thread running through every use of οἰκονομία and its word family seems to be the management of affairs by someone through methods that are carefully adapted so as to be understandable and beneficial to those for whom the management is carried out. In this way, οἰκονομία is linked to the notion of accommodation, which is central for Cyril's explanation of God's interaction with humans. When used formulaically to refer to the incarnation, it also highlights the central Christological point for Cyril that the eternal Logos was not in itself of a human nature, but fully became human *for a distinct purpose*, as a contingent way of addressing a problem. The aspect that is relevant for my current point is this: for Cyril, the use of

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<sup>11</sup> For example, in *AJ* 3.15 he explains that there was an "economy" at work in God's prohibition that Adam and Eve not eat from the very tree that would give them knowledge. Similarly, in *AJ* 4.15 Cyril explains that the sacrificial commands of the Old Testament must be understood as an "economy" and not the introduction of something that is somehow innately necessary to right living. In *AJ* 5.17 Cyril explains the attribution of wrath to God is tied to the "economy."

<sup>12</sup> See several instances in *AJ* 9.47.

“οἰκονομία” works as shorthand to say, ‘to understand what’s going on here, you need to know the larger backstory.’<sup>13</sup>

This aspect is clear in two examples. In *AJ* 6.42–46 Cyril quotes and responds to fr. 50 of *Against the Galileans*, within which Julian furthers his argument (from fr. 49) that the Jews are generally inferior to the Hellenes, evident in their persistent political subservience. At fr. 50 Julian adds that Jesus, too, was clearly a subject of Caesar. Cyril’s first response is to note that most Hellenes could be excused for simply not knowing the “mystery of the economy (οἰκονομίας) with the flesh,” though Julian himself has deeper problems since he tries to show off his extensive knowledge of Scriptures (6.43.2–9). He then explains how human affairs and governance entail norms and limitations that are entirely inapplicable to God who created all things. This point is further explained at *AJ* 6.45, where Cyril paraphrases Julian’s objection with a rhetorical question: “But why, he says, did he not appear to those on earth as established on seats of earthly royalty and distinguished with very high and lofty accomplishments?” In line with his first response in the section, Cyril notes that the answer to this question lies in understanding the “point of the economy” (τῆς οἰκονομίας . . . τὸν σκοπόν). He proceeds then with a summary narrative moment:

For the whole earth went astray, and God and the object of awe was whatever seemed good to each person. For some worshipped the creation and introduced worship for the elements of the world; and others became crafters of their own gods. Then the only-begotten Word of God revealed himself from the heavens in

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<sup>13</sup> Though Cyril’s use of οἰκονομία has a definite Christian-theological sense, it is also worth noting that ancient literary critics sometimes thought of “οἰκονομία” as a “plot” or “plot function.” See Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work*, 24–27.

our likeness, so that he might persuade all to come to the truth and to pass, as if from a mist and shadow of the stupidity among them, into the light of the pure divine vision. (6.45.4–11)

Cyril's main point is that if the Word of God came in power (and not trying to "persuade"), then the turning of lost humans back to himself would undermine free will (I'll return to this political dimension in Chapter 5). Within this argument, the intelligibility of a central event of Christianity (the incarnation of the Word as a lowly human) is tied to a larger story. That larger story is stated succinctly, but its scope is almost universal. It begins with the "whole earth" going astray, which for Cyril began with Adam, the first human. And it then explains the eventual solution in Christ and how that solution fits with a larger pattern of God's activity with humans ("persuasion" rather than "by force").

The second instance comes from *AJ* 9.13–21, which covers Cyril's exchange with Julian about Leviticus 16 and the ἀποπομπαίος, discussed in first chapter. Julian had argued that Leviticus 16 is prime evidence of the fact that Moses understood and practiced animal sacrifices in the same method as Hellenes. He suggested that Moses's command to offer one goat "to the Lord" and one goat "to the ἀποπομπαίος" (an evil-averting divine being, in Julian's understanding) reveals that his sacrificial teachings fit perfectly well within the Hellenic understanding of the cosmos. After critiquing Julian for his unsophisticated ability to interpret enigmatic texts, Cyril offers his first counter-interpretation: the two goats represent two aspects of Christ's work. Corresponding to the first goat, Christ was the "slaughtered Lord," and corresponding to the second goat, he was the ἀποπομπαίος (the "one sent away" from death in his resurrection).

At AJ 9.19 Cyril then suggests that the enigma exemplified in these two goats might be understood “in another way,” which leads to our second narrative moment. Cyril first acknowledges that the law commands a goat to be offered to God “on account of sins” (ὕπερ ἁμαρτίας). In this sense the goat is, in itself, a positive and good thing before God—it is capable of rectifying sin. But, drawing on Jesus’s parable about sheep and goats in Matthew 25, Cyril also notes that goats can, in the scriptural semantic world, represent “those who are in sin.”<sup>14</sup>

Cyril then perhaps realizes that his argument might be losing the thread that began with Leviticus 16, and so he introduces the key interpretive cipher that will bring together the various pieces at play: “With the argument about these matters being as it is,” he says, “come and let us quickly relate the manner of the economy with the flesh (τῆς μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομίας τὸν τρόπον).” His following overview is both as succinct and as universal as was the example from book 6. After quoting Psalm 13(14):1 (“There is no one who does good, not even one”), he summarizes:

And all were in sins, as the law was not succeeding to justify those from the blood of Israel and as the host of the Hellenes were ignorant of the way of blameless living. And when all were sinners, the only-begotten word of God unchangeably and unalterably became flesh, i.e. a man.

He proceeds to explain how this brief story explains the “other way” that Leviticus 16 might be interpreted. Drawing on several biblical passages, he notes that the Word

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<sup>14</sup> He also suggests a certain fittingness in the imagery, since sheep are “fleecy and fruitful” and thus useful (representing the character of saints, who are analogously “fruitful”) whereas goats do not yield such useful fleece or “fruitfulness” (representing, alternatively, “those who are spiritually fruitless”) (9.19.1–8).

became a man in order to fully identify with those who were in sin.<sup>15</sup> The first step in this “other way” of understanding Leviticus 16, then, is to notice that the Word is completely identified with sinful humans. He then notes that “things offered for sins” are often called simply “sins,” and this is especially the case with “goats.”<sup>16</sup> The second step is to notice that sacrificial sin offerings (especially goats, Cyril asserts) are correlated to sins in the Scripture’s customary usage of words. Given these background details, Cyril thinks that we should be able to notice that two goats of Leviticus 16 stand in for two sinful parties.<sup>17</sup> Christ is represented by the first goat, though Cyril’s scriptural quotations clarify that his “sinfulness” is a function only of his identification with sinners. The second goat represents humanity in general. Of these two goats, the first was “slaughtered and was carried up to God ‘as a sweet-smelling scent,’ but the second was sent out (ἐξέπεμπετο) from the slaughter” (9.20.7–9). Cyril interprets Christ as the slaughtered goat, as the “one more worthy than all” who “died for all.” But by this saving death, the other goat gets to be sent away from sacrificial slaughter and to live. Thus, the second goat represents humans who are saved from slaughter: “when [Christ] died for us in the flesh we became the ἀποπομπᾶι” (9.20.46).

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<sup>15</sup> He alludes to I Peter 2:22, Romans 8:3, Isaiah 53:12, and II Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>16</sup> He offers Hosea 4:8a as an example of how the *offerings* for sins are sometimes spoken of as the *sins themselves*: in reference to the part of the sacrifice that priests get to eat, the prophet says “They will eat the sins of my people.” Cyril’s point is that the priests clearly do not eat the “sins” themselves; they eat, rather, part of the sacrifice, which is simply called “sins.”

<sup>17</sup> He says: “The law ordered that ‘two’ kids or goats ‘be taken,’ so that Christ would be understood in this as one from us, in the same nature and form as a man for man as, to be sure, also in a goat for a goat” (9.20.1–4).

Cyril's argument here is dense, but the point for the moment is not about the particulars of his method of scriptural reasoning. The point is about how his quick run-through of the *οἰκονομία* functions in the overall process of making Leviticus 16 intelligible. In this case, Cyril thinks a good reader of Leviticus 16 will need to recall a few specific details of Christ's "economy with the flesh." That "economy" is explained by a brief recapitulation of salvation history beginning with all humans as lost in sin and unable to rescue themselves and concluding with Christ's resolution of this plight. Unlike in *AJ* 6.45 Cyril emphasizes one specific aspect of this divine resolution: the fact that Christ fully identified with sinful humans. This aspect is what opens Cyril's second interpretation of Leviticus 16. Without knowing the back-story that explains why the Word became incarnate as Jesus Christ, a reader of Leviticus 16 would have no way of parsing why two identical goats were sent to very different fates. As in *AJ* 6.42–46, this narrative moment shows how Cyril relies on an underlying narrative (even in summary form) to make intelligible an otherwise unclear (but authoritative) text.

The way in which Cyril's narrative functions in his quest to make coherent sense of the cosmos (and, in this case, the texts that he takes to be divinely-inspired and authoritative) is aptly illuminated in David Steinmetz's seminal essay, "Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method."<sup>18</sup> Steinmetz argues that the classical form of the mystery novel provides a key insight into pre-historical critical exegesis. Mystery novels, he points out, typically have "two

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<sup>18</sup> Steinmetz, "Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method."

narratives.” In the first, the detective (and the reader) discovers a mess of disconnected details. There are “clues, false leads, imaginative hypotheses,” and so forth—“No one knows for certain where this apparently rudderless ship is drifting, not even (for several chapters, at least) the persons charged with bringing the ship safely to harbor.” But at the conclusion the detective performs a great reveal, indicating how the (seemingly) disconnected mass of details actually fit in a coherent and intelligible narrative. This “second narrative” of the story is “crisp and clear and explains in considerable detail what was really occurring while the larger narrative was unfolding.” Particularly important for my point here is Steinmetz’s description:

It is important to understand that this second narrative is not a subplot, even though it is short. It is the disclosure of the architectonic structure of the whole story. Therefore, the second narrative quickly overpowers the first in the mind of the reader, who can no longer read the story as though ignorant of its plot and form. The second narrative is identical in substance to the first and therefore replaces it, not as an extraneous addition superimposed on the story or read back into it, but as a compelling and persuasive disclosure of what the story was about all along.

As Steinmetz goes on to explain, the part of Christian Scripture that we call the “Old Testament” is analogous to the “first narrative” of a mystery novel, and the New Testament records the revelation and working out of the “second narrative” which draws together and explains the various and puzzling details of the first.<sup>19</sup> Cyril’s explanation of Leviticus 16 works similarly. Only by the surfacing of the “architectonic structure of the whole story”—even if in a short, “crisp and clear” form—can the

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<sup>19</sup> Steinmetz, 54–56. He notes that the biblical example works “Not exactly in this way, but close enough to provide useful points of comparison” (56).

enigmatic details of Leviticus 16 be understood. For Cyril, the “whole story” climaxes in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the details about Christ thus become the cipher for Old Testament texts. But it would be impossible to follow Cyril’s sense-making of these Old Testament details without following his lead in pointing to the explanatory second narrative.

This concludes my ongoing explanation and defense for using narrative as a tool of analysis, now with Cyril’s *Against Julian*. The rest of this chapter presents the major contours of the narrative structure of *Against Julian* (broken down into “setting,” “characters,” and “plot”) and then examines two leitmotifs.

### **III. Setting and Characters**

As is the case for Julian’s *Against the Galileans*, Cyril’s *Against Julian* has an implicit narrative backdrop with a maximal setting and slate of characters. The whole cosmos is its setting, the main characters are the Triune creator God, on the one hand, and then every being that this God created, on the other hand. This latter group of characters can be subdivided much further, but first a few words need to be said about the Trinity and then about its creation considered as a whole.

#### III.A The Triune God

The central character of Cyril’s narrative is the Triune God.<sup>20</sup> Though references to the Father, Son, and/or Holy Spirit are scattered throughout *Against Julian*, Cyril does

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<sup>20</sup> Although Cyril is most known to modern scholars for his Christological writings and, to a lesser degree, his exegetical output, he also had a highly developed Trinitarian theology. Marie-Odile Boulnois has studied it in almost encyclopedic manner in *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie*.

give the Trinity direct attention at a few places. The most prominent is in book 8, which is somewhat unique, vis-à-vis the other eight books that are engaged in direct responses to excerpts of *Against the Galileans* (i.e., books 2–7 and 9–10). In book 5, Cyril responded only briefly to an accusation from Julian that, rather than worshipping one God, the Christians worship a “illegitimate (νόθον)” and “counterfeit (ὑπόβλητον)” son. Cyril says here that he will take up questions about God and his Son in greater depth at a later time (5.12.14–18). This seems to be a reference forward to book 8, where Cyril responds at great length to only three fragments from *Against the Galileans*.<sup>21</sup> The latter two thirds of book 8 (8.18–51) are organized around, first, a defense of the Trinity and, second, the “manner of the incarnation” of the son.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the amount of space dedicated to this account of the Trinity and the incarnation, Cyril’s directly descriptive comments about the Trinity are limited. The apologetic context of *Against Julian* accounts for this fact, as can be seen (for example) in the fact that Cyril gives several pages (8.27–34) to quoting philosophers of the Hellenic canon to remind his readers that the Hellenes “come short of our doctrinal

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<sup>21</sup> As suggested by Boulnois, *Cyrille d’Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 482, n. 1.

<sup>22</sup> The first third of book 8 also involves the Trinity, though it is mainly about whether Moses was aware of the Son and Holy Spirit. In AJ 8.17, Cyril wraps up his correction of Julian’s misinterpretation of Balaam’s prophecy in Num. 24:17–18 before delivering the programmatic plan that lasts for the rest of book 8: “But since, as I was saying before, he dares to entirely overturn the ineffable origin of the son from the God and father and he says that he does not subsist (ὑπάρχειν) at all nor is (εἶναι) God, and he laughs, in addition, also at the manner of the incarnation (τὸν τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τρόπον), I say that it is necessary to gather together the dogmas of piety and to wrestle very thoroughly the argument about both matters.” First will be the explanation “that he is God and the word from God” and then how “he became human” (8.17.21–26).

precision (δογματικῆς ἀκριβείας), though they still have not entirely failed to follow our positions” (8.27.5–7).

The most direct commentary is in *AJ* 8.18–20. Here Cyril explains the Trinity with arguments, imagery, and language that was, by then, largely typical of pro-Nicene theology. Julian suggested (fr. 64) that Christians reject Moses’s admonitions to worship only one God and that they, instead, worship three, since they (as Cyril summarizes) “determine that there always coexists (συνυπάρχειν ἀεὶ) with the God and father: the one both from him and in him and his very own, only begotten God the word, and the holy spirit, as consubstantial (ὁμοούσιον) with him.” Cyril responds that “the one nature of divinity is understood in three *hypostaseis*, in the father and the son and the holy spirit,” a formula which implies no “cutting up (τέμνεται)” of them into various natures, nor do the *hypostaseis* “differ in essences (οὐσιωδῶς) so as to be foreign to one another (εἰς τὸ ὀθνεῖον)” (8.18.4–17).

As Julian’s attack was largely directed at the existence of the son, Cyril then deploys arguments long common in Alexandria: for God to be eternally “father,” there must eternally be a son. God “has no contingent attribute (συμβέβηκε γὰρ αὐτῷ παντελῶς οὐδέν)” and thus could not have become “father” at some point in time (8.18.23–28). Likewise, Cyril argues, if God is always creator, then there must always be the one through whom he created (8.18.28–33).<sup>23</sup> The union of these two is described in

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<sup>23</sup> Cyril’s formulation (that the eternal creator implies *not* an eternal creation but an eternal “one through whom he created”) here is at least as old as Athanasius. Khaled Anatolios notes that Athanasius, responding to controversies that Origen’s writings sparked, “responds by implicitly drawing a distinction

standard ‘X from X’ language and imagery: the word “flashed forth like light from light, or like a word in the mind and out from the mind” (8.19.1–5).<sup>24</sup>

Immediately following these analogies, Cyril quickly qualifies their utility. “Adducing examples is a very small thing (μικρὰ μὲν λίαν τῶν παραδειγμάτων ἢ παράθεσις),” he says, suggesting that the examples of fathers and sons and light and radiance are, of course, limited. But they are adequate to “lead up the mind to things beyond our understanding” (8.19.9–11). For Cyril (quoting Paul) reminds that “We now see in a mirror and in enigmas.” This qualification, based on the frailty of human understanding, is worth remembering, for Cyril makes a similar qualification twice later in book 8 by appealing, then, to Plato’s comments in the *Timaeus* that, due to the fact that it is “greater than what is in us”—it is beyond our capacity—to know about the origin of gods, “we must trust those who spoke before” (see 8.25.12–18 and 8.45.9–15).

### III.B The Creation

Much more could certainly be said about Cyril’s understanding of the Trinity, but we can now build on a few features just canvassed to introduce the “setting” of

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between the active potency of God’s creative act, which is coterminous with the Father-Son relation, and the term of that act. In order for the title ‘Creator’ to be authentically predicated of the divine being, it is not necessary for the *term* of God’s creative potency to be in existence but only for that active potency itself to be integral to the divine being.” That ‘active potency’ “is biblically attributed to both the Father and Son.” See *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 117. See 16–17 for the Origenian origin of this theological problematic.

<sup>24</sup> For the centrality ‘X from X’ reasoning, see Michel R. Barnes, *The Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001); Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Cyril’s story, broadly conceived as the cosmos in its entirety. Even if there are many things about the highest and ineffable reality that are beyond reason’s capacity to understand, Cyril is insistent that there are certain features that can and must certainly be affirmed or denied. One of those features lies in the difference between the Trinitarian God and creation. As we’ll see in Chapter 4, this core commitment—that a basic and absolutely fundamental distinction lies between the Trinity (in that it creates) and everything else (in that it is created)—funds several of Cyril’s philosophical arguments against Julian.

This theological commitment is generally embedded as a premise of Cyril’s arguments instead of considered in its own right. It comes up clearly in *AJ* 8.23 when Cyril gives evidence of Moses’s awareness of multiplicity within the one God.<sup>25</sup> Cyril presents Gen. 1:26 and the “Let us make man according to our image and likeness” as unarguably implying some kind of plurality (“Let us [plural] make . . .”) within a basic unity of nature (“ . . . according to our *image* [singular] . . .”)—God would not have invited other “angels” or “intellectual beings” to play a part in this intra-divine act, Cyril insists. He also starkly articulates the fundamental difference to explain that any other suggestion would allow that “perhaps nothing prevents [us] from recklessly suggesting that God and creation (θεὸν καὶ κτίσιν) are in no way at all divided by a difference in nature (εἰς ἑτερότητα φυσικὴν διατετμηθῆναι)” (8.23.17). Cyril’s use of διατέμνω is striking, for he often uses softer language for intellectual distinctions and

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<sup>25</sup> In frs. 62 and 64 Julian had suggested that Christians could not provide even one instance in Moses’s writing that proved he knew of a “second god” or son of God.

categorizations (like νοεῖται, “is understood as”). But the distinction between created and creator is resoundingly not an intellectual distinction—there is a difference as if by a great ontological “severing.” When we think of the natures of the creator and the created, we must fully cleave them from one another.

Cyril frequently enlists Julian’s own “teachers” to make this point. In *AJ* 1.30 he quotes from the *Timaeus* 27d–28a, extracting Plato’s distinction between “what always is and does not have an origin (τὸ ὄν ἀεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον) and what comes to be and never is (τὸ γινόμενον, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε)” (1.30.11–13), which he correlates with (and suggests was derived from) Ex. 3:14, “Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν.” Cyril thus claims that his authoritative, scriptural text *and* Hellenic witnesses alike acknowledge that “all things were led into existence by God, and that he has been allotted a nature that is incompatible with things that have come to be” (1.30.23–27).

During a different argument, Cyril uses this same, basic differences in nature to undergird a point about what kind of beings are capable of creating. Cyril acknowledges that, in one respect, all kinds of beings create—“even we ourselves create when we have some underlying matter and when we use our skill with such things.” But “creating” in this sense is a “kind of skill (ἐπιστήμης . . . τρόπος)” (2.40.1–6). And “skills” can pass between different beings—God can give or teach skills to others. Cyril makes clear, however, that there is a different mode of “creating,” understood not in terms of skills but by reference to nature. This kind of creating “is not a sort of skill, but of a nature which innately has its superiority that is god-befitting to it and it alone.” These things are “not at all accessible to those who have come into being” (2.41.17–21). Cyril

refers to the ability to bring things into existence, which is only like the “skill” of creating (from preexisting material) by a distant analogy.<sup>26</sup>

There are many other places throughout *Against Julian* where the fundamental distinction between that which creates (the Triune God) and that which is created (all other beings) plays an integral role in Cyril’s argumentation. However, the foregoing is adequate to show, first, how fundamental this theological commitment is for Cyril and, second, the kind of argumentative function it plays throughout the text.

### III.C Characters: Spiritual Beings

The primary character and actor in Cyril’s narrative is the Triune God, and the setting is everything that this God created, though the creator and created are of fundamentally different sorts. Within the creation are several kinds of characters, including a variety of spiritual beings. These beings all originally belonged to one class, the angels. But, as I explain in more detail below, part of those angels rebelled against God for reasons that Cyril does not fully explain in *Against Julian*. They did not “preserve their origin,” as Cyril says from Jude 6 on several occasions, and they instead rebelliously portioned out groups of humans on earth to lead them astray.<sup>27</sup>

Those angels who did “preserve their origin” continue to minister as God’s servants within the world. Cyril refers to them at one point as “noetic beings, beyond

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<sup>26</sup> Cyril is not novel in these distinctions. For an overview of Gregory of Nyssa’s technical treatment, see Michael W. Champion, *Explaining the Cosmos: Creation and Cultural Interaction in Late-Antique Gaza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 81–82.

<sup>27</sup> *AJ* 6.38.26–28 and 39.20–22; 4.9.7. For the precise history of equation of the fallen angels with the Greek gods, see Dale Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 4 (2010): 657–77.

body and sensation,” who “carry on a thrice-blessed and famed life, in all wonder, since they entirely have their own mind turned towards and looking on the good, and since they think it an adulteration to not be like this” (3.28.14–23). Cyril contrasts these angels to the rebellious ones, in that the former serve God and even “fight alongside those who had been harmed” by the latter. Such fighting implies no impotence in God, Cyril is quick to point out. Rather, God is “like some king who permits noble supporters to fight against barbarian advances and to drive away their greediness (πλεονεξίας) from those under his scepter” (4.10.12–14).<sup>28</sup> These obedient angels know and delight in their place in the cosmos, and they willingly ascribe to God all due glory instead of trying to hoard it for themselves. In *AJ* 4.11–12 Cyril points to two episodes from Judges where an angel of the Lord (sent to assist Gideon, and then Manoe) scrupulously avoids allowing either man to give any honors directly to itself. Cyril points out that each angel “does not at all hold back people who have chosen to reverence (εὐσεβεῖν) and honor (τιμᾶν) the master of all things with what they have at hand, but they do teach that it would be proper for these people to offer gifts not to those under his rule and instituted as serving [spirits], but rather to the Lord” (4.12.1–5).

The angels play various other roles throughout *Against Julian*’s many arguments. For example, in *AJ* 10.3–4 Cyril presents the lordly relationship of Jesus to the angels as evidence of his divinity. *AJ* 9.11 contains another informative example, for it illustrates the vying narrations about spiritual beings that Julian and Cyril advance. As discussed

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<sup>28</sup> The reference to πλεονεξία offers one clue about why, in Cyril’s thought, the demons rebelled. I will return to πλεονεξία and the role it plays in Cyril’s arguments in Chapter 5.

in Chapter 2, Julian interpreted Genesis 6:2–4 by identifying the named “sons of God” as ‘angels’ (who are ‘gods’ by Julian’s rubric, thus suggesting that Moses was aware of many intermediate divine beings). On Julian’s interpretation, these divine beings reproduced with women, yielding ‘giants.’ Such a process would fit the general pattern Julian had laid out from the *Timaeus* in fr. 10 wherein beings of different ontological status work together to create other beings that share characteristics from each of their progenitors. It would also presumably match themes of divine-human reproduction in Hellenic myths. In response, Cyril insists that Julian’s way of narrating the ‘sons of God’ as divine beings amounts to an entirely improper story. It is an affront to the “holy angels” to suggest that they would “stoop to this extent of incontinence (ἀκρασία),” but it would also set a terrible example for humans if even such holy beings were incapable of resisting the “movements of the flesh” towards sexual lusts (9.11.1–17). If angels cannot resist such passions, how many humans will even try?<sup>29</sup> Thus we can see that angels are noteworthy characters within Cyril’s story. At Julian’s provocation, he had to carefully explain their holy status and purely benevolent role on Christian terms.

### III.D Characters: Humans

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<sup>29</sup> Cyril’s counter interpretation of Gen. 6 (in *AJ* 9.11–12) tracks two lines of humanity, running from Cain and from Seth, which are (respectively) holy and known as “sons of God,” and wicked and known as “daughters of men.” The mating among these two lines refers to when all humans became thoroughly wicked (right before the flood), and the production of “giants” refers to those who are ‘giants’ only metaphorically in their moral perversity. Says Cyril, “it is the custom of the inspired scripture to call giants those of savage mind and much strength” (9.12.38–40). For an overview of the textual and interpretive issues associated with Genesis 6 in early Christianity, see Wickham, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men.”

Not much can be said about humans, the other main category of “characters,” without getting into the “plot” and dramatic action of the narrative undergirding Cyril’s arguments. However, thanks largely to Julian’s provoking remarks on Moses’s account of the creation of humans in Eden, Cyril does provide extended reflection on the “constitution of humans (τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατασκευήν),” as he frequently calls it.<sup>30</sup> By looking at Cyril’s explanation of this original arrangement of humans, we can see the basic anthropological pieces that then become scrambled when humans err. As will become apparent in the final section of this chapter and then again in Chapter 5, to follow various hinge points in the plot it is necessary to know how Cyril construes those pieces. The following first canvasses several passages wherein Cyril explains the basic human goal, which governs his account of anthropological features. Then I pause at the rather frequent theme for Cyril of free will, showing how it sets up the conditions for fulfilling humanity’s goal or for falling away from God; I also point out a few examples of the argumentative work that free will does for Cyril. Finally, I show in more detail how Cyril talks about the mistaken path taken by Adam and Eve, which now explains the condition of humanity. This final step also provides the framework for understanding the eventual fragmentation of humanity into multiple peoples with various characteristics.

Most of the material from the following analysis derives from the first half of book 3 of *Against Julian*, where Cyril responds to Julian’s comments on Genesis 2–3 (frs.

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<sup>30</sup> See *AJ* 3.10.3–4, 1.29.17, and 4.44.29–30 for several examples of this phrasing.

13–17). As I argued in Chapter 2, Julian argued that this Mosaic material should be taken as “mythic,” meaning that it has a hidden interpretation (the content of which Julian seems not to have explained). Cyril, however, takes Julian’s comments as direct criticism that the texts are unreliable. Either way, Julian tried to demonstrate that Moses’s writing could not be coherently construed on Christian terms, and Cyril’s response is thus largely geared towards buttressing that coherence, showing how the many elements of the story of Eden do, in fact, support a Christian accounting of human origins and subsequent conditions.

In Cyril’s account human purpose is directly indexed to God, the creator. Specifically, humans have their highest aim in contemplating their maker. This purpose surfaces several times throughout Cyril’s responses to Julian about the first humans. First, in response to Julian’s suggestion that, absent an original law in Eden, the first humans would have had no opportunity to transgress (fr. 14), Cyril explains that the law functioned to provide continual reminder to humans of their creator, as a beckoning towards contemplation of the divine. Even with the risks associated with introducing such a law, Cyril insists that this purpose is entirely justified, since “there could be nothing more precious than a true contemplation toward God (τῆς ἀληθοῦς θεωρίας τῆς ἐπὶ θεῷ), since it creates in us participation in the utmost blessedness” (3.16.7–9). He cites Alexander of Aphrodisias as further evidence that, as Cyril summarizes, “happiness (τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν) is in the contemplation of divine things (τῆ τῶν θείων θεωρίᾳ)” (Alexander’s quote at 3.17.4–16; Cyril’s statement at 3.17.17–19). A few pages later Cyril returns to the point again, responding now to Julian’s dismay that

(according to his interpretation of Moses) God would withhold the knowledge of good and evil. Cyril insists that “God did indeed create man ‘for good works’” (quoting Eph. 2:10), providing every good needed for this task. Specifically, God fashioned “such a mind (νοῦς) that it is possible to look on God and his affairs” (at least, Cyril clarifies, “according to the limits designated for its nature”) (3.24.1–6).

Equally important in Cyril’s accounting is that this most basic purpose of contemplation be pursued by humans *freely*.<sup>31</sup> To be forced into right actions would, for Cyril, be entirely against the plan of giving humans a rational nature: “For it was necessary to honor the rational creation with freedom of action (ἐθελουργία<sup>32</sup>) and to show the fruit of free choice (προαιρέσεως ἐλευθέρας) as dexterous towards good works (τὸ ἐν ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς δεξιόν)” (3.7.22–24). He explains in further detail in book 8 that “every rational and noetic creature in the heavens has a freely-chosen impulse (αὐθαίρετον . . . ὁρμὴν) towards whatever it might choose to do, and an inclination (ῥοπὴν) toward each act that is free from imposed necessity (ἀνάγκης ἐλευθέραν).” This fact is what makes it appropriate for good deeds to be rewarded and bad deeds to be condemned. Thus, as with the beings “in the heavens,” God also “permitted man on earth to go through life with an unforced faculty of judgment (ἀκαταβιάστῳ γνώμῃ), so that we ourselves might also proceed on every way of good deeds freely.” The

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<sup>31</sup> For more on Cyril’s understanding of human will, see Marie-Odile Boulnois, “Liberté, origine du mal et prescience divine selon Cyrille d’Alexandrie,” *Revue d’Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 46, no. 1 (2000): 61–82.

<sup>32</sup> Cyril seems to have coined this word, which occurs only once in the TLG. Slightly more frequent is the adjectival form, ἐθελουργός, ὄν.

corollary, as Cyril points out here in book 8 and in book 3, is that a man himself has the “reigns of his own desires and is born about by self-bidden inclinations,” which Cyril explicitly clarifies as being potentially “towards what is good and what is not so” (8.47.1–12).<sup>33</sup>

Before considering how this ability to self-direct the human course culminated in terrible consequences for humans, it will first be worthwhile to point out how much rhetorical work this teaching about free will achieves for Cyril, as he both casts doubt on the coherence of Julian’s arguments and as he shores up the plausibility of his own. In *AJ* 4.25–28 Cyril responds to Julian’s explanation that the diversity of laws amongst various nations is tied to the diversity of the kinds of peoples themselves: “the nature of humans has established laws that correspond to it (οἰκείους ἑαυτῆ),” says Julian (fr. 22.2–3). Cyril detects here a determinism that would lead directly to an affront to the one who created this variety of natures. On Julian’s account, he suggests, humans have “not been made in the same manner (ἐν ἴσῳ τρόπῳ), but rather we differ one from another in essence (οὐσιωδῶς).” If this is the case, then there is no “freedom of thoughtful purpose in each person (τῆς ἐκάστου διανοίας τὸ ἐλεύθερον)” (4.25.3–7). Cyril pushes that such a lack of freedom must irresistibly lead to blaming the creator for the wicked nature that produces wicked behavior: “And if there are some people, as he thinks, that are sick with a natural depravity (φυσικὴν φαυλότητα), then the affair would amount to a clear accusation against the one that brought [them] into existence”

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<sup>33</sup> See *AJ* 3.10.1–6, for example, where Cyril again notes that God built into the “human constitution” an “inclination and power (ἐξουσία) towards anything (ἐφ’ ὅτῳ).”

(4.25.22–24). As we saw in Chapter 2, some of Julian’s most powerful evidence for the vast diversity of ruling gods lies in the fact that this divine diversity explains various diversities in the lower, created order. But Cyril points out that, if you follow this reasoning (as Julian himself does), then the morally significant differences between laws which are tied to differing human natures are ultimately attributable to the differing deities. As such an account leaves no space for “freedom of thoughtful purpose” in people, even wicked deeds are due to a direct causal influence of the deities. Julian’s defense of the diversity of the ruling gods is thus rendered less plausible by Cyril through his deployment of a pattern of reasoning that is built around a staunch commitment to human freedom. We will return to this topic in Chapter 4.

Cyril also uses the principle of human freedom to defend the plausibility of various episodes within his Christian narrative. For example, as just noted above Julian takes issue with introduction of a law in Eden, since absent that law Adam and Eve would have had no opportunity to sin. Cyril explains that this purpose was to recall them to a constant memory of their creator. But, he says, “in a different explanation (ἑτέρως),” this law was also beneficial in that “it provided, for a while, training in obedience (ἐμμελετᾶν τὸ εὐήνιον) for those who were so young and exercise in self-control (πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν)” (3.15.18–20). The reference to ἐγκράτεια puts us in the realm of the will, given how (as we’ll see shortly) Cyril explains the fall into sin as tied to ἀκρασία, “incontinence” (the two terms are etymologically linked and, with the different prefixes, opposite in meaning). In short, the free “inclining” of human nature needs a direction in which to “incline,” and God’s law concerning the tree provided

opportunity for Adam and Eve to train themselves to incline toward obedience and self-control, as is pleasing to their maker. But such an account would not be possible without centering human freedom as a leading feature that needs to be incorporated into Cyril's explanation.

Similarly, in book 5 human freedom plays an integral role as Cyril rebuts one of Julian's attacks. In fr. 30 Julian expresses disapproval at the apparent ascription of jealousy to God by Moses. As I suggested in Chapter 2, Julian's comment here is probably not a full-out attack on Moses, but Cyril certainly feels the need to directly defend the claim attributed to God by Moses that "I am a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24). He explains in *AJ* 5.6–7 that "jealous" is only improperly ascribed to God (as an accommodation to human modes of speech), and that it refers to God's desire that his people not depart from true worship. Cyril later mentions a possible counter-objection: God should simply force people to remain faithful, if that's what he really wants. But in response, Cyril poses a rhetorical question, "How then would there be a freedom of thoughtful purpose in man (τῆς ἀνθρώπου διανοίας τὸ ἐλεύθερον) and a state of being free toward whatever seems good (ἀφειμένον εἰς τὸ δοκοῦν)?" (5.11.26–27). In other words, Cyril's defensive response about the biblical ascription of "jealousy" to God relies, in part, on humans being free to depart from God—"jealousy" names God's wish that they do not do so and explains his response (so to speak) when they freely do depart. Human freedom, again, plays an integral role in Cyril's buttressing of his Christian narrative, here as it allows him to maintain Moses's authoritative status as

one who spoke truly about God, even if through accommodating and anthropomorphic language.

These references scattered throughout *Against Julian* show how Cyril thinks that contemplation of God is the highest aim for humans, and that humans have an ability to freely choose their course. We need now to finish this introductory analysis of human characters by attending to the anthropological scheme and vocabulary that informs Cyril's arguments. These details come out clearly in *AJ* 3.23–28 where Cyril responds to Julian's troubling of Moses's portrayal of God as restricting Adam's and Eve's access to the knowledge of good and evil (by forbidding them to eat from the tree which grants knowledge of good and evil), of which "there is nothing more valuable" (fr. 16). Cyril answers that this "knowledge" of discriminating between good and evil is an *experiential* knowledge. Scripture indicates by 'knowledge of good and evil' "not knowledge being received in bare and simple understanding (ἐν ψιλῇ καὶ μόνῃ . . . γνώσει) of things, but [knowledge] in action and experience (ἐν δυνάμει καὶ πείρᾳ)" (3.23.21–26). Cyril proceeds to insist that (as explained above) God created humans "for good works," and he then explains how this required a genuine freedom.

He then explains the mechanisms by which Adam's and Eve's offense against God occurred and the consequence which that offense wrought on their initial constitution. That consequence simply *is* the experiential knowledge, in their very bodies, of what distinguishes good from evil. Cyril simply assumes that the body which

God created for Adam was initially “superior to death and corruption” (3.24.13–14).<sup>34</sup> God built into this incorruptibility “innate impulses for food and having children (ἐμφύτους μὲν τὰς ἐφέσεις . . . τὰς ἐπί γέ . . . τοῖς ἐδωδίμοις καὶ παιδογονίαις).” Cyril explains that, in this state, the humans were “free from tyranny (ἀτυράννευτον) to inclinations (ῥοπαῖς).” They could “freely” do what they liked, “not yet being subject to passions of the flesh that stem from corruption (τῆς σαρκὸς τοῖς ἐκ τῆς φθορᾶς πάθεισιν)” (3.25.2–5). But, Cyril proceeds:

When he offended the God who made him by disregarding the command that was given, the eating of forbidden things became the origin of incontinence (ἀρχὴ . . . ἀκρασίας) for him, and henceforth he was conquered by desires (ἡδοναῖς) after baseness, and the “law of sin” entered the nature of the body, and, as it were, passions of inordinate desires (τὰ τῶν ἐκτόπων ἐπιθυμιῶν . . . πάθη) sprouted from the unholy root of corruption, and . . . he opposed himself to zeal (προθυμίας) for any of the best things. (3.25.7–14)

Cyril does not, of course, work through a systematic anthropology here; he is instead filling out a rebuttal to Julian’s provocation by explaining what “knowledge of good and evil” entails. Still, this passage contains clear pieces of an anthropological framework and vocabulary that explains more about the human characters in Cyril’s narrative.

The close connection between corruption and passions is noteworthy. Cyril had just explained that the original human superiority to corruption allowed them to have certain kinds of “impulses,” ἐφέσεις. Since he names eating and having children, he seems to think of these “impulses” as those which preserve and create more human life. Such impulses, however, do not interfere with genuine freedom. There is a subtle

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<sup>34</sup> Though he does feel the need to defend this claim against “unbelievers” who “laugh when they hear what is said” (3.24.14–15).

irony, then, in Cyril's account, wherein even though impulses toward eating are, generally-speaking, unproblematic, it was the "eating (ἡ βρωσις) of forbidden things" that introduced "incontinence (ἀκρασία)"—especially given that God's command to not eat from one particular tree was meant to provide training "πρὸς ἐγκράτειαν," "in self-control" (3.15.18–20). The freedom built into human nature has a kind of indeterminacy that must be resolved one way or the other, and the consequences of leaning either way directly mirror each other, inversely. Freedom oriented toward God is tied to life and self-control, whereas freedom used against his wishes is tied to corruption and incontinence. Cyril is not entirely clear here about what ties together each of these pairings (life/self-control and corruption/incontinence), but clearly corruption is correlated to incontinence and the related passions and desires, which, as he says, "spring forth from the unholy root of corruption."

Whatever the case, Cyril draws on the "all-wise (πάνσοφος) Paul" to push the case even further, so that now humans are not at all free but, as Paul outlines in Rom. 7, enslaved to the influence of sin: the "ingrained movement of the flesh (τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἔμφυτον κίνημα)" clearly show that one "is constrained (καταβιάζεται) in the human mind by necessity . . . to do what is not lawful" (3.25.23–29). All of this began with the original transgression, from which "corruption leapt into the nature of man," which itself caused the introduction of freedom-restricting passions: "all sorts of passions stemming from it (τὰ ἐξ αὐτῆς πολύτροπα . . . πάθη) entered simultaneously" (3.26.18–19). This experience, says Cyril, quite literally embodies what Scripture means by "knowledge of good and evil": it is the practical knowledge of differentiating between

good and evil, as known only by one who has in fact done good and evil. Unfortunately for Adam, Eve, and their entire progeny, this experiential knowledge produced physical corruption alongside the corruption of freedom, leaving them bound to beastly passions after baseness. These are the human characters of Cyril's Christian narrative.<sup>35</sup>

The final noteworthy feature about human characters is why, according to Cyril, there is such a broad variety of customs and laws evident among them. Given that this variety plays such a strong role in Julian's argumentation (in that his cosmology of the gods and the broader back-story can account for such an obvious feature of the cosmos), Cyril also briefly addresses how his own, Christian way of reckoning up the cosmos could also account for this obvious feature of diverse modes of life among humans. Cyril provides a counter-explanation in *AJ* 4.27, within the response (examined above) to Julian's claim that different natures cause different laws and other visible characteristics. Having concluded that Julian's account unavoidably implicates the creator in "implanting an innate baseness in some people," Cyril explains rather that "the 'difference' of manners (τρόπων) 'among the nations'" should be attributed to "the customs and upbringing and to the leaders of the races (ἔθροισί τε καὶ ἀνατροφαῖς καὶ τοῖς τῶν γενῶν ἀρχηγέταις)," and the variety of laws is thus linked to their varying "faculties of judgment (γνώμῃς)" (4.27.9–15). Cyril thus accounts for differences

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<sup>35</sup> Cyril goes on to explain how the back-story of human sin makes intelligible the incarnation of the Word of God, explaining how he "reforms the nature of man into what it was in the beginning" and "commands the ancient honor of the nature to be made recalled" (3.27.1–5). The close tie between corruption and passions is again evident in the formula of the incarnation's remedy: the Word was "clearly stronger than both death and corruption (φθορᾶς) and fleshly pleasure and other desires (σαρκικῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τῶν ἐτέρων ἐπιθυμιῶν) which prey upon the weak and feeble mind, [and] which have corruption as an ally" (3.27.19–21).

among peoples by appeal to various contingent realities—“nurture” rather than “nature”—and even to the free faculty of judgment in each human (and especially in those who lead groups of people). It is not a difference within human nature itself that creates differences of laws and practices, but rather an indeterminacy built into human nature which becomes self-determined in a variety of different ways throughout time.

#### IV. Plot

It is now time to tease out the plot of Cyril’s narrative that undergirds the varied non-narrative material advanced throughout *Against Julian*. Much in this section has been covered in depth in the preceding sections of this chapter or will be covered in greater depth in the next sections where I examine more closely two prominent themes in Cyril’s arguments. However, it is still worthwhile to piece together these many elements in an overview form to see how they cohere as a plot.<sup>36</sup>

The cosmos and all that is in it began when the eternally existent Triune God summoned it into existence. All spiritual beings, all humans and animals, all inanimate material are united in the fact that all were created and have an origin, over and against their un-originated creator. Among all created things, the human place is pronounced by the fact that when God fashioned all things, he made humans in the

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<sup>36</sup> As has been the case with much of this chapter, many of the events in the following summary are abstracted from arguments that Cyril makes wherein his main point is certainly not the “plot point” which I take from his comments. The next two chapters will return to reading with his arguments rather than mining them for data points. But in this section, references to *AJ* simply give the source from which a plot point was extracted.

image of their creator.<sup>37</sup> The first human was Adam, who was then given Eve as a wife, herself created in a unique way—namely, as fashioned directly out of part of his body, so as to create a natural affection. Eve thus became a “helper” to Adam in that, as a pair, they could then pursue the creator’s command to “Increase and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28).<sup>38</sup> But it was primarily the creator’s wish that humans learn how to contemplate himself—and they would have to learn, over time, how to make progress in understanding what is ultimately ineffable.<sup>39</sup> Largely with this purpose in mind, God gave one prohibitory command to these first humans: not to eat from one particular tree that was in the garden that they lived in. That tree and this command would serve as a reminder of their creator as well as an opportunity to exercise their free will which would be instrumental in progress towards contemplating God.<sup>40</sup>

Of course, such a command also introduced the opportunity for the first humans’ disobedience, leading to the introduction of corruption and turpitude that they themselves could not eradicate. Though Cyril does not probe the similarities or the relationship between the two,<sup>41</sup> there was also an angelic fall, wherein a portion of the host of spiritual beings created by God also rejected his lordship and proceeded to endeavor to pull humans further away from God.<sup>42</sup> God mercifully introduced death to humans who were originally superior to dying as a limit to the evil that could be

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<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., *AJ* 1.32, 2.28–29, 2.34, and 9.5.

<sup>38</sup> See *AJ* 3.5–7.

<sup>39</sup> See *AJ* 3.16–17.

<sup>40</sup> See *AJ* 3.10–15.

<sup>41</sup> As does, for example, Augustine in the *City of God* 11–12.

<sup>42</sup> See below for a further analysis of the angelic fall and its consequences.

wrought through the new human bondage to wicked deeds and its exasperation by misleading demonic actors.<sup>43</sup>

For Cyril, human history after the introduction of physical and moral corruption becomes a long history of the various consequences of the original disobedience, though the Triune creator's gradual rectification of sin is also apparent. Often Cyril highlights the relevant movements of history by tracing various lines of human descent. So, two lines stemmed from Adam and Eve: the wicked line of Cain, who murdered his brother Abel; and that of Seth, whose descendants like Enos exhibit holier lives. These two lines, however, eventually merged and produced the worldwide wickedness which prompted the worldwide purging flood, from which only Noah and his family escaped.<sup>44</sup>

Up until the time of Noah, even amidst the evils committed by humans there was still a singular practice of worship of the one God. Shortly later, after the multiplication of languages at Babel, humanity broke into many different lines, which coincided with the introduction of polytheistic worship.<sup>45</sup> The multiplication of human groupings coincided with an expanding number of ways to worship various creatures instead of the creator.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See *AJ* 3.30.

<sup>44</sup> Noah and his sons were thus, says Cyril, "a second beginning of humanity" (1.8.9–10).

<sup>45</sup> See *AJ* 1.21.

<sup>46</sup> Along with *AJ* 1.21, see also 2.20, 2.24, and 7.17 for other examples of how Cyril elaborates the vast range of objects of worship that humans devised.

It is noteworthy that, in his actual historical overview within book 1, when Cyril reaches this point of human multiplication and expansion he first introduces non-biblical history.<sup>47</sup> Up until this point the biblical information seems to have covered all humans, but after the separation of humans out of Babel, he begins to correlate biblical history to non-biblical history. It is quite clear, though, (and in keeping with Cyril's stated purpose for the history of book 1) that the non-biblical history does not show any kind of progress or development. Cyril does list major events (like the fall of Troy), but these events merely function as points of reference to which biblical history can be indexed.

Though Cyril thinks that many lines of humanity extended outward after Babel, the narrative of his plot focuses on one such line: that of Abraham, since God's rectifying work focused in him and his heritage. As will become clear shortly, the plot does not thereby cease accounting for the other peoples. It is simply that the rectification that will incorporate them, too, needs to be worked out in its initial stages within one particular line. Abraham received the privilege of being the founder of that line largely due to his refusal to follow all the other peoples in their polytheistic worship.<sup>48</sup> Thus his departure from the Chaldean nation of his home marked a rejection of the error that swept through the world after Babel. Abraham was aware, Cyril insists, that the one God is threefold, in a manner congruous with his level of understanding.

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<sup>47</sup> Specifically, Ninus, "the first notable ruler of the Assyrians" (1.10.1-5).

<sup>48</sup> See *AJ* 1.22.

But he was able to hold this awareness alongside a firm rejection of the polytheistic error.<sup>49</sup>

Though Abraham was the founding figure of this new line (the nation of the Hebrews), Moses was like a second founding leader, the chronicler of their history (and the whole world's, in its relevant details), and a perceptive theologian.<sup>50</sup> Cyril makes no comments or allusions in *Against Julian* as to why the following is so, but at an early stage of the Hebrew people they ended up in captivity in Egypt.<sup>51</sup> While there, they largely lost sight of Abraham's original monotheistic insistence and, instead, became used to thinking and worshipping like the Egyptians did, as if there were many gods. God thus consented to meet them where they were (so to speak) and gave them laws and commands that would be recognizable to them in the commands' certain similarities to Egyptian customs—but commands that would also begin to turn the Hebrews away from the customs surrounding the polytheistic error and towards the kind of worship that God truly desires.

The people were led out of Egypt by Moses and eventually settled in the land that God had allotted them, though they proved inept at discerning the pedagogical structure of the law. By and large, the Hebrews latched onto the elements of the Mosaic commands that somewhat resembled the practices of other, polytheistic peoples, and

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<sup>49</sup> See *AJ* 1.23–27.

<sup>50</sup> *AJ* 1.28–34 traces Moses's theological teachings.

<sup>51</sup> Cyril presumably would have simply followed the narrative of Genesis, which explains straightforwardly enough how Abraham's descendants ended up in Egypt during a famine and were later taken advantage of by the native Egyptians. Of course, it's worth noting that many ancient historians thought that the Hebrews had no existence as a people before the exodus from Egypt. See Chapter 2, "Genesis and Jewish Historiography" in Droge, *Homer or Moses?*, 12–48.

they used those elements as opportunity to stray back toward practices from which Moses intended the law to wean them. It was largely for this reason that God allowed the Hebrew nation to be conquered by other nations throughout their history—he allowed this people to be overcome and governed by other nations who were themselves under the prevailing spiritual influence of the false gods toward which the Hebrews kept straying.<sup>52</sup>

There were exceptions, of course, to the failure to discern the actual intent of the law. These are found notably in “the prophets,” which for Cyril includes people like the famous king David.<sup>53</sup> “The prophets,” in fact, mark a new chapter in the plot of Cyril’s narrative. He suggests in a different text that the time of Moses, his successor Joshua, and the subsequent ruling judges belonged to three similar “periods” of time (καιροί), in which the law was “still unpurified (ἀπερικάθατος ἔτι).” The prophets mark a next, penultimate period.<sup>54</sup> Though Cyril does not explicitly provide this framing within *Against Julian*, it makes sense of his explanations of the prophets as noticing and proclaiming the aspects of the Mosaic law that were meant to guide the Hebrews towards a truly desirable worship. They recognized the temporary and

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<sup>52</sup> See *AJ* 6.45.

<sup>53</sup> On several occasions Cyril introduces a biblical question as authored by ὁ προφήτης Δαβίδ (e.g., *Praef.* 2.11, 3.13.9).

<sup>54</sup> *De Adoratione*, PG 68, 588A. As noted by Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontificio istituto biblico, 1952), 170–71. Cyril is here commenting on Leviticus 19:23 and takes the five years included in a regulation (about a fruit tree) as indicative of five stages of the fruitfulness of the law (the prophets belong to the fourth). In the first three stages, the tree/law is not profitable, but through the fourth and into the fifth it becomes so.

pedagogical value of Moses's commands and strove to make this clear to a people who, by and large, preferred to be like the rest of the nations of the world.

In this prophetic period, complete clarity about God's full plan and purpose for humans was still lacking. The prophets recognized that the law had been carefully constructed to wean the people off one mode of worship, but they only began to gesture towards the God's final desired mode. What needed to be left behind was rather clear, but the form of worship that was to be taken up instead was still only sketchy. In the final "period" of Cyril's paradigm, that clarity is finally reached.<sup>55</sup> Abraham, Moses, and the prophets had been aware that God was threefold, and there was even the occasional and shadowy hint that one member of this Trinity would sojourn on earth. The final period of the plot began, then, when the Son of the Father was born from a virgin and became a man.

The incarnation of the Son was the culminating step in God's gradual plan of rectification for all humans. The bodily corruption which was at the root of all manner of human evil was turned back by the coming of the incorruptible God as a corruptible man who died and came back to life. And this work really was *for all humanity*. There had been hints of the way that God's focused action in Abraham's line of descent was always going to culminate in rescue for all the lines that had gone astray from true

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<sup>55</sup> As Kerrigan points out (171, note 1), Cyril elsewhere speaks in terms of three (and not five) periods, which shows that the exact number is negotiable, especially if Cyril is exegeting a Scriptural passage which provides specific numbers to be interpreted. Still, even when he speaks of five periods, he groups the first three together, and these correspond to the first period of a three-period model. The fourth and fifth (of a five-period model) then are explained in the same way as the second and third (of a three-period model).

worship.<sup>56</sup> But the coming of Christ showed (and showed through events that are entirely discernible to even a casual observer, says Cyril<sup>57</sup>) that the apparently focused location of God’s work in former times was actually always universally expansive. For Cyril, this coming effected the reuniting of the various lines of humanity into one entity, unified in its right worship of the one, true God. The conversion of the nations confirms this aim, as does the downfall of the many institutions and practices that had been built around the false worship of the demons who had been masquerading as gods and trying to draw off peoples from the true God.

Though the resurrection of Christ achieved definite accomplishments in the spiritual realm, the struggle between humans and malicious actors is not completely concluded. This explains for Cyril many of the dynamics of history between the time of Christ’s tenure on earth and his own, fifth-century world. It explains at least Julian’s apostasy and ensuing attempts to restore the former practices under the gods.<sup>58</sup> Julian’s deviation briefly broke a pattern wherein even the political structures of the current empire were being transformed into instruments for proclaiming the glory of the true God. By Cyril’s time, however, Theodosius II ruled as emperor of Rome, and he better mirrored the “great emperor” of the universe, Christ himself. Cyril offers his refutation

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<sup>56</sup> See Cyril’s arguments in *AJ* 3.48–52. See also 4.37.

<sup>57</sup> Cyril explains that Christ “pushed along” the plan “to this point.” He also shows how well before Christ’s coming the prophets had been predicting an eventual completion of the incorporation of the nations. But, even if one did not believe the prophetic declarations, Cyril says that now “the fulfillment of the events (τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκβάσεως) is uncontestably sufficient for our certainty—for the multitude of the nations was called and made holy through Christ, by a distinguishing faith in him” (3.53.24–27).

<sup>58</sup> See *AJ Praef.*4

of Julian to Theodosius as a holy offering that is “for the glory of God,” but which can be offered to an emperor who himself displays such “mercy and piety for Christ.” We might say, then, that Cyril’s implicit narrative extends to his own time where dramatic action is still unfolding, in which he himself is an actor. The advent of Christ did, indeed, strike a mortal blow to the tyrannical influence of the demons, but their influence is still active (Julian himself had become a “servant of impure demons”).<sup>59</sup> True worship has been revealed and established and is practiced throughout the world, but the truth still needs to progress further. *Against Julian* is a contribution to that project.

## V. Leitmotifs in the Narrative Structure of *Against Julian*

Though the foregoing is adequate for an overview of the setting, characters, and plot of Cyril’s narrative, it will now be useful to delve more deeply into two pervasive themes. Each features prominently as Cyril reintegrates the coherence of a Christian narrative against Julian’s narrative-fracturing arguments and as he counter-fractures Julian’s Hellenic narrative to subsume its episodes into his Christian story. The first is tied to how God relates to the creation, particularly through economic accommodation. A significant subset of this theme pertains to Moses, the law, and the prophets, and the way that God’s accommodating progressive revelation explains the role of the Mosaic

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<sup>59</sup> *Praef.* 4.5. Cyril does not give a clear account of what precisely happened to the evil spiritual powers after Christ was manifest, and he does not explain their continued influence. He does insist, though, that Julian was right to note that the oracles fell silent (fr. 45), though Julian “has not perceived the reason that the lie lost its power and that the ‘native oracles went silent,’ just as he says. For when Christ shone on the world, all tyranny of demons was shaken, and . . . the fraud was destroyed . . .” (6.20.26–31).

law and the doctrinal unity of Moses and the prophets. Cyril's understanding of divine accommodation is perhaps his most prominent defensive tool for rebutting Julian's attacks that Christians have no defensible claim to be heirs of an ancient (and the only true) tradition.<sup>60</sup> The second focus is on the precise relationship between sin, polytheism, and the human structures that embody and perpetuate the "polytheistic error," as Cyril calls it. These interrelating features form a fundamental cornerstone for Cyril's offensive moments of renarrating Hellenic episodes.

#### V.A God's Mode of Relating to Humanity

As I briefly explored above, the οἰκονομία of God is a key concept which undergirds many of Cyril's responses to Julian. For Cyril, the term refers to the management of affairs by someone through methods that are carefully adapted to be understandable and beneficial to those for whom the management is carried out. This definition now needs further unpacking and illustrating. First to see is how this theme appears briefly in several episodes before considering it at length with Moses and the law.

For Cyril, knowledge of God is the highest aim of humans. However, this creates two, interrelated problems for humans. First is that God is ineffable, beyond all human understanding, as Cyril points out frequently. Still, advancement in understanding about God is possible, though such progress is complicated by human epistemic

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<sup>60</sup> For an overview of the prevalent theme of accommodation in early Christian thought, see Stephen D. Benin, *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought*, SUNY Series in Judaica (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 1–126. Benin's survey does not include Cyril who, as this study shows, mirrors the interpretation of earlier exegetes in many of the following details.

weaknesses of two kinds: (natural) youthful inexperience, and the (culpable) distortions of sinful actions. The following illustrates Cyril's pervasive appeals to God's accommodation as he explains God's various modes of interaction with humans throughout history. At almost every stage of history, God adapts his mode of managing human affairs to be intelligible and beneficial for humans in their limited epistemic state. The most central instance (at least before Christ), as we'll see, is with Moses and the law.

V.A.1: *Adam and Eve*

The two impediments to knowing God (the ineffability of the object of knowledge and the weakness of the knowers) are almost always intertwined when Cyril discusses the need for God to adapt his communication to human weakness. Cyril probably would have affirmed that inexperience alone requires this divine accommodation, as can be inferred from his comments in *AJ* 3.10–19. Here Cyril extends Julian's objection about God prohibiting access to the tree of knowledge one step further by posing the further, hypothetical question about why God would put a prohibited tree in the *middle* of the garden and not on some obscure outer edge where it would be less tempting. He answers that the law would have functioned to call Adam and Eve to an everlasting remembrance of its lawgiver, and furthermore that it “provided, for a while, training in obedience for those who were so young, and exercise in self-control” (3.15.15–20). They needed to have their thinking raised up “from earthly things,” so they could undertake “true contemplation of God,” which “produces

in us a participation in the utmost blessedness” (3.16.2–9). Even before sin clouded the theological vision of the first humans, they needed accommodating aids to seeing God.

But most of the times that he refers to God’s adapting communication and action to the level of humans, that adaptation meets weakness that is due to an epistemic immaturity *and* takes account for sinful habits of thought and action that need to be corrected. Cyril frequently returns to this manner of explaining divine action in his responses to Julian. In one respect, his story of divine interaction with humans is a long story of God addressing humans in regularly adapted manners. But even before the introduction of sin, God was already carefully shaping Adam’s and Eve’s Edenic context so that they could advance in theological understanding.

#### V.A.2: *Abraham*

God also interacts with many other pivotal characters in an accommodating way. Cyril explains several features of Abraham’s life in this manner. For instance, in book 1 after finishing his historical recounting that proves Moses’s historical anteriority to the philosophers of the Hellenic tradition (1.5–19), he then explains the central tenets of Hebrew theology (1.22–34). His conclusion at *AJ* 1.34 is that the apostles and evangelists were in complete agreement with Moses, who himself had taken on the very same doctrines that Abraham held (see 1.22.11–14).

To uphold the claim of theological continuity running from Abraham through Moses and the prophets down to the apostles and even Cyril’s time, Cyril must show that his contemporary Nicene doctrines were already upheld by Abraham. He suggests that the commitment to the existence of only one God was what set Abraham apart

from his Chaldean contemporaries.<sup>61</sup> But he also suggests that, “When time sharpened his intellect for progress in right knowledge, then, yes then he was subtly instructed in the principles of the divine.” Cyril clarifies that Abraham learned that the one God is understood (νοεῖται) as “a holy and consubstantial Trinity”—but, he learned this “as still in types and sensible ways” (1.24.12–18).

Cyril then directly appeals to the rationale of divine accommodation to explain why Abraham learned “in types and sensible ways.” “And why is that?” he asks.

Because, to those who have only recently been called to a knowledge of truth and who do not have a mind that is familiar with the sight of it, the light of the vision of God seems and really is somehow unapproachable. For such knowledge needs a mind that is established, and trained, and which knows how to see clearly, and, furthermore, which has brought in faith (1.24.19–24).

Though Abraham was correct to reject the Chaldean theological errors, his call by God and training in right thinking was still but recent. As such, his mind was not capable of achieving a “vision of God” in an advanced way. He needed a pedagogy that he could understand. Cyril then recounts the story of the Abraham’s visitors at Mamre, explaining in typical early Christian fashion how Abraham received instruction in the Trinity through the episode. Such images were, of course, “obscure” and “inferior to the truth,” but they were “quite useful for guidance, I mean into things beyond understanding and reason (τὰ ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον)” (1.27.1–3).

In this first example about Abraham, Cyril is not yet responding directly to Julian’s attempts to coopt episodes from Cyril’s Christian narrative. Later comments by

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<sup>61</sup> According to Cyril, it was after the flood, at the building of the tower of Babel that humans began to err in worshipping other gods/demons. Abraham resisted this mistake.

Cyril on Abraham, however, accentuate the importance of the notion of divine accommodation for Cyril—not just for the coherence of his narrative structure in general, but also for rebutting the specific kind of coopting attacks that Julian used.

As explained in the previous chapter, in the final (extant) stage of the argument in *Against the Galileans*, Julian invoked Abraham’s sacrificial practices in Genesis 15 as evidence of his proto-Hellenic quality (and thus as evidence of how Christians are not true to the Hebrew tradition). The scrupulous details that Abraham heeded with respect to the animals that were to be slaughtered and offered doubtlessly attracted Julian to this passage, but his explicit point is about how (as he interprets it) bird-auguring was at play, seen in the text’s pointed inclusion of birds appearing and alighting beside Abraham after he has arranged the divided animals.

Cyril quickly dispenses with the point about birds. As noted in the prior chapter, he reads that Abraham “drove off” (σεσόβηκεν) the birds (rather than “sat down” with them [συνεκάθισεν], as Julian’s version reads), which he thinks shouldn’t be surprising, given that the birds were probably meat-eating vultures and would have upset Abraham’s carefully arranged offerings (10.41.1–5). Cyril takes more interest in explaining why Abraham participates in such elaborate animal sacrifices which, in the cultural imagination of his time, perhaps resembled the kind of animal sacrifice that Julian had re-initiated.<sup>62</sup> The central feature of his account is divine accommodation.

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<sup>62</sup> See Scott Bradbury, “Julian’s Pagan Revival and the Decline of Blood Sacrifice,” *Phoenix* 49, no. 4 (1995): 331–56.

Cyril explains that Abraham had just received a monumental promise from God (i.e., that the whole earth was going to be inhabited by Abraham’s offspring). Since so great a promise is difficult to believe,<sup>63</sup> Abraham asked for a sign. Cyril notes that God was fully trustworthy, and there was no need for Abraham to disbelieve. But, since Abraham “was still at the early stages of believing, [God] condescended to him (ἦν ἐν ἀρχαῖς τοῦ πιστεύειν ἔτι, συγκαθίσταται θεὸς αὐτῷ)” and agreed to verify his promise with an oath (10.40.19–20).

According to Cyril, God went a step further, however, and did not merely give an oath. He initiated an oath-making ritual that Abraham would have recognized from his time with the Chaldeans.<sup>64</sup> Cyril notes that “it was the Chaldeans’ custom for the strongest of oaths to be made by going through the middle of ‘two halves,’” as was confirmed by “local law” (10.40.24–26). Thus, when God passed through the halves of the slaughtered sacrifices, he was conforming to local and contingent custom for Abraham’s sake. As further evidence of this pattern, Cyril quotes from Sophocles’ *Antigone*<sup>65</sup> to show, again, an ancient custom that includes the act of passing through things in oath-making. Sophocles’ example also includes fire, though, and with this

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<sup>63</sup> Cyril explains that “the unexpectedness of such matters invites unbelief (τὰ γὰρ τοι τῶν πραγμάτων ἀδόκητα καὶ ἀπιστεῖσθαι φιλεῖ)” (10.40.16).

<sup>64</sup> Cyril points out that, though God only commanded Abraham to offer specific kinds of animals, Abraham introduced even more details—especially cutting them in half. Cyril takes this as evidence that God was using a custom that Abraham already knew, seeing that Abraham didn’t need to be told all the details of how to proceed with the oath-swearing ritual; he simply knew how to divide and prepare the sacrifices (10.40).

<sup>65</sup> 10.40.39–40; *Antigone* 264–5: “And we were prepared to take in the hands red-hot metals,/ And progress through fire and swear by the gods.” The TLG database (at the time of this writing) includes no author quoting these lines other than Cyril.

element Cyril also points out that God's appearance as fire communicates something that is consistent across the biblical witness. "And again," he says, "the divine and unmixed nature is represented in the form of fire" (10.40.46–47), referencing back to *AJ* 10.23 where Cyril explained that another of Julian's errors lay in overlooking how fire signified the divine nature.

The main point, though, is how Cyril employs the idea of divine accommodation to account for an episode of the Christian narrative that otherwise appears to fit perfectly well with activities and customs that might appear pagan: "the God of all things condescended (συγκαθίσταται) to the faint-heartedness (μικροψυχίαις) of the elder and made an oath economically (οικονομικῶς), according to the custom of the Chaldaeans" (10.40.42–45).

#### V.A.3: *The Nations*

A kind of divine accommodation also plays a central role in several of Cyril's explanations about God's interaction with all the nations before the coming of Christ. In a series of Julian's fragments (frs. 19–20) Moses is portrayed as teaching that his God was the god only of the Hebrews. Building on this alternative account of Moses, Julian proceeds to accuse the Christians of transforming Moses's God into a universally-ruling God who in fact does not provide for all peoples in his domain (since, Julian argues, on the Christian accounting God provided to the nations "no prophet, no anointing, no teacher, no messenger about future things," etc.; *AG* fr. 20.15–17).

To reassert the coherence of a Christian presentation of God's providence over the entire world, Cyril employs numerous strategies throughout *AJ* 3.38–53. Several

arguments are exegetical and function to reestablish Cyril's version of divine providence. For example, Cyril argues that: Moses clearly states that God created all things and thus cannot be a localized God, as Julian would interpret him (3.38); furthermore, the prophets confirm him as God over all things (3.43); several scriptural episodes wouldn't make sense if Moses's God didn't reign universally (such as the flood, which covered *all* the earth—how could a 'sectional' God pull this off, as it would encroach on other gods' territories?; or, the plagues of Egypt, which would similarly encroach?; 3.42, 3.44); and so forth.<sup>66</sup>

But Julian did more than reconstrue Moses as a localized lawgiver, presenting teachings about a localized God. He also challenged the plausibility of a Christian account which claims that God universally rules, given that (to his perspective) this god's rule is not evident among much of the world. A simple reassertion of Scriptural data to the contrary would not have been enough to rebut this challenge—Julian's argument is about which narrative is capable of plausibly construing the scriptural evidence in the first place. Cyril also needed to provide enough of a believable rationale to make his construal of the scriptural data plausible.

For that explanation he turns, again, to an argument which appeals to divine accommodation. This argument is only made, however, as a concession. To Julian's

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<sup>66</sup> Cyril also draws, again, on the universal history he established in book 1 to explain that, in the Christian accounting, God's providence for all clearly *preceded* the establishment of the nation of Israel. He quickly traces the history of Adam through Noah, then down to Abraham, as a way of showing that God was ruling over *all* of humanity (some of which was more grievously rebelling against God). This explanation is the essential background story to his next argument about how the calling of Israel from all the nations should not be taken as evidence of limited providential care, but rather as a new stage of God's still-universal providential care.

fundamental rhetorical question—Why would a universally-ruling God not provide for all the nations?—Cyril responds that it is absolutely necessary to trust in the wisdom of the divine plan.<sup>67</sup> Still, he provides two examples in *AJ* 3.49–50 that illustrate the rationale of the “ineffable economy (τὴν ἀπόρρητον οἰκονομίαν)” (3.50.2–3). The first invites the reader to consider horse-trainers and their typical method with a *group* of horses. Cyril asks: would the trainer work with them in a large group (κατὰ πληθὺν . . . καὶ ἀγεληδόν) or one at a time (καθ’ ἓνα καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος)? He suggests that, obviously, a skillful trainer will take the latter course. Where, then, does this leave the horses who are trained towards the end? Do they have any grounds to complain about not being trained first? Cyril insists not: for, “the one who undertakes the teaching is not ignorant that there is a fitting time for each one of them,” and “the nature of the matter (ἡ . . . τοῦ πράγματος φύσις) gave to the first ones the requirement that such first ones be subjected to the rules of the art” (3.49.26–31). It is not entirely clear what Cyril means by “the nature of the matter,” and the analogy is not his strongest.<sup>68</sup> The

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<sup>67</sup> Cyril says, “But since he [Julian] attempts most unskillfully and irrationally to show that he is both God and master only over Abraham’s descendants, such that the nations received the things they should rightly expect from no one—for it would doubtlessly have been necessary, he says, if ‘the nations’ in the account were in his domain, to send a ‘prophetic spirit’ to them and to appoint guiding ‘prophets’ and, above all else, to illumine holy laws, which, I mean, are through the all-wise Moses, and to exhibit also divine signs—we say this, restraining the incontinence of his tongue: ‘For, O master, it should be very much clear and agreed upon that fighting the divine decrees is perilous and unseemly’” (3.49.1–11). Cyril next quotes Isaiah 40:12–13 (“Who has measured the water with his hand? . . . Who knew the mind of the lord, or who was his counselor?”) to further substantiate his point, concluding that “the divine is all-sufficient, and it needs nothing at all; and, rather, it places both ‘wisdom and knowledge’ in those who are worthy of understanding” (3.12–18).

<sup>68</sup> He provides further details, noting that God’s gift was bestowed on Israel earlier than the others, the result being that Israel “was seen as enviable (ζηλωτὸν) and admirable, full of seemliness according to the law.” Though he does not make this explicit, this explanation that Israel was intended to become

point for the time being, however, is that Cyril takes the plausibility of his response to Julian to be tied to God's adaptation to the needs of his subjects: "the unmixed mind knew the fitting time appropriate for each of the affairs" (3.50.19–20).

Cyril's second illustration focuses on the way that humans are not only immature in their knowing capacity but are also inhibited by sins. He turns to medical practice, noting that doctors often treat patients in ways that are unintelligible to the patients, though those methods are beneficial. In such circumstances, it would be terribly rash for the patient to attempt to rebuke the knowing doctor. This example is still intended to undergird the plausibility of God's mode of universal providence, which focused in Israel but always had a universal scope (all humanity was "sick," and God's healing employed methods that might seem curious to some of the patients, at least while they're still sick). However, Cyril has picked an illustration that clearly cuts in two directions: God is analogous to a doctor who knows how to treat a patient's malady, but *Julian* is analogous to a patient who resists that treatment because he is unable to understand what kind of treatment he needs.<sup>69</sup> God adapted methods to the

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"enviable" to the other nations on account of its virtue would fit with Cyril's insistence elsewhere that God lead back all people not by coercion but by persuasion (for example, see 8.48).

The possible problem with Cyril's analogy is that the necessity of training horses one-by-one seems to lie in the limited capacity of the *trainer* (who is analogous with God), and not in the *horses*. The example of the first horse might make it easier to break in subsequent horses, but it's clearly not necessary that a horse have a more advanced example (otherwise the first horse could never be trained).<sup>69</sup> Julian's root error is thus in one respect a failure to recognize God's accommodating mode of interaction with humanity and the *medicinal* value of that mode. On the close connection between the Christian theme of divine accommodation and "the entire ancient medical tradition," see Benin, *The Footprints of God*, xv *et passim*.

plight of the world, singling out Israel as a “first-fruit” and a forerunner to the incorporation of all peoples.<sup>70</sup> Cyril thinks his account of God’s gradual formula of redemption to be irrefutable, especially since humanity now has the historical perspective to see the culmination of this economy of God, the calling of all the nations in Christ: “the fulfillment of the matters (τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκβάσεως) is uncontestably sufficient for our certainty—for the multitude of the nations was called and made holy through Christ” (3.53.24–25).

*V.A.4: Moses, the Law, and the Prophets*

Cyril’s most frequent and most important application of the rationale of divine accommodation is to Moses and his law. Julian appealed on multiple occasions to this law as evidence that Christians were not in fact faithful heirs of Moses, since they did not follow the practices it mandates. As I showed in Chapter 2, he suggested that if Christians were to faithfully read and obey Moses, they would not be far from the Hellenic regime of thought and practice. To this provocative narrative of Christian decline from Mosaic practice, Cyril consistently responds that the law of Moses was given to the people of Israel as an accommodation to their epistemic and moral state, though this law was always intended to be temporary (as the prophets make eminently clear) and even had its own eventual collapse into inefficacy built into it. That collapse

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<sup>70</sup> At AJ 3.52 Cyril appeals (uniquely in the early church) to Hosea 9:10: “As a bunch of grapes in the desert I found Israel, and like an early observer in a fig tree I saw their fathers.” He explains that a grape is difficult to find in the desert, but that Israel “pre-ripened” (προπεπανθέν) and was “early” (πρώϊμον). But if Israel was “early,” as Hosea writes, then Hosea implies that others will follow, Cyril suggests. “Therefore,” he explains, “since both the other nations and those who were not quite yet fully matured will follow soon in his footsteps, the faith of Abraham is early, the ‘first-fruit’ of the calling of the nations” (3.52.11–28).

would correspond to the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the kind of worship that God had always desired: that which is “in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). The types and “shadows” of the law would give way to the truth.

Cyril’s explanation of the economy at work in the Mosaic law is scattered throughout *Against Julian*. However, the most complete explanations are in *AJ* 4.15–18 and 9.25–31, each of which focuses on sacrificial ritual. In *AJ* 9.25–31, he responds to Julian’s repeated question of why Christians “neither show regard for the law of the Jews nor abide in the things said by [Moses],” which Julian then specifies as the commanded sacrificial customs (fr. 72.4–5). In the fragment preceding *AJ* 4.15–18, Julian has not mentioned sacrifice at all and has explained, rather, how the variety of creative and ruling divinities explain the diversity of the peoples. Cyril’s response includes the counter-explanation that these divinities are in fact fallen angels, who have demanded atrocious sacrifices. This final point only then prompts an explanation of why Moses legislated sacrifices, if—as in Cyril’s account—the true God really wants virtuous living, not bloody sacrifices like those demanded by the fallen angels.

In both passages Cyril stresses that the Hebrews were not able to receive the fullness of the truth at the time of the giving of the law. He gives several reasons (consistent across both passages) for this inability. One reason is a simple (and not blameworthy, it seems) immaturity of thought. The people of Israel then had a “mind newly fixed in piety (νεοπαγῆ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν τὴν διάνοιαν),” whereas the “evangelical” life requires much more toil than they could carry out at the time (9.25.15–20). Or, as he says in book 4, Israel still had “a powerless and impotent mind

and did not yet know how to stand firmly” (4.17.3–4). But Cyril is clear in both passages that the Israelites had become entangled with the polytheistic practices of the Egyptians. “In Egypt” Israel “became accustomed to performing” sacrifices (9.26.3; cf. 4.17.1–2). For Cyril, the most damning evidence of Israel’s *culpable* weakness lies in their making of a calf while Moses was on Sinai:

For, ancient Israel was so ill with stupidity and hardness-of-hearing and so very easily led astray that while Moses was awaiting the law from God and delaying on the mountain, they turned to apostasy and dared to give their reverence to a calf and even to shout out their assent, saying, “These are your Gods, Israel, who brought you from the land of Egypt.” (9.25.29–33; citing Ex. 32:4)

In such a spiritually decrepit state, Cyril suggests, they were entirely incapable of receiving instruction in noetic worship and spiritual sacrifice (9.25.37). For Cyril, the full revelation would involve “exact precision” in both “right living” and in “subtlety on dogmatic issues,” and Israel’s behavior made clear that this would be an “unbearable load for the minds of the Jews” (9.25.24–27).

Given their inability to receive the lofty and difficult truths, God gave the law in an accommodating manner: he provided commands and customs that would be recognizable to the Jews in their current state. The law that God gave through Moses was thus a kind of “caretaker for children (παιδοκόμον),” and though God did clearly call the Jews away from “the polytheistic error (τῆς . . . πολυθέου πλάνης),” he also allowed them “for a time” to bring physical sacrifices to worship him, “in line with the custom of the ancients (ὡς ἐν ἔθει τῶ πάλαι)” (4.17.7–12). Cyril makes the Pauline resonances explicit in book 9, where he notes that,

Still, the law in letters was an “instructor of the un-learned” and a “teacher of children”; for Paul, who was educated in the law, spoke like this, and, giving orders to use clearer things, like letters of the alphabet or the first principles of what they’re learning, he permitted training in the truth with types and a familiarization [with the truth] in exercises suitable to a child, for the time being (τέως). (9.25.10–15; referencing Rom. 2:20)

As Cyril explains a little later, the law was full of types which were “appropriately indexed to the minds of those who are under a pedagogue” (9.27.5–7).

With these concessions, God made the law accessible to Israel in its immature and spiritually warped state. But Cyril carefully parses exactly *what* about the law was meant make it intelligible by being indexed to Israel’s habits from Egypt, and *what* about the law was always meant to pull towards spiritual worship. This is clearest in *AJ* 9.26.2–19. The accommodating component was simply to allow sacrificial practice. But, Cyril argues, Moses “formed the features of the sacrifices not according to what they [the Jews] were accustomed to, but rather the sacrifices were prepared so skillfully and wisely so as to give birth to the form of noetic worship through themselves.” In other words, Moses allowed sacrifices to continue, but the precise details of the instructions were designed to be a bit unusual to the Jews, and even to point forward to an eventual, more spiritual form of worship.

Thus, the likeness of the practices of the law to Egyptian practices was limited, and these concessions were always meant to be temporary. As an example, Cyril cites Exodus 12:11 (“But offer it in this way . . . Let your loins be girded and your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hands”), invoking the whole set of customs that were to accompany the Passover celebration. Cyril suggests that the sacrificial lamb “was not

sacrificed simply, but wisely (οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ' ἐνσόφως)” (9.26.9–10), and he proceeds to mention several of the precise details given by the law, presumably to show how the ritual would have seemed unique, vis-à-vis Egyptian sacrificial rituals. It’s worth noting, too, that Cyril later invokes this same verse from Exodus to explain not simply the Mosaic law’s unique qualities, but also how those qualities point towards more advanced worship. In book 10 he suggests that the command for the people to have their feet shoed and staffs in hand “signifies that things in types will not stand always but will run forward as if towards the truth” (10.25.6–10). The readiness of the celebrants to depart to a better place, in other words, was an indication that the types themselves were eager to advance to their full significance.

In fact, Cyril suggests in several places that Moses himself was largely self-conscious of the ultimate inadequacy that he was instituting in the law. Rejecting Julian’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 18 (in fr. 62), Cyril argues that Moses made entirely clear that he expected a future lawgiver to *surpass* him, even though this lawgiver would be “like me,” as the prophecy says.<sup>71</sup> Cyril then suggests that “Moses was not ignorant that the only-begotten word of God, when he becomes a man, will make laws for those on earth that are incomparably better than the old command.” He suggests that the concomitant command of Deut. 18:15–16 (“You will listen to him in

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<sup>71</sup> For example: Moses freed Israel from slavery in Egypt; Jesus freed humanity from bondage under Satan. Moses provided manna in the desert; Jesus gave “life-giving and wholly pure nourishment” of spiritual manner (8.9.1–6).

however many things he speaks to you”) amounts to Moses providing a caveat to his binding laws:

For if it then were to happen, he [Moses] says, that he [i.e., the predicted second lawgiver] wants to legislate things which may show the command which was given through me to be unprofitable (ἄπρακτος), let there be no argument about this; let him legislate with authority. For he is God and master and the business of law-making is rightly fitting for him and him alone. (8.10.9–13)

In Cyril’s explanation, these new things would not contradict Moses’s commands, but they might render them ἄπρακτος, no longer useful.

This instance from book 8 shows that Moses himself knew that his law was meant from the outset to be temporary and an accommodation. One more example from book 9 will further illustrate how Cyril takes the law to be an accommodation that has built into itself an intentional inadequacy—an inadequacy designed to lead Israel on to a spiritual worship. In fr. 72 Julian again accused Christians of failing to sacrifice like the Jews do, and he also rebutted a possible Christian response (namely, that Jews themselves don’t actually sacrifice anymore) by noting that the only reason for their not sacrificing currently is that they are deprived of their temple (a fact which Julian tried to remedy when he was emperor). Part of Cyril’s response in *AJ* 9.30–31 focuses on Julian’s claim that the Jews don’t sacrifice because they don’t have a temple, because this claim is a perfect opportunity for him to illustrate Julian’s failure to understand the law, which is “in shadows.” Julian needs to learn about “the economy that has come about through this very thing (τὴν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ δὴ τούτῳ γεγενημένην οἰκονομίαν)” (9.30.3–4).

Why, Cyril wonders, did God “order sacrifices to be offered to him not in *any* place under heaven, or rather wherever those yoked to the law might be, but [he presented it] as a great and necessary matter [that it be done] in Jerusalem alone?” (9.30.4–8). Cyril then asks rhetorically: could it be that God exists only in that one place, that one city? This possibility is quickly ruled out, since obviously “the divine is unlimited and the bodiless one is not in a place but is stretched out everywhere.” Why, then, did Moses give such precise commands about *where* certain practices be carried out, and even prescribe condemnation of carelessness (τὸ ῥάθυμον; 9.30.10–12, 21) in the matter?

Cyril’s answer to this rhetorical question is condensed, but he suggests that Moses saw an opportunity to build into the law its own inadequacy. Moses, he explains, foresaw the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent scattering of the Jews to the nations.<sup>72</sup> As such, he commanded them to only offer sacrifices in Jerusalem, so that when it was no longer possible to fulfill such a command (due to being expelled from Jerusalem), the people would gradually realize that the Mosaic form of sacrifice was always meant to be a placeholder for a spiritual form of sacrifice—a new form of worship which could be offered *anywhere* to the God who is *everywhere*. Cyril explains that, unfortunately, their experience of being scattered was “unpersuasive” (ἀπίθανον),

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<sup>72</sup> Cyril is probably referring to the Jewish-Roman war of 67–70 CE.

and it was even harmful in some ways.<sup>73</sup> For after Christ's advent some people were—as Moses intended—progressing from the old and enigmatic forms of worship to a spiritual worship. But, if others were to stubbornly stick to the enigmatic forms as if they were fully adequate, this would undermine those who were (correctly) leaving behind the enigmatic forms as inadequate. Cyril seems to be implying that this is why Jews no longer can sacrifice in their temple: such practices *would* have undermined those who had recently converted to “the truth” (9.30.24–36).<sup>74</sup>

This is a dense example, but the point is certainly clear: Moses's regulation for temple worship was, in Moses's own understanding, meant to be a temporary measure—temporary, at least, in its unrefined form. A core element was not temporary, however, in that it could be fulfilled with a more advanced significance. After explaining this command of Moses, he summarizes: “Therefore, since the things (πραγμάτων) have transferred into the truth and have received within the types and enigmas a transformation (τὴν . . . μεταβολήν) into better things, we say that the law has not been destroyed, but rather has been fulfilled (ἐκπεπεράνθαι) at the appropriate time, at which [time] the truth shone on us—that is, Christ” (9.31.1–5). Christ illuminated the eternal aspect of Moses's command, and in that respect Moses's law is

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<sup>73</sup> On Cyril's increased harshness for Jews after the advent of Christianity (because of their increased culpability at having failed to learn from the divinely-planned obsolescence of the Mosaic cult), see Chapter 5, “The Law Against the Jews” in Blackburn, “The Mystery of the Synagogue,” 210–57.

<sup>74</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea offers in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* 1.6.31–42 a similar explanation of Moses's sacrificial system, including that Moses foresaw the destruction of the temple and built his sacrificial system around the future inability to continue practicing it. As Benin puts it, “Moses, according to Eusebius, knew the fate of the Law even as he was proclaiming it” (*The Footprints of God*, 20).

truly not destroyed—but it is “fulfilled” and thus can no longer be carried out as if this illumination did not usher in a “transformed” manner of worship.

For Cyril, it takes a mind illuminated by the mystery of Christ to see the complete correlation of the shadows and types in the law and the fulfillment in spiritual worship. He does, however, think that God’s accommodating mode of engaging humans had plenty of built-in triggers that should have left the Jews aware that some future advancement was coming, even if they couldn’t fully predict what it would look like.

In *Against Julian*, one of the most prevalent roles the prophets play is that of those who *did* accurately perceive the built-in limitations of the law, and who tirelessly pointed out those limitations to the Jewish people that thought the law was a final form of God’s revelation. Given Julian’s renarration of biblical history, this is an essential point for Cyril’s restoration of the coherence and plausibility of his Christian narrative. As the previous chapter showed, Julian suggested that the prophets were among the first to distort Moses’s reliable and true teachings. He claims in fr. 58 that Christians abandoned their ancestral teachings, following instead “what the prophets preach.” Christians thus got their blasphemous treatment of the gods from this “innovation of the Hebrews.” Cyril insists throughout *Against Julian* that Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and the evangelists teach the same thing. But, as we already saw with Abraham and with Moses, one must know how to read the earlier teachers to see the continuity, which does not lie on the surface of their texts. Importantly, Cyril does not deny Julian’s observation that some differences seem to exist between Moses and

the prophets. Rather, he continues to trace the way that the prophets had their own role within the history of the reception of God's accommodating mode of revelation: they were the first to pick up on the parts of Moses's law that had expiration dates, so to speak, and that simply could not be taken as final forms of divine self-revelation.

Most of the times that Cyril quotes the prophets to this effect, the back-story is largely implicit. In *AJ* 10.24, for example, Cyril is responding to Julian's speculation that Christians no longer sacrifice because "a fire will not come down, consuming the sacrifices as it did for Moses" (fr. 83.4–5). Cyril explains that Christians no longer sacrifice for a better reason, namely that they have "put away such a material worship (οὐτω παχεῖαν λατρείαν)" and carry out a "subtle and precise noetic and spiritual" version. That this is the kind of sacrifice God always desired is then verified by quotations from Hosea 6:6 ("I desire mercy and not sacrifice and knowledge of God rather than holocausts"), I Samuel 15:22 ("Behold, is not right obedience superior to sacrifice. . ."), Psalm 49:14 ("Sacrifice to God a sacrifice of praise") and 26:6 (I ". . . sacrificed in his tent a sacrifice of loud noise"), and Romans 12:1 ("Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your rational worship"). In this argument, the statements of the prophets (and Paul<sup>75</sup>) verify that "material" worship was never what God ultimately desired, and that sacrifices of a spiritual kind was more desirable (10.24.15–31).

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<sup>75</sup> Though this is not Cyril's explicit point, the inclusion of a quotation by Paul about the need for "τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν," next to Old Testament comments about non-physical kinds of sacrifice (e.g., sacrifice "of praise," and "of loud noise") underscores his point about the continuity of teaching between the Old Testament prophets and Paul.

In AJ 7.29 Cyril gives a more programmatic description of the relationship between the prophets and the law. Responding directly to Julian's charges just mentioned in fr. 83, Cyril insists that the law and prophets "each and every one (οὔτοι τε κάκεινοι), say the same thing," and that one can easily see that "they are everywhere in harmony with one another" (7.29.9–13). This harmony is evident, he explains, in the way that the prophets took up for Moses when his law was misunderstood and mistreated. Cyril explains that the "holy prophets" were "rising up with a great many words and shouting down against those from Israel," since "the law that had been established for them through Moses had been treated like nothing, and they had turned, instead, to the commandments of men for their teaching" (7.29.13–18). He notes that only an incredibly high regard for Moses's law would lead the prophets to reproach others so scathingly, and this high regard suggests that they wouldn't simultaneously commit the same error of unfaithfulness to the law.

At AJ 9.43 Cyril draws on Ezekiel to go even further. Not only did the later Jews fail to appropriately regard the law (bringing down the prophets' justified condemnations). Ezekiel shows in starker terms how the law itself could never have sustained an eternal observance, indexed as it was to the unfaithful habits of the people. In this section Cyril has been explaining, again, how the Jews' behavior after being led out of Egypt demonstrated how very "unlearned and easily led astray" were their hearts. He then quotes Ezekiel to explain the rationale behind the temporary and material laws of Moses. Ezekiel says:

And I raised up my hand at them in the desert to scatter them in the lands, because they did not do my judgments and they rejected my commands and they profaned my Sabbaths and their eyes were after the inventions of their fathers. And I gave them *commands that were not good* (οὐ καλὰ) and judgments in which they will not live. (Ez. 20:23–25)

Cyril quickly clarifies that, in answer to Moses’s intercession for the erring people, God gave laws that were “not good” only “as respects the beauty of the truth (πρός . . . τῆς ἀληθείας).” These were, rather, “pedagogical laws (νόμιμα . . . παιδαγωγικά)” (9.44.2–5). But Ezekiel the prophet provides confirming evidence for the enigmatic and impermanent nature of the law, and he does so by explaining how God engaged with Israel when it was still entirely disposed to turn away from his revelation and instructions on how to relate to him.

The theme of divine accommodation was a powerful tool for Cyril’s rebuttal of Julian’s attempt to fragment and renarrate significant episodes of the Christian narrative. In Julian’s presentation, the assemblage of texts, stories, and characters that are central to Christians’ self-understanding can only be plausibly understood as a long series of perversions. Moses was a leader and lawgiver of one of the many nations, the Hebrews, which was overseen by a local ethnarch deity. Moses thus extended the earlier traditions of the people in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of whom were Chaldeans and astrologers (as Abraham’s examples especially show). Moses also provided detailed and precise instructions about the kinds of rituals that are required by the Hebrews’ ethnarch gods. But then the prophets began to distort his teaching. Julian explicitly accuses them of misinterpreting Moses about how many gods exist, but we can easily imagine how Julian (or someone who found Julian persuasive) might have

incorporated the many prophetic passages which Cyril quotes about God hating the animal sacrifices that the Jews brought to him, or about God preferring “a sacrifice of praise,” or about God promising a “new covenant” (From Jer. 38, which Cyril quotes in *AJ* 9.45). Each of these instances could “fit” within Julian’s renarration of serial apostasy (which continued with the popular teacher Jesus, whose immediate disciples sneakily insinuated that he had risen from the dead, and whose later followers even claimed him to be a God, and so forth).

There is a consistency and a coherence to Julian’s narrative, and it offers a plausible rendering of the data (at least the data which Julian centers as the primary evidence). Running within and throughout Cyril’s responses is the piece-by-piece reconstruction of how the relevant data can be better construed on his own, Christian terms. And at almost every stage of his renarration, divine accommodation plays a role. Abraham seemed to carry out practices that were Chaldean in form, but it only looked that way because the one, true God who honored Abraham’s rejection of polytheism condescended to communicate with Abraham in terms that he would recognize, given his Chaldean upbringing. Furthermore, Cyril insists, aspects of the condescending mode of communication also contained within themselves images—sketches—of the more comprehensive truth, and these images reveal (at least in hindsight) how God’s

accommodations were always meant to push people along in understanding divine truths.<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, Moses's law might look similar to Egyptian laws and, more generally, Hellenic laws (especially in their sacrificial aspects), but that is because God, again, decided to tolerate the Hebrews' epistemic immaturity and their meagre ability to understand divine matters—an ability which had been compromised by their acculturation to Egyptian practices. As with Abraham (on a much larger scale, in fact), God also built into the temporary measures of the law both hidden insights into the clear truth and features that gave the accommodated version an expiration date, at which point it should become obvious that a clearer and more advanced version of the truth was coming.

The prophets thus didn't distort Moses's teachings but recognized more clearly than others the pattern of God's accommodating mode of communication. Their teachings and critiques therefore should not be taken as opposed to Moses, as Julian's

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<sup>76</sup> It's also worth pointing out that Cyril doesn't always rely only on explanations based on divine accommodation. Sometimes he thinks that Julian's coopting interpretations are just bad, unimaginative readings of the text. For instance, Julian also took as evidence of Abraham's Chaldean way of thinking and living the fact that he used a servant as a συμβολικός—probably “one who practices divinatory sign-reading” (see Chapter 2 for Julian's argument)—presumably for the selection of a wife for Isaac. As I noted, the practices that this servant deploys in Gen. 24 could be described as “reading signs,” which Cyril takes to be Julian's basis for calling him “a practitioner of mantic arts.” Cyril simply thinks this is a forced and unnecessary reading. He explains, rather, that this servant of Abraham had every reason to pray for a wife for Isaac—his probable future master—who would be gentle and kind to her servants. Furthermore, Cyril explains, the “sign” that the servant prayed for (i.e., that the woman who was to be Isaac's wife would be the one who agreed to give the servant and his camels a drink from the well) makes perfect sense as a “test” of the kind of disposition a servant would hope for out of a future mistress. Says Cyril, “For from this [experiment], it was possible to infer the disposition of a woman and, as it were, to take the interaction as a kind of down-payment of what might be expected in the future” (10.41.35–37). In this response, Cyril simply insists that Julian contorted a forced interpretation out of the text, when a rather straightforward interpretation would have worked.

plot would have it, but as teachings which were in perfect continuity with the true import of Moses's teaching and as critiques which railed against those who misunderstood and misappropriated Moses.

Finally, the teachings of the apostles, evangelists, and even Christians down to Cyril's time ought to be understood as a final revelation of God, especially with respect to the kind of service and worship that he has been coaxing humans toward the whole time: a worship "in spirit and in truth." These teachings, that is, are the clear and straightforward version of what was earlier presented in the (accommodating) types and shadows, and they retrospectively cast light on the central import of those types and shadows. What are rendered as further discontinuities and apostolic innovations on Julian's account are thus rightly understood, Cyril claims, as the more complete version of what was earlier somewhat obscure due to the epistemic immaturity of humans. The rationale of divine accommodation was central at most every point where Cyril repaired the fragmentation done to his Christian narrative by Julian's subsuming counternarrative.

#### *V.A.5 Analogies of Divine Accommodation/Progressive Revelation*

This leads to a final notable aspect of the theme of divine accommodation in Cyril's reasoning. "Divine accommodation," in my vocabulary, explains these many relevant events and patterns with respect to God's action. As we've seen, Cyril frequently speaks with respect to God's action. But a corollary of divine accommodation is "progressive revelation," which is a way of speaking of the same set

of events and patterns with respect to the growing understanding of God’s revelation—it names the human perspective on the process, so to speak.

Cyril interweaves both aspects throughout his explanations, and he regularly appeals to a set of analogies which are deployed to show the manifest plausibility that knowledge about God would be gained in advancing stages. Those analogies lend further texture to his way of narrating and arguing with the rationale of divine accommodation. The first (of three) examples comes in *AJ* 4.17, after Cyril has been explaining that, due to Israel’s having just come out of Egypt and “not yet knowing how to stand firmly,” Moses allowed them to offer worship “in line with the custom of the ancients,” as we saw above. He proceeds to explain that progress in scientific knowledge similarly builds on early and incomplete models:

For, in a certain way, the beginnings of the sciences (αἱ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἀρχαί) lack a completeness of knowledge, but they advance a little at a time to being fully developed, setting out and adding a small bit by a small bit and pushing up the movement of our comprehension, as if going up stairs, by progressions toward what is better into greater maturity. (4.17.15–19)

Cyril suggests elsewhere that the perspective that Julian is advocating—which, on this analogy, would require artisans and scientists to reject any advances in their crafts—is ludicrous. It would require that contemporary humans all tend to animals or be farmers (since that is what the first humans in Adam’s family did), and it would require that all humans wear only clothing from animal tunics (since Adam’s first clothing was like this). Furthermore, on this way of thinking, contemporary humans should renounce all manner of useful skills, since in the beginning “There was no understanding of the medical art among them, nor of any other sciences, nor the use of

letters, nor artisanal experience, nor a cultivation of technical skills, but time brought these things into their midst” (10.30.14–17). The key point made here is that time (χρόνος) brings a progress in understanding to human knowledge in all kinds of realms—why not, Cyril suggests, also with human knowledge about how to worship God appropriately?

The second example (from *AJ* 9.27) also illustrates how stages of progress are needed in human practices, but this one also illustrates how later stages relate to prior ones: the later and final stage makes the prior forms no longer useful, since the whole point of intermediate stages was to progress to a later stage. This explains for Cyril how the worship practices of the law lose their primary usefulness once spiritual worship is fully revealed. He explains that the manifestation of Christ, “who is the truth,” made the types of the law “ineffectual (τὸ ἀδρανὲς).” This can be understood by analogy to skilled copperworkers who, when embarking on a project, “helpfully display beforehand the structures (σχήματα) of what it is going to be through softened wax.” Cyril explains, though, that the wax sculpture is not the point of their craft but is a part of the process only so that the “beauty of what will be made” would be visible beforehand in a model. But, when the object of their project “has come to completion, we will not then be in the right to accuse the craftsmen of disdainful of the types” (9.27.12–23). This illustration explains how, once the scheme of divine accommodation has been fully revealed in Christ, the law (like the wax model) is neither of continued

usefulness nor something to be despised.<sup>77</sup> It had its role, but a retrospective glance at the intermediate status of the law shows that this role was always meant to be subordinated to another task.

The final example similarly illustrates progressive revelation from the perspective of looking back on earlier stages. In *AJ* 10.35–36 Cyril responds to Julian’s accusation that Christians do not follow Moses’s laws about circumcision. Cyril explains, again, that the Hebrews followed various commands “as the law decreed in old times,” but he also insists that “spiritual matters (τὰ νοητά) were being sketched out through the older things, in shadows (ἐν σκιαῖς)” (10.35.26–8). When Christ illuminated those shadows, the time to enact the “true worship” arrived. Cyril then illustrates this process, showing how, by the rationale of progressive revelation, “fulfillment” does not entail the rejection of the earlier stages, though the later certainly does build on the earlier in a way that transforms it. He says,

For just as a variety of colors, when added at the appropriate time, do not at all destroy silhouettes that are prefigured (προανατυπούμενας σκιάς) on canvases, but rather transform them into a much clearer appearance; in the same manner as this, we say that the silhouettes of the law have not been overturned (ἀνατετράφθαι) but rather have been fulfilled (ἐκπεπεράνθαι) as through a progression towards the truth, since in giving birth to such beauty from it at the appropriate time, they [the sketches] have advanced to this state, according to the manner Christ illuminated. (10.35.40–46)

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<sup>77</sup> Blackburn similarly suggests from *De Adoratione et Cultu* 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’” (“The Mystery of the Synagogue,” 130).

This example, as with the other two, plays important roles in the narrative structure of Cyril's arguments. Each works to buttress the preponderant theme of divine accommodation (and, relatedly, progressive revelation) by illustrating the innate plausibility of the claim that humans might need to advance in stages in knowledge of crafts and skills. If one accepts that this is so with sciences like medicine or husbandry, suggests Cyril, then *mutatis mutandis* it is also entirely plausible when it comes to the ability to interact with and worship God in an acceptable manner. Furthermore, if one accepts that advancements in scientific knowledge often render the methods and tools of earlier stages obsolete, then it should also be entirely plausible that earlier stages in humanity's progression towards "true worship" would become obsolete, though that would not entail scorning or hating them.

The word "plausible" has played a frequent role in this analysis of the theme of divine accommodation. That is because Cyril's many responses to Julian that appeal to divine accommodation do not exactly *prove* his own point or interpretation, against Julian's—at least in any strict sense of rational or logical proof. Julian's criticisms of Christianity have an internal coherence, but only if one accepts the back-story (including the way that back-story explains what kinds of texts are authoritative, and how they should be read) that the arguments depend on and that make the argument intelligible. That Hellenic back-story is largely implicit, as is Cyril's Christian back-story. But even though these narratives are largely implicit, the foregoing suggests that the arguments that Julian advances and Cyril responds to are largely about eroding or shoring up the plausibility of the respective underlying narratives. How would one

*prove* whether or not Abraham really was an astrologizing Chaldaean, who was a faithful practitioner of the kind of animal sacrifices that the gods love, and who, in this, was a predecessor of Moses, who would deliver a whole regime of scrupulous sacrificial regulations so that his Hebrew people would know how to relate to their ethnarch divinity? The implicit rhetorical strategy of Julian was to “prove” this interpretation by demonstrating how extensively the textual witness about Abraham (and Moses, and the prophets, etc.) could be slotted within his own narrative. Cyril’s response, as we’ve seen here, was to solidify Abraham’s (and Moses’s, and the prophets’, etc.) role within a Christian narrative. The way to adjudicate how successful either one is, however, is not in terms of “proved” or “disproved”—by what standards would one do that?—but in terms of “plausible” or “implausible.” The theme of divine accommodation is central for Cyril to make his various explanations of the plot points throughout Scripture to be plausible.

Next we’ll focus on another consistent and important pattern that runs throughout Cyril’s objections to Julian. The theme of divine accommodation is largely useful to Cyril for strengthening the coherence of the Christian narrative. The next section illustrates several of the key explanatory patterns that Cyril used to subsume elements of Julian’s Hellenic narrative into his own Christian narrative: that is, the relationship between sin, polytheism, and the practices that humans build around the “polytheistic error.”

V.B Sin, Polytheism, and Pagan Worship

The second theme meriting closer attention for the role it plays in the narrative structure of Cyril's arguments is that of sin, polytheism, and pagan systems of worship. We have already noted, briefly, that Cyril continues the long Christian tradition of equating the gods of the nations with fallen angels, or demons. What now needs further elucidating is the subtle but consistent role this identification plays in his moments of offense against Julian, when Cyril reorders dismembered episodes of the Hellenic narrative within the sweep of the more expansive Christian narrative. First, I will show the close relationship between sin and polytheism at pivotal moments within Cyril's comprehensive history of humanity. Then I will examine the details of Cyril's equation of the "gods of the nations" with "demons" (both the narrative details of that equation and its frequency). This will finally lead to an examination of how Cyril uses these first two points to build an explanatory framework for pagan practices of worship. This final point plays a key role in his rebuttal of Julian's attempts to coopt Mosaic ritual laws (rituals, that is, which Julian tried to claim as Hellenic) and in his attempts to renarrate what was, for Julian, an integral piece of Hellenism, but on Christian terms.

#### V.B.1 *Sin and Polytheism*

At several crucial junctures of Cyril's account there is a subtle but consistent correlation between sin and polytheism.<sup>78</sup> This pattern begins with the very origin of sin with Adam and Eve in Eden. Cyril has much to say about this event, but of present interest is the passing comment on polytheism, made while treating original human

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<sup>78</sup> The validity of "polytheism" as a historically descriptive category is, of course, still debated among scholars. I am using the term as Cyril uses it in *Against Julian*.

sin. In fr. 16 Julian suggested that it would be inappropriate for God to bar Adam and Eve from access to knowledge of good and evil, since such knowledge is rather the highest goal of humans. Cyril responds in book 3, first, that Julian simply misunderstood the precise meaning of “knowledge of good and evil,” and he proceeds, second, to explain the mechanics of the fall in terms of “the flesh (τῆς σαρκὸς) being subjected to the passions that stem from corruption (τοῖς ἐκ τῆς φθορᾶς πάθεσιν)” (3.25.6). After finishing his brief explanation about how these features work together, he then discusses where this error came from, namely the “terribly evil serpent” (3.26.2). Specifically, this διάβολος promised that eating of the forbidden tree would make Adam and Eve “like gods” in being knowledgeable about good and evil (3.26.9; Gen. 3:4). Through this lie, Cyril explains, the great slanderer “planted the destructive teaching of polytheism (τὸ τῆς πολυθεΐας ὀλέθριον μάθημα) in the souls of the first people” (3.26.14–16). This is only a passing comment, and Cyril does not offer further explanation. He probably means that the serpent created space in the human imagination to think that there might exist other beings who unqualifiedly count as “God”; in other words, the implicit condition for thinking that Adam and Eve could become gods is the possibility that other gods could actually exist, which was (on this explanation) a new (and erroneous) thought for Adam and Eve. Whatever the case, this example shows that Cyril associates the first sin with both the passions of the flesh and the “destructive” error of polytheism.

Cyril mentions polytheism in a similar configuration again when he discusses the Tower of Babel. In his historical overview of book 1, he suggests that before the

flood all people worshipped one God, even if they were wicked (1.21.1–2).<sup>79</sup> To build on Cyril’s initial metaphor, we might infer that the seed “planted” by the serpent in Eden hadn’t yet sprouted. However, after “the flood, and the construction of the tower, and the division of languages,” humans “—in withdrawing their mind from the truth and settling it into temporal and earthly matters and in pleasures of the body (ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ἡδοναῖς)—fell into every kind of inordinacy” and came under the “charges of the polytheistic error (τῆς πολυθέου πλάνης)” (1.21.7–11). Again, a pivotal point in human history is explained largely by two correlating features: becoming subject to bodily desires (here the “pleasures of the body,” and above the “flesh” as subjected to “passions”), and committing a polytheistic error.

The “polytheistic error” continues to play a role in Cyril’s historical narrative from book 1. After mentioning the beginning of polytheistic practices in general, Cyril proceeds to Abraham, but not without first singling out the Chaldeans as the worst of offenders against the one God. This detour is natural, given Abraham’s departure, as Moses’s text explains, “from the land of the Chaldeans” (Gen. 11:31). However, it also anticipates Cyril’s arguments in book 10 about Abraham, for in book 1 he notes that the Chaldeans’ surpassing wickedness lies in their “measuring the movement of stars” and in their “regarding the flights of birds as a pretext for divination” (1.21.24–26)—each of which practices Julian had argued was evident in Genesis’s account of Abraham (frs. 87–88). The point for now, though, is that Cyril suggests that the reason that Abraham

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<sup>79</sup> Cyril’s evidence for this is that “none of them were reproached for inclining toward other gods or institution worship for unclean demons” (1.21.3–4).

“was accepted by God” was that he rejected their “stupidities” (see 1.22.1–7). Cyril thus interprets and highlights Abraham’s departure from the Chaldeans as a resistance to the polytheistic error and the regime of practices that had begun to develop around those who “ascribe the glory that is fitting only to God to the elements of the world” (1.21.22–23).

We considered at length above another pivotal moment in Cyril’s narrative of God’s accommodating revelation, namely the rescue of the Hebrews from Egypt. What bears emphasizing now is the fact that Egyptian customs to which the Hebrews had become accustomed are identified specifically with “the polytheistic error (τῆς . . . πολυθέου πλάνης)” (4.17.8). As explained above, there are other elements at play in Cyril’s diagnosis of the Hebrew mistakes (such as insufficient intellectual maturity for divine truths), but again we see that a primary element in human error is polytheism.

The “polytheistic error” was present with the first sin; it correlated with the breaking of humans into many groups and into many mistaken modes of worship; and it was the doctrinal error that contributed to the need for God to give the Hebrews instructions that were in types and shadows. Polytheistic teachings are, in Cyril’s historical narrative, a consistent piece of the narrative framework, whether as a catalyst of turning away from God or as a foil against which people turn back to God.

A final illustration of the centrality of this theme can be taken from *AJ* 8.35–39, which is very much like the “narrative moments” outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Here Cyril responds to a central and thematic objection of Julian’s, namely to

the incarnation of God.<sup>80</sup> He suggests that to understand this event, the “reasons” (αἰτίας) that the incarnation was needed should be explored. As with the passages above, he proceeds to give a universal history of humanity, starting with the “beginning” (γένεσιν) of everything in heaven and earth, and the formation of a “human body from the earth” (8.35.1–5). He proceeds to summarize many of the features we’ve already seen—the original freedom of choice for humans, God’s command in Eden, the lie of Satan about becoming God, and then the consequences of disobedience, namely death and corruption. The explanation of this plight then leads into how it was incumbent on God to rescue humans, and polytheism again features. A new form of rescue was necessary because the law was doing no good for the Jews, and because the Hellenes had been “carried off by the drive to worship those who are not at all gods and to carry on a life that is beastly and bound to pleasure” (8.36.17–21). Again, polytheism and a life adversely driven by pleasure appear together.<sup>81</sup> For Cyril, the human problem of sin, of uncontrollable passions, even of physical corruptibility is entirely tied up with the error of thinking that there are many gods.

V.B.2 “*All the gods of the nations are demons*”

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<sup>80</sup> Using a formula very much like that mentioned above (though he does not use “οἰκονομία” here), Cyril says that he must “look into the method of the incarnation of the only-begotten (τὸν περὶ γε τῆς ἑνανθρωπήσεως . . . τοῦ μονογενοῦς . . . τρόπου)” (8.34.22–24).

<sup>81</sup> See further into Cyril’s argument where he asks what the creator should do in response to the human plight. His first of seven rhetorical questions (all of which have an obvious negative answer) is: Was it then necessary for the creator “To allow impure demons to rule those on earth?” (8.37.15).

As mentioned above, part of the “plot” of Cyril’s narrative includes the falling away<sup>82</sup> of a portion of the original host of angels created by God. On several occasions he explicitly appeals to Jude 6 to explain that these “holy angels became wicked and apostates.” They did not “guard their own beginning” (Jude 6) but “slipped away from being with God” (6.38.26–28; see also 4.9–10). In both books 4 and 6 Cyril proceeds to explain that these beings then “divided among themselves those on earth” and led them away from the one true God.

These two explicit mentions of the ancient division of the angels fits with Cyril’s ubiquitous equation of the “gods of the nations” with “demons.” He only quotes the biblical source of this argument (Ps. 95[96]:6) twice (4.15.11–12 and 8.4.11–12), but he equates the “gods” with “demons” well over a dozen times throughout *Against Julian*, sometimes by making a (probably sarcastic) correction to an initial reference to “gods,”<sup>83</sup> though sometimes making his objection about the true identity of the “gods” the main point.<sup>84</sup>

### V.B.3 Polytheism and Pagan Worship

The final element in Cyril’s persistent pattern of connecting polytheism, sin, and “the gods” as “fallen angels” as “demons” is the way it explains pagan systems of worship, past and present. When these angels fell to become demons who masqueraded as gods, they worked to draw humans away from God. Cyril speaks of this corrupting

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<sup>82</sup> Cyril likes “slipping” language to describe what these apostate angels did—in one place they “διωλισθήκασιν,” (4.9.9), and in another they “ἀπώλισθον” (6.38.27).

<sup>83</sup> As in *AJ* 6.26.6–7, where he mentions θεοὺς ἤτοι δαίμονας.

<sup>84</sup> As in *AJ* 9.24.2, where he quotes Porphyry to insist that blood sacrifices go οὐ θεοῖς, ἀλλὰ δαίμοσι.

effect in two general ways: it is manifest in the countless patterns of wicked living seen among the nations but also in the perverse worship rituals. So, after drawing on Jude in *AJ* 6.38 to explain the identity of the gods, he then elaborates the many ways that the rule of these gods brought “the cultivation of every kind of wickedness” (6.39.6); after he references Jude in *AJ* 4.9, he only mentions in passing that the gods led away from “all virtue” and he notes that these demons/gods “prepared for worship (σέβας) to be established in sacred places and for altars to be built and for people to bring honors with both drink offerings and sacrifices” (4.9.17–19).

Cyril consistently deploys this explanation of pagan practices as linked to the governing demons. Frequently he uses this account to critique blood sacrifices, specifically. This explanation features directly and centrally in *AJ* 4.12–23 (see also 9.23–31), where he enumerates more than a dozen instances from Hellenic history of human sacrifices that were offered to the gods. But this explanation is also scattered throughout the text in passing comments. For example, in *AJ* 6.19 Cyril challenges Julian’s emulation of Marius, a second century Roman military leader, by noting that he “slaughtered” his daughter “on the altar of demons (τοῖς τῶν δαιμονίων . . . βωμοῖς)” (6.19.15). As this instance illustrates, although sometimes the argumentative architecture of narrative subsumption is explicit (as when Cyril explicitly explains the story of how the fallen angels came to be regarded as gods), often that architecture lies in the background and contributes indirectly. As I will explore in more depth in Chapter 5, Cyril’s argument about Marius in *AJ* 6.19 is not about the gods—the section is rather about what kind of men from history count as admirable exemplars. But part of

Cyril's criticism of Marius includes the insinuation that he was entangled with blood-loving demons. The program of linking pagan practice to the ruling spiritual beings who are, in fact, demons thus enables Cyril to renarrate the mini-"episode" of Marius.

*V.B.4: Conclusion: Sin, Polytheism, and Pagan Worship*

For Cyril, the close relationship between polytheism (in its bare form, as belief in many gods), sin and corruption, and pagan practices of worship provides a powerful tool in his counter-narrative subsumption of a central piece of Julian's Hellenism. The gods whom Julian proposes are legitimate overseers of human peoples, installed as such by the single father of the entire cosmos, are in fact really the group of angels who apostatized from the true God and then, as Cyril says, divided up all the people on earth among themselves to try and lead them astray from God. This is easily the most straightforward example of Cyril incorporating an "episode" from his rival's narrative into his own narrative. He does not simply negate Julian's position that many gods rule the nations. Rather, he offers a response that accounts for key elements of Julian's Hellenism but that construes those elements in a very different way.

As I've noted before, Cyril is not novel in this interpretive move. But novelty is entirely beside the point for his rhetorical goals, and it would be a mistake to slide past the familiar Christian trope in Cyril that "all the gods of the nations are demons" without serious attention. Through his writing, his governing policy, and his own practices, Julian had advanced a large-scale vision for a renewed way of life in the Roman Empire. Even if the political aspects of this vision faced major setbacks in the decades after Julian's death, that vision seems to have been perceived as viable by Cyril

and his contemporaries. A major part of that vision included a philosophically sophisticated version of the ancient gods, who had the role of supervising the affairs of their assigned nation on earth. Insofar as this was a viable way in Cyril's time to imagine the cosmos and adequately explain any number of features about it, Cyril needed a way to counter this option. Simple denial of this scheme was perhaps an option, but a more powerful rhetorical route was to explain the error by showing its origin and accounting for its ongoing adverse effects—which is done by subsuming the narrative details of the error into the cosmos as imagined by Christians. This is the work that equating the “gods of the nations” with “demons” does for Cyril. Furthermore, it does a significant amount of work: the frequency with which Cyril evokes the trope shows how effective he thinks the back-story of fallen angels is for making sense of many episodes from history. Simply claiming that the pagan gods are fallen angels is only a first step; *showing* how much that story illuminates and interprets from history is a second step in narrative subsumption. As we'll see in the next chapter, equating the gods with demons is more than a rhetorical trope, too. It is also closely intertwined with several of the more pointed philosophical disputes within *Against Julian*, especially as regards cosmogony and providence.

Before moving to the cluster of episodes surrounding cosmology in Chapter 4, though, we need to consider Cyril's culminating step in the renarration of the Hellenic gods. Given that the plight of humanity was bound up in the web of relations between sin and corruption, polytheism, and the bloody rituals demanded by the overlord demons, the goal of “Christ, the savior of us all,” as Cyril often calls him, also addressed

this nexus in which humans were hopelessly bound. Cyril explains the liberation from this trap and the overthrow of the demons at the end of book 4.

On several counts, the latter half of book 3 and all of book 4 in *Against Julian* have a thematic unity: divine oversight of the cosmos. This is evident if we consider which fragments of *Against the Galileans* are treated here: frs. 19–28, which make up the entirety of Julian’s comparison of the Hebrew and Hellenic doctrines about the nations.<sup>85</sup> It is also evident in reading through Cyril’s response: though Julian is concerned only briefly with questions of divine providence and then more extensively with how to account for diversity of features in the world, Cyril is centrally concerned with correctly identifying the true God and all other spiritual beings who have influence over the course of events on earth. He takes up questions of providence over the peoples, the diversity of characteristics, etc. largely from this perspective. Furthermore, the final fragment considered in these books was a summative moment for Julian. He pauses to explain why, though he “did not want to speak at length” he nevertheless ended up “fully discussing these matters” (fr. 28.1–2). He proceeds to explain how, on any reading, his account of Moses’s God is better than the Christian account. After Cyril responds, book 5 opens with a relatively new set of topics.

This context within *AJ* emphasizes that the final pages of book 4 function as a concluding finale to Cyril’s many arguments about the “gods of the nations.” His final point draws all the arguments together. After explaining from Ex. 33 how Moses and

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<sup>85</sup> See my outline of Julian’s extant argument in Chapter 2.

the Israelites refused to proceed into the promised land if God did not himself accompany them (even if an angel sent by God accompanied them), Cyril concludes that he will add one other argument, “not at all useless, and beneficial for those who read it (οὐκ ἄσυντελὲς εἰς ὄνησιν τοῖς ἐντευξομένοις)” (4.48.1). He then summarizes the core reinterpretation of Julian’s position: “For, on the one hand (μὲν), wicked and apostate demons divvied up those on earth.” However:

On the other hand (δὲ) the only-begotten word of God became a man, the all-powerful right [hand] of the father, the hand which rules over all things, so that, freeing from their greediness (πλεονεξίας) those who had been seized, he might convey [them] to his God and father. (4.48.3–6)

Cyril then quotes 2 Cor. 15:22–24 to verify that the mission of Christ included “abolishing all rule and all authority and power” to return the kingdom to his God and Father. He explains that this kingdom, “as it were, had been plundered by a tyrant,” but in the end the son will “set it free and present it to the one who founded it” (4.48.16–17). In all likelihood, Cyril reserved this final explanation till last to show not only that his Christian position could better account for Julian’s “gods” but also that these re-explained gods are definitively defeated by Christ. Here as much as anywhere else Cyril’s subsumption of key episodes of Julian’s narrative is pointedly also the direct rejection of Julian’s way of thinking about the spiritual hierarchy. The gods of the nations are truly demons who, like rogue warlords, have attempted to usurp sovereignty over portions of the rightful leader’s domain. But that leader sent an irresistible liberator, the incarnate son of God, who effected the resounding defeat of the usurpers.

## Chapter 4: Episodes in Rival Narratives: Cosmology

### I. Introduction

This dissertation has so far laid out a general framework for interpreting Julian's *Against the Galileans* and Cyril's *Against Julian*. I suggest that Julian and Cyril each inhabit traditioned rationalities that are framed and generated by rival narrative backdrops, and so when they come to argue with one another (so to speak), they end up trying to fracture the coherence of their rival's narrative and then show how their own narrative can account for those fractured pieces in a more plausible way. Chapter 2 demonstrates how this was a major and unifying (if implicit) strategy in Julian's *Against the Galileans*. Chapter 3 then explores in further detail the narrative substructure of *Against Julian*.

This chapter and the next turn to how this large-scale strategy takes shape in focused arguments throughout *Against Julian*. The current chapter takes up a cluster of "episodes" that can be broadly categorized as "cosmological." These episodes include the events and agents of creation, as well as the texts that relate them, and the authors who wrote these more and less authoritative texts. One important function this chapter will play is to demonstrate with greater clarity how a "narrative conflict" analysis works, and particularly how it relates to other kinds of analyses that one might offer of these texts. As is already evident in the list itself of episodes clustered together under "cosmology," there are many interconnected layers of argument. The narrative conflict

is only one element among those interconnected layers, though it is also in the backdrop of the other layers.

To illustrate how these layers of argument are interconnected, we might imagine an educated late antique person asking a cosmological question, such as, “how does providence operate in the cosmos?” To answer that question, this person will need to know which of the many texts that give competing answers are reliable; but to figure *that* out he’ll need to know about the authors of those competing texts, so he can judge which one(s) is actually authoritative. One way to test the authority of those authors and the reliability of their texts is to see if their answers can even make sense (to see, we might say, if they can cohere *metaphysically*, at least); he can also test those texts to see if they lead to conclusions that are appropriately pious towards God(s) (to see if they are *theologically* appropriate), and so forth. And to take one step further out, as a reader of multiple authors who argue about where the cosmos came from, he might also have to decide if those authors are *really* interested in cosmology, or if some, unspoken and non-cosmological concerns are driving a debate.

Authoritative authors and texts, philosophical coherence, theological appropriateness—each of these layers is at play in following cosmological arguments, and each layer has its own integrity. But there is an additional, largely implicit layer of argumentation that occurs at the narrative backdrop of Julian’s and Cyril’s arguments. In the following, I will keep tabs on that layer as it relates to many of the other layers. This is not to say that the layer of the narrative backdrop is really the only important or interesting layer that exists in the text—the other layers are not mere

epiphenomena of the narrative backdrop, nor do you have to understand the layer of the narrative backdrop to understand what's going on in other layers, considered one by one. But the layer of narrative conflict has a way of showing how most of the other layers hang together, and it clarifies the coherence of the whole text of *Against Julian* (and *Against the Galileans*). In that narrow sense, the narrative backdrop of Julian's and Cyril's arguments are indeed uniquely fundamental to their texts—but only because by attending to this layer in each text can we see how a maximal number of the features of each text (as whole texts) hold together.<sup>1</sup>

The prior paragraph is full of generalities. The rest of the chapter examines how these general dynamics occur concretely in portions of Cyril's *Against Julian*. Specifically, it considers two stretches of text from *Against Julian* that anchor the two halves of this chapter: first, *AJ* 2.32–49; second, book 4 in its entirety. *AJ* 2.32–49 includes two fragments from *Against the Galileans* and Cyril's response thereto. In the following, I first sketch Julian's argument in those two fragments and situate it in the larger sweep of *Against the Galileans*. Then, after providing a descriptive overview of Cyril's response and the overlapping and interconnecting argumentative “layers,” I show how they all relate to the layer of the narrative backdrop. At the conclusion of the first half of the chapter, I provide a close reading of one of the philosophical arguments

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<sup>1</sup> It's not the case that every layer of argument has a clear place in light of the text's narrative backdrop. These texts are written by individuals who do not perfectly embody the way of life they strive to articulate (as, I think, they themselves would admit). They thus might advance arguments that do not really fit well within the logic of the traditions that they strive to adhere to. Cyril and Julian are strong representatives of their traditions, of course, but that does not mean that they perfectly embody the practices or perfectly articulate a paradigmatic rationality of their traditions.

that Cyril uses against Julian, found in *AJ* 2.45. This example illustrates why it's necessary to attend to the narrative backdrop in the disagreement between Julian and Cyril. MacIntyre's point that has helped organize this study is that a kind of narrative conflict can arise when two traditions do not share standards by which to adjudicate their differences. In *AJ* 2.45, Cyril advances a philosophical argument that, on its surface, seems to appeal to something shared by him and Julian: he says at an earlier point that "the nature of the matter itself (ἡ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πράγματος φύσις)" will support his argument (2.36.18–19). Rhetorically, it sounds like anyone who can attend to the "nature of things" should be persuaded by the argument. But when Cyril deploys philosophical reasoning in *AJ* 2.45, he centers a set of terms and a pattern of reasoning that was honed in the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century; he uses terms and patterns of reasoning in such a way that would be foreign to Julian. The "rationality" of Cyril's argument in these passages, in other words, will be showed to be a highly "traditioned" rationality, such that someone who does not ascribe to the intellectual lineage of the tradition is not likely to be persuaded, and may perhaps even find it hard to understand the point.

After this treatment of *AJ* 2.32–49, I provide a similar analysis for book 4, the details of which I will save until then.

## **II. Sharing Creating**

### II.A. Julian's Arguments in *Frs.* 9–10

In Chapter 2 I briefly summarized frs. 9–10 of *Against the Galileans*, but now a more detailed overview is required. These fragments occur during the stage of Julian’s argument where he “compares what has been said by the Hellenes and by the Hebrews about god” (fr. 3.3–4). I argued earlier that Julian carries out several such comparisons and that his consistent point is to show that Hebrew wisdom (seen seminally in Moses) is largely compatible with Hellenic wisdom—though the Hebrew wisdom is also much more limited in scope. One of the ways that Julian thinks that Hellenic wisdom is far superior lies in how it accounts for the many forms of multiplicity that are evident in the created order. This conceit is on display in frs. 9–10 where he argues that the variety among creatures can be explained by their creation by a joint effort of differing creative gods. But, as we’ll see in the second half of this chapter, this preoccupation is also on display in Julian’s more specific explanation of the diversity between the laws, customs, dispositions, and even bodily appearances of people from different nations (see frs. 21, 22, 26). That this point about variety is central within *Against the Galileans* makes all the more striking how Cyril does (and doesn’t) respond to Julian’s preponderant concern to explain diversity in the cosmos.

Cyril’s engagement with frs. 9–10 encompasses roughly a third of book 2 of *Against Julian*. Fr. 9 itself is almost entirely composed of two quotations that Julian introduces, and fr. 10 exegetes one of those quotations at length. Julian suggests in fr. 9 that his readers compare (1) what the god in Moses’s cosmogony is portrayed as creating to (2) what the god in Plato’s cosmogony is portrayed as creating. He introduces as his first point of comparison Genesis 1:26–28, which recounts the creation

of man in the image of God. His second, much longer quote comes from *Timaeus* 41 and contains the speech that Plato's Demiurge gives to "the gods of gods" about their creation by the Demiurge and their conscription to help create the final "three mortal races."

If Julian offered any lengthy commentary on the first quotation of fr. 9 (Moses's portrayal of God in Gen. 1:26–28), Cyril has not preserved it. After quoting Genesis and the *Timaeus*, Julian is only concerned in the following fr. 10 with exegeting the Demiurge's comments in the *Timaeus*.

Before considering Julian's treatment of the *Timaeus* it will be useful to note the larger place of the *Timaeus* in the Platonist tradition. This can help contextualize Julian's comments, and it will also accentuate features of Cyril's later critiques. In the Platonist tradition, the *Timaeus* was probably the most important of Plato's texts from antiquity up until at least the Middle Platonist era.<sup>2</sup> After Plotinus's era, the *Parmenides* may have rivaled the *Timaeus* in centrality, but the latter never lost a central place in the tradition.<sup>3</sup> At the very least, Iamblichus, whom Julian revered, seems to have prioritized the *Timaeus* in his arrangement of a Platonist curriculum of study.

Iamblichus's "lasting contribution to the curriculum," writes Harold Tarrant, "was in

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<sup>2</sup> See John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Revised ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Reydam-Schils and Ferrari suggest that the *Parmenides* became the new "pinnacle of Platonism," displacing the *Timaeus* partially because the latter "had left its readers with many puzzles that demanded answers" ("Middle Platonism and Its Relation to Stoicism and the Peripatetic Tradition," in *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*, ed. Pauliina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin [Abingdon: Routledge Handbooks Online, 2014], 50–51). Harold Tarrant suggests, though, that "the *Timaeus* always remained supreme for them . . . , with or without its elusive consort, the *Parmenides*" ("Platonist Curricula and Their Influence," in *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism* [London: Routledge, 2014], 27).

the formalization of those dialogues of Plato in which he thought the entire philosophy of Plato was summed up.” Though we no longer have Iamblichus’s precise ordering, a sixth-century text gives more detail of its contemporary curriculum: it includes ten dialogues of Plato, which culminate in two, additional “perfect” dialogues: “the *Timaeus* (in which all natural philosophy is crystallized) and *Parmenides* (in which all theology is crystallized),” as Tarrant explains.<sup>4</sup> Proclus, Cyril’s contemporary, wrote a several-volume commentary on the *Timaeus*, in which he preserves the remarks of numerous earlier Platonist commentators on the clearly popular text.<sup>5</sup>

The *Timaeus* itself is a dialogue, like most of Plato’s compositions, but it contains less dramatic action than most. The majority of the text is taken up with the speeches of Timaeus, which provide the fodder for the “natural philosophy” that Platonists of Julian’s era found crystallized therein. But this does not mean that the details of that philosophy were entirely agreed upon—if anything, the reception of the *Timaeus* within the Platonist tradition is evidence of MacIntyre’s claim that traditions are constituted by *arguments*.

From the *Timaeus*’s first interpreters, difficulties arose around a variety of passages and topics.<sup>6</sup> Julian invokes one of these contested passages in *Against the*

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<sup>4</sup> See “Platonist Curricula and Their Influence,” 23.

<sup>5</sup> See Harold Tarrant and Dirk Baltzly, eds., *Proclus: Commentary on Plato’s “Timaeus,”* 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Dillon identifies six, lasting interpretive problems generated by the *Timaeus*: “The principal problems left by the *Timaeus*, problems which Plato himself must have declined to solve, seem to be the following: (1) Whether the cosmogonic process described is to be thought of as taking place at any point in Time; (2) the identity of the Demiurge; (3) the identity of the Young Gods to whom the Demiurge delegates the creation of the lower part of the human soul; (4) the nature of the activity that may properly be assigned

*Galileans* (see fr. 8.2–7). Timaeus asks: is the cosmos “eternal, having no principle of beginning (ἀεί, γενέσεως ἀρχὴν ἔχων οὐδεμίαν), or did it come to be, having begun from some principle (ἢ γέγονεν, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τινος ἀρξάμενος)?” The clear answer given—that it “came to be (γέγονεν)” (*Tim.* 28b)—was carefully parsed from the beginning of the *Timaeus*’s reception. Two of its first interpreters, Speusippus and Xenocrates, displayed a “willingness to give a non-literal interpretation of one of the Master’s dialogues,” Dillon explains, preferring to side-step the straightforward meaning of “γέγονεν.”<sup>7</sup> With only a few exceptions, the rest of the Platonist tradition followed their lead, offering one form or another of an interpretation that treated the cosmos as eternal.<sup>8</sup>

In *Against the Galileans* Julian places much weight on another central passage in the *Timaeus*, which comes about halfway through the character Timaeus’s lengthy speech on the Demiurge’s composition of the cosmos. In *Tim.* 41a-b, the Demiurge is said to deliver a speech to the “Young gods,” as Dillon calls them—gods that, as we learn, come from the Demiurge and assist in creating other entities.

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to the Receptacle; (5) the manner in which any combination of immaterial triangles can create solid substance; (6) what relation these basic triangles can have to the Ideas in their traditional form. On these questions controversy continued throughout later Platonism, beginning with Plato’s immediate successors.” *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, 6–7.

<sup>7</sup> John M. Dillon, “The *Timaeus* in the Old Academy,” in *Plato’s Timaeus as Cultural Icon*, ed. Gretchen J. Reydam-Schils (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 81.

<sup>8</sup> Questions about whether the cosmos was “created” or always existed are, of course, much more complicated than the binary set of options might lead to believe. See, for instance, John Phillips’ explanation of the four different possible meanings of “created” (γενητόν) as articulated in the second century by Calvenus Taurus in “Neoplatonic Exegeses of Plato’s Cosmogony (*Timaeus* 27C-28C),” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35, no. 2 (1997): 173–75.

Julian discovers three sets of beings on the stage when the Demiurge utters its opening words, “gods of gods.” The first set is simply the Demiurge, who is speaking; second is the “gods”; and, third is those of whom the just-mentioned “gods” are themselves “gods.” He explains that this third class are the sun, moon, stars, and heaven that are visible to the human eye. But he also explains that these are only “images” of noetic and invisible gods, who are the second class.<sup>9</sup>

Julian’s next task is to explain the various links and layers of causality that went into the creation of the “three mortal races,” as Plato says (and which Julian clarifies to be humans, animals, and plants). He explains how Plato’s account of the Demiurge and the noetic gods is a necessary precondition for understanding how mortal creatures (particularly humans) came to be. The Demiurge himself told these noetic gods that they had a functionally immortal status—since they “came to be (γεγένησθε)” they cannot be “immortal or completely indissoluble.” But, since the Demiurge wills that they never perish, they are immortal, for all intents and purposes. When it comes to creating mortal beings, the Demiurge seems to face a minor problem: if he creates them in the same way as he created the gods, then they, too, will need the same status and attributes as those gods, including functional immortality. The solution is that the Demiurge and other gods will work together, each contributing a part to mortal creatures. The other gods will imitate the creating work of the Demiurge, but *their* work will yield mortal components. And the Demiurge will directly contribute only those

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<sup>9</sup> Julian’s gives a more detailed explanation of the different classes of divinity—including the visible gods (the heavenly bodies) and invisible gods—in *Or. 4: Hymn to King Helios*.

parts that are truly divine in quality. The result will be beings who are an appropriate mix of mortal and immortal (fr. 9).

Such is Plato's account. Julian adds a few glosses throughout his quotations (explaining, for example, that the "divine" contribution of the Demiurge to humans' composition is the "rational soul"), and then he explains the significance of Plato's lesson:

For if heaven were to differ in no respect from a man and, by Zeus, from a beast and, finally, from actual creeping creatures and the fish that swim in the sea, it would have been necessary for there to be one Demiurge, and he himself the [Demiurge] of all things. But if there is a great gulf between immortal and mortal things . . . then it is proper that the cause of some of these be one set, and the cause of others be another set. (fr. 10.28–34)

For Julian, a creating agent's causality is such that features of that agent inherently transfer to the created being(s). In other words, there are something like natural laws that govern cause and effect, such that a single, creating cause will consistently and regularly produce the same kind of result.<sup>10</sup> If the Demiurge were to create all things single-handedly, then it would yield a creation that lacked diversity (at least in key respects, like [im]mortality). Julian sees in Plato's speech of the Demiurge an ingenious solution for this quandary: a first, creating agent produces some number of beings that, as a class, are uniform (in the relevant respect) since they were created by the same cause. This second class was also given creative agency, though that agency is

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed treatment of Neoplatonic understanding of causality, see "Philosophical Principles of Pagan Neoplatonism," the first part of Stephen Gersh's *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, *Studien zur Problemlgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie* 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 17–121.

derivative of the first creative agency. The existence of their (derivative) creative abilities can be linked to the creative ability of their own maker, but this does not make their creative ability completely identical to the Demiurge's. There are now at least two different kinds of creative causality among the actors in the cosmos, and by collaborating they can blend the natural effects of their causation and multiply the classes of beings in the world. Julian's main concern seems to be the difference between immortal and mortal beings (though there is perhaps also a more detailed hierarchy of difference within the order—probably meant to be descending in importance—of “heaven,” “human,” “beast,” “creeping creatures,” and “fish”). Whatever the case, Julian takes it as essential that any viable philosophical account of reality must be able to explain the array of different classes of beings that exist in the earthly realm. Plato's speech to the “gods of gods” in the *Timaeus* offers precisely this.

As I argued in Chapter 2, frs. 9–10 fit in the larger context of Julian's argument in the way they show Hellenic teaching to be superior to (though compatible with) Hebrew teaching. In Julian's interpretations of Moses elsewhere in *Against the Galileans*, he suggests that Moses writes vaguely about how diversity comes about. For an example (to which we will return in the second half of the chapter), Moses hints that the linguistic diversity that spread from Babel was due to the agency of multiple divine beings (fr. 27). Julian elsewhere suggests that Moses thought giants were produced through mixture from gods impregnating human women (fr. 67). But Julian treats such Mosaic material as oblique and not at all developed, compared to the explanatory resources in Plato's *Timaeus*. Frs. 9–10 thus make a point about divine causality and

diversity as a way of showing the philosophical superiority of Julian's Hellenism and, relatedly, the authorial superiority of Plato to Moses. These points contribute to the larger point of the superiority of Hellenism to Christianity, which was itself a perversion of Moses's (already limited) tradition. The explanatory power of Julian's Hellenism is thus, in this instance, demonstrated partially by its renarration of the episode of Moses as a minor sage.<sup>11</sup>

## II.B. Cyril's Response

As I suggested above, Cyril's response to Julian's argument in frs. 9–10 incorporates a variety of argumentative elements. The following first summarizes of his response in its order as written before noting, next, the variety of these argumentative elements piecemeal. After this I argue that a consistent purpose of those elements is to dislodge the characters of the Demiurge and the "gods" from Julian's account so that they no longer make sense on the terms Julian provides. In other words, Cyril's various arguments focus on fracturing a piece of Julian's narrative and preparing the dislodged elements for reconstrual within a different narrative. He doesn't completely close the circle by giving the detailed renarration of the characters on Christian terms in *AJ* 2.32–49, but the second half of this chapter treats a string of arguments (in *AJ* book 4) that

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<sup>11</sup> It's hard to say why exactly Julian picks Gen. 1:26–28 as his point of comparison to the *Timaeus*. Julian may have commented further, unpreserved by Cyril. Otherwise Julian's pay-off of the juxtaposition of the passages is left unstated, without clear clues about what he meant to imply. Given that caveat, I suspect that Julian's comparative pay-off lies in the fact that Gen. 1:26–28 gives no resources at all for explaining how human beings (mixtures of mortal and immortal elements) were created by an immortal god. In other words, Moses makes no comment on the entire problem of how a single creative entity might produce a diverse set of beings. On this hypothesis, Julian wants his readers to note that, even if Moses elsewhere shows hints of understanding creative causality, in Genesis 1 where it would have been most appropriate to comment on such causality, Moses passes over the matter entirely.

does perform the entire sequence of meticulously dislodging Julian’s characters and then plausibly reinscribing them in a different story.<sup>12</sup>

### II.B.1 Overview of Cyril’s Response

Unsurprisingly, Cyril finds all manner of problems with Julian’s argument in frs. 9–10. He first defends Moses, redeploying an earlier argument that Moses wisely selected topics for discussion—topics that were most needful to his people in their state of error. Moses “passed over excessively refined disputation” and instead “most wisely and, meeting a great need, made room for talking about more central matters” (*AJ* 2.20.22–23). Cyril insists in *AJ* 2.34 (in response to Julian’s fr. 9) that in Gen. 1:26–28 Moses wisely centers a point of utmost importance: the humans making in the divine likeness. Cyril rebuts Julian’s attempt to downgrade Moses by pointing out that, in his sycophantic fawning over Plato’s writing (see 2.34.19–20), Julian entirely misses this most remarkable part of Moses’s teaching, which is entirely appropriate in its relative brevity.

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<sup>12</sup> It’s perhaps worth pointing out that Cyril doesn’t betray that he is self-consciously setting out to renarrate episodes from Julian’s story within his own—though I suspect that he would have agreed that this was at least part of what he was doing, if we could have posed this interpretation to him. Thus we shouldn’t expect him to repeatedly perform a formulaic execution of the “steps” of renarration (first rebut the opponents attempts to fracture your tradition’s narrative, then fracture the plausibility of *his* tradition’s narrative by doing XYZ, then provide a counter-explanation for the fractured episodes, etc.). My argument is that the cumulative strategy of *Against Julian* is to wage this narrative conflict. In some stretches of the text, all the major steps exist together. But other stretches of the text stay within one step: whether showing the plausibility of a Christian story by showing in detail how the stories about important characters (like Abraham, for example) really do make sense on Christian terms; or, showing the plausibility of the Christian story by defending the coherence of philosophical commitments within the tradition; or, (as in the stretch of *Against Julian* that this chapter examines) in fracturing the plausibility of the rival narrative by showing the incoherence of some of its philosophical commitments; and so forth.

Julian's error is not simply in misunderstanding Moses due to an overemphasis on Plato, Cyril argues. Plato himself had serious problems with his creation account in the *Timaeus*. Cyril suggests that Plato either wrote this speech for the Demiurge in *Timaeus* 41 in a poetic mode (in which case he assigns speeches to characters badly), or he truly intended to write words that the Creator himself might have said. Cyril does not return to the first option and presses into the second, showing that, in the words he attributes to God, Plato ascribes things to him that are not licit (θέμις), particularly in his depiction of God as inexplicably demeaning his own divine-befitting glory by sharing it with other, created beings (2.35).

Roughly the next fourteen sections of *Against Julian* revolve around this basic argument. It is dense and convoluted, and it has several overlapping and recurring points that Cyril makes and supports and re-presents. He presents, furthermore, several *kinds* of arguments—some appeal to the authority of scripture, others to Hellenic authorities, and others still rely on philosophical appeals to “the nature of the thing itself.” I won't go into Cyril's complete details for the sake of length, but it will be important to survey at least several of his basic points.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew Crawford has given detailed examination in a conference paper of several of these arguments, especially those in *AJ* 2.35–41 and 2.46–49. My overview of these sections largely agrees with his analysis, and my treatment below of 2.44–45 further supports his general point about Cyril's arguments being a sophisticated, if dense, philosophical deconstruction of the *Timaeus* (“Must the Creation Be Proportional to the Demiurge? Cyril's Deconstructive Reading of the *Timaeus*” [XVIII. International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 22, 2019]).

After explaining a brief exception about how certain creatures can be called “gods” but only in an improper sense,<sup>14</sup> Cyril enlists Aristotle to object to Julian’s characterization of the heavens as being “gods” (2.36.5–16). After this straightforward argument from Aristotle’s authority, Cyril moves to a series of arguments from “the nature of the thing itself” that will prove that “God would not have spoken of the activity of creating with those who are not at all ensouled or noetic ‘gods’” (i.e., the heavenly bodies) (2.36.17–19). He wonders why the creator might have shared this activity which properly belongs to only the uncreated nature, and he suggests that there are only two options (which end up being linked): God was either “hesitant” (ὀκνήσας; or even “lazy,” or “fearful”) to himself create or didn’t deem the next round of creation as worthy of direct attention (2.36.22–24). Cyril insists that the first option is impossible even on Plato’s own terms: Plato himself claims that this God is good, and this rules out the motivation of ὄκνος to explain why he didn’t himself create. Alternatively, if God considered the lower creation unworthy of being created directly by him (in the same way the gods were honored by their being created directly by God), then he is shown to be both vain (τῦφον) and contemptuous (ὑπεροψίας) towards others. And, Cyril presses, if God thought so lowly of humans that he didn’t want to create them, why would he then later desire their worship (2.37.1–8)?

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<sup>14</sup> Drawing on Psalm 81, Cyril suggests that God honors some of creation with the name “gods” as a way of indicating their closer status to God by being intellectual beings. This argument (which is by no means new to Cyril) recurs throughout *Against Julian* in 2.35, 8.5, and 9.4.

Having argued that Julian's and Plato's position entails that the Demiurge wouldn't care for any worship from humans, Cyril goes back to quoting other members of Julian's own tradition against him (though he notes in passing that Scripture, of course, could also easily make this point as well). He enlists Porphyry's *On Abstinence from Animals* to show that God *does* desire sacrifice, and immaterial sacrifice at that (2.37.9–25).<sup>15</sup> Cyril accentuates the inconsistency, rhetorically asking how God (especially given that he *does* truly does desire worship from his creatures) could “abandon us to the other gods”? How could he “withdraw from what he himself made”? Why does he provide for “those on earth,” when they “were given to other gods as playthings, as Plato has it” (2.38.1–8)? Then follows another quotation, now from Alexander Aphrodisias's *On Providence*, which insists that God does provide for earthly affairs, against the implication that Cyril has drawn out of Plato and Julian.

After summarizing that Julian's position entails the illicit (“οὐ . . . θέμις,” again; 2.39.13) position that God gives away things that are his prerogative by nature, Cyril uncovers another fault line in the argument. He moves to the act of creating itself and wonders how a “nature that came into existence and was made (γενητὴ καὶ πεποιημένη φύσις)” could possibly create anything, in a proper sense (2.39.21)? “Creating,” Cyril admits, is sometimes a matter of knowing how to do something—a potentially transferable skill. But understood in its properly divine sense, creating is an act that

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<sup>15</sup> Though it's not the main point currently, Cyril's selection of quotations (probably culled from Eusebius, in this instance) also cuts against Julian's valuing of blood sacrifice—Porphyry insists that material offerings are not appropriate to the immaterial divine.

depends on an unoriginated and uncorruptible nature, which belongs only to God and could not belong to “gods” that were themselves created (2.40.1–10).

As the argument proceeds, Cyril circles back on an initial objection, now levied against the Platonic reasoning about *why* the Demiurge God would pass off the duty of creating. One option is that “he was envious” (διεφθόνησεν), which seems to be a further hint at what might motivate the “hesitation” that Cyril detects. According to the inevitable logic of the *Timaeus*, Cyril thinks, this God does not want certain creatures to have the great blessing of being directly created by their benevolent divine ruler. The other option for explaining God’s reticence to create directly, Cyril suggests, is that this God was nervous about the fact that, by necessity, he *had* to share creating (as Plato presents it)—he was under some kind of natural compulsion and couldn’t do otherwise. But Cyril insists that such nervousness would indicate either an innate ignorance about how to create “mortal races” (in which case the lesser gods know *more* than the Demiurge God!), or it would indicate that he simply disregards creating, which suggestion has already been shown to be impious (2.40.11–24). Cyril also returns to Plato’s suggestion that God *could* create gods who are “not immortal” per se, as Plato himself admits, and who are thus only immortal by God’s will—this is, Cyril thinks, inconsistent with the implication that he *couldn’t* himself create the “three mortal races,” who are also (of course) “not immortal.” At the most fundamental ontological level, both the gods and the “mortal races” are the same in that they are, as far as their innate constitution goes, mortal—which means that God really could have created the

three races, just like he created the gods. Cyril wants to know: why did the Demiurge assert otherwise, as Plato's account has it (2.41.1–9)?<sup>16</sup>

So far Cyril has been trying to poke holes in various parts of Julian's arguments, without addressing head on the central concern of those arguments. At the end of this response to fr. 9, he finally turns to Julian's main point (i.e., that Plato provides an adequate explanatory scheme for the diverse classes of beings in the cosmos). As noted above, the exegetical energy that Julian applies to the *Timaeus* is leveraged toward this end. After all Cyril's dense, interweaving arguments about a few of the tangential details of Julian's suggestion, we might expect a long demonstration and defense of how Cyril thinks the Christian tradition can better account for diversity. Instead, Cyril's comment on the origin of diversity is little more than a counter-assertion: ". . . we say that the demiurge, using a god-befitting authority, produced variety of color and multiplicity of form and the fact that one thing is different from another and not the same in either kind or form." This act of making was not primarily a question of "skill" but of a "nature" that is superior to all others. Cyril proceeds to quote Hermes Trismegistos in support, but this is the extent of his argument (2.41.10–13). Julian thinks that diversity in creation requires an array of sources of creative causality and argues—at length—that a Neoplatonic hierarchy, as seen in the *Timaeus*, provides

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<sup>16</sup> As Crawford points out, Cyril traces a morally degenerative progression within the options that emerge for explaining the actions of Plato's Demiurge God. Cyril wonders why God *didn't* create the mortal races, when he clearly could create mortal beings (as he did with the gods)? Cyril doesn't answer, but Crawford quite plausibly surmises that, in Cyril's thinking, "The Demiurge must have been feigning inability out of a malicious desire to deprive humanity of something good. One moral defect follows another, from hesitation to envy to fear to dissimulation." Crawford, "Must the Creation Be Proportional to the Demiurge? Cyril's Deconstructive Reading of the *Timaeus*."

exactly such a structure. Cyril simply asserts that a single God could create all the diversity.

After this surprisingly short response, Cyril moves to the next excerpt from *Against the Galileans* (fr. 10), which is Julian's further exegesis of *Timaeus* 41 and his extension of Plato's logic about the diversity of races to diversity writ large. Cyril will respond one more time to Julian's point about diversity—at the conclusion of the rejoinders to fr. 10 he asserts, again, that one God could create all the diversity.<sup>17</sup> But, for the rest of his response he returns to another topic where he thinks Julian's position is untenable. The rest of the argument renews his attack on the consistency and cogency of the entailments he finds within Julian's divine hierarchy.

Cyril intimates that his critique will be returning to metaphysical terrain by accusing that Julian “confuses all things and jumbles together the natures of things with one another (φύρει τε ἀλλήλαις τῶν πραγμάτων τὰς φύσεις)” (2.44.16–18). This argument (to be explored in greater detail shortly) suggests that Julian confusedly holds an ontological equivalency between what is τὸ γενητόν and what is τὸ ἀγένητον—another instance of an incoherence within Julian's and Plato's account.

Cyril next imagines a possible rejoinder from someone like Julian, who might draw on Empedocles to argue that “the ‘conjunction’ of elements is what produces the nature of earthly bodies” (2.46.13–15). Cyril does not explicitly make clear how this response might undercut his own argument, but his response to the imagined objection

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<sup>17</sup> “What,” Cyril asks, “stands against or is inconsistent with conceptions rightly-held, if someone wanted to say that all things are from one creator?” (2.48.17–19).

gives some clue. Cyril explains that even if multiple elements have to come together to make bodies, there must still be (even on Empedocles's own terms) some agent who directs the "conjunction," who puts the elements together harmoniously and keeps them from fighting with one another, and this is "God, the master artificer" (for Empedocles it is the principle of love) (2.47.1–11). This response from Cyril suggests that the Empedoclean point might seem to support Julian, because it, too, fits the general pattern of appealing to an underlying fact of varying causal elements for its explanation of variety in the world. Cyril does not object to the variety but simply posits that, again, a single agent nonetheless single-handedly and directly governs the variety.

Two arguments remain. Cyril first returns to the earlier criticism that Plato's God is "overcome with hesitation (ἄκνω . . . κερρατῆσθαι)," but now he deepens the criticism. He goes beyond simply pointing out the error and explains, further, what led Plato to make such an error. He explains that the ἄκνω of the Demiurge is simply one instance in a systematic error for Plato. Alluding to material in the *Republic* (at least), Cyril suggests that "the Good," which Plato places above the Demiurge God, is, in Plato's account, "itself unmoved, stationary, steadfast, and it shirked both the necessity and the desire to produce any of the things that were brought into existence."<sup>18</sup> As a result, Cyril explains, the Good itself "shrank back (κατοκνησάν)" from the task of creating

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<sup>18</sup> There was some ambiguity in the Platonist tradition as to the identity of the highest divine principle—whether this was the Demiurge or a higher "Good." Cyril assumes, with later Platonists, the latter. See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, 7.

and rather delegated it to a “second God” (2.48.3–8). This second God, Cyril suggests, follows the same pattern that the Good initiated. Implied in this argument is that all the moral faults that Cyril discovered in the activity of Plato’s Demiurge transfer directly up a rung to the Good who is, if anything, even more culpable for being the source of this pattern of morally objectionable behavior.

Cyril’s final argument raises one more problem with Julian’s account of the diversity of beings in the world. He pushes Julian’s causal logic to what he thinks to be an absurdity. If, Cyril suggests, several creative agents are necessary for “heaven” and “man” and “beasts” and “creeping critters” and “fish” to be distinct from one another, then there really will need to be a different creative agency for every different thing in existence. It will be necessary, Cyril concludes, “for a demiurge to be introduced that is proportionate to the limits of each created thing” (2.48.11–17). (Cyril here asks again: why can’t we simply admit that one creator accounts for all diversity?) By Julian’s logic, he insists, the number of creative agents must match the uncountable numbers of things in the world, reaching all the way to the most insignificant beings.

### II.B.2 *Cyril’s Argumentative Layers*

The surface of Cyril’s response to these two excerpts of *Against the Galileans* contains a variety of kinds of arguments. Having now shown how those arguments proceed, we can begin to see how they relate, and how the large-scale narrative conflict is advanced in these pages of book 2.

On the surface of his response, Cyril pursues a variety of tactics. For one, he continues to sort out the authoritative status of different contenders for “sage.” Given

the axiom that “one wise man comes from another” (1.4.2), it is essential for Julian as for Cyril to make clear which authoritative figure(s) are trustworthy. Cyril is fulfilling this task when he begins the section by defending the authoritative status of Moses, whose wisdom Julian downplayed. His argument about Moses is brief within *AJ* 2.32–49, but given how central a role Moses and his wisdom vis-à-vis Hellenic wisdom plays for Cyril (most directly in book 1’s narrative history), it is certainly worth noting. Similarly (and at greater length) Cyril also attacks the trustworthiness of Plato. In line with his explanation from book 1 that the Hellenic masters certainly knew some of Moses’s teachings (1.17), Cyril readily draws *affirmingly* on parts of Plato to advance his argument.<sup>19</sup> But he also tries to show that Plato introduces several different errors in his writing. This nuanced treatment of Plato illustrates what it looks like for Cyril to renarrate a character-episode on the terms of his own narrative: Plato knew some truths about creation from Moses, but those truths were interspersed with errors stemming from demons who try to insert themselves into the story as legitimate creators and rulers. These dynamics show that Cyril’s arguments are, in one dimension, about authoritative figures and authoritative texts.

Intertwined with the arguments about authoritative figures are several other kinds of arguments. For instance, part of how he shows the unreliability of Plato is by deploying several arguments about what it is fitting to say or think about God—for

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, in *AJ* 2.37 Cyril draws approvingly on Plato’s comment from *Timaeus* 29e that the Demiurge “was good, no envy for anything occurs in good.” Cyril is not merely suggesting that the *Timaeus* is thereby internally inconsistent based on his discovery elsewhere of an implication that the Demiurge is envious (though inconsistency is certainly part of it). He’s also showing the mixture of truth and falseness in the *Timaeus*.

shorthand, we can call them “theological” arguments. At several points throughout his response, Cyril remarks on what it is “θέμις” to say about God. He is primarily interested in showing how Plato “illicitly” or “inappropriately” displays God as not properly acting towards his own divine status. These arguments have as an immediate result the disqualification of Plato as authoritative, but they are still arguments that address a question other than Plato’s authoritative status and constitute a different layer of argumentation.

Similar, but still somewhat different, are what we might call “metaphysical” arguments. Cyril argues about “the nature of [a] thing itself” at one point, and, at another, about how Julian confuses the “natures of things.” In *AJ* 2.45–46 he considers the difference between what is τὸ γενητόν and what is τὸ ἀγένητον as fundamental features of different kinds of beings, suggesting based on his findings (which I will examine shortly) that Plato’s and Julian’s arguments are simply incoherent. Such arguments are deployed at least once in defense of a theological argument. In this sense, the “metaphysical” and “theological” arguments are related. But a distinction can be made between a thought process that traces out the kind of motivating causes of creating (or *not* creating) in a divine being and a thought process that discerns if that apparent motivating cause, once determined, can be piously asserted about a divine being. Each rational process has its own integrity, but they can also be linked to one another, as we see in Cyril.

Yet another dimension of Cyril’s argument works to discredit Julian himself by showing his incompetence with respect to his own Hellenic tradition. Not counting

Plato, Cyril quotes three Hellenic sources in support of various arguments, each of which could have corrected Julian's mistake, if Julian even knew his own "teachers," as Cyril sometimes calls them. The quotations do play a role in the content of the arguments themselves, of course, but they also function to undercut the reliability of Julian as a person (they are arguments about *ethos*, in classical categories). In *AJ* 2.37 Cyril insists that Scripture is adequate to prove that God truly does desire worship from his creation, but he introduces Porphyry instead, since his teachings are (or "should be") "trustworthy" to Julian (2.37.13). Similarly, Cyril acknowledges that Julian probably won't accept the authority of Matthew's gospel for a point, so he turns to Alexander Aphrodisias for support, since he belonged to Julian's ranks (2.38.13–15). Finally, Cyril quotes Hermes Trismegistus to show that another of Cyril's points is supported "even by [Julian's] own teachers" (2.41.24–25).<sup>20</sup> In each of these cases Cyril tries to show himself as more familiar with Julian's authorities than is Julian himself, thus piling on reasons for a reader to discredit Julian.

Each of these kinds of arguments has its own integrity, and, as I've pointed out, it is clear how some of them connect with one another. However, it is not immediately clear how (or if) all these arguments can be explained as part of one, coherent argumentative strategy. Is the main point simply to attack and discredit Julian? That's certainly part of the argument, but why then is Cyril also concerned to uphold Moses?

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<sup>20</sup> At *AJ* 2.47.17–18 Cyril also insists that "the accounts of the Hellenes" uphold one of his own points, against another implication he draws from Julian. Though these "Hellenes" remain anonymous, the GCS critical notes suggests that Cyril might have another comment of Plato's in mind.

Is the main point a metaphysical argument about divine being? That's certainly part of it, but why, then, does Cyril so carefully incorporate textual support from a variety of kinds of sources? Why does he go out of his way to draw on Alexander Aphrodisias, when he seems to otherwise prefer biblical sources?

There is another, implicit dimension to the argument that holds things together in a loose coherence, and that is the narrative conflict. Stated briefly, in these sections Cyril is refortifying the coherence of his own narrative (by buttressing Moses's authoritative status), and he is then, more extensively, laboring to fracture the plausibility of Julian's own narrative account and to prepare certain fractured elements for incorporation into his own story. More concretely, Cyril seems concerned here to dislodge the "characters" that play prevalent roles within Julian's account. While each of Cyril's arguments do work at their own layer, a common thread is that these arguments collectively undermine the plausibility that the Demiurge would either want or need to include other sub-divinities in his creation of the rest of the cosmos. As we saw in the last chapter, Cyril is adamant that these "gods of the nations" are in fact malicious demons. For such a claim to be persuasive, Cyril needs to dislodge these gods from their place in Julian's account. Only then will they be characters without an explanatory home, and they will be ready for incorporation into the Christian explanation that they are fallen angels who masquerade as gods and lead the nations astray.

To be sure, the framework of "narrative conflict" is not necessary to notice this section's consistent thread: Cyril trying to discredit the idea that the Creator would

need an additional layer of divinities to create the “mortal races.” What the narrative conflict framework shows is how that thread is part of a larger, coherent argumentative tapestry that spans *Against Julian*. This will become even more important in a few paragraphs when I show how Cyril’s refutation employs terms and arguments that would not be acceptable to a Hellenist like Julian. Without the “narrative conflict” frame, it might look like Cyril is merely “talking past” Julian. It may be that he is talking past Julian, but he is not *merely* doing so: the narrative-conflict framework will illuminate how these many threads still weave a single and coherent tapestry.

That one of Cyril’s central objectives in *AJ* 2.32–49 was to dislodge the gods can be clearly seen by simply tracing how often he returns to the point: he consistently brings up the gods and the problems they introduce to Julian’s arguments throughout the variety of kinds of arguments. The first piece of evidence comes early within *AJ* 2.32–49. When Cyril imagines two possible explanations for how Plato ascribes speech to God in 2.35 (i.e., Plato is either speaking poetically, or he is straightforwardly assigning words to God), he insists that the second option is indefensible because it portrays God as giving what is proper to himself alone “to the gods that are not truly such” (2.35.7). The “not truly such (τοῖς οὐκ ἀληθέσι)” comment is an opening declaration of the strategy of dislodgment. Given that he has not yet attempted to prove that these “gods” are not truly gods, he is here flagging in advance a focus for the following arguments.

When he proceeds to explain how, on Christian terms, beings who are made in the image of God might be called gods in an improper sense, this leads directly into his

use of Aristotle to undermine Julian's claim that the heavenly bodies are gods in any sense whatsoever (even in the "improper" sense) (2.36). Cyril thus shows that one set of beings (i.e., the heavenly bodies) cannot be explained as gods, though Julian tries to so explain them. The next argument (drawn, says Cyril, from "the nature of the thing itself") similarly shows that other beings that Julian denotes as "gods" simply cannot be understood as such: God would not "entrust to other 'gods' the activity of laboring for the 'creation' of 'three races'" (2.36.19–22). This point is then buttressed by the long argument about how such a claim would imply that God is either hesitant/lazy or didn't care for his creatures. The central problem that introduces these cascading theological errors into Julian's system is, thinks Cyril, the attempt to introduce additional gods beside the creating God. Implicit in Cyril's argumentation is the notion that all these many errors might be avoided if Julian were to correctly identify these lower spiritual beings.

As explained above, at AJ 2.38 Cyril enlists Porphyry to affirm that God truly does desire worship from his creatures. Cyril's point, again, was that the introduction of intermediary gods creates problems. "How," he rhetorically asks, does God ask for honors from creatures, if he "abandons us to other gods? . . . Why does he provide (προνοεῖ) at all for things on earth, though they were given as playthings to other gods, as Plato has it?" (2.38.3–8). Cyril's point is not, of course, that God does *not* actually desire worship for his creatures, or that God *shouldn't* show providence for those under his care. His point, rather, is that the introduction of intermediary gods undermines the claim that God *does* act in these ways.

Shortly thereafter in *AJ* 2.39 Cyril's arguments focuses again on the problems introduced by the role that Julian gives to his gods. Here Cyril suggests that "thinking that others can create and call into existence what once did not exist will constitute an attack on the divine glory itself" (2.39.10–12). He argues that a nature that is itself derivative (γενητή) could not bring other entities into existence (2.39.21). The point is again directed at the gods: it simply does not make sense to say that these beings who were themselves created could then actively create. As Cyril pushes this argument in *AJ* 2.41, another phrase reveals that he is consistently trying to dislodge the characters of the gods from their place in Julian's accounting. Here he suggests that Plato is inconsistent to suggest that the Demiurge God *could* create technically mortal gods but *could not* create the "three mortal races." As he notes the inconsistency, he speaks again about "the gods to whom *they say* (φασί) the king and lord of all things handed over the act of creating" (2.41.2–4). His point, again, is that "they" are incoherent in saying such a thing: "it is entirely inappropriate (ἐκτοπωτάτων) for us to attribute to other gods the work of creating" (2.41.22–23). As we will examine more closely next, when Cyril accuses Julian of "jumbling together the natures of things" (2.44.16–17), he means that the natures of the lower spiritual beings (whom Julian identifies as gods) and of the Demiurge God are fundamentally different, yet Julian's account confuses them. This problem, again, would be remedied by correctly identifying the lower spiritual beings.

Finally, in *AJ* 2.47 Cyril offers something of a summary conclusion of his many arguments. Whereas Julian's account (via Plato) of the diversity in the world presumes at least three categories of beings in the cosmos (the Demiurge God, the lower gods, and

the mortal races), Cyril insists that it only makes sense to maintain two categories. The middle category must be ejected:

So then, no others can be the creators of “three races,” but rather the originator (γενεσιουργός) of all things should appropriately be thought of as the highest and only beginning (ἀρχή) of all things, next to whom there is nothing at all more, but rather all things are under him and through him and under [his] feet, as things created out from [him] (ἐκτισμένα). (2.47.12–16)

As we’ve seen, all manner of arguments contribute to this conclusion. And those many arguments accomplish other proximate ends for Cyril: they further undermine Julian himself as a philosopher, they undercut the authority of Plato, they boost the credibility of Moses, and so forth. But a consistent objective for the arguments is to squeeze out the intermediate gods as plausible characters in the cosmic drama. At the “narrative conflict” level, this objective can be explained as a fracturing of Julian’s narrative account by dislodging some of the characters. Cyril is trying to show that an account with “gods,” on Julian’s terms, simply cannot hold together.

Cyril doesn’t push the final step of renarrating the gods *as demons* in this section. As we’ll see in the second half of this chapter, a parallel set of arguments in book 4 similarly work towards dislodging the gods from Julian’s narrative account, and there Cyril repeatedly drives home that these characters should rather be understood as demons. Before getting there, though, I want to consider one of Cyril’s arguments from AJ 2.32–49 in more detail. When Alasdair MacIntyre suggests that some conflict between traditions happens at the narrative level, he suggests that this often occurs when those traditions do not share standards that are adequate for resolving differences. Apparent overlap of patterns of reasoning, standards of adjudication, self-

understood objectives, and even language might be illusory. In such cases “arguments” would not be persuasive, given that their argumentative integrity lies in premises or definitions or a rationale, the integrity of which an adversary’s tradition denies *a priori*.

Setting aside the question of whether such impossibility is inevitably systemic in the conflict between Julian and Cyril, Cyril’s argument in *AJ* 2.45 does proceed on terms and a rationale that is particularly Christian, though it might appear at first blush to be a philosophically straightforward argument. In other words, Cyril advances an argument that would hold very little (if any) sway for a Neoplatonist like Julian because it presumes a framework that is foreign to the way such a person reasons. Cyril is arguing past, rather than with, Julian. However, this is also a poignant illustration of how “arguing past” can still be part of a larger, coherent argumentative strategy. Cyril’s many arguments about the gods in *AJ* 2.32–49 contribute to the strategy of out-narrating Julian—of providing an account of the data of the world within a narrative that has an explanatory power that is demonstrably superior to Julian’s. In one respect, the argument of *AJ* 2.45 does its rhetorical work not in spite of its incompatibility with Julian’s way of reasoning; rather, the rhetorical work of this particular argument is accomplished in that it is part of a vast bundle of similar arguments that, one-by-one, plausibly establish an alternative way of imagining, reasoning about, and living in the world. This larger argument depends on the impossibility of particular arguments, so to one of those we turn.

### II.B.3 *Case Study in Argumentation: Against Julian 2.45*

Shortly after quoting fr. 10 (containing Julian's exegesis of the speech of Plato's Demiurge in *Timaeus* 41), Cyril presents an accusation: Julian "confuses all things and jumbles together the natures of things with one another" (2.44.16–18). Cyril's meaning becomes clear in *AJ* 2.45 where he argues that a serious philosophical incoherence lies in Julian's exegesis of the *Timaeus* (and in the *Timaeus* itself). There are two features about Cyril's argument that show how it is a display of uniquely *Christian* reasoning: first, in the way that Cyril applies a fundamentally Christian mode of reasoning and framework of analysis; and, second, in how much exegetical work he undertakes to render Julian's exegesis of Plato so that its terms even fit this Christian framework. In short, Cyril critiques Julian by philosophical standards whose prominence is discernible in light of the Christian commitments about creation and about the Trinity from the third and fourth centuries, but he can apply these standards only after recasting entailments of Julian's arguments in a language that is directly judicable by those Christian commitments.

Cyril's core critique is most succinctly stated in *AJ* 2.45, lines 13–18 and 21–23. I have included the full Greek text and bolded/underlined the key terms/phrases. Quotation marks indicate where Cyril is quoting from Julian.

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Since, then—as [Julian] himself clearly conceded—the **unoriginated God** is the originator of the former and the latter things,<sup>21</sup> how does he say that they originated from him and “**coexist with and are inherent to**” him? How, tell me, does an **originated thing** coexist with **the unoriginated God**? In what manner is it inherent [to him]?

...

[Julian] says that the highest god is **unoriginated**, on the one hand, but that **those who originated from him** are **inherent to** and **begotten from him** and **proceed**,’ on the other hand . . .

“Ὅτε τοίνυν, καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς διωμολόγηκεν ἐναργῶς, τούτων τε κάκεινων γενεσιουργὸς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγέννητος θεός, πῶς ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγενῆσθαι φησὶν αὐτοὺς ‘**συνυπάρχειν** τε καὶ **ἐνυπάρχειν**’ αὐτῷ; Πῶς, εἰπέ μοι, **τῷ ἀγενήτῳ θεῷ** συνυπάρξει **τὸ γενητόν**; Ἐνυπάρξει δὲ κατὰ ποῖον τρόπον; (2.45.13–18)

...

**ἀγέννητον** μὲν εἶναί φησι τὸν ἀνωτάτῳ θεόν, **ἐνυπάρχειν** δὲ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ **γεννηθῆναι** καὶ **προελθεῖν** τοὺς παρ’ αὐτοῦ **γεγονότας**’ . . . (2.45.21–23)

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Two interconnected patterns of reasoning undergird Cyril’s accusation. The first and most central stems from Christian commitments about the creation of all things by God from nothing, and the second stems from a central strand of the fourth-century Trinitarian disputes.<sup>22</sup>

The heart of Cyril’s critique is that Julian has incoherently classed originated things with the unoriginated God—he has treated τὸ γενητόν as ontologically

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<sup>21</sup> He has been speaking of “visible” and “noetic” gods.

<sup>22</sup> For a similar kind of argument about the development of a Christian metaphysic out of the Trinitarian controversies, see now Johannes Zachhuber, *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysics: Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus* (Oxford University Press, 2020). Zachhuber traces other features of developing Christian thought and finds the true “ontological revolution” (5) in fact in the Christological controversy. Still, his focus (like mine), is on “Christian or Patristic philosophy” as “signifying a set of logical and ontological concepts underlying the articulation of doctrinal statements” (3). See chapter 2 for an analysis of “a single Cappadocian philosophy in which the language utilized for the trinitarian settlement becomes part of a much more comprehensive intellectual system” (60).

equivalent to the ἀγένητος God. As Gerhard May has traced, Christian thinking on the relationship between God and creation in the starkly dichotomous terms of “creation from nothing” clearly emerged in the late second century with Tatian, though he suggests that it had earlier gnostic expression in Basilides.<sup>23</sup> May even claims that it took a particularly gnostic form of iconoclastic thought (with respect to traditional philosophy) to express such a radically new doctrine.<sup>24</sup> This illustrates how divergent was the Christian decision to draw a sharp distinction between the uncreated God, on the one hand, and the cosmos that was created by him (and once did not exist) on the other hand.

Cyril diagnoses Julian’s error about the creator/created divide as intertwined with a second and related Trinitarian error. He critiques Julian’s confusion of τὸ γενητόν and τὸ ἀγένητον, but that critique is fleshed out in relation to another problem in Julian’s Platonic vocabulary. The second error stands out in its contrast to Christian Trinitarian doctrine: Julian thinks that originated (γενητοὶ) gods could “co-exist with” and “be inherent to” the unoriginated (ἀγένητος) God. For inheritors of the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century, the Son alone “coexists with” and “is inherent to” the Father, and the Son uniquely belongs on the uncreated side of the most basic

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<sup>23</sup> Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of Creation out of Nothing in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), 138–54.

<sup>24</sup> May wonders at the fact that a “gnostic” thinker was the first to clearly articulate a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. He suggests that this may be the result of a “singular knitting together of common Christian and gnostic motifs. Or one could even say: the biblical ideas of creation and omnipotence are overstated in Basilides in a gnostic way; thus, as the being of the gnostic God explodes all concepts, so his creation can only be described, in a manner paradoxical for Greek thinkers, as creation out of nothing.” In other words, it took a particularly negative and reactive form of theology to escape the dominant philosophical framework used for debating the origins of the cosmos. See May, 84.

ontological divide (leaving aside the Spirit, which does not feature in this argument).<sup>25</sup> Cyril thinks he has detected the same error in Julian that “Arians” committed by identifying the Son as a created creator.<sup>26</sup> In between the two summary indictments excerpted above, Cyril provides a succinct explanation of how the normative Christian resolution avoids Julian’s ontological error. In contrast to Julian’s *created* assistant creators, Cyril explains:

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“We affirm that the word of God which is **unoriginated necessarily coexists with** him who brings [him] forth and **is inherent to** him, and he **proceeds** from him **in a begetting manner.**”

Ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀγένητον ὄντα τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον **συνυπάρχειν ἀναγκαίως** τῷ φύσαντι διίσχυριζόμεθα καὶ **ἐνυπάρχειν** μὲν αὐτῷ, **προελθεῖν** δὲ **γεννητῶς** ἐξ αὐτοῦ. (2.45.18–20)

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In Cyril’s framing, for both Julian and for Christians, there are three relevant groupings that need to be related and distinguished, but without confusing a second, fundamental and binary distinction between the created and the uncreated. Those three classes are for Julian/Cyril, respectively: the Demiurge/Father, the “gods”/Word, and “the three mortal races”/all of creation. According to Cyril, Julian’s manner of

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<sup>25</sup> Boulnois notes that, for Cyril, the language of *συνυπάρχειν* indicates for the Father and Son that, “puisque leur coexistence est nécessaire à leur être, il ne peut y avoir d’antériorité de l’un par rapport à l’autre.” “Coexistence” of Son with Father is an *eternal* reality. See Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie*, 397.

For further instances confirming that Cyril treats “coexistence” of Son and Father as an eternal reality, see AJ 1.46.5–8 and 8.6.1–3. For an example of Cyril explicitly correlating “coexisting with” and “being inherent to,” see his *Commentary on John* 1.18 in P.E. Pusey, ed., *Sancti Patris Nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872); (ET in Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on John*, trans. David R. Maxwell, vol. 1, Ancient Christian Texts [Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013], 8).

<sup>26</sup> Though he does not make the specific accusation of “Arian” here, Cyril does accuse Plato of being “Arian” in AJ 1.48.6–9.

relating these three classes errs by eliding the more fundamental distinction between the uncreated and the created, and Julian therefore incoherently treated the gods as created beings while also ascribing to them characteristics that only rightly belong to what is uncreated. The Christian foil to this mistake lies in identifying the second grouping (the Word) as uncreated (ἀγένητον) but then distinguishing it from first grouping (the Father) by noting that the Word comes from the Father “in a begetting manner” (γεννητῶς). This “proceeding in a begetting manner” does not imply that the Word is created, and thus it does not breach the uncreated/created distinction. As Cyril says elsewhere in classically pro-Nicene reasoning, “Just as God is from God and light flashed forth from light, so too also what is unoriginated is from what is unoriginated (ἐξ ἀγενήτου ἀγένητος).”<sup>27</sup> The “unoriginated” Son is from the “unoriginated” Father but “in a begetting manner.”

Khaled Anatolios’s treatment of the Christian Trinitarian disputes illustrates from a broader, development-of-doctrine perspective how distinctly Christian is the reasoning that Cyril deploys against Julian. He also shows how this Christian reasoning about the divine persons and nature is tightly intertwined with Christian commitments to creation from nothing. Anatolios’s model for explaining the position undergirding Cyril’s critiques emphasizes that Trinitarian doctrine developed through a complex

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<sup>27</sup> *Thesaurus* PG 75.24b–c. Cyril proceeds to explain that: “It is necessary that the Word is the same sort of thing as is the one who begot it. For in this way what is genuinely from the essence of the Father can be verified by the one begotten from him (τῷ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννωμένῳ).”

series of existential “breaks” in the flow of Christian experience.<sup>28</sup> The background to these breaks for virtually all fourth-century Christians were certain shared commitments, including centrally: that “God created the world from nothing” and an emphasis on “the lordship or primacy of Christ.” Among several concrete features of Christ’s primacy is that he is both pre-existent and that he was the “Creator of the world,” though some of the scriptural warrants for this position (like Proverbs 8:22, “He created me as the beginning of his ways . . .”) left it unclear as to whether he might be “created and also the Creator of the rest of creation.”<sup>29</sup>

As Anatolios narrates, the emergent clarity about these two positions produced a break” in Christian experience at the beginning of the fourth century. He explains that God’s radical transcendence over creation came to center on the term “unbegotten” as the way of distinguishing God from creation.<sup>30</sup> Yet, “this development constituted an agitation or break within the flow of Christian experience inasmuch as it

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<sup>28</sup> Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 33–35.

<sup>29</sup> Anatolios, 36–37.

<sup>30</sup> Anatolios consistently glosses “unbegotten” with “(agen[n]ētos),” indicating the lack of clarity around a distinction between (ἀ)γενητος and (ἀ)γεννητος at the outset of the Trinitarian controversies. The eventual clarity that is evident in John of Damascus is a result of the disagreements and resolution of the fourth century. Damascene writes in *Expositio Fidei* 1.8, “For it is necessary to see that τὸ ἀγέννητον—written with one ‘ν’—indicates what is uncreated (τὸ ἄκτιστον) or what has not come to be (τὸ μὴ γενόμενον), and τὸ ἀγέννητον—written with two ‘ν’s—signifies what is not begotten (τὸ μὴ γεννηθέν). According to the first sign, essence differs from essence (διαφέρει οὐσία οὐσίας). For one essence is uncreated or ἀγέννητον—with one ‘ν’—and another is γενητή or created. According to the second sign, being does not differ from being. For the first hypostasis of every kind of living being is unbegotten (ἀγέννητος), but not ἀγένητος. For they were created by the demiurge, led forth into a beginning [of existence] by his word, but they were not begotten, for there was no other same form that preexisted them from which they would be begotten” (Bonifatius Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos: Band 2 Expositio Fidei*, vol. 2, Patristische Texte und Studien 12 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973]). For further information on the early lack of clarity surrounding these terms, see R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 202–6.

needed to be creatively integrated with another fundamental principle of Christian experience, the primacy of Jesus as Lord.” The key question for Christians became, “How then to reconcile the primacy of Christ, closely bound with his double relation to both God and creation, with this newly maximized sense of divine primacy—the radical difference between God and world and God’s absolute priority and freedom from any kind of posteriority (or being caused)?”<sup>31</sup>

The eventual solution was (as Cyril deploys in compressed form against Julian) to carefully distinguish what it means to be (ἀ)γενητος/(un)originated and (ἀ)γεννητος/(un)begotten—the same distinction erected in the Nicene Creed’s formulation that the Son is “begotten, not made” (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα).<sup>32</sup> Though Cyril’s understanding of these sets of terms is subtle,<sup>33</sup> his argument against Julian in *AJ* 2.45 clearly shows this basic Nicene distinction at work.<sup>34</sup> The divine is properly ἀγένητος, and all things that are not divine are γενήτος. The Word is divine and is thus

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<sup>31</sup> Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 39.

<sup>32</sup> In a way, the Nicene solution only makes sense against the pressures of the Christian affirmation of “creation from nothing” that are outlined above. The early thinkers that Gerhard May surveyed for the origins of this doctrine (concluding with Tatian and Irenaeus) were primarily concerned with the possibility of an eternal cosmos (and especially, but not only, the material substrate for that cosmos). As Anatolios suggests, the Trinitarian controversies were prompted in part by posing questions raised by “creation from nothing” to the divine realm. Thus, even given May’s conclusions about “creation from nothing” and the second century, Lewis Ayres can still note that the fourth-century debates were not about “whether to place the Son on either side of a clear God/creation boundary” because “the ease with which this distinction can be made by modern theological readers is itself an achievement of the fourth century.” In one respect, such distinctions were in place by the second century, but what those distinctions implied for “the divine life and action,” as Ayres puts it, remained to be worked out (*Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 4).

<sup>33</sup> See Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie*, 29–76 generally for language about God, and 72–75 and 359–66 on “unbegotten.”

<sup>34</sup> There is, admittedly, some confusion in the manuscripts surrounding language of γεν(ν)ητος (see the GCS critical apparatus for examples even within *AJ* 2.45). My interpretation follows (and, to the extent that I am correct, validates) the editorial decisions in the GCS.

ἀγένητος, though it can be distinguished from the divine Father by noting that it proceeds from the Father “begettingly,” which indicates something like one of multiple possible *modes* that a being might have (rather than a different *kind* of being altogether) and certainly does not suggest anything in opposition to the fundamental status of being ἀγένητος. This mode of proceeding (as ἀγένητος ἐξ ἀγενήτου, as he says in the *Thesaurus*) also entails that the Word “coexists with (συνυπάρχειν)” and “is inherent to (ἐνυπάρχειν)” the Father.

When Cyril held up Julian’s creative schema to this framework, he found that it erred. Julian made the same mistake as the “Arians,” in that he categorized the creative gods as basically γενήτοι while also suggesting that they could “coexist with” and “be inherent to” God who is ἀγένητος. What should be clear by now, though, is how the framework by which this incoherence is exposed has a uniquely Christian origin, tied to a history of debates that presumed as their very starting point uniquely Christian commitments, centrally the commitments to God’s radical transcendence over the creation which was summoned from nothing and to the preeminence of Christ over all things. Existential pressures produced by such commitments led to the careful lexical distinctions and modes of reasoning that Cyril uses against Julian. Insofar as these pressures arose from *Christian* antecedents, the theological and philosophical reasoning that emerged would not be agreeable (if even intelligible) to someone like Julian, who

rejected the entire Christian mode of living and thinking as a distant and errant offshoot of the true way of living and thinking preserved in the Hellenic tradition.<sup>35</sup>

The first noteworthy feature of Cyril's argument against Julian in *AJ* 2.45, then, is that he evaluates the plausibility and coherence of Julian's arguments by uniquely Christian standards. The second feature that highlights the incompatibility of Cyril's and Julian's modes of reasoning can be seen by noticing how much exegetical work Cyril has to undertake to even make Julian's arguments fit the uniquely Christian standards. According to Cyril, Julian's core error is evident in the claim that something '*originated*' might '*coexist with*' or '*be inherent to*' God who is '*unoriginated*.' However, neither Julian nor Plato directly say that something *originated* either *coexists with* or is *inherent to* a God who is *unoriginated*. Cyril does think that this claim is an obvious entailment of Julian's argument, but he has to do some creative interpretive work to show how so.

What Julian *does* explicitly say (and Cyril requotes it in his argument in *AJ* 2.45 as such) is that:

“Plato knows that the noetic and invisible gods are inherent in (ἐνυπάρχοντάς) and coexist with (συνυπάρχοντα) and are begotten (γεννηθέντα) from the

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<sup>35</sup> Unsurprisingly, given his upbringing, Julian was certainly aware of some of the advanced technical distinctions that Christians were making in their theological reasoning. He notes in fr. 18, for example, that Moses does not indicate whether the angels (or, later in the fragment, the Spirit) are “γεγονότες” or “ἀγένητοι.” But his deployment of the terms in this fragment is better interpreted as mockery than as acceptance of the normativity or centrality of the distinction. That is to say, Julian doesn't adopt the difference between “γεγονότες” or “ἀγένητοι” as an important distinction when he uses it in fr. 18. Rather, he implies that this Christian line of thinking is one more instance of Christian failure to remain faithful to Moses who himself seems not to center a distinction between things that are γεγονότες and ἀγένητοι. For a treatment of Julian's awareness of contemporary Christian theology, see Hunt, “The Christian Context of Julian's *Against the Galileans*.”

Demiurge himself and proceed therefrom (προελθόντας)” (2.45.8–11; originally quoted in fr. 10 at 2.43.14–17).

First, Julian does not say that the Demiurge is “ἀγένητος.” He does in fr. 9 quote Plato’s use of the term, though it clearly has a different sense than Cyril’s and applies to yet-to-be-made (or “unmade”) creatures.<sup>36</sup> Second, he does not say that the gods are γενητός, “originated.” But he does speak of the gods with the verb γεννᾶσθαι, “begotten.” So far, Julian’s statements and lexical choices actually adhere to Nicene logic: as Cyril’s own comment in *AJ* 2.45.18–20 make clear, it is metaphysically coherent in a Nicene scheme to say that some being(s) might (1) coexist with and (2) be inherent to and (3) proceed from *and* (4) be begotten (γεννᾶσθαι) from God—that being(s) just must itself be ἀγένητος.

It is thus striking that, when building his case against Julian in *AJ* 2.45, Cyril first requotes a passage that conforms to Trinitarian metaphysics. Cyril’s next sentence (2.45.11–12) similarly does not seem to uncover Julian’s core error, for Cyril then points out that Julian says that God is the Demiurge of both the noetic and invisible gods, and “the one who crafted the heavens and begot (γεννήσας) the stars.” Again, Cyril provides Julian’s own words (from 2.43.19–21), and again the quotation seems only to suggest that the stars were “begotten” from the God.<sup>37</sup> Were Cyril trying to simply pull

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<sup>36</sup> In the speech to the “gods of gods,” the Demiurge explains the gods’ creation to them and then notes next that “three unmade (ἀγένητα) mortal races remain.” The term refers not to an ontological characteristic of being “unoriginated,” as with Cyril, but simply “not yet made.” See *AJ* 2.43.9–10.

<sup>37</sup> Cyril does not quote Julian verbatim in 2.45.11–12, as in the prior 2 lines. He mostly uses Julian’s words, though he changes the syntax and substitutes one or two words. A slight, resultant change is that Cyril interprets Julian as saying that God “begot the stars”—but in the actual fragment quoted in *AJ* 2.43, Julian says that the Demiurge is the “fashioner of heaven and earth and the sea and the stars, having begotten

a fast one on Julian, he might have paraphrased these sentences and introduced terms that lay the groundwork for a clean charge of philosophical error. In other words, I think Cyril is not trying to violently force Julian’s argument into saying things that it doesn’t actually say—if he were trying to do so, he would have made his job easier by not re-introducing Julian’s statements in their verbatim form which *conforms* to Trinitarian reasoning. Cyril seems, rather, to think that there is a genuine entailment to Julian’s argument that exposes the argument’s fundamental error.

Cyril’s next comment begins to clarify where the putatively fatal entailment lies. It is worth quoting again in full (now with a slightly different collection of terms and phrases emphasized):

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Since, then—as he himself clearly conceded—the **unoriginated God** is the **originator** of these and of those things, how does he say that they **originated** from him and “coexist with and are inherent to” him? How, tell me, will an **originated thing** coexist with the **unoriginated God**? In what manner will it be inherent [to him]?

Ὅτε τοίνυν, καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς διωμολόγηκεν ἑναργῶς, τούτων τε κακείνων **γενεσιουργός** ἔστιν ὁ **ἀγέννητος θεός**, πῶς ἐξ αὐτοῦ **γεγενῆσθαι** φησιν αὐτοὺς ‘συνυπάρχειν τε καὶ ἐνυπάρχειν’ αὐτῷ; Πῶς, εἰπέ μοι, τῷ **ἀγεννήτῳ θεῷ** συνυπάρξει **τὸ γενητόν**; Ἐνυπάρξει δὲ κατὰ ποῖον τρόπον; (2.45.13–16)

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*their archetypes* among the noetic things” (2.43.19–21). I think this is just a slip of paraphrasing, though, and I can’t discern Cyril building any of his subsequent argument on this slip.

Cyril is probably overreaching to say that Julian “clearly conceded” the point, but he draws a possible inference from Julian’s claim that God is the “Demiurge” of the gods.<sup>38</sup> Cyril takes the statement that God is “Demiurge” (Julian’s word) of the noetic and invisible gods and infers that God is thereby their “originator” (γενεσιουργός) (Cyril’s word). As the etymology of γενεσιουργός implies, God is the one who “authored existence” or “fashioned a coming-to-be” for these gods. Cyril seems to presume that such a role implies not simply “begetting,” though. To be a γενεσιουργός is to give something that once had no existence an “origin” (γένεσις) of existence. And, if the Demiurge gave an “origin” of existence to the other gods, then a clear entailment would be that those gods have come into existence—they are γένητοι, “originated.”<sup>39</sup> This seems to be how Cyril’s inferences work. His following accusatory question then makes the subtle but pivotal transition: he asks how Julian could coherently say that these gods “*originated* (γεγενῆσθαί) from him” and, at the same time, “both coexist with and are inherent to him.” Cyril has now added the key verb that Julian has not (in the quoted passage in 2.45.8–11) yet used: γεγενῆσθαί.<sup>40</sup> Though Julian actually used γεννᾶσθαι (“were begotten”), Cyril suggests that Julian’s other lexical choices

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<sup>38</sup> Julian had himself explicitly said: “Κοινὸς δὲ ἀμφοτέρων δημιουργὸς οὗτός ἐστιν . . .” (2.43.19).

<sup>39</sup> The LSJ gives as one option for γένεσις “= τὸ γίγνεσθαι, becoming” (III.2).

<sup>40</sup> The tense, too, is probably worth noting: the perfect tense denotes a completed and discrete action. If the gods “came to be,” in the perfect tense, then there is no way that this word (γίγνεσθαι) might describe the ongoing relationship of how the gods relate to the Demiurge God. It describes, rather, the original and discrete event of their coming-to-be, of their creation.

necessitate that what he really thinks is that the gods γεγενῆσθαι, “originated” from God.<sup>41</sup>

When Cyril concludes the paragraph, he returns to the quotation that began this argument (from 2.43.14–17) but now with this same, key addition of γίγνεσθαι language (specifically, the perfect participle γεγονότας), now alongside the γεννᾶσθαι language. Cyril says,

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The scrupulous advocate for Plato’s creative language says that the highest god is **unoriginated**, on the one hand, but that **those who originated from him** are “inherent to and **begotten from him** and proceed,” on the other hand . . . .

Ὁ δέ γε τῆς Πλάτωνος εὐρεσιεπείας συνήγορος ἀκριβῆς **ἀγένητον** μὲν εἶναί φησι τὸν ἀνωτάτῳ θεόν, ἐνυπάρχειν δὲ καὶ **ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννηθῆναι** καὶ προελθεῖν **τοὺς παρ’ αὐτοῦ γεγονότας**. . . . (2.45.20–23)

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Cyril has now finished recasting Julian’s arguments so that his claims and vocabulary are suitable to be measured by his own distinctly Christian standards. Cyril has added to Julian’s explicit phrasing “τοὺς παρ’ αὐτοῦ γεγονότας,”<sup>42</sup> so now Julian is presented as saying that “those originated from him [God] . . . are inherent within [him].” This contains the key confusion that Cyril accused Julian of making: suggesting that

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<sup>41</sup> In Cyril’s favor, Julian does at least once use “γίγνεσθαι” language to describe the relationship between the Demiurge and the gods (and the whole cosmos), though Cyril does not bring up this particular comment of Julian’s in *AJ* 2.45. At *AJ* 2.43.27–28, Julian explains that, according to Plato, “nothing is the cause of being immortal for the gods and visible cosmos other than τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ γενέσθαι.” Plato also uses this verb in his passage quoted in fr. 9.

<sup>42</sup> The GCS edition includes “those who came about [γεγονότας] from him” within single quotation marks which misleadingly indicates that Cyril has taken these words directly from Julian. Rather, and importantly, these words indicate what Cyril takes to be an entailment of the words Julian uses in the relevant section of his fragment.

“originated beings” could “be inherent within” (and, from earlier, “coexist with”) him who is “unoriginated.”

To summarize, Cyril thinks that Julian confused and conflated the fundamental categories of τὸ ἀγένητον and τὸ γενήτον. To levy this charge, however, he had to find *both* of these categories implied within Julian’s actual argument. Cyril appends “ἀγένητος” to Julian’s discussion of the “highest God,” and he infers that if this God is the “Demiurge/creator” (in Julian’s own words) of the noetic and invisible gods, that necessarily implies that these lower gods are necessarily (in Cyril’s words, now) γένητοι—they “have come to be.” Given these unavoidable entailments, Cyril concludes that Julian is “mixing up and confusing all things” when he suggests that a being that is γένητος might “coexist with” and “be inherent to” a God that is ἀγένητος (2.45.23–25).<sup>43</sup>

### III. Divine Providence, Diversity, and Theodicy

Having considered a cluster of “episodes” broadly relating to cosmogony, we turn now to another run of cosmological arguments. These arguments, contained in *Against Julian* book 4, move from questions of origins to questions of divine oversight and maintenance of the cosmos. This second half of the chapter will proceed much like the first. I first summarize Julian’s provoking claims and then attend to the course of

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<sup>43</sup> Julian might very well have not objected to at least several of the inferences that Cyril drew, considered individually. For instance, I suspect that, if asked, Julian would have accepted describing the Demiurge as “ἀγένητος.” He probably also would have accepted labeling earthly creatures as “γένητοι.” Still, Cyril collects and judges these inferences within a larger argument in a way that only a Christian would. The difference between something that is ἀγένητος and beings that are γένητοι is a fundamental and organizing principle for Cyril in a way that it clearly wasn’t for Julian. Using these labels triggers a whole series of questions and issues that would not have been triggered in the same way for Julian or a Neoplatonist.

the arguments that Cyril advances throughout *AJ* book 4. Covering now an entire book of *Against Julian*, I will necessarily have to give briefer summaries for several parts of the argument. Still, it will be useful to survey the wide and seemingly-disconnected course that Cyril follows throughout book 4, because the next part of the analysis will be to show, as before, how those various arguments and layers of arguments do, in fact, cohere. They hold together in the way that they collectively contribute to the implicit strategy of narrative conflict. At this fundamental level, Cyril is primarily at work on the same project as in *AJ* 2.32–49: he continues his sustained effort to dislodge the characters of the gods from Hellenic narrative, and this time he also closes the renarration loop by reinscribing these characters as demons within his own Christian narrative. Finally, having brought to light the underlying narrative conflict in book 4, I will question again whether Julian’s and Cyril’s modes of reasoning grounded in rival traditions and tradition-constituting narratives are compatible. We just considered this question as it relates to language of being (un)generated, and we will consider it again at the end of the chapter with a focus on the language of providence.

### III.A Julian’s Arguments Within *Against Julian* Book 4

To adequately understand Julian’s arguments contained in book 4 of *Against Julian*, it will first be useful to resituate them within the larger sweep of Julian’s criticism (for a condensed summary, see my outline of *Against the Galileans* in Chapter 2). Book 4 of *Against Julian* contains *Against the Galileans* frs. 21–28, which comprise most of Julian’s project of comparing Hebrew and Hellenic doctrines about “the nations” to one another. This specific comparative project fits in Julian’s larger project of

comparing Hebrew and Hellenic teachings writ large (roughly frs. 4–28). As Chapter 2 showed, this larger project was intended to demonstrate that Moses’s Hebrew teachings were generally consonant with Julian’s Hellenic teachings. In the books of *AJ* preceding book 4, Cyril responds to Julian’s comparison of Hellenic doctrine to Moses’s teachings about the creation of the cosmos and specifically of the first humans in Eden. Julian found in that cosmogonical comparison genuine but limited insight in the doctrines of Moses, but at fr. 19 (in *AJ* 3.37) he signals that he has gone as far as he can on this topic. “Moses,” Julian explains, “seems not to have mentioned everything” important about the creator, and so he says he will proceed to “compare and contrast to one another what the Hebrews and what our fathers taught” about the nations. His cosmogonical comparison project thus slides smoothly into questions that, as will become evident, continue Julian’s cosmological renarration of the degenerating Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The first two fragments (frs. 19–20) of the new comparative project are contained at the end of *Against Julian* book 3, and in them Julian argues that Moses (and even the prophets, Jesus, and Paul) acknowledged merely that their god picked out the nation of Israel to oversee it, though according to Julian, Moses says nothing about “how or by which gods” the *other* nations are overseen (fr. 19.17–18). Julian concludes this point in fr. 20 by suggesting that Paul’s doctrine, if true, would imply that all the nations except Israel were entirely and cruelly overlooked by their maker for thousands of years.

This argument leads directly into the series of fragments that Cyril responds to in *Against Julian* book 4, wherein Julian determines to compare next “these things” (Moses’s and Paul’s teachings) “to our things” (the Hellenic doctrines). Frs. 21–28 is one of the tighter series of fragments that are contained within a single book of *Against Julian*. In brief, after Julian surveys the Hebrew (and even Pauline) teachings on God and the nations in frs. 19–20, in fr. 21 he begins to explain the Hellenic alternative. He quickly lays out the Neoplatonic hierarchy, starting with the “Demiurge” and “common father,” who distributed rule of the nations to “ethnarch and city-protecting gods” who each rule “in a way corresponding to itself (οἰκείως ἑαυτῷ)” (fr. 21.10) He then explains that “experience (ἡ πεῖρα)” itself confirms his account, in that various diversities among the nations can be explained by reference to the diversity of their ruling gods: diversity of the peoples’ characteristics (fr. 21), their laws and customs (frs. 22, 26), and even differences in their bodies (fr. 26).

Within his defense of this theological vision, Julian interweaves a treatment of Moses’s account of the diversity of languages at the tower of Babel. Julian argues that Moses’s account is mythic (μυθώδη) and (at least in its surface details) unbelievable (frs. 23–24). By intertwining Moses’s account, Julian accentuates the superiority of the Hellenic doctrine: he stresses that Moses’s account of the diversity of just languages is an obscure and mythic one, whereas the Hellenic account explains a wide variety of differences (which, he insists, are “far greater” [μείζων] than linguistic difference) (fr. 24.10). Julian insists that the Hellenic account is more expansive, but, in keeping with his account of Moses as lesser-than-but-compatible-with his peers from other nations,

Julian does suggest in fr. 27 that Moses's account of the confusion of the languages functionally agrees with Julian's mode of accounting, which explains a diversity of features through a diversity of causal agents. Julian points out that Moses's God said "Let us" go down to confuse the languages, implying that several agents were involved in creating the several languages.) Julian concludes in fr. 28 by summing up the "lengthy" discussion with his main point: regardless how Moses identifies his God (Julian thinks there is some confusion about this; see Chapter 2), Julian's own account about the "God of all things" and the "sectional" gods under him is better than Moses's (and, by implication, certainly better than the Christian distortions of Moses's teaching about God) (fr. 28.1–12).

Two general and related features of these arguments need emphasizing before turning to Cyril's responses. First, frs. 21–28 continue to center diversities in the world as a pressing set of phenomena that any theology needs to be able to explain. This emphasis was prominent in frs. 9–10 from *AJ* 2.32–49 when Julian was focused on the cause of different classes of beings in the cosmic order. It remains central when he turns to the oversight of the cosmos and how that governing structure accounts for differences of features among humans. We'll see shortly that Cyril has a brief response on the origin of such differences, but his rebuttal evinces that his theological reasoning is driven by a different set of concerns.

Second, Julian speaks of the relationship between the plurality of gods and diversity of human features in terms of providence (*πρόνοια*). In fact, he emphasizes several times that, absent a theology that can account for the many differences in the

world, one must hold that these differences “came about randomly” (ἐκ τοῦ αὐτομάτου συμπεσεῖν), meaning that the cosmos is not administered “by providence” (fr. 21.26–27). And if providence played no role in producing these differences, “why do we worship and waste our energies on one who exercises no providence (τὸν μηδὲν προνοοῦντα)?” (fr. 24.20). For Julian, the many kinds of diversities evident throughout the cosmos are more than curious phenomena that he’d like to be able to explain. It is a collective phenomenon, rather, that is closely tied to his entire account of the relationship between humanity and the divine. Πρόνοια is a lynchpin in his vision for what a rightly ordered community life should look like. Cyril, too, emphasizes that a proper theology needs to uphold an appropriate account of divine providence over the cosmos. But, due to his different narrative backdrop and attendant mode of reasoning, talk about πρόνοια turns out to trigger different concerns and patterns of reasoning.

### III.B Cyril’s Responses in *Against Julian* Book 4

The next part of this chapter proceeds in two stages. First is an overview of the first half of *AJ* book 4 (4.2–23) which includes Cyril’s vastly disproportionate response to only one of Julian’s fragments. Marie Odile-Boulnois gives this section as an example of Cyril taking a fair bit of liberty in his response: in it, she notes, “. . . certains paraissent au premier abord fort éloignés de l’objection initiale.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the section begins with Julian’s argument about how his hierarchy of gods is proved by the “experience” of diversity among the nations, and it eventually concludes with Cyril’s explanation of

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<sup>44</sup> Cyrille d’Alexandrie, *Contre Julien*, Tome II, 17.

how to interpret Mosaic sacrificial rituals and then his examination of Hellenic human sacrifice. Despite the apparent wandering, however, there is a coherent progression that becomes clear when we attend to the narrative conflict being waged. Second, I will selectively overview arguments from the second half of book 4 (4.24–48). Two themes are prominent: Cyril’s counter-interpretation of the tower of Babel, and the blatant determinism of Julian’s position. Again, the narrative conflict rubric helps to show how these arguments have a place within a larger rhetorical strategy. By lingering within the actual course of Cyril’s argumentation throughout book 4, we will be able to see how the many layers (and there are a few new kinds of layers in book 4) contribute to Cyril’s outnarration of Julian.

### III.B.1 Against Julian 4.2–23

In *Against Julian* 4.2–23 Cyril quotes and responds to AG fr. 21, in which Julian claims that the hierarchy of the gods causes diversities among the peoples: Ares, the god of war, governs the most warlike nations; Athena, herself wise *and* battle-savvy, governs the nations that display these characteristics; and so forth. How Cyril ends his lengthy rebuttal to this focused claim by talking about human sacrifice is actually not hard to trace, once we notice that he is walking through all the steps of out-narration within these passages. It will be worthwhile to see all those steps in summary form before looking more closely at specific arguments. In short, Cyril points out a number of conceptual problems with Julian’s account that show the “lunacy (ἀποπληξία)” (4.7.14) of his argument—a madness which, again, stems from the ill-chosen explanatory role that Julian attempts to give to the ethnarch gods. Unlike in *AJ* 2.32–49,

Cyril completely closes the renarration loop: 4.3–7 dislodges the “gods” from their role in Julian’s narrative, and 4.9–15 explains in detail that these gods are, in fact, fallen demons. One of Cyril’s central pieces of evidence that these beings are not legitimate subordinate rulers of the cosmos is the way that they collect honors and sacrifices for themselves and not for their own ruler, the highest god. In the wandering flow of his rebuttal, this critique of Hellenic sacrifices (which are, says Cyril, retained by mid-level deities) leads to the next topic: Mosaic sacrifice. Following on his tirade against specifically Hellenic sacrifices, Cyril understandably considers a possible counter-objection: if the Hellenic sacrificial system is objectionable, then so too might be the Mosaic sacrificial system, since Moses (as the imagined objection goes) commanded that sacrificial customs “proceed through the same manner” (4.15.16) as those of the Hellenes. As I detailed in Chapter 3, Cyril then explains in *AJ* 4.16–18 the stark difference between Mosaic and Hellenic sacrificial customs by detailing how the Mosaic sacrificial law was an accommodating “economy (οἰκονομία)” that God instituted for the Hebrews who were but recently rescued from Egypt. He explains further that these laws were always meant to be temporary, and that at the very least they absolutely proscribe human sacrifice. This final argument returns in *AJ* 4.18.18 – 4.23.24 to Julian’s ethnarch gods who *have*, in contrast to the true God, demanded human sacrifices. Cyril recounts from several Hellenic sources (including, again, Porphyry, but also Dorotheus, Monimus, and others) stories of humans slaughtered for the “gods,” who (says even Hermes Trismegistus) should be carefully avoided. Cyril concludes that Chronos, Dionysius, Zeus, Athena, Ares—gods whom Julian explained as responsible for different

customs and laws among humans—are clearly “evil and repulsive and pestilent demons who stole the name of divinity” (4.23.20–24).

In this way, in its most general contours, Cyril’s long and meandering arguments in *AJ* 4.2–23 meticulously dislodge the “gods” from their place in Julian’s account and reinscribe them as different characters within his Christian narrative. As in *AJ* 2.32–49 there are multiple different argumentative layers at work, most of which contribute directly to the project of out-narration. It will be worthwhile, again, to survey those layers as they appear in book 4 in slightly more detail than the general overview I just provided. Several of these layers are rather similar to those in *AJ* 2.32–49 (especially the philosophical arguments), and so I only selectively re-summarize them now. But there are also a few new kinds of arguments that will be worth lingering over. As before, those layers generally link to cosmological questions, and specifically to identifying the beings that Julian thinks are gods and that Cyril counter-explains as demons.

Cyril’s first several arguments in response to Julian’s opening fragment in book 4 mirror arguments from *AJ* 2.32–49. Before introducing Julian’s argument, Cyril summarizes his next focus, and this summary returns to the same subject material of book 2: Cyril explains that Julian has given “an account of the ‘Demiurge proximate to the world’ (as he himself calls it) as the master of all things, and though [Julian] submits all things to his reign, in another way [Julian] contrarily removes him from authority over us, and he does not blush to apportion his kingdom to some countless gods and to others other than himself” (4.2.2–7). As before, Cyril thinks that Julian’s account which

tries to hold together the cooperating activities of the Demiurge and the lower gods creates innumerable problems.

After quoting Julian, Cyril starts his response by suggesting that, if the demiurge God would have divvied up the nations as Julian suggested, it would be for one of two possible reasons: either that God himself is incapable of ruling them all, or he is capable but still chose to apportion them to others for some reason. The first option would make this God out to be feeble. But the second option has problems, too: perhaps, Cyril suggests, Julian thinks the reason God chose to apportion rule to others is that the other gods knew better how to instruct the nations? But Cyril points out that, in this case, God somehow had created other gods that are *more* knowledgeable than he himself is! But if, on the flip side, God himself is more knowledgeable about ruling the nations well, then his choosing not to do so opens him up to charges of contempt (ὕπεροψία): a truly benevolent and good God would desire good for his creatures, and that would mean directly overseeing their wellbeing (4.3).

But Cyril seems willing to concede for the sake of argument that God might have assigned the nations to lesser gods and that he might have done so for the good of his creatures. Posturing as inhabiting Julian's way of thinking, Cyril reasons that God surely would have made such a decision so that the lower gods might teach the nations how to be virtuous. Yet, Cyril points out, Julian has said the opposite: the lower gods govern not following some higher commands or guided by any moral standard but merely by their own dispositions, whatever those might be. Of note, too, is that Cyril takes up the question of providence here. Julian had suggested that an account for the

diversity of *human characteristics* was necessary to uphold an appropriate account of divine providence. But Cyril here turns Julian's argument on its head, and he does so by switching the register to distinctly *moral* issues. He argues that even if the good God did assign the nations to other gods to rule, the appropriate effect should be towards moral uniformity, since "the will of God" is "uniform (μονοειδὲς) with respect to the good" (4.4.12). But Cyril points out that, by Julian's account, the distribution of governance effected moral difference among the nations. By his own terms, Julian's examples of national differences in fr. 21 perhaps border on morally problematic domains—the characteristics he labels range from θρασύς ("bold," or "arrogant"?) to φιλόανθρωπος ("benevolent") to τρυφηλός ("luxurious," or "delicate"?) to εὐμαθής ("quick to learn"). But the hinge of Cyril's critique lies in his push fully into moral territory: to give just a few examples, he adds that "the Scythians are brutal and murderous (ὠμοί τε καὶ ἀνδροκτόνοι)" and that "the Chaldaeans marry their mothers and lust after their sisters and do the most shameful things of all, and no one reproves them, but rather their laws call [them] to such things" (4.4.22–25). Cyril argues that not only does Julian's system of divine oversight yield diversity instead of uniformity—it also causes a multiplication of evil. As Cyril responds to Julian's argument, he takes Julian's initial concern with providence and turns it in a different direction. Based on the diversity of moral perversities in the world, Cyril wonders, "what sort of providence is this the work of?" (4.5.7–8). He proceeds to suggest that, by Julian's account, wicked nations won't be able to be held accountable for their misdeeds, people who live well can no longer be praised, and admonitions towards right living (be it from parents to children,

or from lawmakers to the people) will be useless (4.5.8–32). In other words, Cyril alleges that Julian’s account entails a kind of determinism that undercuts a healthy moral economy. I will return to these kinds of arguments at the end of the chapter.

After this opening argument in *AJ* 4.2–5, Cyril recycles several now-familiar arguments (including that the Demiurge, the “Mind” over all things, is also implicated in the misdeeds of the lower gods, to whom he granted authority, 4.6.16–21) before introducing a new argumentative layer that does not appear in book 2. At *AJ* 4.8 Cyril suggests a new avenue by which one can recognize the unseemliness (τὸ ἀκαλλές) of Julian’s doctrines: namely, “from our own affairs (ἐκ τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς πραγμάτων),” by which he means human political organization. Given several of the politically-charged contextual details in 410s–420s Alexandria,<sup>45</sup> and given that Cyril explicitly dedicated *Against Julian* to Emperor Theodosius II, it is not hard to imagine that Cyril is adding to his refutation a new kind of layer to his argument.

Cyril explains first how “earthly kingdoms” function: the highest rulers “appoint from their subjects whomever they see as wise and as skilled in the best affairs to be guardians over places, and [the rulers] crown them with the honors of authority.” Cyril is unsurprisingly most interested in the ongoing relationship between a supreme ruler and his subordinate guardians. In healthy arrangements, the guardians do not create new laws willy-nilly but rather guide their charges in accordance with the decrees of the supreme ruler. Just as the governing parameters pass down from the

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<sup>45</sup> See the Introduction for further contextual information.

highest ruler through his subordinates to the people, so also the subordinates pass up from the people “tributes, dues, taxes” to the highest ruler. Good subordinates thus instill in the people an “eternal remembrance of the superiority of the one who rules” (4.8.1–14).

Having sketched this ideal earthly political economy, Cyril proceeds to ask if Julian’s cosmological political economy bears any resemblance. Unsurprisingly, he finds the opposite: the “city-protecting gods’ and demons and angels” have actually “carried off those on earth from even knowing who is the Demiurge and master of all things . . . . And they seized for themselves the gifts (γέρα) coming from everyone—sacrifices, festivals, songs, thank-offerings—and they misled those on earth into devoting themselves to their own worship (θεραπείαις) alone” (4.8.20–25). Cyril has only one word for this kind of behavior by subordinate rulers: τυραννίς, “rebellion” or “despotic rule” (4.9.3). This accusation leads directly into Cyril’s demonstration (explained in detail in Chapter 3) that these “gods” in Julian’s account are, in fact, the former angels who, according to Jude 6, “did not preserve their origin” and rather went among the nations of the earth to lead them astray.

Cyril almost certainly meant to include in his cosmological argument another, implicit argument against Julian, of interest to anyone who theorized political systems. His argument suggests that Julian’s theology contains the seeds of political sedition, since each subordinate cosmological ruler governs οἰκείως ἑαυτῷ, “in a way corresponding to itself” as Julian had put it (fr. 21.10, at 4.2.13), and not corresponding to the wishes of God. There is therefore here a political layer of argumentation: if

humans in the Roman empire were to model their earthly political behavior on Julian's cosmological political system, then the Emperor would be constantly facing insubordination and outright rebellion from the various lower ranks of governance. Julian's cosmology makes for bad politics.

Like the other layers, this one has a kind of integrity on its own, but it also plays a pivotal role for the layer of the narrative conflict. Cyril's many attempts to show the philosophical absurdity of intermediate gods could conclude that a better account would simply exclude intermediary characters entirely. But his political analogy helps to show that Julian has not only introduced characters which undercut the coherence and plausibility of his account—the political analogy shows also that Cyril's story truly does have a plausible explanation for characters that act this way. Their activity matches that of earthly usurpers of legitimate political authority: mapped onto the cosmic realm, these characters must be fallen angels, "demons" whose tyranny Christ came to undo. If these spiritual characters are demons, such an identification does further work for Cyril by helping to explain the wide range of incompatible and diverging religious views in the world.

Cyril substantiates his political analogy even further, supporting it with scriptural evidence that constitutes a separate argumentative level. His account of the fallen angels from Jude also includes the fact that some angels did "preserve their origin" and play an appropriate role within the governance of the universe. Cyril explains that these "holy and rational powers" are ordered "to fight alongside those who were harmed, not because [God] himself wasn't strong enough to save . . . but like a

certain king who permits his noble supporters to fight against the barbarian advances and to drive off the oppression of those under his rule” (4.10.6–14).

Cyril provides two examples from Scripture to illustrate his identification of the obedient rational powers as appropriate nobles fighting for their king. The way he builds this illustration is another small example of reasoning that would be unacceptable to Julian but that nevertheless builds Cyril’s case as a demonstration of the explanatory power of his own tradition. Cyril draws both examples from LXX Judges, and each illustrates how angels appropriately serve God. In the first from Judges (B) 6:16–20, an angel appears to Gideon and delivers assurance that he will be successful against his enemy. Gideon insists that the angel remain while he prepares a sacrifice, which the angel then commands him to put “on a stone (πρὸς τὴν πέτραν).” In the second account (in Judges 13:15–16, 19) Manoe similarly asks an angel to wait while he prepares a sacrifice, which he then brings “to a stone (ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν) for the Lord” after the angel itself refuses to accept the sacrifice.

Unlike Julian’s demons, Cyril’s angels demonstrate appropriate service under a ruler: “they don’t hold back people who want to reverence and honor the master of all things with what they have at hand, but they do teach that it would be inappropriate to dedicate the honors to any who are under a yoke and have a servile role instead of to the Lord” (4.12.1–5). The book of Judges thus provides an illustration of appropriate spiritual subordinates serving under God: both angels allow Gideon and Manoe to honor God, and they defer the prepared sacrifices since they are not themselves worthy of such honor. Notwithstanding their Jewish and Christian provenance, the general

details of these stories might provide an agreeable point for a politically involved Neoplatonist like Julian to consider. However, Cyril pushes the illustration further in a way that would certainly not be persuasive by any standards of Neoplatonic reasoning. It would, however, further demonstrate the internal consistency of Cyril's narrative (namely in how that narrative informs the way to read holy texts) and, ultimately, its explanatory power.

Along with noticing that both angels defer the sacrifice, Cyril also notices that both sacrifices end up being directed to a stone (τὴν πέτρᾱν) after the angels refuse to accept them. Drawing on Paul, Cyril insists that this means that both sacrifices were in fact offered to Christ. In I Corinthians 10:4 Paul identified the stone (ἡ πέτρα) that followed Israel in the desert as Christ, and Cyril transposes the identification to the two passages from Judges. (Cyril also justifies the transposition by explaining that the imagery of a "stone" for Christ is not arbitrary but rather fitting, in that "the divine nature is unshakably fixed in the honors that are fitting to it"—"fixed," that is, like a stone) (4.12.5–12). A Neoplatonist and a Christian might be able to proceed in general with an argument about what kind of activity is appropriate for a spiritual authority and about what textual illustrations properly portray such beings. But as soon as one of those textual illustrations (like Cyril's from Judges) is deployed to also portray a spiritual authority as offering due praises to a "stone" which is "Christ," the semblance of common ground between the Neoplatonist (especially a Neoplatonist like Julian who sees Paul as a charlatan) and Christian would disappear.

The passages from Judges thus serve another example of an argumentative layer that has its own intertextually-driven way of reasoning. That layer, too, contributed to the narrative conflict layer in that it contributed to the dislodgement of Julian's gods. Cyril concludes the exegetical argument with a rhetorical question: "So then, if indeed God truly submitted the nations to the 'city-protecting gods,' why did they not instead command that gifts be brought from them to him?" (4.12.13–15). The layer contributes to Cyril's larger strategy, even though this layer itself is, in a sense, another example of Cyril "arguing past" rather than "with" Julian.

The subsequent sections of *Against Julian* repeat familiar arguments. Cyril draws several quotes from Porphyry (4.13–14) and Homer (4.15) to illustrate his point that the gods/demons are actually wicked. The choice of sources for examples is, again, instructive, in that Julian (in his well-known love of sacrifice) is left looking like a dilettantish representative of his own tradition. Even someone like Porphyry who, says Cyril, is "like-minded and superstitious with him" seems to know that the demons "play tricks" and undermine those "who wants to succeed in virtue" (4.14.15–20). Cyril's subsequent, lengthy treatment of Moses and the law is something of a preemptive move against Julian's general strategy of offering coopting interpretations of Mosaic sacrifice.<sup>46</sup> The final sections of 4.2–23 then return to more examples (drawn,

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<sup>46</sup> Though Cyril only imagines the specific objection that leads into his explanation of the Mosaic law (i.e., the objection that to reject Hellenic sacrifice is also to reject Mosaic sacrifice, since the latter "proceeds through the same manner" as the former), Julian himself makes exactly these kind of claims later (see fr. 71, in *AJ* 9.21.11–17).

again, from Hellenic sources) of how Julian's gods truly have required even human sacrifices.

Thus ends 4.2–23, one of Cyril's longest responses to a single fragment, and one that covers a wide range of topics, given Julian's relatively focused argument within the provoking fragment. But the various topics and layers of argumentation do hang together at the layer of the "narrative conflict," mostly (though not only) in the sustained attempt to dislodge Julian's "gods" from their role in his narrative and to reinscribe them as the fallen angels—now "demons"—of Jude 6 within Cyril's narrative.

### III.B.2 Against Julian 4.24–48

The latter half of *Against Julian* book 4 circles around two themes: how to understand Genesis 11 and the tower of Babel (Cyril's responses to frs. 23, 24, and 27 of *Against the Galileans*); and further arguments about Julian's link between the diversity of human features, laws, customs, etc. and the diverse ruling gods (responses to frs. 22, 24, 25, 26, 28). In Julian's original argument, these two themes were tied together, since his treatment of Genesis 11 and the multiplication of languages folded into his treatment of human diversity writ large. In Cyril's response the two themes somewhat overlap, but they are largely distinct, since Cyril's task was to show that Genesis 11 has an entirely different significance than that ascribed by Julian. In other words, Julian had attempted to narrate the tower project at Babel as an illustrative episode in his own, Hellenic narrative, and Cyril now rebuts that attempt by showing how the episode fits perfectly well within a Christian narrative. I briefly noted earlier in this chapter how Cyril had to defend a Christian reading of Moses on generally cosmological issues (within *AJ* book 2,

about Moses's relative brevity in his creation account), and it will be worthwhile to trace that same dynamic in book 4 where Cyril's Christian retrieval of a Mosaic episode requires more sustained argument. After that, questions of difference, determinism, and providence can be considered.

### III.B.2.i The Tower of Babel

The response that Cyril offers about the tower project at Babel suggests that he has not quite realized the subtlety of Julian's argument. As I argued in Chapter 2, Julian's identification of this story as "entirely mythic (κομιδῆ μῦθώδη)" (fr. 23.5) means that he thinks the unbelievable aspects of the story point to a hidden significance—Julian later says that Moses "knowingly veiled (ἐπεκάλυπτε . . . εἰδώς)" the matter (fr. 27.3–4). So, when Julian suggests that Christians foolishly believe that God confused the languages because he "was afraid of the murderousness of men" (fr. 23.35–36), Cyril actually takes Julian himself as advancing the interpretation that "the God over all things 'was frightened' of an attack from 'men.'" Ironically, Cyril ends up agreeing with Julian that such an interpretation would be unbelievable (4.30.1–14). Cyril similarly agrees that it would have been ridiculous for people to try to build a tower literally "to heaven," as Julian himself actually thinks (4.32.1–4).

Even if Cyril and Julian seem to be on the same page about what would amount to a misreading of Moses, their accounts of how to correctly interpret Moses diverge. Julian probably took the incongruous aspects of the story, if read entirely literally, as

signs of a hidden (true) meaning.<sup>47</sup> Cyril explains the same potentially problematic features more prosaically. To the suggestion that it would be impossible to build a tower “into heaven,” Cyril simply retorts that this is “hyperbolic (ὑπερβολικῶ)” speech. He explains that it is in fact the “custom” (ἔθος) of Scripture to speak this way, and to illustrate he cites from Psalm 106(107):23–26 where sailors who are caught in a storm are said to “ascend to the heavens (ἔως τῶν οὐρανῶν) and descend to the depths” (4.32.1–11). This Psalm, he explains, does not suggest that sailors actually make it to the heavens on stormy waves; they are only carried very high, just as the people of Babel wanted to build a very tall tower. Next, to Julian’s suggestion that Moses portrays God’s motive as being afraid of men, Cyril explains that God’s motive was in fact benevolence (4.31). To make this argument, Cyril builds on the fact that the prior plot point in the narrative of Genesis was the flood that covered the whole earth. With this in mind, he suggests that the tower project at Babel was an attempt to create a refuge in case God were to send another flood. Such an endeavor, Cyril explains, was not only impious (in that the people thought they were smart enough to escape God’s power)—it was also unnecessary, since God had sworn to never destroy the earth again by a flood. God thus mixed up the languages so the people would cease wasting their energy on a wicked and useless project, and in doing so he saved them from “vain toiling” (4.32.35).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 2 on Julian’s way of interpreting “mythical” texts.

<sup>48</sup> See Boulnois’s note, “La construction de la tour de Babel et le deluge,” on Cyril’s interpretation of the tower of Babel—which, she suggests, is entirely novel in the Christian exegetical tradition—in *Cyrille d’Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 578–80.

Julian and Cyril also both comment on Genesis 11's description of God "going down" to earth for the confusion of languages. It is not entirely clear what Julian thought was the significance of Moses's comment from Genesis 11:7 about God's descent,<sup>49</sup> but Cyril again takes Julian as suggesting that Moses really taught that God came down, in a way that would require a body and physical locomotion from one place to another. Cyril suggests that Julian is either shameless to suggest that God wouldn't be able to separate the languages from a heavenly abode; or, "perhaps he truly thinks that it was a bodily descent, and he submits the bodiless nature to the laws of bodies" (4.34.17–19). Julian fails to see, he explains, that Moses understands the basic rules of theological discourse: Moses knew that he "did not have words that are able to measure up to the glory of God," and so he "uses human words" anthropomorphically (4.34.23–26).<sup>50</sup>

The final noteworthy aspect about Cyril's response to Julian on the tower project relates to how each of them treats the plural ascription to God by Moses of "Let us go down . . ." (Gen. 11:7). It is especially clear how Moses is a character in an "episode" that each try to fit into their own narrative. Julian notes several problematic features with the details of Moses's story about the tower at Babel—features that make the story unbelievable, at one level. But, he eventually claims that Moses's real point in

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<sup>49</sup> It's possible that he is giving a sarcastic summary when he said that God was "coming down from heaven, since he was not able to accomplish this, as it seems, unless he came down to earth" (fr. 24.7–9). In that case, then he would probably be adducing this comment as one more instance of an incongruity in the story which points towards a hidden meaning.

<sup>50</sup> Cyril accuses Julian of being similarly inept at recognizing appropriate anthropomorphic language in *AJ* 5.7.

the story was to hint at something true: the truth is hidden in the intimation that God “did not descend alone, nor did [only] one other descend with him, but rather there were very many of them” (fr. 27.5–6). For Julian, this points to the nugget of insight that is “veiled (ἐπεκάλυπτε)” in the story. He thinks that Moses implies (even though Moses doesn’t say it outright) that many beings were needed to produce the many languages: Julian says, “If then for the confusion of the languages not only the lord but also those with him descended, then it is clear that, again, for the confusion of customs not only the lord, but also those with him (who confused the languages) should be taken as the causes for this differentiation” (fr. 27.8–12). Julian mentions the plurality in Genesis 11:7 in support of his larger point about a multiplicity of gods causing the multiplicity of customs because he thinks that in Genesis 11 Moses truly presumed that a multiplicity of gods caused the multiplicity of languages. Moses is thereby inscribed in Julian’s Hellenic narrative as a minor sage who wrote at times in mythic forms and who, in this passage, teaches about the diversity of gods. As I explained in Chapter 2, Julian’s place for Moses in his narrative also explains *why* Moses would write in mythic forms: myths were most appropriate in intellectually primitive eras, probably like that of Moses’s lifetime.

Cyril, too, sees significance within God’s statement, “Let us go down . . .” And Cyril’s larger narrative framework similarly explains why this truth would be recorded in this less-than-clear manner. He first objects to Julian’s interpretation on the grounds that “Moses not once but many times denounces the falsely-called gods” (quoting three

passages from Deuteronomy and Exodus to illustrate the point) (4.43.23–24). In place of Julian’s rendering, Cyril explains that,

Moses knew the sacred and one nature of divinity in a holy Trinity. It was for this reason that he used in one place the singular, and in another place the plural, like it is in the statement, “Let us make man according to our image and according to [our] likeness” [Gen. 1:26]. For God did not make for himself some other helpers for the construction of man, but in the “let us make” and the “according to our likeness” was an indication of the holy and consubstantial trinity (4.44.25–31).

Cyril thus argues as before about the “custom” of Scriptural (or even specifically *Mosaic*) speech—Moses has, he suggests, a consistent pattern of mixing grammatically singular and plural wording when he references the Lord. He did so in Genesis 1:26 when he ascribed the sentence to God, “Let us [plural] make man according to our image [singular].”<sup>51</sup> And he did it again in Genesis 11. The *plural* instance clearly lies in the “Let us go down . . .”, and Cyril almost certainly thinks the *singular* instances lie in every other mention of the Lord’s action in the passage (“And the Lord [singular] descended to see. . .” in vs. 5; “The Lord [singular] said. . .” in vs. 6; “And the Lord [singular] scattered them . . .” in vs. 8; etc.). Moses’s consistent grammatical oddity has a straightforward explanation, according to Cyril: he intends to convey something about the Triune God who, though he is “one nature of divinity, is worshipped in a holy and consubstantial trinity, I mean in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (4.44.2–4). Why Moses did not say so in more explicit terms can perhaps be inferred from comments

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<sup>51</sup> See also *AJ* 1.31 where Cyril argues that this singular/plural combination in Gen. 1:26 precludes an interpretation that suggests that the creator God consulted with other gods to make humans: Cyril says that if this were the case, God wouldn’t have been able to say, “Let us make humanity according to our image [singular]. . . .”

earlier in this chapter: Moses wisely presented material that could be understood by his contemporary audience.

### III.B.2.ii: Difference, Determinism, and Providence

I mentioned earlier that Cyril detects in Julian's account of the diversities among the nations a problematic determinism (*AJ* 4.4–5). Cyril returns to this topic in the latter half of book 4, where it is a second predominant theme alongside the tower of Babel. As in book 2, Cyril's many arguments work together to undermine the role assigned by Julian to the subordinate gods. Even more than in book 2, in book 4 Cyril explains that those beings actually fit the role of the rebellious demons of the Christian narrative. After quickly summarizing Cyril's arguments, I now show how, again, Julian's and Cyril's arguments throughout these parts of *AJ* book 4 are less compatible than their shared language of "providence" might tempt us to think.

Given that Cyril's arguments about Julian's determinism are intertwined with his own explanation of the import of the tower of Babel story, they do not unfold in a linear manner throughout book 4. Still, as he circles around the theme of diverse human features, customs, and laws, it becomes clear that his several responses derive from a few main objections. Several of those objections are quickly recounted in *AJ* 4.25–26 (in response to fr. 22 where Julian suggested that humans have created laws which correspond to their nature).<sup>52</sup> The best way to summarize the arguments of this

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<sup>52</sup> Julian's precise claim is: "It is clear that the nature of humans (ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων . . . φύσις) established laws that correspond to it (οἰκείους ἑαυτῇ)"—that is, the laws correspond to the *nature*. Cyril will raise the possibility in *AJ* 4.26.8–16 and again in *AJ* 4.41.13–21 that Julian might have meant that the gods simply

section is to look briefly at each objection. First, Cyril detects a suggestion by Julian that there is no such thing as one human nature (4.25.1–6)—an accusation that, if not supported by fr. 22 where Julian uses “nature” in the singular, has more textual warrant in fr. 26 where Julian summarizes that “It was necessary, first, that different natures (φύσεις) underlie what should be different among the nations” (fr. 26.22). Given the multiplicity of human natures which cause the diversity of features (though in 4.36 Cyril asks what grounds Julian still has for calling them *human* natures)—Cyril next points out that there is no longer any “freedom of purpose (διανοίας τὸ ἐλεύθερον)” among humans: “the performance of either good or evil will no longer lie with us” (4.25.7–8). Of note is how Cyril, as before, immediately moves to differences that entail moral culpability. Julian’s mention of “misanthropic (ἀπανθρώπους)” people (fr. 22.3–4) seems to set them off as simply less cultivated than “philanthropic (φιλόανθρωπον)” people, rather than as morally perverse. But Cyril is interested in assigning moral culpability—if someone is “cruel and harsh,” then by Julian’s reasoning, “he was

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*assent* to the outcome of human nature’s influence on laws and customs. In other words, while (according to Cyril) Julian normally claims that the *characteristics of the gods* are what generally causes *differences among humans* (including differences in laws), Cyril says that Julian has reversed this in fr. 22 and suggested that *human nature* is what drives the *differences* (in which case the gods would play no causal role). In fr. 22 as it is preserved, Julian does not mention the gods while discussing differentiation in human nature and human laws, which leaves room for Cyril’s question. However, given Julian’s specific vocabulary that relates human laws to human nature (the laws are “οἰκείους ἑαυτῆ”); fr. 22.3), I suspect that Julian furnished the example of human nature and laws to illustrate the larger pattern of cascading causality: the gods each rule οἰκείως ἑαυτῶ (as in fr. 21.10) and thereby cause different nature(s) in humanity, and then humans develop laws by a similar relationship wherein the laws conform to their nature.

compelled to this by natural laws” (4.25.12–13). Cyril’s first objection, then, is that Julian has undermined the very notion of human nature.

Second, Cyril thinks that Julian has also implicitly denied human freedom of choice. Cyril’s third objection lies in the reasoning that if culpability of wrongdoing does not lie with human “freedom of purpose,” then the cause of evil action has to be tracked up another level of causality to where culpable agency is operative. Clearly, then, the creator of the determinative human nature(s) becomes the culpable actor: “if, as [Julian] thinks, some are sick with an evil in their nature, the matter is, I think, a clear accusation against the one that brought them into existence.” If the creator put “error” and “scorn for learning” and “lack of wisdom” in their nature, then rather than helping, he has harmed (ἠδίκηκεν) them (4.25.22–29). Cyril will argue later that this charge against the Demiurge passes on up to “the Good,” but in his response to fr. 22 he decides to enlist Alexander Aphrodisias to press his charge (and to add, again, the now-familiar argumentative layer which shows Julian to be in conflict with his own tradition). A quotation from Alexander’s *On Providence* makes clear that Julian has undermined providence (πρόνοια) (which Alexander insists is at work in the world): “. . . It is characteristic of every good thing to provide help (τὸ ὠφελεῖν)” (4.26.6). In Julian’s account, however, the creator harms the creatures by creating natures with proclivities toward wrongdoing. In *AJ* 4.45 Cyril pushes the argument even further by suggesting that the multiplication of human features that Julian is so eager to account for thus amounts to a multiplication of forms of evils, given that the diversities between the nations includes moral perversities.

Cyril also attacks the explanatory work that Julian thinks his gods and their influence achieve with respect to human diversity. He thinks, in fact, that Julian does not rigorously abide by the implications of his deterministic argument. For instance, as evidence of the “strength of nature” in shaping peoples’ dispositions, Julian suggested that “western nations” have only a few people who excel in philosophy or geometry, even though they have been governed by the Roman empire (and presumably shaped by their laws and customs, one might think) for a long time (fr. 22.7–14). But Cyril wonders: how do *any* westerners excel in these disciplines, if their nature determinatively disposes them otherwise (4.27.1–8)? This specific argument of Cyril’s might seem forced—Julian probably didn’t mean that the *only* determinant in an individual’s philosophical acuity is their national origin. But the critique in its more general terms perhaps presses the argument more plausibly. Cyril suggests that Julian’s explanation of diversity between peoples leaves little way to account for the obvious diversities within peoples. Cyril wants to know what Julian can do with the fact that some Hellenes and Romans turn out bad, despite their good laws, while alternatively some barbarians become quite laudable (4.27.16–21)? By Julian’s reasoning, Cyril suggests, when it comes to such central markers of a people’s identity, “nature” should produce a more consistent outcome. As counterevidence of Julian’s ethnic forecasting, Cyril provides examples from a variety of sources (and Hellenic sources, at that) of different peoples attaining virtues that are not characteristic of their ethnic identity (4.28). Later, Cyril focuses on Julian’s suggestion that the different gods cause different bodily characteristics (fr. 26). By Julian’s reasoning, the causation from a ruling god

that creates a uniformity of bodily color should also create a moral uniformity. And yet, Cyril suggests, people with the same melanin composition regularly think and act differently. How can Julian account for this diversity within a people group that shares other common features?

Just as Cyril provided a counter-explanation in book 2 for the diversity of classes of beings in the cosmos, so too he has a counter-explanation for the diversity of human features: “instead we will assign the ‘difference’ of manners ‘among the nations’ to customs (ἔθεσί) and rearing (ἀνατροφᾶς) and to the leaders of the races” (4.27.12–14). In *AJ* 4.41 he similarly ascribes the cause of differences to the educating (παιδαγωγία) of their parents and to the “movements of free choice (ταῖς . . . τῶν προαιρέσεων ῥοπαῖς).” Three lines from Sophocles’s *Philoctetes* illustrate Cyril’s final source for difference, located in the role of civic leaders (4.41.1–12).<sup>53</sup> Importantly, Cyril’s arguments also explain moral diversity without implicating the creator. That creator provided a “human nature that is lacking in no good thing,” but then “a great many pleasures and attacks of various passions corrupt the heart,” leading away people’s minds from what is fitting. Their “intention (διάνοια),” Cyril insists, “is autonomous and allowed to do what seems good” (4.35.20–28). Culpability for evil thus lies in this autonomy and not with the creator.

It will be worthwhile to pause here after treating such a wide stretch of text and to consider what to make of the material as it relates to my argument about the

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<sup>53</sup> According to the TLG, Cyril is the only person in the extant Greek corpus to quote these lines together.

narrative conflict seen between Julian and Cyril. As in *Against Julian* book 2, there are a variety of argumentative layers at play in Cyril's responses to Julian in book 4, and most of those layers are not in themselves arguments about narrative. Cyril attacks Julian's suggestions about diversity on philosophical grounds and on theological grounds. He quotes from different biblical texts as well as different Hellenic texts, and in that process he continues to demonstrate which texts are authoritative (the biblical texts) as well as to illustrate his earlier conclusions about how Hellenic authors have mixed truth with error. Again, by quoting Hellenic authors against Julian himself, he attempts to undermine Julian's own trustworthiness as a Hellenic intellectual authority. All these arguments accomplish rhetorical ends in their own right. But, again, the question might be asked about what, precisely—if anything—holds those arguments together?

Also like in book 2, the layer of the narrative conflict helps show how these many topics and kinds of arguments contribute to a single project revolving around the project of renarrating episodes from a rival's narrative in one's own. Cyril's reinscribing of Moses and the story of the people at Babel is a lengthier defensive move than we've seen yet in this chapter—"defensive" in that it rebuts Julian's original attempt to narrate Moses as a Hellenic sage.<sup>54</sup> Cyril's counter-subsuming moves in the narrative conflict of book 4 centers, again, on Julian's characters of gods. By *AJ* 4.9 Cyril provides the final step to the renarration: he explains that the gods (who introduce all manner of philosophical and theological problems into Julian's reasoning) are, in fact,

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<sup>54</sup> Cyril's explanation of the Mosaic law in *AJ* 4.16–18 is also a preemptively defensive move against Julian's later attempts to use Mosaic sacrificial laws to leverage Moses into the Hellenic narrative.

the fallen angels of Jude 6; the “gods of the nations” are, in fact, “demons,” as says LXX Psalm 95:5 (quoted in *AJ* 4.15). Throughout *AJ* 4.24–48 Cyril interweaves this counter-identification of the characters with his arguments, leading up to his culminating appeal of book 4:

Let those who were led astray with him hear also from us: “Hear, O deaf ones, and you blind ones, look up to behold (Is. 42:18)”; turn away from the “sectional” and falsely called [gods], who are rather not at all gods, and worship with us the one who is [God] by nature and truth (4.46.27–32).

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, Cyril concludes book 4 by showing how these reinscribed characters are not only deceptive and misleading but are also soundly defeated by the Son of God. Cyril returns to the political metaphor: those rebellious demons who in *AJ* 4.12 hoard all honors, gifts, and worship for themselves are in *AJ* 4.48 likened to a tyrant who has “plundered” a land. Christ, however, expels the usurping powers and returns the kingdom to freedom under its rightful ruler. Cyril concurs with Julian (as would all ancient peoples) that the cosmos is full of spiritual agents. But there are different narratives that tell people how to identify and relate to those agents. The many layers of Cyril’s arguments against Julian collectively contribute to the undermining of Julian’s narrative explanation of the identity of these beings as “gods.” His arguments further explain that these beings that Julian treats are characters from Cyril’s narrative: fallen angels.

### III.C Arguments from Providence

Πρόνοια plays a pivotal, if passing, role for Julian and for Cyril.<sup>55</sup> Their respective invocations of the concept deserve closer consideration at this chapter's conclusion. Given that a tradition's mode of reasoning is fundamentally conditioned by its narrative backdrop, the question will continue to arise whether different narratives produce non-intersecting modes of reasoning. Like their arguments about creation, Julian's and Cyril's arguments about "providence" suggest that different patterns of reasoning may be at play, despite their apparently shared vocabulary. More specifically, the Christian and Platonist traditions developed rival accounts of divine causality—accounts, furthermore, that are tied to the divine character(s) of their narratives. Neither Julian nor Cyril provide a focused analysis of divine causality, so the first thing we must do is simply recount what, precisely, they *do* say. This will enable us to, next, locate their comments in the wider intellectual contexts of arguments about providence and uncover the reasoning that supports their explicit statements. Then we can look closer at that Neoplatonist and Christian reasoning and ask whether the two modes are compatible.

To briefly recapitulate Julian's position, "providence" is the way of naming the divine ordering of the vast cosmos in all its diverse features. If a philosopher cannot explain how the divine is responsible for producing those diverse features, then Julian thinks the only remaining option is to admit that the features came about randomly—

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<sup>55</sup> See Boulnois's treatment of "Théodicée, providence divine et liberté humaine" in *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 33–41. She notes that "Concernant la providence, Julien et Cyrille sont tous deux d'accord pour la considérer comme une pièce majeure de leur confession de foi." She also suggests, though, that "la discussion porte sur les conditions de sa mise en oeuvre" (33). As will become evident, this underestimates the depth of the disagreement between the two.

that is, without any governing providence (fr. 21). But if this is the case, then contemporary events, too, are passing along randomly, and humans have no reason to praise or beseech any divine powers which do not benefit them (fr. 24). This line of thinking is also a tool in Julian's coopting of Moses, who (says Julian) claimed that his god "was assigned to exercise providence (προνοεῖν ἔλαχε) only over" Judea (fr. 25.8). If that god were the only God, he notes, then such a claim would suggest that a great wrong has been committed against all the other nations who would be left without providence. But on Julian's accounting, it makes perfect sense for Moses's god to care for only one nation which alone is his responsibility.<sup>56</sup> The main point, though, is that Julian accepts the many different kinds of diversity as given features of the world—even those features that have moral connotations are treated as more-or-less given. Furthermore, he speaks of those diversities in terms of providence, and the multiplicity of the gods is central to his explanations.

Though he only mentions πρόνοια and its cognates a few times, providence is also a central concern for Cyril in his responses to Julian. But for Cyril the pressing questions surrounding divine care for the cosmos relate not to justifying the cosmos's diverse features in light of divine rule. Rather, the pressing questions about providence surround exculpating the divine for culpability in the many morally fraught differences in the world. We can see in Cyril's response a glimpse of the larger, incompatible

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<sup>56</sup> In fr. 25 and 28 Julian does express uncertainty about whether Moses thought the Demiurge was also the direct ruler of Israel or whether Israel's god is one of the many ethnarch gods. See Chapter 2 for my suspicion about this apparent discrepancy.

frameworks of reasoning. This is evident in the way that Cyril must transpose Julian's arguments into his own framework and his own set of concerns about providence. One more passage from *Against Julian* will suffice to illustrate Cyril's concerns with providence.<sup>57</sup>

Cyril presses the argument most clearly in *AJ* 4.41–42 (responding to fr. 26 of *AG*). He side-steps Julian's focus on generic ethnic differences and then centers, instead, morally significant differences. Cyril argues that, given the causal relationship between ethnarch gods and human laws and customs,

. . . it is necessary to assign rightly to them [the gods] the causes of the very many and disparate differences between "nations" in the quality of their manners and "laws." Therefore, among the "city-protecting" or "ethnarch gods" and demons are ones who are savage and wild and irascible and murderous and who elect to love the worst of all sorts of evil things. Whatever quality those among the subservient nations are seen [to have], it is necessary for those who rule them to be regarded as having the same quality. Then is it not a clear slander against God to say that he abandons all those on earth to such terribly disgusting ones who are able to bring them unto every sort of perversity (ἐκτόπων)? (4.41.29–39)

By Julian's reasoning, Cyril suggests, any evil characteristics evident among the nations must also have their cause in the governing gods. As we'll see shortly, Neoplatonists were aware of this possible problem and had an answer—but the answer only works within the broader patterns of theological reasoning in Neoplatonism.

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<sup>57</sup> I already treated a second illustration in Cyril's response to fr. 21 above. In that fragment, Julian asked where the differences between Celts, Germans, Hellenes, Romans, etc. came from, if not from the gods. Though some of the specific differences that Julian names might have moral connotations, Cyril adds examples (murderous Scythians and incestuous Chaldeans) that push the conversation into decidedly moral territory.

Before moving back to the Neoplatonist reasoning, however we should linger longer with Cyril. His next comments in *AJ* 4.42 show even more starkly his subtle shift into moral territory. In fr. 26, Julian argues that any acceptable account of diversities must give a more detailed explanation of their cause than the simplistic assertion that “God said so.” His reasoning is that God’s commands directly inform the nature of created things, and then he gives two examples to clarify: God commanded that fire be born upwards, and earth be carried downwards. Julian further explains that, based on this command, the very nature of one is to be light, and the very nature of the other is to be heavy. In Julian’s way of reasoning, the divine command itself is tied to the creation of the nature of things under consideration (fr. 26.9–11). His is no simplistic, divine-command metaphysic.

But Cyril sees an entailment in Julian’s argument that is, in his words, “even more unbearable” than the preceding comments. The example from the physical domain of fire and earth is clear enough: their difference (being light and being heavy) is caused by differences in their natures, which in turn is caused by divine agency. But Cyril suggests that if—as Julian himself goes on to say—“so, too, is it the case with other matters (Οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἑτέρων ὁμοίως)” (fr. 26.11), then the same kind of relationship in the physical domain must hold for the moral differences among people. Cyril rhetorically asks, “is it necessary that . . . , in the very same way, some men are of an evil nature and are brought about thusly by the Demiurge through being subjected to the wishes of the ‘ethnarchs’?” (4.42.3–9). Cyril takes Julian’s example of divine causality at work in the physical realm and pushes it into the moral realm. By this

entailment, wicked people are evil for the same reason that dirt falls when dropped: it is an inexorable requirement of their nature, as God made it. Claims like *this*, says Cyril, and not Christian teachings, are what actually “dares to denounce the providence of God,” as he said in an earlier argument about the true function that the ethnarch gods play in Julian’s explanation (4.4.17).

### III.C.1 Neoplatonist Providence: Background

Πρόνοια was a hotly disputed topic beginning with at least Plato and stretching well beyond Julian’s and Cyril’s time.<sup>58</sup> Compared to the many treatises that were often wholly devoted to the complex questions about providence, Julian’s and Cyril’s invocations are relatively brief. Still, traces of the wider philosophical backdrop are evident in Julian’s and Cyril’s comments, and these traces are sufficiently substantive to let us unearth the larger patterns of reasoning that inform their arguments. By carefully unearthing these structures of rationality, we will see that Julian and Cyril not only held different positions about “providence”; that is, they didn’t merely disagree about specific questions within a larger set of commitments that go under the title of “providence.” They were rather talking about different things, tied to their different traditions. Julian imposed his concerns about differentiation in the cosmos on Christians who did not share those concerns in the same way, and Cyril refuted Julian

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<sup>58</sup> For a detailed (if somewhat encyclopaedic) overview, see Myrto Dragona-Monachou, “Divine Providence in the Philosophy of the Republic,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36, no. 7 (1994): 4418–90. For another overview that is indexed to Christian teaching, see Andrew Louth, “Pagans and Christians on Providence,” in *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change*, ed. J. H. D. Scourfield (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2007), 279–98.

by transposing his argument into a field of theological reasoning that was distinctly Christian.

To see these dynamics, we must first locate Julian's comments within the longer history of Platonist and Neoplatonist debates over providence. Then we turn to a close reading of Plotinus's *Ennead* 3.3.3, part of his treatise "On Providence." Plotinus's arguments serve a dual purpose: they plausibly elaborate Julian's commitments with more metaphysically-precise details, and they also anticipate and respond to Cyril's main objection about culpability accruing to the gods who might seem to have disposed some humans toward evil. We then return to Cyril's critique, where it will become clear that his and the Neoplatonists' rationale about divine agency render the use of "πρόνοια" in Julian's and Cyril's arguments incompatible.

Of the handful of places in the Platonic corpus that became touchstones for discussions about πρόνοια, the *Timaeus*, again, was central.<sup>59</sup> Though the text does not dwell on providence, a handful of passages are relevant. First is *Tim.* 30b-c for its basic affirmation of providence: "this cosmos became ensouled and intellectually-endowed in truth through the providence of God." More relevant is *Tim.* 41—the speech to the "gods of gods," which, as we explored already, explains for Julian the basic principle by which diverse classes of beings exist. Julian makes the link between providence and an orderly diversity of beings explicit in *Against the Galileans*, and he is typically Platonic in

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<sup>59</sup> Louth also points to *Laws* X, the myth of Er at the conclusion of the *Republic*, and the discussion of "necessity" in the *Phaedrus* as the other three central texts. See "Pagans and Christians on Providence," 281–82.

this stance. As Louth says, for Plato's position, "The rational structure of the universe is, then, then mark of divine providence."<sup>60</sup> That structure is built around the complex system of gods. Another relevant comment comes just after the Demiurge's speech to the gods, where the Demiurge is said to have "prescribed all these things to them [the gods] so that it would be blameless (ἀνὰίτιος) for subsequent evil . . ." (*Tim.* 42d). The incorporation of these lower gods in the creation of lower realities, combined with their specific instructions, acts as a kind of culpability buffer in Timaeus's "likely story" (*Tim.* 29d). The Demiurge is not responsible for evil since such responsibility is somehow absorbed by agents at a lower level.

Several features from these passages develop a life of their own among later Platonists. What concerns us is the way that the divine hierarchy, along with explaining the diversity in creation, provides resources for a kind of theodicy by its treatment of divine causality. Alongside this hierarchy of *beings* there eventually emerged in the Platonic tradition distinct hierarchy of *providences*, attached to the different levels of divinity.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes these hierarchies order a lower "fate" (εἰμαρμένη) within the causally higher realm of "providence" (often in response to Stoic emphases on fate).<sup>62</sup> Several Platonic texts present a clear, three-fold notion of

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<sup>60</sup> Louth, 281.

<sup>61</sup> For a general overview, see Peter Adamson, "Freedom, Providence and Fate," in *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*, ed. Pauliina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin (Routledge, 2014), 437–52.

<sup>62</sup> Gretchen Reydam-Schils and Franco Ferrari suggest that "the prominence of the theme of Providence in later Platonist writers, which goes much beyond what the *Timaeus* itself has to offer on this score, was largely due to a Stoic influence." See "Middle Platonism and Its Relation to Stoicism and the Peripatetic Tradition," 42.

providence. Comments from the Christian bishop and rough contemporary of Julian, Nemesius of Emesa, illustrate how this threefold layer of providence was tied to the layers of divinity and of divine causality. Explaining his understanding of Plato, he notes:

. . .for the primary providence is that of the primary god; and he exercises providence primarily over the Ideas . . . . The coming-to-be of individual animals and plants and of all things subject to coming-to-be and passing-away is the object of the providence of the secondary gods . . . . The performance and accomplishment of deeds and the achieving of things in life . . . Plato declares to be [the object] of tertiary providence. This is presided over by certain daimones . . . .<sup>63</sup>

Three realms of divine governance are indexed to three kinds of providence.

This system has implications for theodicy, but tracing this dynamic is a bit trickier. As we saw in *Tim.* 42d, Plato suggests that the responsibility given to the lower gods somehow exculpates the Demiurge from responsibility for evil. This comment doubtlessly lies behind explanations like Dragona-Monachou's, who suggests that Middle Platonists "tried to exempt God from evil by removing him from the world and by bridging the gap between heaven and earth with intermediary beings."<sup>64</sup> Though there is evidence that some Middle Platonists might have treated intermediary beings as acquiring responsibility for evil (thus exempting the transcendent principle of

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See, for example, Proclus's explanation of the distinction between fate and providence in *On Providence* §5 (Carlos Steel, trans., *Proclus: On Providence* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007], 43).

<sup>63</sup> *De Natura Hominis* 43. For more on threefold providence, see R. W. Sharples, "Threefold Providence: The History and Background of a Doctrine," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 46, no. S78 (2003): 107–27, from which comes the above translation of Nemesius.

<sup>64</sup> "Divine Providence in the Philosophy of the Republic," 4454.

responsibility), such a characterization would be harder to justify by the time of later Neoplatonists like Julian.<sup>65</sup> Julian certainly does not treat the intermediary gods as responsible for evil—it's not as if these lower gods make mistakes, and so the higher God can lay all the blame on them. One reason that we'll turn to Plotinus next is that he illustrates a Neoplatonist option for dealing with the problem of divine culpability—rather than pinning culpability on intermediary beings, culpability rather diffuses out of existence as the hierarchy of causality moves downward away from the highest principle and toward matter. As Plotinus will specifically say, in certain respects, “blame” is simply the wrong topic to raise because of the *natural* dynamics of cosmic causality.

The point for now, though, is that Julian's way of linking providence, diversity of existent things, and the hierarchy of being is largely typical of the Platonic tradition, even though he does not speak in as much detail as others. We can now turn to Plotinus for more of these details. A section of his treatment “On Providence” treats several of these interrelating dynamics while also considering the precise question that Cyril raises about the Neoplatonic hierarchy and providence: if a man is a certain kind of person—a characteristically *wicked* kind of person, as Cyril puts it sharply—and if he is

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<sup>65</sup> Plutarch is a leading example this Middle Platonist option. See John M Dillon, “Plutarch and God: Theodicy and Cosmogony in the Thought of Plutarch,” *Traditions of Theology*, *Philosophia Antiqua*, 89 (January 1, 2002): 223–37. Dillon summarizes Plutarch's reasoning: “As the first god is seen as ever more unitary and impassive, so the need is progressively created for another deity who is prepared to get his hands dirty, so to speak, and take on a more active role in the creation and administration of the universe, particularly the lowest part of it” (228). Dillon insists that Plutarch's comments amount to a weak dualism and remain entirely in the “ambit of the Platonism of this period” (234). But Plutarch is clearly concerned with identifying an intermediary divinity (or principle) that can absorb responsibility for evil (or at least for disorderliness).

that kind of person because he reflects the principles of the power above him in the causal chain, then isn't the higher power culpable for that man's wickedness?

### III.C.2 Providence in Plotinus

In the second part of his treatment of providence, Plotinus begins with a question close to Cyril's critique of a determinism latent in Julian's argument.<sup>66</sup> Plotinus considers the anti-determinist claim that "I am the master of my choosing (ἐγὼ κύριος τοῦ . . . ἐλέσθαι)" (3.3.3.1). Despite Cyril's accusations against Julian, what Dragona-Monachou says for the Middle Platonists is also true of Plotinus and later Platonists: "All defended divine providence against fatalism."<sup>67</sup> Plotinus's defense against fatalism, though, is nuanced: he acknowledges that, among other relevant factors that contribute to a person's actions, one fact is that each person is a "of such a kind" (ὁ τοιόσδε)—each person is already disposed to act or choose in a certain way.<sup>68</sup> Then comes Julian's central issue: "But whence [does someone become] 'such a kind of person'?" (Ἀλλὰ πόθεν ὁ τοιόσδε;).

Before answering, Plotinus makes clear that he has shifted his focus from determinism to the related question of theodicy. The question is, he says, about where blame (αἰτίαν) lies: with the "maker" or with the "thing that came to be"? (3.3.3.1–5). If

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<sup>66</sup> For the critical text of *En.* 3.3.3, see Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer, eds., *Plotini Opera, Tomus I, Porphyrii Vita Plotini, Enneades I-III*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 274–76. Translations are my own, in consultation with A. H. Armstrong, trans., *Plotinus, Ennead, Volume III*, Loeb Classical Library 442 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

<sup>67</sup> "Divine Providence in the Philosophy of the Republic," 4455. With that said, it is true, as Boulnois points out, that the theme of human freedom "n'est jamais abordé par Julien dans les fragments conservés de son *Contre les Galiléens*" (*Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 33).

<sup>68</sup> He also notes that the range of available choices that lies before someone is itself already restrictive of free choice.

the reason that a man acts in a certain way is intertwined with the “sort of person” he is, then *why* he is this “sort of person” is significant for determining culpability for wrongdoing. Plotinus clearly has a critique like Cyril’s in mind: if, to use of one of Julian’s examples, someone is θρασύς—“bold,” perhaps straying into “arrogant”—by virtue of the way they are shaped by their ruling god, is that god implicated in “arrogant” acts of that person?

Plotinus gives two options, preferring that “one must not assign blame at all” (ὄλως οὐκ αἰτιατέον), rather than acquiescing to selecting the “maker” or the man as responsible. Of course, if it’s in someone’s power to be better, then that person is responsible for *not* being better, says Plotinus. But he acknowledges that it’s not *entirely* in his power—it relies on the “sort of person” he is.<sup>69</sup> To see why blame cannot accrue to the being who made a man the “sort of person” he is, Plotinus turns to plants and animals. No one blames their maker for the fact that *they* can’t somehow become better than they are. Plotinus wants his reader *not* to rank things (like plants, animals, humans) and *not* to think that their rank implies “better” and “worse.” He says, “For it is necessary *not* to seek whether one thing is worse than another, but whether it [exists] sufficiently as itself (Δεῖ γὰρ οὐ ζητεῖν, εἰ ἔλαττον ἄλλου, ἀλλ’ εἰ ὡς αὐτὸ

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<sup>69</sup> Commenting on this passage, Paul Kalligas suggests that Plotinus resolves the question with a different nuance than did Plato, who in *Laws* X 904b-d more thoroughly ascribes the ‘placement’ of each soul in a role in the cosmos in terms of that soul’s moral character (thus fully locating the rationale for someone’s ‘placement’ in their own, prior choices). For Plotinus, “the choices [the soul] is offered during its initial embodiment—the ‘lots’ or ‘parts of the drama’—are predetermined not only by the Logos, but also by the ‘species’ (*eidōs*) of the corresponding progenitor; . . . These limitations entail a proportional diminution in the individual soul’s responsibility. For it is not reasonable to demand of a living entity that it should surpass its own nature.” See Paul Kalligas, *The Enneads of Plotinus: A Commentary*, trans. Elizabeth Key Fowden and Nicolas Pilavachi, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 474.

αὐτάρκως).” “For,” he proceeds, “not all things had to be equal” (οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἴσα ἔδει) (3.3.3.6–18).

Plotinus wants to show why the higher principles are not to blame, and he considers next whether the ontological inequality between things was deliberately (“προαιρέσει”) planned by the higher beings. He seems to worry that if the inequality *were* deliberately planned, then it would be valid to consider whether “blame” was due. “Not at all!” comes his answer. He explains that the implications of the hierarchical structure of reality are not “deliberately chosen” by the maker—rather, he says, things “came about like this according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν)” (3.3.3.18–20). What he means by “according to nature” is, as we will see shortly, where the Neoplatonic way of reasoning is evidently incompatible with Cyril’s Christian reasoning: “nature” is such that causality diffuses in its downward path, and it does so in such a way that culpability for certain deficiencies is simply not a problem.

Λόγος, Plotinus explains, “follows upon (Ἀκόλουθος)” soul (ψυχή), and soul on mind (νοῦς). The fact of hierarchy means diversity, and rank—including differences “in value” (τῆ ἀξία). As for living things (ζῶα), he further explains, they are “not only souls, but the diminutions (ἐλαττώσεις) of souls—[each is], as it were, a fading away from the things immediately preceding it (οἷον ἐξίτηλον ἤδη προιόντων).” With living things, each “becomes lesser as it hastens into matter, and what comes from it is more deficient (σπεύδων εἰς ὕλην, καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐνδεέστερον)” (3.3.3.20–29).

Of course, for Plotinus, this fact of diminishment and proportional deficiency is not a problem—it’s a “wonderful thing (θαῦμα),” he says, that the evanescent beings

come to be at all. He also makes clear that the deficiencies of the lower do not create blame for the higher, and this structure does not mean that the higher is implicated as having the same deficiencies: “It’s therefore not the case that, if what has come to be is of such a sort (τοιούτον), then also that what precedes it is of the same sort (τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τοιοῦτον).” The higher entity that precedes the lower in the hierarchy of being is, he explains, “better than anything that has come to be, and it is beyond blame (ἔξω αἰτίας)” (3.3.3.30–34).

Plotinus’s explanation provides a detailed rationale to address Cyril’s objection. In response to Julian’s explanation of ethnic variety by reference to the variety of characteristics of the ruling gods, Cyril had responded: “Whatever quality those among the subservient nations are seen [to have], it is necessary for those who rule them to be regarded as having the same quality” (4.41.35–36). Of course, he had clearly wicked qualities in mind: brutality and bloodthirstiness. Without quite the same, laser-focus on moral issues, Plotinus offers a plausible answer: it is simply “according to nature” that there be a diminishment in the downward chain of causality, especially as the produced beings become more and more enmeshed in material existence. Furthermore, not all moral deficiencies thereby track back up to the higher beings, as Cyril had accused.

Plotinus’s answer seems to provide a transposition of Plato’s comment in *Tim.* 42d (which exempts the Demiurge from blame by issuing responsibility to the intermediary gods) into a metaphysical explanation, which also takes care of the possible problem of thinking that the intermediary gods are culpable for evil *instead of* the higher god. A detail of the “likely story” of the *Timaeus* has been, if not allegorized,

transposed into a different register. Plato had noted that the higher god had “prescribed all these things to them [the gods] so that it would be blameless (ἀναίτιος) for subsequent evil . . .” Plotinus’s account carefully shows that the higher god is blameless *not* because culpability for evils committed in the lower realm travels up the chain to the intermediary gods but no further. Rather, the hierarchical layering of divine agency and the concomitant diminishment in lower created beings shows that questions of culpability simply do not belong. The structure of reality produces these dynamics—there is no “blame” for this *givenness* of the cosmos. As John Dillon has recently summarized, starting with Plato, the Platonist tradition included some “negative force . . . which is *an inevitable condition* of there being a world at all, but which, as a side-effect of introducing diversity, generates various sorts of imperfections.”<sup>70</sup>

### III.C.3 *The Hierarchical Layering of Divine Agency (?) and Christian Providence*

Plotinus’s explanation doesn’t exactly answer Cyril’s objection. It shows how Julian might have responded to Cyril’s critique, but it relies on a mode of theological reasoning that Cyril would have protested. The role of Plotinus’s “hierarchical layering of divine agency,” as I just put it, is where we must dwell to identify Cyril’s fundamentally different mode of reasoning about providence. There are two primary points of divergence between Cyril’s Christian and the Neoplatonist reasoning: “the

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<sup>70</sup> John M. Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism: The Origins and Chief Features of a Philosophical Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 34, emphasis added.

*hierarchical layering* of divine agency,” and “the hierarchical layering of *divine agency*.”

Let’s take the second aspect first.

It’s probably not quite accurate to speak of Platonists and “divine agency.” Better would be “divine causality,” as I have sometimes said instead. The Neoplatonic emanations—the metaphysical principle behind the hierarchy and ranking of reality—have a quasi-automated character, at least compared to Christian emphasis on personal, willed divine activity. To put it simplistically, the Christian God exhibits something more like personal *agency*, and the Neoplatonic god(s) exhibit something more like impersonal *causality*. As Stephen Gersh acknowledges, “The question of deliberate versus automatic causation forms the basis of most scholarly controversy about the meaning of emanation” in Neoplatonist studies. Still, he insists that, “Taken at face value, the notion of something diffusing causal potency . . . implies an unwilled and automatic process, and there is no evidence to suggest that the pagan Neoplatonists understood it in any other way.”<sup>71</sup> Michael Champion’s recent *Explaining the Cosmos* is more circumspect but reaches a similar conclusion. In a chapter on “Christian and Neoplatonist Creations” he notes that many generalizations of the differences in the two traditions are too hasty: “It is too strong a distinction to claim that the Christian God wills creation whereas the Neoplatonic One produces involuntarily. . . . Similarly, it is an overstatement to claim that Christian creation is an expression of divine goodness whereas the Neoplatonic creation merely follows what

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<sup>71</sup> Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 20–21.

the One is necessarily . . . .” Still, he argues that “distinctions remain,” such as the centering (in Plotinus, specifically) of creation coming from “God’s willed self-actualization” as opposed to Christian insistence that creation was a “free act of love.” A related distinction is that, in a limited sense, “since his will and he himself are one, the act of production of the cosmos is an expression of the One’s own being, and thus there is a sense in which the One produces simply by being what he is, and that what he produces is necessary, as Plotinus repeatedly claims throughout the *Enneads* (e.g. 6.8.9.10–13).” This contrasts with a Christian insistence (or at least Origen’s insistence, in Champion’s example) that “God in himself stands beyond God’s will to create.”<sup>72</sup>

Though “personal agent” versus “impersonal cause” is certainly too simplistic, the related shades of difference between the traditions’ preferred language have relevant implications for how to understand their claims about “providence,” and those differences begin to make sense of Julian’s and Cyril’s respective emphases. Julian inhabits a mode of reasoning about the cosmos that cares a great deal about explaining diversity—but it is also a mode of reasoning wherein “introducing diversity” simply has a “side-effect” of “imperfections,” in Dillon’s words. But the greater emphasis on direct divine *agency* in Christian thought more quickly raises questions of culpability for wrongs in Cyril’s reasoning.<sup>73</sup> Cyril hears Julian say that the divine structure governing

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<sup>72</sup> Champion, *Explaining the Cosmos*, 74–75.

<sup>73</sup> There are other reasons that Christians like Cyril might have been more concerned with the question of culpability for evil, of course. One is simply exegetical: Christian Scriptures begin with the account of why a good creation has evil in it, and the answer lies in the culpable actions of Adam and Eve. When speaking of the solution for this evil, Paul reasons from universal human culpability inaugurated by

humanity caused Scythians to be brutal, and he immediately thinks that this necessarily makes the gods culpable for the Scythians' putative brutality. But Plotinus's treatment of providence in *Ennead* 3.3.3 shows how the quasi-automatic nature of cascading causation from the divine into the human realm prevents blame from passing back up the chain of causality. Metaphysical inequalities—meaning the humans cannot be perfect like gods—was not deliberately (προαίρεσει) planned. Rather, things “came about like this according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν)” (*Enneads* 3.3.3.18–20).

What might Cyril say in response? He might point out that God was the creator of nature (φύσις) and ask: would this fact not make God culpable for the character of nature? We end up with something of a philosophical chicken-or-egg question, a metaphysical Euthyphro problem. Which way one leans—toward language of *agency* or *causality*—will condition the way he reasons about divine providence. Christians and Neoplatonists seem, on the whole, to have leaned in opposite directions, and though neither Julian nor Cyril go into extensive detail, their patterns of argumentation fit the respective leanings.

Plotinus's detailed treatment of providence and “the *hierarchical layering*” shows a second point of divergence—whether we call this layering one “of causality” or “of agency.” As we saw in Plotinus, the layering of νοῦς, ψυχή, λόγος, and so forth is what causes the gradual diminishment of being. Julian's point in *Against the Galileans* is not

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Adam to a parallel universal remedy in Christ, the “last Adam” (I Cor. 15:45; cf. I Cor. 15:22, Rom. 5:12–19). Rightly assigning culpability seems part of the fabric of the Christian narrative and reasoning.

precisely the same, but it is entirely compatible (as is clear in other instances of Neoplatonic reasoning<sup>74</sup>): Julian suggested that the variety of gods in the divine hierarchy means that different ethnarch gods can produce different characteristics among the humans they rule. This is entirely consonant with the general *creative* pattern from the *Tim.* 41 that shows how the distinct contribution of one layer of divinities can yield differentiation in lower beings: the lower gods contribute the mortal aspect, the Demiurge contributes the immortal, and you get a new kind of mixed creature (i.e., humans). Julian’s reasoning about differentiation of *characteristics* is built on the basic principle of the mixture of contributions (as is Proclus’s<sup>75</sup>). Athena contributes her characteristic traits to yield a characteristically wise people; Ares contributes his characteristic to yield a characteristically militaristic people; and so forth.

Cyril’s response to Julian’s emphasis on this differentiation of divine characteristics—which, for Julian, is necessary to uphold providence—is built on another Christian commitment that crystallized in the fourth century: namely, that the operations (ἐνέργεια) of the Trinity are inseparable.<sup>76</sup> Lewis Ayres suggests that, through the many fourth-century church councils, “One of the most important principles” to develop among supporters of Nicaea “is that whenever one of the divine

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<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Proclus’s *Elements of Theology* §97: “The originative cause of each series communicates its distinctive property (τῆς ἑαυτοῦ . . . ιδιότητος) to the entire series; and what the cause is primitively the series is by remission” (E. R. Dodds, trans., *Proclus, the Elements of Theology*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], 86–87).

<sup>75</sup> See the above note.

<sup>76</sup> My thanks to Matthew Crawford for pointing out to me how this Christian doctrine does not sit well with several of Julian’s typically Neoplatonist comments.

persons acts, all are present, acting inseparably.” Tied to the growing emphasis on the complete sharing of the divine nature between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, this corollary doctrine became part of the “very ‘grammar’ of divinity,” as Ayres puts it—“Pro-Nicenes assume the impossibility of there being degrees of divine existence, and they assume God to be the only truly simple reality.”<sup>77</sup> Given this fundamental divine simplicity, there is no way to parcel out divine activity to varying actors.<sup>78</sup> There may be some kind of multiplicity with the Christian divine, but it cannot be a multiplicity of ἐνέργεια. As such, in Christian reasoning, divine action must be direct, and thus culpability cannot diffuse out of existence—the production of evil therefore becomes a much more immediate concern when considering the divine work providence.

I’ll return to the doctrine of inseparable operations in the Conclusion, when we compare Cyril’s and Nestorius’s explicit commentary on the doctrine. Though *Against Julian* has no such explicit treatment, it lies behind several of Cyril’s criticisms of Julian’s arguments. The disagreement about providence thus begins to look very similar to the disagreement that we examined in the first half of this chapter: Cyril critiques Julian on grounds that are entirely consistent within Christianity but which are also *unique* to Christian reasoning, vis-à-vis Julian’s Neoplatonism.

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<sup>77</sup> *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 280–81. See 296–300 for a closer analysis of this doctrine, including how it allows for the “appropriation” of certain divine acts to the Father, Son, or Spirit. The teaching didn’t spring newly into Christian thought in the late fourth century—Christopher Beeley has identified prominent features of the teaching in Eusebius of Caesarea in the early fourth century (*The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012], 89).

<sup>78</sup> Discussing early trends in Christian reasoning about these matters, Khaled Anatolios suggests that “. . . creation is conceived as the self-mediated immediacy of divine presence,” “The Immediately Triune God: A Patristic Response to Schleiermacher,” *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* 10, no. 2 (May 2001): 169.

There is evidence in several places in *Against Julian* that Cyril's theological imagination has been shaped to immediately detect and object to any attempt to parcel out divine agency (and it is, in Cyril's interpretation, divine *agency*) to different actors. This is perhaps most evident in *AJ* 7.24–27 where he takes direct aim at Julian's ascription of different skills to different gods. According to Julian, says Cyril, some gods are “doctors by training,” others underwrite remarkable eloquence, “as in the best of sophists.” Others still “teach the business of murdering, being both experts in slaughtering and perpetrators of savagery” (7.24.20–24). We can leave aside the now-familiar accusation that the gods sponsor morally objectionable skills—that is only part of Cyril's critique. He also finds it theologically unacceptable to suggest that the variety of skills evident among humans would each, as individual skills, have their cause in a single god. “Then in what way,” Cyril asks, “is the nature of man inferior to them?” (7.25.7–8). Humans can manage multiple skills—can the gods only do one thing, each? He asks: “How, then, is it not necessary in consequence for the gods to be demoted behind the cleverness in us, if they are suitably equipped for one and only one (ἐπιτηδείως ἔχοντες πρὸς ἓν τι καὶ μόνον)” of the skills that humans have (7.25.16–19)? Cyril insists, rather, that God “is all-sufficing, all-powerful, and entirely self-complete (παναρκές, πανσθενές τε καὶ αὐτοτελές),” so “Who would dare to say that the divine is in need of anything whatsoever. . .?” (7.24.29–31). Cyril's accusation is that Julian's

parceling out of divine characteristics among different deities implies that each deity is deficient in all other characteristics.<sup>79</sup>

Though Cyril does not explicitly articulate a doctrine of inseparable operations in his arguments against Julian, this is the kind of thing that a fifth-century Christian inheritor of the doctrine would say. The simplicity of the divine nature means that all ability and all activity equally belong to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The emphasis on this teaching, furthermore, reached its zenith after Julian's death—meaning he not only would not have agreed with it; he also probably couldn't have known about it. One of the classic articulations, for example, comes in Gregory of Nyssa's *To Ablabius*, written after 375 at the earliest.<sup>80</sup> Julian died in 363. What we have, then, is Cyril making an argument based on a Christian mode of reasoning—developed in response to disputes within the Christian tradition, as were the doctrines of *creatio ex nihilo*—against Julian's comments which, as Plotinus helps elucidate, were rooted in a Neoplatonic mode of reasoning that itself is deeply rooted in the long Platonic tradition.

In conclusion, though Julian and Cyril do not provide extensive reflections on providence, key features of each of their patterns of reasoning appear to align with larger commitments evident in their respective traditions. But when we trace those

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<sup>79</sup> See also *AJ* 4.7 for a similar accusation where it is also clear that Cyril's argument is meant to dislodge Julian's gods from their role in the narrative: "Furthermore, this fact also should show that they are not gods. For the one who is God in truth and by nature is understood to be an all-beautiful and self-complete and self-sufficient respecting all of his own things, the founder and origin of every good. But the one that is not like this, which has one and barely one discovery of a paltry ability (δianoία), how could he be thought of as God?" (4.7.39–44).

<sup>80</sup> For Gregory's development of inseparable operations in this text, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 351–59. For the dating, see Lucas F. Mateo Seco and Giulio Maspero, eds., *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Seth Cherney, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 99 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 3.

larger commitments and the concerns that drove them, it looks less and less like Cyril and Julian are talking about the same thing. Central to each of their arguments are assumptions about divine causality/agency and, more basically, about what the gods/God are like. And the Christian and Neoplatonist narratives provide rival modes of thinking about such things.

## Chapter 5: Episodes in Rival Narratives: “Gifts of the Gods”

### I. Introduction

Chapter 4 shows how a cluster of episodes relating to cosmology sheds light on the narrative conflict advanced by Cyril in *Against Julian*. Cyril produces a variety of arguments, each of which has loosely interconnecting layers, and a narrative conflict analysis shows how these many layers hang together as part of a coherent intellectual project. The various arguments contribute to Cyril’s implicit strategy of fracturing Julian’s Hellenic narrative and reconstruing the various pieces in his Christian narrative.

The present chapter advances a similar analysis, though with slightly different kinds of material and episodes from *Against Julian*. What holds this chapter together is Julian’s own category of the “gifts of the gods.” The following pages show how Cyril takes these many gifts that Julian enumerates and treats them as episodes ready for renarrating in his Christian story.

The contribution of this chapter to my overall argument is of two kinds. In one sense, this chapter provides more examples of the dynamics of narrative conflict that I traced in Chapter 4. Rather than focusing on the cluster of episodes that relate to cosmology, I focus now on a new cluster of episodes. This allows us to consider material from other parts of *Against Julian* and to show how a narrative-conflict analysis can work through different stretches of Cyril’s long text. In another sense, though, this chapter is not simply *more* of the same kind of material as in Chapter 4. Both chapters

examine how Cyril was renarrating “episodes” from Julian’s narrative, but the kind of episodes in Chapter 4 and now Chapter 5 and the kind of roles that these episodes played in Julian’s and Cyril’s narratives are somewhat different. “Cosmology,” including the creation and ordering of the cosmos, includes a cluster of episodes that are going to be similarly central in both Julian’s and Cyril’s narratives. What, precisely, “creation” or “origin” means in each author is complicated, as the prior chapter illustrates. But however they explain these concepts, both Julian and Cyril consider the “origin” of the cosmos as critical for understanding everything else. To switch idioms, we might say that every narrative’s plot has some kind of beginning (even if the “beginning” is an infinite stretch of time), and Chapter 4 examines how Julian and Cyril gave rivaling explanations of the “beginning” of all things.

In this chapter, we move to episodes that have different degrees of importance, depending on which narrative is their explanatory home. I have grouped the gifts that Julian introduces and Cyril reinterprets under three categories: exemplary characters, intellectual superiority, and military and political domination. The different degrees of importance are most evident in the exemplary characters. For example, Julian affords Minos a prominent role in his narrative, but when Cyril recasts Minos within the Christian narrative, he has little prominence. In a way, the prior chapter was about rivaling attempts to explain fundamental planks of Julian’s and Cyril’s narrative framework. The present chapter traces how Cyril shows that the overall structure of his narrative is capacious enough to account for episodes from Julian’s narrative, even if those episodes are not then reconstrued as fundamental planks and are, instead, little

more than minor illustrations. As Cyril renarrates the episode-clusters of exemplary characters, intellectual superiority, and political dominion, he rescales their significance. My meaning will become clearer as the argument unfolds, but first we need to review how the many “gifts of the gods” feature in Julian’s arguments before analyzing Cyril’s reconstrual of these episodes.

## II. Julian on the “Gifts of the Gods”

As Chapter 2 traces, in frs. 37–57 of *Against the Galileans* Julian recount different gifts that the gods have bestowed on Hellenes.<sup>1</sup> Though he mentions a wide variety of “gifts,” they can be organized readily enough within a few categories.<sup>2</sup> And, as Julian makes clear in the concluding fr. 57, each category has a specific divine patronage. The categories, as Julian himself enumerates them in this fragment, are: gifts of bodily healing (overseen by Asclepius), gifts pertaining to the soul (sponsored by Apollo and Hermes); gifts in military aid (sponsored by Mars and Enyo); and, gifts in the various arts or trade. Athena and Zeus, he says, “manage all these things” as a whole (fr. 57.2–6). Julian’s many examples throughout frs. 37–57 can, indeed, populate each of these categories. For the sake of economy, I organize his examples into three, overlapping

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<sup>1</sup> The few fragments within frs. 37–57 that do not enumerate specific Hellenic gifts (i.e., frs. 41, 47, 48, and 50) provide a contrast to the Hellenic abundance of gifts: these fragments expose how few and paltry were the gifts that the Hebrews received from god and how meager were the gifts that the later Christians retained after they split from the Hebrews and “like leeches, sucked away the worst blood and left behind what is purer” (fr. 47.12–13).

<sup>2</sup> It is tempting to think that Julian imagines all the gifts as falling into only two categories: goods “concerning the soul (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς),” and “external (τὰ ἐκτός)” (or “bodily [τὰ τοῦ σώματος]”) goods. He mentions these two groups in fr. 24.24–25, 25.11–12, and 57.2–3, 15. But this categorization probably stems from Plato’s *Laws* III, 697B and thus was in all likelihood a stock mode of speech within the Platonist tradition (see the GCS critical notes on *AJ* 4.33.23–25 for a list of many antique authors who used this twofold categorization).

groups. My organization reflects the interconnected logic of how Julian treats the many gifts. These categories are: military and political domination in general; intellectual superiority, especially in *paideia*; and, exemplary characters (which overlaps with both the political power of Rome, with generals; and with the cultivation of souls, with sages). This categorization of the gifts highlights the unsurprising fact that cultural and political concerns had great gravity in (Emperor) Julian's reasoning. It will also make it easier to see how Cyril thinks differently about individual episodes *and* broader themes.

### II.A Military and Political Domination

We begin with military and political domination, largely because the next two categories of gifts undergird Julian's general sense that the gods granted political domination to the Hellenes. By examining first how Julian thinks the many gifts of the gods amount to Hellenic political superiority (and Jewish subservience), it will be readily evident how the next categories relate to this arch-gift.

Within frs. 37–57, two clusters focus explicitly on the political and military rise and superiority of Rome. The first cluster (frs. 40–44) traces select events in the long history and pre-history of the Roman Empire. Julian begins by asking which “kingdom” (βασιλείαν) should begin his presentation: that of Perseus, or Aeacus, or Minos and his brother Rhadamanthus? Cyril tells us that he has cut out much of Julian's historical material—he passes over at least the “myths” about Perseus which were “full of nonsense” (AJ 6.11.1–2). But Cyril did include a short discussion of Minos. He then summarizes that Julian went on to trace Dardanus as a son of Zeus, before he spoke of

Aeneas and his flight from Troy, of Romulus and Remus, and of the founding of Rome (6.14.1–5).

Though it's unknown how much of Julian's historical narrative Cyril trimmed away, Julian's general objective was still clear enough. He traces his Roman heritage at least to a direct son of Zeus, Minos, who received laws from the chief god and carved out the heart of the future Roman empire by "expelling barbarians as far as Syria and Sicily" (fr. 40.4). His historical narrative continues to show the gods' guidance all along as the building blocks of the future Empire came into place.

For all we know, Julian might have elaborated numerous episodes from the pre-history of Rome. But Cyril picks up again with Julian commenting on Zeus's gift of Numa, who met the new needs of an expanding dominion, most especially with his cultic laws (fr. 42). Julian also notes that Zeus provided the central city (Rome) with the Sybil and other oracular avenues. He furthermore provided a legendary shield from the sky, a miraculous head, and a sword from Ares—each of which, Julian explains, were tokens of the gods' continued favor. They were gifts "given as pledges not in word but in deed" showing that the gods will "forever hold a shield before our city" (fr. 43.7–11). The gods were at work in the distant past, in the proto-Roman figures, and they were just as at work in the founding of Rome itself and in the continual maintenance of its dominion. Julian mentions in passing also one Marius (almost certainly the second century BCE Marius Gaius who won several important victories for Rome), showing his continued attention to military matters (fr. 44); but he also mentions the new avenues of "communion" with the gods that Zeus granted, after the traditional oracles had

become silent (fr. 45). Clearly, Julian's understanding of divine interaction was focused in the fore-ordained political and military ascendance of the Roman Empire, and his enumeration of various historical episodes makes this clear. As Jean Bouffartigue has commented on Julian's historical narrative in *Against the Galilean*, the Roman past "s'agit d'une histoire pourvue d'une orientation très ferme, une histoire dont la fin est l'hégémonie romaine."<sup>3</sup>

In the second cluster of fragments on political dominance (frs. 49–53) Julian moves from listing historically discrete gifts of the gods that led to Roman dominion and focuses, instead, thematically on political freedom and authority over and against servitude. These fragments remind the reader of the role that the divine political gifts play in the larger structure of *Against the Galileans*: these examples illustrate the relative superiority of the Hellenic tradition over the Hebrew as a way of problematizing the double apostasy of the Galileans. Having recounted the long history of divine favor to Rome, he then juxtaposes the Romans and their "dominion" (βασιλεύειν) to the Jews, to whom the gods gave "freedom for a very little amount of time, and then to be always subservient and living as foreigners" (fr. 49.5–6). As illustrations, Julian quickly mentions: Abraham, who was a foreigner in a strange land; his descendant, Jacob, who was a slave in Syria and then Palestine and then among the Egyptians;<sup>4</sup> then, Moses, who had to lead the whole people out of slavery in Egypt. After this time, Julian

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<sup>3</sup> Bouffartigue, *L'empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, 454.

<sup>4</sup> In LXX Gen. 28:5, Isaac sends Jacob "to Laban, son of Bathouel the Syrian," and later in 29:30 it explicitly says that Jacob "served" (ἔδούλευσεν) Laban.

continues, the Hebrews alternated between “being subjects” (ὕπακούοντες) to judges, then to foreigners, then eventually to the Assyrians, to the Medes, to the Persians, and—last of all, in the enduring, contemporary arrangement—to the Romans. The brief period of Jewish peaceful self-rule (under kings, which was against their god’s wishes, Julian points out) amounted to a scant four hundred years. As Julian puts it in fr. 51.5–8 sarcastically, “is it better to be perpetually free, and over the entirety of two thousand years to rule most of the land and sea, or [is it better] to be in slavery and to live under a foreign command?” Julian concludes his explicitly political theme by insisting that the “order of governance,” the “form of law-courts,” the “management and beauty of cities,” among other things, are far superior to the “uncultivated and barbaric” (ἀγρία καὶ βαρβαρική) state of the Hebrews (fr. 53.3–7).

For Julian, the entire history of the Roman Empire conforms to and illustrates prominent features of his Hellenic narrative. Moreover, that narrative’s emphasis on the political supremacy of the Hellenes accentuates the Christians’ out-of-place-ness in the cosmic order. In this cosmic order, the governing deities have always consistently shown greater favor to the Romans, who came to rule the entire known world. Within the twists and turns of history, Julian thus presumes an underlying static political order, reflecting the static order of the cosmos. Rome might not have always been ruler of the world, but retrospectively Julian can see that Rome was always going to be ruler.

A similar stasis is evident in the Jewish nation which, though it had an era of freedom, has been consistently pulled back as if by gravity to its subservient status, which Julian can see in incipient form in its founding figures—just as inversely the

founding figures of Rome show signs of its destined dominance. Within this basic cosmic order, the Christian sect attempts movement, and ill-advised movement, at that. They work against the progressive manifestation of the eternal, cosmic hierarchy within the worldly political order. In Julian's narrative, as that order was crystallizing around the underlying, divinely ordained structure, Christians disregarded the divine causality. They grew dissatisfied with the gifts—like political dominance—that were most bountifully bestowed on their own Hellenic tradition, and they inexplicably preferred the heritage of a nation whose lot was to be ever ruled by superior peoples. Unsatisfied with this, they fled further from the eternal order that was slowly becoming manifested in the inevitable shifts of the outward shape of history.

These aspects of Julian's arguments show how he regards long-term political developments as clearly reflecting the work of the gods. Political success manifests greater divine favor (or favor of greater divinities), and political subservience manifests less divine favor (or favor of lesser divinities). When we turn to Cyril, we'll find that he likes to problematize the individual episodes that Julian foregrounds. But Cyril's narrative also doesn't presume a cosmic order wherein an ethnic-political ordering directly manifests a static divine hierarchy.

## II.B Intellectual Superiority

A second theme within Julian's enumeration of the superior gifts of the gods to the Hellenes is intellectual and cultural superiority. Julian references items in this class of gifts several times throughout frs. 37–57, and these are worth briefly recounting—Cyril renarrates most of them individually. The opening salvo of fr. 37 lists several

original “sages” among the Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Hellenes (fr. 37.7–12); the next fragment is more thematic and lists Hellenic endowments in “first principle[s] of science and philosophical learning” (ἀρχὴν . . . ἐπιστήμης ἢ μάθημα φιλόσοφον) (fr. 38.3–4.); after touting the forms of government and lawcourts, he mentions later “increase in learning and training in the liberal arts” (fr. 53.5–6); and, he contrasts Solomon to Isocrates (fr. 54).

In fr. 55, Julian moves from enumerating instances of Hellenic cultural superiority and argues more theoretically about intellectual superiority. This fragment and Cyril’s response provide a deeper look into their intellectual conflict than the simple reconstrual of historical characters or events, one-by-one. The exchange provides a look at *how* they think about cultural and intellectual issues. I will focus on Cyril’s response to fr. 55 when we turn to his rebuttals. Fr. 55 is one of *Against the Galileans*’s better-known fragments for its resonances with Julian’s infamous law forbidding Christian teachers in official schools and his accompanying explanatory letter (explained further below). Julian takes a slightly different tack in *Against the Galileans* than outright prohibiting Christians from coopting Hellenic literature. He asks sarcastically why Christians “nibble” at Hellenic learning if, in fact, the mere reading of their Scriptures is supposed to be perfectly adequate. Julian answers his own question: of course, open-minded Christians realize that their texts are ineffective at enhancing the intelligence (σύνεσιν) of even naturally well-endowed men, while Hellenic learning takes even one who is “entirely dull” (παντάπασιν ἀφύης) and improves him. As for one who has some innate aptitude, Hellenic education (παιδείας) transforms him into a true

“gift (δῶρον) of the gods to men” (fr. 55.3–18). Julian suggests, in other words, that many Christians implicitly acknowledge this superiority when they continue to engage in the traditional systems of learning that is built on the Hellenic texts.<sup>5</sup>

A connection between intellectual and political superiority in Julian’s thinking becomes clear when he gives examples of what concrete forms the intellectual “gifts” might take: growth in scientific knowledge, or defeating many enemies in battle, or exploring distant lands and seas (fr. 55.18–21). Hellenic *paideia* is the cultural mechanism by which divine favor is continually bestowed on the greatest of nations. This argument gives texture to how Julian maintains his tradition’s narrative. He has already surveyed many impressive feats of rulers and heroes throughout Roman history, but now he subtly fills out a more fine-grained back-story which explains the long running cultural substructures that sustain this success. Julian had earlier stipulated that any explanations that Christians offer for certain phenomena in the world should have thicker rationale than merely “God said so” (see fr. 26.6–7). Julian here similarly fills out an explanation for general Hellenic superiority. Markers like advancement in sciences (he mentions in fr. 38 the Hellenic perfecting of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy), success in war, and expansion of territory did not come by mere fiat of the gods but are rather the products of an even more thorough

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<sup>5</sup> A variety of resources are available for wider background on late antique education. See Henri Marrou’s classic Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956). See also the more recent Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, *American Studies in Papyrology* 36 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Edward Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 41 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

management of divine oversight and favor shown to this tradition. As Cyril extracts these various, layered episodes from Julian's arguments, he will similarly offer a layered counter-account on Christian terms.

### II.C Exemplary Characters

Although this final category thematically overlaps with my first two categories, these exemplary characters stand out as easy evidence for Cyril to use in his deconstruction of Julian's narrative. Cyril will argue that the narrative home that Julian tries to give these characters simply can't hold up when one considers certain relevant features of their lives. And Cyril, of course, thinks he has a better explanation for them in his own narrative.<sup>6</sup>

Most of Julian's characters are exemplary for political or broadly cultural reasons. He mentions Socrates, Plato, Aristeides, Cimon, Thales, Lycurgus, Agesilaus, and Archidamus in passing in fr. 39 before adding the aforementioned details about Perseus, Aeacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus in fr. 40. Numa centers fr. 42 for his timely introduction of cultic regulations, and Marius Gaius gets passing reference in fr. 44. Asclepius—the “greatest gift of Helios and Zeus”—is really a divine rather than human character, but since he appeared sometimes “in the form of a man” (fr. 46.8), he deserves mention as a character, too. Alexander the Great is mentioned in fr. 51,

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed study of Christian and Neoplatonist conflict through competing philosophical *bioi*, see Arthur P. Urbano, *The Philosophical Life: Biography and the Crafting of Intellectual Identity in Late Antiquity*, Patristic Monograph Series 21 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013). Urbano's character-focused account, like Susanna Elm's (see Chapter 1), leans heavily into the shared *paideia* of competing Christians and Neoplatonist exemplars. But it illustrates the centrality of “character-episodes” in rivalry between late antique traditions.

Isocrates in fr. 54, and Hippocrates in fr. 53. Julian also downplays Christian exemplary characters (Jesus in fr. 41, the patriarchs in fr. 49, and Solomon in fr. 54), which gives Cyril opportunity to demonstrate how his narrative gives perfectly defensible accounts of them.<sup>7</sup> Though Cyril does not treat every character that Julian mentions (and I don't even comment on every character that he *does* treat), it is still worthwhile to see that the presentation of a vast number of exemplary characters is clearly a feature of Julian's arguments.

### III. Cyril on the "Gifts of the Gods"

By selectively treating Cyril's responses to Julian's layered account of how the gods granted far superior gifts to the Hellenes, we can see how Cyril reconstrues individual "episodes" one-by-one in a way that builds into a coherent counternarrative. The following considers the categories in reverse order: first the exemplary characters, then cultural and intellectual matters, and finally political dominance. Cyril's comments on Julian's exemplary characters fit most simply and straightforwardly into this narrative-conflict analysis: the characters are easily delimited "episodes" from Julian's narrative that Cyril can reconstrue as different kinds of characters in the Christian narrative, and it is easy to see how Cyril rescales their prominence. His treatment of culture and *paideia* becomes more complex. There are distinct elements

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<sup>7</sup> Christoph Riedweg has also called attention to another relevant fragment from *Against the Galileans*, preserved in *Quaestiones et responsiones ad Graceos* of Ps.-Justinian (recently discovered by Peter Toth). In this fragment, Julian adds Aristotle to the gifts of the gods, noting: "Plato and Aristotle have been sent from the gods to mankind as teachers of truth." See Riedweg, "A German Renaissance Humanist as Predecessors & Some Further Surprises," 260.

(like written language and its history) that can be straightforwardly renarrated. But with the “gifts” of intellectual superiority and political domination, the analysis must trace his continued renarration of discrete “episodes” while also tracking how the different plots give rise to different modes of reasoning. The details of the plots, that is, fund different commitments and ways of evaluating other episodes.

### III.A Cyril against Julian’s Exemplary Characters

As Cyril turns to Julian’s character-episodes, he attempts to how they fail to fit the contours of Julian’s narrative—they don’t successfully illustrate the superiority of his Hellenism, and they instead introduce insoluble problems for the coherence of that narrative. In one way, several of Cyril’s arguments are straightforward character-assassinations: for example, Julian offered Socrates as an example of divine favor towards the Hellenic tradition, and Cyril undermines this characterization of Socrates-as-divine-gift by pointing to his reported irascibility and sexual addiction. But Cyril’s arguments do more than simply smear Julian’s characters. By attending to the features of Cyril’s larger narrative we can see that he is both dislodging most of these characters from their exemplary role in Julian’s narrative *and* appropriating them as reconfigured characters in his Christian narrative. For Cyril, these character-episodes thus simultaneously demonstrate the weakness of the explanatory power of Julian’s narrative and the capacity of Cyril’s narrative to consistently offer better explanations.

#### III.A.1 *Socrates*

Cyril fully recognized that one of Julian’s strategies was to pit his own exemplary characters against the best that Christians had to offer. “Since,” says Cyril at

the beginning of book 6, “[Julian] holds in no small regard those ancients who have the same mentality as him and since he dares to match them up against the saints, come and let us say some things that are appropriate. . .” (6.3.1–3). He turns first to Socrates.<sup>8</sup> Mirroring a strategy we saw deployed in the prior chapter, Cyril chooses to draw on Julian’s own tradition to make his point, thereby undermining Julian’s apparent status as a representative Hellenic intellectual. Cyril introduces two passages from Porphyry’s *History of Philosophy* to show two of Socrates’s moral failings.<sup>9</sup> The moral vocabulary he uses to evaluate Socrates reveals the work that his Christian account accomplishes in the background.

Socrates’s first failure was his intense wrath. Porphyry reports that, when Socrates became angry, “it was a terrible disgrace, for he would restrain himself from no word or deed” (6.3.23–24).<sup>10</sup> Cyril inflates Porphyry’s minor criticism, asking “What,

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<sup>8</sup> Christians before Cyril treated Socrates in a variety of ways. Early martyrs alluded to his own unjust death as described in Plato’s *Apology*. Others like Clement of Rome criticized him for reasons similar to Cyril’s. Others like Eusebius of Caesarea praised his wisdom, though he, too, gave Moses as that wisdom’s source. For more on Socrates’ treatment by early Christians, see Ernst Benz, “Christus und Sokrates in der alten Kirche: ein Beitrag zum altkirchlichen Verständnis des Märtyrers und des Martyriums,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 43, no. 3–4 (1950): 195–224; Mark Edwards, “Socrates and the Early Church,” in *Socrates from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael B. Trapp, Centre for Hellenic Studies, King’s College London Publications 9 (London: Routledge, 2016), 127–41; Michael Frede, “The Early Christian Reception of Socrates,” in *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Lindsay Judson and Vassilis Karasmanis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 188–202; Nikolaos Charalabopoulos, “Two Images of Sokrates in the Art of the Greek East,” in *Socrates from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael B. Trapp, Centre for Hellenic Studies, King’s College London Publications 9 (London: Routledge, 2016), 105–26; A. A. Long, “Socrates in Later Greek Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, ed. Donald R. Morrison, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 355–80.

<sup>9</sup> F 10 and F 11d in David Toye’s entry on “Porphyry (260),” in *Brill’s New Jacoby*, ed. Ian Worthington et al., October 1, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/porphyry-260-a260?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-jacoby&s.q=porphyry](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/porphyry-260-a260?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-jacoby&s.q=porphyry).

<sup>10</sup> Toye speculates that Porphyry included this negative portrayal because its source was almost a first-hand witness to Socrates. Other ancient commentators alluded to Socrates’s anger, but often to show his

then, is more shameful than wrath? Or how is an incontinent (ἀκρατής) anger . . . not the worst infirmity of the mind?” He proceeds to develop several extended similes to illustrate further: the soul of an irascible man is like a sea “when a fierce wind swoops down [upon it] and unleashes itself in irresistible crashes of waves on both rocks and on the shore.” Such a man is like a boulder rolling uncontrollably downhill, crashing into everything in its way where it happens to pass (6.4.1–6, 12–18).

Socrates’s second serious failure is that “he was such a skirt-chaser (γυναιμανής) and was comprehensively seized by inclinations (ῥοπᾶς) after this that he thought nothing else could be better” (6.5.3–5). Cyril again summons Porphyry who notes that, though Socrates had commendably austere daily requirements, his requirement “of sexual pleasures (τῶν ἀφροδισίων) was terribly excessive.” Porphyry reports that Socrates restrained himself to intercourse with only his two wives or with prostitutes, but Cyril also suggestively adds Socrates’s “chase after the beauty of Alcibiades.”<sup>11</sup> Cyril takes Socrates’s sexual habits as evidence that he was “exceedingly lustful and incontinent (ἀκρατής), and he knew no satiety from those so disgusting pleasures (ἡδοναῖς)” (6.5.17–18, 22–23).<sup>12</sup>

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control over it (See *Brill’s New Jacoby* [BNJ] 260 F 10). Porphyry very well may have similarly explained Socrates’s control, and Cyril has not included.

<sup>11</sup> Porphyry’s original point was to flatter Socrates by suggesting that Socrates had *only one* kind of regular need. Porphyry furthermore takes the fact that Socrates fulfilled this need with only his wives and with prostitutes as evidence that his behavior “did not pass into wrongdoing” (6.5.8–9). Cyril’s language about Alcibiades probably comes from Plato’s *Protagoras* 309a.

<sup>12</sup> For a variety of ancient interpretations of Socrates’s sexual reputation, see Toye’s commentary on BNJ 260 F 11. If the fifth-century Hermias is representative, then Neoplatonists worked hard to defend

Several features of Cyril's two-pronged takedown of Socrates are noteworthy. First is the selection of vices that Cyril emphasizes. Though Porphyry's *History of Philosophy* is not fully extant, Cyril's contemporary Theodoret also excerpted one of the same passages for his *Cure for Pagan Maladies*, and he included a longer portion of Porphyry's text. That longer excerpt includes a variety of other notes about Socrates which Cyril might have listed as further evidence of Socrates's immorality: he was disobedient as a child, and he kept unsavory company as an adult, for example.<sup>13</sup> Why did Cyril choose to focus on sexual pleasures (ἀφροδισίων) from this longer list? Why, furthermore, did Cyril also include the comment that Socrates would sometimes become very angry? There are doubtlessly a variety of possible answers. For one, by pointing out Socrates's irascibility, Cyril sets him up to contrast Moses who, as Numbers 12:3 says, was "the most exceedingly meek (πράοτατος . . . σφόδρα) of all men."<sup>14</sup> But Cyril's specific lexical choices suggest that he is also plotting Socrates within the moral landscape that is part and parcel of his own Christian narrative.

Chapter 3 introduced several of the terms that Cyril centers in his explanation of the fall of the first humans into sin and corruption. He frames the original and

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Socrates from charges of sexual wrongdoing. See Geert Roskam, "Socratic Love in Neoplatonism," in *The Neoplatonic Socrates*, ed. Danielle A. Layne and Harold Tarrant (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 21–35. For an annotated list of Neoplatonic sources that treat Socrates, see Harold Tarrant, "The Reception of Socrates in Late Antiquity: Authors, Texts, and Notable References," in *The Neoplatonic Socrates*, ed. Danielle A. Layne and Harold Tarrant (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> See *Cure for Greek Maladies* 12.63–68 (preserved as F11c in *Brill's New Jacoby*).

<sup>14</sup> *AJ* 6.4.20. Cyril actually heightens the language of Numbers 12:3: he gives the superlative "πράοτατος" (Numbers has simply "πραῦς") and he adds a second, emphatic "σφόδρα."

fundamental options in Eden—for either human development or demise—in terms of ἐγκράτεια and ἀκρασία, “self-control” and “incontinence.” God’s first command to Adam and Eve (that they not eat from one particular tree) provided opportunity for the young and morally undeveloped humans to exercise and grow in ἐγκράτεια (AJ 3.15.18–20). However, their failure to follow that command became the “origin of ἀκρασία,” from which flowed all manner of irresistible and conquering “pleasures (ἡδοναῖς)” (3.25.7–10). Humans who had once been “free from tyranny to inclinations (ῥοπαῖς)” (3.25.4–5) were thereafter subjected to such ῥοπαί. These dynamics lay at the root of human moral failure—and they are dynamics that clearly arise out of key events in the Christian narrative. Several of these key terms subtly recur in Cyril’s treatment of Socrates in *Against Julian* 6.4–5. Socrates displays an “incontinent (ἀκρατής) anger”; his madness for women led to being “seized by inclinations (ῥοπαῖς)” after them; and he showed himself generally to be “exceedingly lustful and incontinent (ἀκρατής),” enslaved to “disgusting pleasures (ἡδοναῖς).”

The reoccurrence of this specific vocabulary reveals that Cyril is doing more than (though not less than) smearing a character that Julian has claimed to be a shining exemplar of the superiority of the Hellenic tradition. His treatment of Socrates provides a lucid window onto the fundamental narrative conflict at play. Cyril first notes that Julian’s example of a supposed gift of the gods (in the form of an exemplary philosopher) has a problem—by another Hellenist’s own reckoning, Socrates had prominent moral failings. By pointing this out, Cyril rhetorically dislodges this character-episode of Socrates, who is too morally complicated to fit the

straightforwardly exemplary role Julian gives him. Second, Cyril then implicitly demonstrates that his own Christian narrative and its concomitant shape of moral anthropology is entirely capable of explaining the relevant data about Socrates for which Julian hadn't adequately accounted. With Cyril's anthropological backdrop in mind, Socrates's actions make perfect sense: in these moments, Socrates demonstrated that he was an entirely typical heir of Adam and Eve. This character-episodes thus simultaneously demonstrate the weakness of the explanatory power of Julian's narrative and the strength of the explanatory power of Cyril's.<sup>15</sup>

### III.A.2 *Plato*

A skeptical reader might object that this makes too much of a short, straightforward, and frankly distasteful example—that I'm giving Cyril too much credit for advancing a subtle argumentative strategy, whereas he's just mudslinging. That may be the case, but before reaching judgment, we should first consider his treatment of Julian's next exemplary character, Plato. Cyril exerts a remarkable interpretive creativity to show that Plato is guilty of the same moral problems as Socrates. If he simply wanted to smear one more character, easier avenues certainly would have been open to him. But the fact that he works hard to pin one of the *same* accusations on Plato suggests that he is attempting to demonstrate the consistency of his own mode of moral analysis when it comes to exposing Julian's morally problematic exemplars. Plato

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<sup>15</sup> This account also can explain why Cyril chose the examples of anger and sexual promiscuity from among the range of examples of Socrates's moral failings in Porphyry's *History of Philosophy*. Cyril found that these two examples in particular show not simply that Socrates is a bad moral exemplar—they also illustrate the ability of the Christian narrative to provide a thorough explanation of that moral failure.

doesn't simply fail as such an exemplar—in Cyril's portrayal, Plato, like Socrates, fails on grounds that Christian reasoning can explain.

Whereas Porphyry provided a portrait of Socrates that Cyril could easily adapt to show Socrates's proliferous ἀκρασία—Socrates was thus indicted “through the facts themselves” (δι' αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων) (6.5.16–17)—Cyril seems to have found a slightly harder case when he transitioned to “the affairs of Plato himself” (6.6.1). No similarly salacious account was available for Plato. Still, Cyril proposes looking to see if Plato might be “detected as having suffered with him [Socrates] incontinence (τὸ ἀκρατέες) leading to desires” (6.6.2). Unsurprisingly, Cyril does discover such a failing. Since he has no useful account of incontinent *actions*, he attempts to discover evidence about Plato “through his own words” (διὰ τῶν ἰδίων . . . λόγων) (6.6.3). To this end he employs two passages from Plato's dialogues: *Philebus* 65c–d and *Symposium* 183b–c.

Though Cyril draws many of his pagan sources for *Against Julian* directly from earlier Christian apologetic works, his use of Plato's two passages in *Against Julian* 6.6 is entirely novel in the history of the reception of Plato. He might have culled his first passage from Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, his evident source for many pagan passages. But Cyril uses the excerpt for an entirely different purpose than did Eusebius, who had marshalled it against Epicurean hedonism.<sup>16</sup> The second passage (from the *Symposium*) has no prior attestation in Greek literature.<sup>17</sup> That Cyril was highly creative

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<sup>16</sup> Athenaeus had also cited this passage in the *Deipnosophistae* (12.4.4).

<sup>17</sup> According to a TLG search ran on 13 February 2020. Excepting, perhaps, John Stobaeus, who was possibly a contemporary of Cyril and who included this passage in his *Anthology* 3.6.68. The proverb that

in his selection of passages further accentuates that his objective was to do more than undermine Plato's moral authority, whatever the method—he wanted to show that Plato had the same specific moral problem which illustrates the accurateness of Christian moral anthropology.<sup>18</sup>

Cyril presents both passages as evidence that Plato's reasoning is corrupted by ἀκρασία, and what seems to link the passages (to one another and to Porphyry's discussion of Socrates) is the root irritant of ἀφροδίσιον—the same thing Porphyry ascribed to Socrates. In the first passage from the *Philebus*, the character Protagoras says:

For pleasure (ἡδονή) is the greatest of impostors, and the story goes that with pleasures of a sexual sort (ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ταῖς περὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια), which are

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this passage of the *Symposium* mentions (“Ἀφροδίσιον ὄρκον οὖ”) shows up a few times before Cyril in Greek literature, but the author never seems to be taking it from the *Philebus*.

<sup>18</sup> What led Cyril to the *Symposium* passage, after the *Philebus*, is an interesting question, since he seems not to have come to it via earlier apologists or interpreters. The mostly likely avenue by which he arrived at the *Symposium* passage is by the lexical link of “ἀφροδίσια,” which also occurs in the *Philebus* passage (and in Porphyry's description of Socrates). If this is correct, then it is an instance of Cyril deploying an interpretive tool on Plato's corpus that he also deploys for biblical exegesis (to very different ends, of course): he links passages together based on a reoccurring term(s) and uses them all to interpret one another. The extraordinary implication of this discovery, if accurate, is that Cyril knew Plato's corpus so well that he could muster—perhaps even by memory—several passages to illustrate a point merely based on the reoccurrence of the term “ἀφροδίσια.” For an example within *Against Julian* of Cyril doing this with a biblical text, see his interpretation of the “γίγαντες” of Gen. 6:2 by reference to the term's reoccurrence in LXX Is. 13:3 (*AJ* 9.11–12).

It may be the case, as Kinzig suggests, that Cyril culled *Symposium* 183b–c from a (now lost) handbook. But given the surgically-precise lexical link that Cyril establishes between the *Symposium* and *Philebus* passages (building on Porphyry's use of “ἀφροδίσια”), it seems more likely that he himself was original in collecting and pairing them. If he did draw one or both from a handbook, then that handbook would almost certainly need to have been arranged for precisely the same purpose as Cyril's. For Kinzig's account of Cyril's Platonic sources, see Riedweg, Kinzig, and Brüggemann, *Kyrrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian*, 1:CLXIV.

said to be the greatest, perjury is even pardoned by the gods, as if the pleasures were like children, utterly devoid of all sense.<sup>19</sup>

Cyril adduces from this statement that Plato countenanced a great impiety: he was willing to excuse people from obligations they owe to the gods, if their excuse was aphrodisiacal pleasure. Plato, Cyril suggests, is trying to rationalize and justify a life driven by ἡδονή, even when it leads one to break an oath made to the gods.

In Cyril's second selection (from the *Symposium*) Pausanias claims:

Most strange, as the *hoi polloi* say, [is] that mercy from the gods is for him alone who, when he makes an oath, transgresses it. Sexual pleasure (Ἀφροδίσιον), they say, is no oath. Thus both gods and men have given all license to the lover.<sup>20</sup>

Again, Cyril takes this as evidence that Plato allowed people to break oaths, but only when aphrodisiacal pleasures are the reason.

Cyril knows, of course, that the *Philebus* and the *Symposium* are dialogues and that the excerpted passages are thus not direct claims made by Plato: they are only comments made by his fictive characters. But Cyril turns this fact, too, to his own purposes. Plato, he says, “is ashamed (as is fitting) and he is embarrassed about his own words, and he says that they belong to others.”<sup>21</sup> Cyril knows this might seem a stretch,

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<sup>19</sup> AJ 6.6.3–8. Translation from Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb, trans., *Plato, Statesman. Philebus. Ion*, Loeb Classical Library 164 (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1925), 391–93 (with modifications). Eusebius quoted from this passage in *Praep.ev.* 14.22.2.

<sup>20</sup> AJ 6.6.8–12. Translation (with modifications) from W. R. M. Lamb, trans., *Plato, Lysis. Symposium. Gorgias*, Loeb Classical Library 166 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 115.

<sup>21</sup> A veritable cottage industry has developed in modern interpretations of Plato over the attempt to get at Plato's thought through the words of his *characters*, on which see Gerald Press, ed., *Who Speaks for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). In the chapter “Where Plato Speaks: Reflections on an Ancient Debate,” Harold Tarrant surveys ancient arguments about “whether certain characters could be relied on to speak for Plato” (67).

but he thinks it a justifiable one. He claims that if Plato did *not* approve of the idea that ἀφροδίσιον was an excuse to renege on oaths, then he would have proceeded to carefully refute it. Yet, Cyril suggests, “how is it possible to doubt that he commends this idea? For he did not at all rebut those who choose to think like this.” He implies that the conclusion must be that Plato really did suggest (abashedly, at least) that the gods suspend the normal moral boundaries for “unjust and incontinent lovers (ἀκρατεῖς ἐρασταί).” Based on Plato’s words, people are permitted “to proceed with license, entirely and in every way (πάντη τε καὶ πάντως).” Cyril concludes his treatment of Plato with a rhetorical question, the answer to which can easily be framed in the terms of narrative conflict. He asks, “This man who had so splendid and famous a reputation for his abilities with and knowledge about philosophizing—how was it that he needed (ἔδει) to throw aside reverence for the divine behind shameful and blameworthy pleasure (ἡδονῆς)?” (6.6.12–26). As with Socrates, Cyril tries to demonstrate that a more expansive and satisfying explanation for Plato lies in the narrative which shapes Christian anthropology. The Christian explanation for human moral ills, grounded in the story of Adam’s and Eve’s fall in Eden, provides the analytical framework and vocabulary to make sense of Plato’s surprisingly dangerous words. It was “necessary” (ἔδει) that Plato give pleasure (ἡδονή) a pass, he implies, because Plato, too, was a typical member of humanity whose inherited, fundamental moral flaw is tied up with an “incontinence” that leaves all vulnerable to the tyranny of “pleasure.”

Lest it begin to look like Cyril can give only derogatory accounts of Julian's character-episodes, we move now to Numa. For Julian, Numa was evidence of Zeus's ongoing favor to Rome—Numa, the legendary successor of Romulus and, in Julian's words, the "great philosopher" (φιλοσοφώτατον), appeared when Rome was expanding and facing new dangers. In *AJ* 6.14 (one of Cyril's *shortest* responses to an excerpt from Julian), Cyril writes approvingly about Numa, though for reasons distinct from Julian's. Two features of Cyril's comments about Numa throw light on the narrative conflict. The first is relatively straightforward: Cyril maps Numa in the long history of the Hellenic reception of partial truths from Moses. The second feature is tied to Cyril's brief comment about how Numa established temples called "Πιστέως." This comment's significance in a narrative-conflict analysis, however, is less straightforward. We will have to make two detours to fully appreciate it: to Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* and to a later argument in *Against Julian*.

First, Cyril's suggests that certain features of Numa's cultic prescriptions were genuinely pious. Cyril atypically names his source (Dionysius of Halicarnassus) when he claims that Numa "established altars and temples, and there were no statues in them" (6.14.23–24). He explains this aniconic policy by identifying Numa as a student of Pythagoras, who led Numa to recognize correctly that "God is formless and without shape" (6.14.26–27).<sup>22</sup> By leveraging the putative relationship between Numa and

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<sup>22</sup> For a wider discussion of early Christian aniconism in relation to classical philosophy, see Robin Jensen, "Aniconism in the First Centuries of Christianity," *Religion* 47, no. 3 (July 2017): 408–24 (Numa is discussed at 414–15).

Pythagoras, Cyril is able to offer Numa as yet another episode in his larger narrative about the glimpses of theological truth that are evident among the Hellenes.<sup>23</sup> In *AJ* book 1 he had argued that both Plato and Pythagoras had visited Egypt where they learned about Moses’s theology—a historical claim which explains how these two happened to give an account of God that is “somewhat more appropriate (ἐπιεικέστερόν πως) than the others” (1.40.23–24). Cyril suggests that this relatively better account led Pythagoras, at least, to the conclusion that the divine prefers “spiritual—not material—sacrifices” (θυσίαις . . . ταῖς νοηταῖς, οὐχὶ ταῖς ἐνύλοις) (6.14.27–28). Cyril’s account of Numa in *AJ* book 6 and his account of Pythagoras in *AJ* book 1 are thus mutually reinforcing: based on what Pythagoras learned in Egypt, Numa advanced cultic worship in a spiritual, immaterial direction. As I explained in Chapter 3, the transition from physical, blood-sacrifices to “worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) is a major plot development in Cyril’s understanding of humanity’s slow growth towards the ability to relate to God as God desires. Thus, by isolating and reconfiguring an aspect of Numa’s reputation, Cyril can show how Numa fits perfectly well into the Christian narrative.

In the second noteworthy feature of this passage, Cyril addresses Numa’s reputation for establishing a temple(s) called Πιστέωζ. A passing comment in these few

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<sup>23</sup> It’s worth noting that Numa’s relationship with Pythagoras was contested in antiquity. Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch both acknowledge that there was widespread dispute about whether Numa was really a disciple of Pythagoras—though Cyril simply speaks as if he indisputably were (as had Clement in *Stromata* 1.15.71, another of Cyril’s likely sources). In *Roman Antiquities* 2.59, Dionysius argues for chronological reasons that Numa could not have been a disciple of Pythagoras, who in fact was born well after Numa’s death. Plutarch’s opening comments in his *Life* of Numa consider the dispute about when Numa lived and if he could have known Pythagoras.

lines shows how he is co-opting Numa as an illustrative data point in the Christian narrative. In short, Cyril treats “πίστις” in a way that is both creative (with respect to his source, Dionysius) and hostile (with respect to Julian’s understanding of πίστις).<sup>24</sup>

In his *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius explains Numa’s concerns about πίστις: Numa wanted to improve the keeping of contracts in the Roman state. He noticed that *witnessed* contracts were generally upheld out of the respect for the witnesses; but *unwitnessed* contracts were less reliable for having as their only safeguard the mere πίστιν (here in the sense of “pledge” or “assurance”) of the parties involved. To reinforce the social reliability of these “assurances,” Numa personified πίστις and established a temple “Πίστεως” to incline people to regard pledges as highly as Justice (Δίκην), Law (Θέμις), and so forth (*Roman Antiquities* 2.76).<sup>25</sup>

Cyril obliquely acknowledges the assurance-securing objective which Dionysius centers in his explanation of the founding of a temple Πίστεως,<sup>26</sup> but he also reconfigures this historical datum about Numa. “Having established temples,” Cyril writes, “he named them Πιστέως, through which—and only which—the divine is seen by humans (at least insofar as is possible)” (6.14.28–30). Leaving aside Cyril’s subtle implication that Numa somehow established *all* his temples under the nomenclature of

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<sup>24</sup> In the following, I mostly do not give an English translation for πίστις because I have found it impossible to find a single gloss suitable to Cyril’s and Julian’s different uses of the term.

<sup>25</sup> Dionysius’s account of why Numa established a temple called Πιστέως illustrates Teresa Morgan’s broad point about the social function of πίστις in the Hellenistic era. For her comments on how Numa fit into larger social patterns built around πίστις, see *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 106–7.

<sup>26</sup> He notes that Numa “ordered those under his rule to regard Πίστιν as an oath (ὄρκιον δὲ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν Πίστιν)” (6.14.29–30).

Πίστεως (Dionysius is clear that the temple “Πίστεως” was but one of many) we should note Cyril’s brief aside about the indispensable role of πίστις (“faith,” here) for theological epistemology. It is only through faith, he insists, that humans can look on the divine. For one, this is simply not the same sense of “πίστις” that Dionysius uses. At this surface level, Cyril is already reconstruing a feature of Numa’s story to fit his Christian narrative. Numa is now portrayed as having inherited two fragments of theological truth: the first regarding how to worship an immaterial God, and the second relating to how humans can know this God (i.e., by “faith” alone). But Cyril’s reconfiguration isn’t simply different than Dionysius’s (and Julian’s)—it is in fact hostile to the Hellenic philosophical tradition writ large.

In short, Cyril evokes an understanding of πίστις that was antagonistic towards classical philosophy. To be sure, his objective in this passage is not overtly philosophical, nor does he even explicate as an aside the philosophical implications of a passing comment. Cyril merely adds a short subordinate clause to the historical detail that Numa had named his temples “Πιστέως”: he notes that πίστις is that “through which—and only which (καὶ μόνης)—the divine is seen by humans.”

Features in Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromateis* reveal the subterranean conflict behind Cyril’s passing comment. Within Cyril’s claim is a Christian understanding of πίστις that Clement used to reorient the epistemological foundations of classical philosophy. Clement dedicated much of his *Stromateis* to πίστις, since one of his goals seems to have been to offer a response to the objection (by Celsus, or those like him) that Christians live not by reason but by (blind) faith. In response to this criticism,

Clement explains that πίστις is the only sure foundation of reasoning: “It is possible to arrive at the first principle of all things by faith alone (πίστει . . . μόνῃ)” (2.4.14.1).<sup>27</sup>

George Boys-Stones has recently called attention to this same passage in Clement, and his categorization of philosophical conflict in the post-Hellenistic era shows just how cutting is Clement’s comment. Boys-Stones suggests that disagreement between philosophical schools was articulated in two forms: a weaker form of “difference” and a stronger form of “opposition.”<sup>28</sup> Disputants used language of “difference” (such as “διαφέρω”) for in-house disagreements—this language marked distinctions “between arguments that can be contained *within* the family.”<sup>29</sup> His central example is the immediate successors of Plato who, “whatever their faults, retained the general shape of Plato’s metaphysics, including the key thought that the ultimate explanatory principles transcended the material world.” Even though in the estimation of Numenius, for example, several of these successors made errors, the difference Numenius articulated between himself and them is, says Boys-Stones, “contained within a broadly shared understanding of what constitutes *adequacy in philosophical explanation*.”<sup>30</sup> In the stronger form of difference—“opposition” (indicated by language

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<sup>27</sup> Cyril’s similar insistence on “πιστέως . . . μόνῃς” suggests that he quite possibly had Clement’s passage in mind (or in front of him) when he was writing about Numa. He clearly drew on the *Stromateis* for other arguments throughout *Against Julian*, and, though Cyril could have derived all of the historical details about Numa in *AJ* 6.14 from Dionysius of Halicarnassus and from Plutarch, Clement had applauded Numa for the same reason as Cyril (i.e., being a Pythagorean, Numa prohibited the use of images for God) (see *Stromata* 1.15.71).

<sup>28</sup> Boys-Stones, “Difference, Opposition, and the Roots of Intolerance in Ancient Philosophical Polemic,” 261.

<sup>29</sup> Boys-Stones, 264.

<sup>30</sup> Boys-Stones, 267 (emphasis added).

like “ἐναντιόομαι”)—a rival disputant’s error is so consequential that there emerges “a whole new branch in the wider genealogy of philosophy—a new family, or a new camp.” Boys-Stones suggests that the primary doctrine by which Platonists discerned *opposition* between themselves and Stoics, New Academics, and Aristotelians lay in the epistemological point that “the ultimate explanatory principles transcended the world.” By denying this fundamental category (i.e., the explanatory principles of the “forms”) the other schools rejected “the basic explanatory framework of Platonism.” The construction of *opposition*, then, between later Platonists and the other schools is evident in how the Platonists appeal to “a *higher* explanatory level—the level of the forms and of god”—to articulate the fundamental epistemological failure of their rivals who, despite genealogical claims to Plato, are viewed as outsiders by the self-understood authentic keepers of the Platonic tradition.<sup>31</sup>

According to this typology of polemics, by the language of the post-Hellenistic disputants themselves, lines between in-house debates and family-dividing disagreements revolved around this “adequacy in philosophical explanation.” And this brings us to Clement. Boys-Stones suggests that the first Christian philosophers like Clement entered the philosophical arena with a deliberately *oppositional* orientation to the philosophical traditions, and especially to Platonism. He infers from Celsus’s arguments, in fact, that Christians argued against the Platonists in a manner parallel to how the Platonists argued against the other schools—Christians appealed to a “*higher*

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<sup>31</sup> Boys-Stones, 265–66.

explanatory level,” just as the Platonists had appealed to “the forms” to show the necessarily limited vision of, for example, the materialist Stoics. However, Christians (and Clement most clearly) upped the ante—and πίστις was at the center of the subordinating twist.<sup>32</sup>

Boys-Stones explains that “Instead of arguing that they have access to *principles* higher than those recognised by Platonists, [Christians] argue that they have access to these principles, which the Platonists do not in fact have.”<sup>33</sup> The problem that Clement posed to Platonist epistemology, he explains, was that “there are no logical procedures available to the unaided mind” which are sufficient for discovering reliable principles of reasoning.<sup>34</sup> Something from outside is necessary: πίστις. “Faith,” says Clement at one point, “is grace that leads up from what is undemonstrable to what is simple” (*Stromata* 2.4.14.3). Boys-Stones explains that, for Clement, πίστις becomes a kind of “assistance from above” and, in concert with divine revelation, “is a condition of adequacy in philosophical explanation.” He concludes that for Clement (and probably even Justin Martyr before him), “Without it, access to the ultimate explanatory principles remain unavailable *even in principle* to any Greek philosopher in general.”<sup>35</sup>

While Clement’s treatment of πίστις is more nuanced than need concern us now, suffice

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<sup>32</sup> Teresa Morgan’s claims about Philo and πίστις suggest that Philo might have been a predecessor of Clement. Philo, she says, “takes a turn away from Plato and his predecessors. Rather than treating *pistis* as the state at which we arrive by reasoning from (reliable or unreliable) data, Philo treats *pistis* towards God as a key development in the relationship of a righteous person with God. It is within a relationship of trust in God that we learn what the truth is” (*Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 152–53).

<sup>33</sup> Boys-Stones, “Difference, Opposition, and the Roots of Intolerance in Ancient Philosophical Polemic,” 274 (emphasis in original).

<sup>34</sup> Boys-Stones, 274–75.

<sup>35</sup> Boys-Stones, 275–76 (emphasis in original).

it to say that he was building on and reconfiguring the role that it played in the epistemology of other schools while simultaneously undercutting them.<sup>36</sup> The essential point for now is that Clement provides a clear, early example of how a particular notion of πίστις played a central role in the polemical attempt to subordinate other philosophical schools.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed treatment of how Clement interacts with and modifies earlier understandings of “πίστις,” see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 3rd ed., Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 112–27; Dragoş Andrei Giulea, “Apprehending ‘Demonstrations’ from the First Principle: Clement of Alexandria’s Phenomenology of Faith,” *The Journal of Religion* 89, no. 2 (April 1, 2009): 187–213.

Matyáš Havrda points out that, in his general concern for articulating the foundational principles for his philosophy (what Havrda calls “intellectual independence”), Clement is not unlike Galen, who sought a philosophy that would teach true doctrines *and* a way for its students to independently verify and build on those true doctrines. But even if Clement and Galen agreed on the *formal* point that some kind of unproved, first principles are necessary for reasoning (“faith” for Clement, and something like the “science of demonstration” for Galen), in *substance* Clement’s claim that “faith” is tied to the eminently believable power of God seen in Scripture still has an effect of “subsuming” (as Boys-Stones would say) Galen’s philosophy. Galen may be correct to recognize the need for some foundational basis for his philosophy, but unless he has the right foundation of Scripture, he still does not have “access” to the right principles, Clement might say. See Matyáš Havrda, “Intellectual Independence in Christian and Medical Discourse of the 2nd–3rd Centuries,” in *The Rise of the Early Christian Intellectual*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 139 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 81–100.

<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, according to Boys-Stones, the opposition drawn by Christians with such a use of πίστις was of a new kind in ancient polemics. Errors between even opposing schools, he suggests, could be treated as propaedeutic, so that (for example) Platonists could hold out that enough hard work (or the correction of a character defect) could eventually lead a Stoic into Platonism. “But the Christian line” about their rivals, he says, “is different: it is that their methodology traps them in underachievement” (279). Without the access to reliable principles through πίστις, rival philosophies will ever be doomed to failure.

He further suggests that these dynamics explains the occasional impatience of early Christian philosophers like Justin with the long curriculums of philosophical training required by (in Justin’s case) the Pythagoreans. Without the fundamental operator of faith, this tedious method misleadingly tells students “not to expect results until after many decades of hard work. So,” from the Christian perspective, “even the brightest and best-intentioned pupil can easily become ‘stuck’ in Platonism or Pythagoreanism—mired in the empirical sciences and the false promise of elevation they offer to the intellect.” It is true, he acknowledges, that Christians could speak of training in other schools as propaedeutic, but even Clement, for example, “is also capable of saying that people become Christian *despite* their philosophical training” (279). We will see later in this chapter how Cyril, too, treats *paideia* in general as a possible (though not necessary) propaedeutic for Christians.

It may seem like a stretch to link this back-story about Clement, πίστις, and fundamental epistemology to Cyril, given that Cyril's comment about Numa's temple Πιστέως is brief and certainly not a direct philosophical critique. But a second detour—this time to a later argument in *Against Julian*—will confirm and further illustrate how the dynamics that Boys-Stones lays out are, in fact, implicit in Cyril's engagement with Julian over Numa.

In *AJ* 10.39–41, Cyril engages Julian directly with questions of πίστις as they argue about the significance of Abraham's sacrifice in Genesis 15:7–11. As I explained in Chapter 2, Julian interprets this passage as proof that Abraham was proficient in the (Hellenic) methods of sacrifice, divination, and bird auguring. It will be worthwhile to briefly rehearse Julian's argument again, focusing this time on the function that πίστις plays in his reasoning. Julian quotes directly from Genesis 15:7–11, which recounts Abraham's uncertainty about how he will know that he will inherit his promised land. In the passage, god responds to Abraham's questioning by initiating a sacrificial ritual.

Julian's interpretation of the sequence of events within Genesis 15:7–11 reveals his understanding of πίστις. First, says Julian, Abraham receives a “prediction” (πρόρρησιν), which is then “strengthened through an omen (οἰωνιστικῆς) . . . after the divination (μαντείας) is completed with sacrifices.” The precise order seems to be: prediction, divinatory ritual, confirming omen. Julian clarifies that this “omen” was the birds that flew down and sat with Abraham: god “showed the promise to be certain (βεβαίαν) by a flight of birds” (fr. 88.14–19). In other words, extracts from Abraham's

actions reveal a multi-step process of determining a divine message.<sup>38</sup> At the end of this process, god sent a further sign as confirmation in the form of birds (which were a common means of divination).

After laying out how Abraham’s episode advanced in a multi-stage process, Julian draws a more generalized conclusion. He claims that “any πίστις without the reality (ἀληθείας) seems to be silliness and folly. But it is not possible to see the reality from a bare announcement (ρήματος), but it is necessary that following on the words [of the announcement] there be a sign which, when it occurs, will confirm (πιστώσεται) the prophecy that is made about the future” (fr. 88.20–23). This confirming “sign” seems to be equated with πίστις in Julian’s account, coming at the end of the process and functioning as a confirming “pledge,” or a sign of “assurance.” Πίστις thus plays a role complementary to “the truth,” and it furthermore seems to be an ingredient that is provided from the divine side of the interaction and toward the end of the order of operations. Though Julian is not talking in a particularly philosophical mode, it is still evident that the role of πίστις is not at the foundation of how one comes to know something—absent the “reality” or “truth,” πίστις is mere “folly.” Julian’s account seems, if anything, to return to the older criticism that Christians cling to a blind faith. Furthermore, as the middle sense of “πιστώσεται” suggests, Julian seems to think of

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<sup>38</sup> There is some textual ambiguity that muddies the following, but Julian makes a side comment in his explication of Abraham’s actions, and this comment further suggests that he is attending specifically to an order of sacrificial operations. He says that “the prediction . . . was strengthened through an omen, *not haphazardly, as with us*, but after the divination is completed with sacrifices.” If the GCS editorial decision is accepted (reading “οὐχ ὡσπερ ἡμεῖς ἐκ παρέργου”), then Julian seems to suggest that what is exemplary about Abraham is how careful he was in the precise order that he went about the ritual—in contrast to the slipshod practices of Julian’s contemporary Hellenes.

genuine πίστις as something from the divine agent, and it simply “confirms” a message already communicated.<sup>39</sup>

In Cyril’s response, πίστις plays a different kind of role. Rather than being an ingredient from the divine side, it squarely resides as part of Abraham’s process of understanding. Πίστις is, in fact, the foundation of his theological knowing. The sacrificial ritual was not at all an integral part of the process of knowing God, as it seems to have been with Julian—it was simply a support system that God graciously put into place to nurture and grow the nascent faith. As I explained in Chapter 3, Cyril interpreted Genesis 15:7–11 as an instance of God’s accommodation to Abraham’s relative immaturity. God promised a land to Abraham, and Abraham should have taken that promise as entirely reliable. But Cyril says that, since Abraham “was still in the early stages of believing (ἐν ἀρχαῖς τοῦ πιστεύειν)” (10.40.19–20), God accommodated this immaturity by verifying the promise through an oath-making ritual that would have been recognizable to Abraham from his Chaldean upbringing.

Just as Julian had generalized about the relationship between πίστις and ἀλήθεια based on the episode of Genesis 15, so too does Cyril—but with an inverse conclusion. Julian had insisted that, “Without the reality (ἀληθείας), any πίστις is folly.”

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<sup>39</sup> Julian’s interpretation of Abraham in Genesis 15:1–6 in the prior fragment confirms his usage of “πίστις” as “pledge” or “assurance.” Here, Julian argues that Abraham knew how to interpret the heavenly bodies: after god (or an angel) announced that Abraham would have many descendants, Abraham asked how he could be sure of this promise. The messenger took him outside his tent, Julian says, to show him “shooting stars” (τοὺς διάττοντας). This was “so that,” Julian says, “he could provide a clear πίστιν for the words”—a “clear pledge” or “assurance” (fr. 87.19–21). Again, Julian treats the πίστις as an ingredient from the divine side of the interaction, and as a confirming “assurance” at the end of a divinatory ritual.

Cyril retorts that, in the case of Abraham, “Rather, the real thing (τὸ ἀληθές) was added to his faith (τῇ πίστει).” Cyril seems to mean that Abraham’s initial disposition of “trust” toward God was then given more concrete confirmation,<sup>40</sup> though that confirmation (in the form of the sacrificial ritual) was not strictly necessary to the process—it was God’s accommodation. What exactly Cyril means by saying that *the reality* was added to faith is not clear, though I suspect that he liked the rhetorical effect of reversing Julian’s formula (rather than ἀληθεία being prior to πίστις, Cyril insists that Abraham’s πίστις came first, and then afterwards “the reality” was added). But Cyril does make clear that the oaths of the ritual were intended to solidify Abraham’s nascent faith, which was made “more steadfast” thanks to the “concurring assurance (σύνδρομον . . . ἀσφάλειαν) from the oaths” (10.41.11–13).

Cyril extends his generalization about “πίστις” in another way that sheds further light on the clashing interpretations of Abraham’s πίστις. He says that “what is accepted by faith (τὸ πίστει παραδεκτὸν) must not be irreverently probed (ἀπολυπραγμόνητον).” “How,” he goes on to ask, “can something that has been tested (τὸ βασανιζόμενον) continue to be held by faith (ἔτι πεπίστευται)?” (AJ 10.41.6–10). Cyril’s lexical choice in this latter comment suggests that, in his estimation, Julian’s error about Abraham stemmed from a dangerous confusion about how humans gain knowledge about different kinds of things. “βασανίζειν” (and its noun form, “βάσανος”)

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<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, Cyril’s terse reversal of Julian’s articulation might mean that “the reality [of the promise]” was given after or based on Abraham’s faith—i.e., the promise for land (the “real thing”) was eventually “added” to Abraham’s faith.

sometimes connotes an “investigation” or a “testing,” and Cyril uses the term frequently in this way: sometimes he simply notes that he will “closely investigate” something,<sup>41</sup> and sometimes he uses the term to suggest that if Julian had simply carried out an appropriate “investigation” or “testing,” then he wouldn’t have made a certain mistake.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, Cyril thinks that certain matters need to be “tested,” and he likes to imply that Julian fails to do so. But Cyril is equally insistent that other matters should *not* be “tested”—specifically, matters that relate to God and his commands.<sup>43</sup> In addition to connoting an appropriate “investigation,” “βασανίζειν” can also imply a presumptive “cross-examining” or even a “questioning by torture.” Cyril probably means to invoke this nuance as well at times, including when he says that “something tested” (τὸ βασανιζόμενον) cannot still be held by faith. He suggests, that is, that otherwise-acceptable methods of “testing” take on an irreverent quality when they are applied to divine matters. Divinatory rituals (like the one Julian claimed to discover in Abraham’s actions) attempt to tortuously extract information out of the divine realm. The correct disposition towards a divine revelation (like the promise Abraham received) is one of “faith,” and a disposition that wants to “test” the divine word cannot coexist with πίστις.

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<sup>41</sup> For example, see AJ 1.34.22–27.

<sup>42</sup> For example, see AJ 2.36.18–19, 3.23.15–16 or 10.2.18–23

<sup>43</sup> Cyril says in one place, after dwelling on the many aspects of Christ’s salvific work, that “Even if the measure of our understanding happens to be inadequate to the surpassing quality of the things accomplished, we should not for that reason dishonor the supernatural and ineffable nature by asserting its impotence (τὸ ἄδρανές). But it would be appropriate instead to honor with untested (ἄβασανίστοις) judgements whatever he might command [us] to do” (AJ 8.38.23–28). Similarly, in 8.34.24–29 Cyril claims that since he is speaking about a “mystery” before Hellenes, “we will put away the investigation (τὴν βάσανον) of ineffable things.”

In summary, for Julian, πίστις is what confirms, and it can be obtained sometimes through divinatory methods. For Cyril, πίστις cannot act as confirmation since it itself lies at the beginning of the process of knowing; furthermore, “confirmation” of the sort that Julian envisions excludes πίστις by its very nature. Cyril insists that Abraham’s story does not include, as Julian suggested, a divinatory process with a “πίστις=assurance” at the end. Rather, such an information-extorting process would have corroded Abraham’s “πίστις=faith.” The sacrificial ritual, Cyril explains, was a nurturing support system for Abraham’s young faith.

Cyril’s critique of Julian about πίστις is not, of course, as systematic or philosophical as is Clement’s treatment of the topic. Nor is it clear that Cyril intended to advance an argument as subtly subordinating as Clement had advanced.<sup>44</sup> But Cyril’s critique and Clement’s treatment do bear key resemblances with respect to πίστις. Both treat “faith” as foundational in their epistemology, whether it is explicitly advanced (in Clement’s case) or implicitly evoked (in Cyril’s case). We might say that what Clement argues for in abstract and analytical detail Cyril later deploys to explain a concrete case. Julian’s interpretation of Abraham’s πίστις in fr. 88 make clear that πίστις plays no such role in his religious epistemology.

The many dynamics raised in Clement’s *Stromateis* and instantiated in *Against Julian* 10.39–41 are just under the surface of Cyril’s comments on Numa in *Against Julian*

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<sup>44</sup> Another slight difference between Clement and Cyril is that the former makes faith essential for knowing first principles of reasoning, and the latter for knowing “the divine.” Even given this difference, the parallel in their treatment of πίστις still holds, since both are interested in how πίστις is foundational to knowing.

6.14. When Cyril notes in passing that Numa named his temples “Πιστέωζ” and glosses that “faith” is that “by which—and only which—the divine is seen by humans,” he invokes the history of Christian subversion of the philosophical schools. Regardless whether Cyril (or Julian) had the subtle dynamics of these arguments at the forefront of their minds, the point remains about the kind of intellectual conflict they instantiate. With this background in mind, what dynamics of narrative conflict come into view in Cyril’s brief comments about Numa Pompilius?

As I already suggested above while discussing Numa’s proclivity for spiritual sacrifice, in *AJ* 6.14 Cyril is attempting to take relevant data about Numa, one of Julian’s exemplary characters, and reconstrue that data to fit into the broader narrative tapestry of Christianity.<sup>45</sup> Cyril maps Numa as a disciple of Pythagoras, whom he had already pinpointed as an indirect student of Moses. Furthermore, when he insinuates that Numa understood πίστις as the only way to know the divine, Cyril is showing that Julian’s character “fits” within the fine grain of the Christian story. Julian attempted to support and fill out his Hellenic narrative with the character-episode of Numa. But Cyril insists that this character-episode fits better within the Christian narrative—facts about Numa’s life (his move towards immaterial cultic practices, and his high regard for

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<sup>45</sup> As a side note, Cyril’s treatment of Numa illustrates another way in which Cyril is *not* going through a programmatic process in his renarration. He doesn’t go through successive “steps” of first dislodging Numa from Julian’s narrative (as he had done by pointing out Socrates’s and Plato’s moral problems) and, second, of reinscribing him in another narrative. Rather, in this instance, Cyril proceeds as if the satisfactory construal of Numa within the Christian narrative is adequate to simultaneously dislodge him from Julian’s narrative.

πίστις in religious matters) make the most sense against the wider backdrop of the Christian narrative and reasoning.

#### III.A.4 *Other Characters*

Since a key to triumph in a conflict of narratives lies in an accumulation of demonstrations—this is how “explanatory adequacy” must ultimately be demonstrated—I will quickly summarize Cyril’s treatment of several other characters that Julian provided as evidence for the validity of his Hellenic narrative. I include these brief overviews to help us, Cyril’s modern readers, imagine what it might have felt like to an ancient reader to watch Cyril attempting to cumulatively demonstrate the explanatory power of his tradition.

After he exposed the root of Socrates’s and Plato’s moral infirmities, Cyril next treated two more of Julian’s exemplary characters: Cimon and Aristides. Julian must have mentioned Cimon, the fifth-century BCE Athenian, for his reputation as an effective general and politician who was pivotal in the early Greek wars with Persia—he is the subject of one of Plutarch’s *Lives*, Thucydides mentions him, as do Aristotle, Diodorus Siculus, Pausanias, and more.<sup>46</sup> Julian might have mentioned Aristides, also a *strategos*, alongside his contemporary Cimon since both were historic supporters of the autocratic governance of Athens, against democratic reformers.<sup>47</sup> Whatever Julian’s

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<sup>46</sup> For an overview of Cimon (including references to his ancient biographers and commentators), see Christopher W. Blackwell, “Cimon,” in C.W. Blackwell, ed., *Dēmos: Classical Athenian Democracy* (A. Mahoney and R. Scaife, eds., *The Stoa: a consortium for electronic publication in the humanities* [www.stoa.org]) edition of January 31, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> For Aristides see Simon Hornblower, “Aristides (1),” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

precise reasons, Cyril has different estimations of both. He knows (probably from Plutarch's *Life of Cimon*) the tradition that Cimon had an incestuous relationship with his sister, Elpinice, and that he was indicted for being bribed by the enemy.<sup>48</sup> Cyril also offers the otherwise-unattested claims that Cimon was condemned by the Athenians of tyranny and that the historian Theopompus dubbed him an arch-thief and financially corrupt (6.7.12–15). Continuing to draw on Hellenic historical sources, Cyril notes that Aristeides was similarly a thief who himself knew that his Athenian comrades would do well to expel him.<sup>49</sup> As best I can tell, Cyril's treatment of these two ancient political leaders is not as textured as is his renarration of Socrates, or Numa; it's hard to see how anything unique from his Christian narrative is demonstrated in the way he explains them, and the "explanation" seems much closer to mere smear. Still, by raising problematic details about Julian's exemplary characters, Cyril continues trying to chip away at the plausibility of Julian's Hellenic narrative.

With Julian's next example, Marius Gaius, Cyril finds richer material than with Cimon and Aristeides, whom Cyril merely dislodged from their exemplary role in Julian's narrative. Marius presents an opportunity to also reinscribe a character in his own story, much like Cyril had done with Socrates and Plato. Julian's extant comment about Marius is a scant three words: "I admire Marius" (fr. 44.4). Any number of features about the first century BCE Roman military and political leader could have

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<sup>48</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Cimon* 4.6, 14.2 (text in Jeffrey Perrin, trans., *Plutarch, Lives, Volume II*, Loeb Classical Library 47 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914], 403–67).

<sup>49</sup> Cyril probably drew from Plutarch's *Life of Aristides* 3.2.

appealed to Julian.<sup>50</sup> But Cyril seizes on an obscure piece of Marius’s history, likely taken from Eusebius.<sup>51</sup> Marius’s many military victories included the defeat of the Cimbri in Northern Italy. According to one report, this eventual victory came only after Marius sacrificed his daughter to the gods, as he was instructed in a dream.<sup>52</sup>

Cyril outdoes himself heaping scorn on Julian because of this obscure (and, to modern scholars, dubious<sup>53</sup>) detail about Marius. To give but a taste of his sardonic critique:

Therefore, if he praises and marvels at Marius, then let [Julian] declare guilty those who choose *not* to do the same thing as [Marius]. Let him persuade the worshippers of the ethnarchs and city-protectors to desire children for their family, *not* so that their offspring can prattle “Pa-pa-pa” at home and so that their progeny might extend to their children’s children—but rather so that they might enchant these so-gentle gods with their children’s blood, since such is, it seems, their most desired sacrifices. (6.19.20–26)

Though Cyril’s enthusiasm in excoriating Julian’s passing “I admire Marius” might seem over the top, it adds rhetorical work to the project of narrative conflict. Marius becomes for Cyril an opportunity to illustrate again the superior explanatory power of his narrative. As Chapter 3 emphasizes, a central pillar of Cyril’s reconstrual is the demonstration that Julian’s “gods” are, in fact, wicked demons. Julian mentions Marius

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<sup>50</sup> For an overview of and bibliography for Marius, see Ernst Badian, “Marius (1) (RE 14, in Suppl. 6), Gaius,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> *Praep.Ev.* 4.16.12. Eusebius is quoting Clement’s *Protrepticus* 3.42.7 (which could instead be Cyril’s direct source).

<sup>52</sup> Clement (and Ps.Plutarch’s *Parallela Minora*) names an otherwise unknown Dorotheos as the source of Marius’s dream and ensuing sacrifice.

<sup>53</sup> Alan Cameron insists that the (Roman) story about Marius’s sacrifice of his daughter was fabricated for Ps.Plutarch’s *Parallela Minora* as a verifying counterpart to the (Greek) story about Erechtheus’s prolicide. See *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, *American Classical Studies* 48 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 130.

generically in his long section on the gifts that the gods bestowed on the Hellenes, and by introducing the specific story about Marius's sacrifice, Cyril troubles the example. Not only is Marius himself impugned as an exemplar. The gods, too, are implicated: it is they who desire such a sacrifice. Cyril queries whether it really make sense, as Julian's story seems unavoidably to entail, that *good* gods would desire a man to slaughter his own child? Is this really a "gift of the gods" (6.19.34)? Something seems deeply wrong with Julian's story; it can't hold up under scrutiny.

Cyril, of course, offers a diagnosis of the mistake: Julian has misidentified the characters that interact with Marius. Marius was excessively, mistakenly pious (δεισιδαιμονέστατον) and became deceived, so that he offered his daughter not to "good gods" but rather "on the altar of demons" (6.19.10–16). Cyril wants his audience to see that Julian's narrative egregiously construes the relevant data about its characters; the plausibility of the narrative fractures under the weight of facts. But he also wants his audience to see that the episode of Marius is still explicable: it makes tragically good sense within the Christian story which unmask the wicked demons who masquerade as gods.

### III.A.5 *Minos*

Cyril's characterization of Minos, another exemplary character is similarly over-the-top, but it also introduces a dynamic that will transition to the next part of this chapter. Much as was the case with Socrates and Plato, attending to the moral vocabulary Cyril uses to explain Minos (πλεονεξία, specifically) will show how Cyril redepicts Minos within his larger narrative tapestry. Julian presented Minos as an early

building block of the empire, since he drove barbarians from much of the Mediterranean and also instituted laws that he received from Zeus (fr. 40). To show the depth of Julian's mistake in valorizing Minos, Cyril strays beyond these specific themes. He points out that Minos's wife fell into such bestial lust that she mothered the legendary minotaur with a bull. He also notes that the promiscuity of Minos's daughters was enough to inspire several tragic plays.<sup>54</sup>

Before the family smear campaign, however, Cyril does consider Minos's military and political legacy. The general facts in Cyril's account are, of course, the same as in Julian's accounts: Minos conquered much Mediterranean territory. Cyril's interpretation of the facts is different, though:

. . .your Minos, who is "from Zeus," as you say, after receiving the laws did not want to rule only the affairs of the Cretans over whom he had seized (ἀνήπτο) power. But he was aroused (ἀνεπτόητο) into greed (εἰς πλεονεξίαν) and was madly raging against those who were in no way his concern—to such an extent that he took the islands by the custom of war, and he made free peoples part of his spoils. . . . (6.10.20–25)

As he has done before, Cyril suggests that a good Hellene wouldn't have made Julian's mistake. That is to say, someone who knew his tradition would have been able to discern Minos's problems: Homer himself gave Minos the epithet "ὀλοόφρων"—literally "ruinously minded."<sup>55</sup> And Callimachos commented that "Minos stretched a

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<sup>54</sup> Cyril might have had any number of plays in mind when he mentions Phaedra and Ariadne, Minos's daughters. On Pasiphae, Minos's wife, see David Leeming, "Pasiphae," in *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>55</sup> Cyril quotes from Od. 11.321–22. A TLG search run on 10 March 2020 suggest that no other Christian prior to Cyril had commented on this Homeric excerpt. (Porphyry seems to be the only person after Homer who mentioned "Minos ὀλοόφρων." See his *Homeric Questions* 322.)

heavy yoke over the neck of the islands.”<sup>56</sup> Cyril insists that if the moral of Minos’s story was how to “govern justly,” as Julian’s argument implied, then the great poets would not have “called him ‘ruinously minded’” or “reproached him for placing on the islands a burdensome and unbearable yoke of his greed (τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πλεονεξίας)” (6.10.35–38).

As we’ll see in greater detail shortly, Cyril thinks that certain features about Minos did, indeed, foreshadow features of the Roman Empire—not its victorious military, but its oppressive drive for domination. For now, though, we need to attend further to Minos and Cyril’s moral vocabulary. He twice ascribes Minos’s actions to πλεονεξία, “greed.” Chapter 3 points out a few other places where Cyril speaks of πλεονεξία, and reviewing and expanding those brief comments will show how Cyril’s defamatory treatment of Minos also demonstrates once again that Cyril’s treatment of Minos is implicitly designed to demonstrate the explanatory capaciousness of his Christian narrative.

Πλεονεξία is one of Cyril’s favorite terms to describe the motivation or vicious disposition behind satanic and demonic despotism.<sup>57</sup> Frequently coupling it with language of “binding,” Cyril treats this “greed” as a constitutive characteristic of unjust rule. The corrosion of proper oversight began with Satan and the rebellious angels and spilled over into unjust human rule. For instance, elsewhere Cyril points out several

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<sup>56</sup> Cyril quotes from an otherwise lost portion of Callimachus’s *Aetia* (fr. 4 in Annette Harder’s edition: *Callimachus: Aetia* 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Broader reflection on πλεονεξία goes back at least as far as Aristotle, for whom it was a subspecies of injustice. See *Nicomachean Ethics* V.1–2 (1129a–1130b).

parallel features in the ministries of Christ and of Moses: Christ overthrew the oppression of Satan, who “tyrannized us out of πλεονεξίας and bound the human race under the yokes of sin.” Similarly, Moses had “freed those from the line of Israel who were oppressed with an unbearable slavery” in Egypt (8.9.1–10). At another place in *Against Julian* Cyril confirms that Pharaoh’s oppression of the Hebrews did, indeed, mirror Satan’s despotic rule over humanity: when he led them through the sea, says Cyril, Moses delivered the Hebrews from the πλεονεξίας of Pharaoh (6.8.8–12).<sup>58</sup> For another example: as we saw in Chapter 3, Cyril explains that the fallen angels who “‘did not preserve their origin’ . . . divided up those on earth among themselves.” He proceeds to explain that, when the word of God came to rectify this oppression, “we were freed from their πλεονεξίας” (4.9.7–13, 4.10.6). As for the loyal angels, Cyril suggests that God sends them to aid in liberating humans, “like a king who permits his noble supporters to fight against the barbarian advances and to drive πλεονεξίας away from those under his rule” (4.10.12–14).<sup>59</sup>

As these examples show, πλεονεξία isn’t simply “greed.” It also has a strong element of coercion, which explains its fitness to political contexts. Cyril brings that coercive edge into stark relief in *AJ* 8.47.13–31, where he explains why God did not reform human hearts by mere fiat. Had God done so, he explains, then resultant human good deeds would no longer be admirable—they would be the fruit not of a free will

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<sup>58</sup> For Satan as acting out of πλεονεξία, see also 6.16.10–21, where Christ endured the cross “so that he might drive away Satan from his πλεονεξίας against all.”

<sup>59</sup> See also 4.48.3–18, where Christ frees “those who had been seized from their [the demons’] πλεονεξίας,” and the “πλεονεξίας of the devil” is “destroyed.”

(γνώμης) but rather of “involuntary coercion” (ἀβουλήτου πλεονεξίας). For Cyril, πλεονεξία names an oppressive, self-serving drive. It is evident archetypally in Satan and the demons/angels, but it is also imitated throughout the earth by unjust human rulers. As we’ll see later in the chapter, Cyril suggests that Julian himself as emperor was caught up in this pattern of oppression.

With this broader background in mind, Cyril’s ascription of πλεονεξία to Minos—and twice within a short treatment, no less—takes on new significance. Minos was not simply an ambitious warlord, despite Julian’s glowing review. He is intelligible, Cyril suggests, as an ambitious warlord only against the backdrop of the Christian story—in this way, Cyril tries to show that his narrative can better account for Minos. It has a greater explanatory power, Cyril implies, because it provides texture and a moral vocabulary for Minos, who fits into a larger pattern and history of despotism. That history began, so the Christian narrative explains, with the rebellion against God in the spiritual realm. Minos was a coercive, greedy warlord just like the demons are coercive, greedy warlords. These dynamics show how, like Socrates, Plato, Numa, Cimon, and Aristeides, Minos too is an “episode” from Julian’s narrative whom Cyril can recast more plausibly as an “episode” in the Christian version.

As noted at the outset, Cyril does not comment on every character that Julian mentions. And he does comment on several characters that I haven’t covered: for example, Cyril turns several times to Asclepius—who, he points out, even by Julian’s

terms cannot be a great figure (since Zeus destroyed him with lightning).<sup>60</sup> But the foregoing should be adequate to illustrate how Cyril's engagement with Julian over various characters from history contributes to the larger conflict of narratives. Cyril is often distasteful in his attacks, as with Socrates and Minos; and he works hard to interpret them in ways foreign to their traditional interpretations, as with Plato and Numa. But his various treatments become coherently intelligible when we attend to the narrative conflict: he is consistently striving to demonstrate the superior explanatory power of the Christian narrative, in contrast to the patchy and dissatisfying explanations provided by Julian. How successful Cyril is judged to be at this endeavor will, of course, be tied to the traditioned criteria of the one judging. But that the disagreement over these characters occurs at the level of the traditions' bedrock narratives is clear.

### III.B *Paideia* and Culture

The first section of this chapter shows that one dimension of the narrative conflict between Julian and Cyril revolves around character-episodes. This next section moves to another feature of Julian's argument about gifts of the gods. I have categorized this conglomerate of gifts "intellectual superiority," though it might be better to think of it more broadly as "cultural superiority." Julian thinks that the consistent emergence throughout Hellenic history of exemplary characters, of new expansions in the Roman Empire, and more are all the result of an underlying cultural

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<sup>60</sup> See *AJ* 6.23.

engine, the component parts of which are themselves also “gifts of the gods.” These component parts include the branches of learning advanced within the Hellenic tradition.<sup>61</sup> But they include most centrally the classic texts of the Hellenic tradition and, more broadly, the formation that these texts can provide in a particular way of life. A man who “receives education (τὰς . . . παιδείας)” from the Hellenic texts, says Julian, becomes himself a “gift of the gods to men” (τῶν θεῶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δῶρον) (fr. 55.18).

In some ways, the following section is less straightforward than the preceding. The exemplary-character section considers material that is, on the very surface of the argument, full of “episodes” in a historical narrative. Unlike such material, much of Julian’s and Cyril’s arguments about cultural superiority and *paideia* are not, on their surface, directly arguments over how narrative “episodes” should be construed. As with the material I covered in Chapter 4, there are numerous argumentative layers which overlap within their arguments about education and culture. To see the narrative conflict as Cyril responds to Julian’s arguments about Hellenic cultural superiority and *paideia*, we will need to first attend to how the disputes run on the surface of the arguments, without reference to the narrative backdrop. Still, these

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<sup>61</sup> The following analysis in this chapter focuses on Julian’s and Cyril’s arguments about what we might categorize as the “humanistic” branches of learning. But Julian also thinks that the Hellenic tradition has a vastly superior scientific educational system, as fr. 38 makes clear: he lists astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, and music (the medieval quadrivium) as sciences (ἐπιστήμη) that the Hellenes perfected.

Cyril’s response in *AJ* 5.37–40 has been taken as evidence that he harbored “hostility to the liberal arts” (Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 241, note 30). But Cyril’s concern is not to denigrate such learning *simpliciter*. Rather, he argues that Julian has confusingly treated true philosophy (which consists in identification of a good life) with the difficult and tedious studies which themselves do not contribute to knowledge of a good life.

backdrops do play foundational roles in the arguments, particularly in the respective ways that they explain language: the origin of specific languages, the origin of *written* language, and the origin of the specific Hellenic texts. The place that these language-episodes have in Julian's and Cyril's narrative backdrops conditions the kind of arguments each interlocutor can advance.

### III.B.1 *Julian and Paideia*

Probably more so than with any of the textual material covered so far, Julian's and Cyril's brief comments about *paideia* are the mere tips of icebergs—tips which have much more inertia from their underwater mass than is evident in what emerges from the surface. But our way of measuring the complete inertia is through the tips, so with each of these we begin. I will quickly summarize AG fr. 55 before sizing up its full inertia and then repeating with Cyril's response in *AJ* 7.17–23.

At first glance, fr. 55 does not readily fit in the “gifts of the gods” category. Julian first appears simply irked at the encroachment of Christian intellectuals on his prized Hellenic texts. He asks exasperatedly, “Why do you nibble at the teachings (μαθημάτων) of the Hellenes, if indeed the reading of your scriptures is self-sufficient for you?<sup>62</sup> But it would be better for people to keep away from these than from the consumption of sacrificial offerings (ιεροθύτων).” Though certainly a real layer within Julian's critiques, we can leave aside his comments about the eating of meat that has

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<sup>62</sup> Julian probably means to evoke the old accusation (at least as old as Galen) that Christians are anti-intellectual and rely on blind faith. He sarcastically suggests that the mere *reading* (ἀνάγνωσις) of Scripture (or perhaps just *hearing* it read) is fully sufficient (ἀυτάρκης) for Christian formation. Such a position would clearly contrast to the hard-earned course of study (μαθήματα) of Hellenic *paideia*.

been offered in pagan ritual worship. It quickly becomes apparent throughout the rest of the fragment that Julian's main interest is to elucidate the proven potential of a course of education—of *paideia*—in Hellenic texts, and to do so by contrast to the worthlessness of Christian texts. Furthermore, he accuses classically educated Christians themselves of being fully aware of this disparity in the formative power of each canon of texts. Their awareness is proved, he implies, by the fact that they continue to study Hellenic literature: why would Christians continue to study it, Julian wonders, unless they realize that “through [Hellenic] teachings, every noble being which nature has brought forth among you has shrank back from godlessness (ἀθεότητος)?”<sup>63</sup> Why devote such time and energy to studying Homer and Hesiod, Herodotus and Thucydides, unless Christians are fully aware that “to whatever extent there is even a small share of cleverness [in someone], that quickly does it happen that he flees from the godlessness (ἀθεότητος)” among Christians? (fr. 55.2–11). Julian detects a performative contradiction among those Christians who *speak* as if their Scriptures were full of truth—fully adequate to form true and holy lives—but who continue to act as if a Hellenic course of study is more than worth the demanding labors. Julian's repetition of the charge of “godlessness” (ἀθεότης) is noteworthy, too—contrary to Christian claims to have direct access to the true God, *their* texts advance the real “atheism” by denying the true gods.

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<sup>63</sup> Julian, whose education in the classical tradition—which eventually led to his conversion—was overseen by bishops of the church, surely has himself in mind with this comment. He is the example par excellence of how Hellenic education will cause a noble-natured person to withdraw from Christian godlessness.

Alternatively, the Hellenic texts contain the real path of piety. Furthermore, these texts—themselves given from the gods, as we’ll see momentarily—are the cultural engine that prepares men for greatness and, as already noted, that transforms such men into “gifts of the gods.” Julian proposes a thought experiment to make his point: Christians should take some of their children and educate them in the Christian texts *only*. “And should they appear superior to slaves when they mature to manhood,” he says, “consider me foolish.” He is not proposing an actual experiment which would take decades to run, of course. Julian, who had studied in Athens with the likes of Gregory and Basil from prominent Christian families of Cappadocia, implies that Christians of means have *already* voted with their feet, so to speak—by continuing to send their children to the centers of Hellenic *paideia* they have already refused to run the experiment, because they know how it will end. Julian detects a great duplicity when such Christians, who have continued to patronize Hellenic learning, “attribute (ἀποδίδοτε) to Satan and those who worship Satan those [words] by which it is possible to obtain courage, prudence, justice (ἀνδρείαν, φρόνησιν, δικαιοσύνην)” (fr. 55.21–29). They *attribute* Hellenic literature to Satan, that is, though they *act* as if these texts are indispensable for a successful life.

The inertia underneath Julian’s brief argument in fr. 55 can be better measured with reference to his imperial legislation on teachers. A letter written shortly after his infamous edict of June 17<sup>th</sup>, 362 bears striking affinities with the argument in fr. 55, and together this edict and letter clearly illustrates the logic behind Julian’s “unambiguous” regard for the various features of Hellenism as, in the words of Polymnia Athanassiadi-

Fowden, a profound “unity.”<sup>64</sup> It’s not clear from *Against Julian* if Cyril knew the specific language of Julian’s edict and explanatory letter, but it is clear from his responses in *Against Julian* that he was reacting against the wider cultural argument that Julian’s law and letter together advance.

The text of Julian’s official edict is innocuous enough. It insists that “Masters of studies and teachers must excel first in character, then in eloquence.”<sup>65</sup> Based on this standard, Julian then institutes a new process for the appointment of teachers at imperially sponsored schools: new teachers must be approved by a variety of governing bodies, starting with the local senate and theoretically extending to the emperor himself. Julian, it seems, wanted a veto option as part of the normal appointment process, purportedly to verify the character of the appointees. In his explanatory letter written shortly thereafter, Julian’s partisan purposes quickly become evident. “Right *paideia*” (Παιδείαν ὀρθήν), he begins in this letter, “is something we know to be not an ornate harmoniousness in speeches and language, but it belongs to an intellect which has a healthy disposition of mind, and which has true opinions about both good and evil, and lovely and wretched things.”<sup>66</sup> Such a requirement, Julian then insists, means that “one who believes one thing and teaches his disciples another” is disqualified—one

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<sup>64</sup> Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> The Latin of the text is preserved in the *Theodosian Code* 13.3.5. This translation is from Clyde Pharr, Theresa Sherrer Davidson, and Mary Brown Pharr, eds., *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952), 388.

<sup>66</sup> *Ep.* 61 c in the edition of Joseph Bidez, ed., *L'Empereur Julien, Œuvres Complètes*, 2nd ed., vol. 1.2, 2 vols., Collection Des Universités de France (Paris: Société d'édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 1960); it is *Letter* 36 (with English translation) in Wilmer Cave Wright, trans., *The Works of Emperor Julian, Volume III*, The Loeb Classical Library 157 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923).

“fails in *paideia* to the very extent that he fails to be a man of integrity (χρηστός ἀνὴρ).” As Julian elaborates on the allusive language, it slowly become clear who are the theretofore unnamed “hucksters” (καπήλων)—a term he would later use for Christians in *Against the Galileans* (fr. 58.26)—that the opening passages of the letter attacks.<sup>67</sup> They are Christians who, despite their doctrinal claims, still “become exegetes of the ancient writings” and teach at schools in the empire. Julian exposes in this letter the same incongruity that he embellishes in fr. 55 of *Against the Galileans*. He says,

Did the gods not lead Homer and also Hesiod, and Demosthenes and also Herodotus and Thucydides and Isocrates and Lysias into all *paideia*? Did not some of them regard themselves as the priests of Hermes, and others of the Muses? I think it grossly out of line (ἄτοπον) for the interpreters of their material to dishonor the gods who are honored by it.

Julian is clear that Christian *students* can still attend schools: why should “children still ignorant” be kept away from a proper education? But would-be Christian *teachers*—men who object to the way of life that has been cultivated by and steeped in the classical Hellenic texts for centuries—can no longer hold positions that carry the responsibility of teaching those texts. Julian understands those texts to teach a life of piety towards the gods, and so he thinks that Christians can only read them entirely against the grain or display flagrant hypocrisy in teaching piety towards the very gods they otherwise vehemently denounce.

Better than any of Julian’s other modern interpreters, Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden has distilled the impetus behind Julian’s actions and arguments about *paideia*.

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<sup>67</sup> Later in the letter Julian substantiates this claim by suggesting that Christian instructors who teach what they don’t believe must do so out of base, financial motives.

She suggests that a simple question lay at the heart of his imperial project of reform, evidenced most clearly by his education policy. As mentioned above, Julian answers that question—Is Hellenism a unity or diversity?—with a resounding “unity.” The many pieces of the literary tradition that historically shaped the great men of Rome were inseparable from the defining cultural and religious practices of the empire. To study the words of the texts in the right way was to conform to the kind of life they had always fostered. Julian fundamentally objected to the Christian argument that “the spirit of Hellenism had to go, but the letter was to be retained,” as Athanassiadi-Fowden aptly summarizes.<sup>68</sup> The letter of Hellenism wasn’t intelligible to Julian as anything other than the embodiment of the spirit of Hellenism. The letter and spirit together called for a way of life; that call could be rejected, or accepted, but it couldn’t be simply bypassed.

The claim that Athanassiadi-Fowden makes for Julian’s Hellenism is perhaps difficult to imagine in our modern world because his kind of Hellenism is not a live option—it has few (if any) visible, compelling adherents advancing it as a tradition of life and thought.<sup>69</sup> But Julian’s defensive comments about the Hellenic corpus resonate,

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<sup>68</sup> *Julian and Hellenism*, 3. Commenting on the trend of former “barbarians” beginning to learn Greek, Athanassiadi-Fowden aptly channels Julian’s mindset by asking, “Is it possible to learn a foreign language without acquiring another personality in the process?” This is Julian’s question: can one become a proper speaker of the rich Greek language without understanding and enacting something of the driving dynamism of the language? And isn’t that dynamism tied to the kinds of lives that classic Greek-speakers lived? Can one really “go on,” in the Wittgensteinian sense, in the Hellenic language without inhabiting a Hellenic life?

<sup>69</sup> Though, it’s worth noting that Athanassiadi-Fowden does think Julian’s version of Hellenism survived underground throughout Byzantine history and is, in principle, still available for revitalization: “Condemned by Church and State alike, often persecuted, the spiritual progeny of Julian somehow made

*mutatis mutandis*, with the still-quite-live ways that Christians sometimes defend a privileged role in interpreting biblical texts—with good reason has the role of classical texts in the Hellenic tradition been compared to that of the Bible in the Christian tradition.<sup>70</sup> The German biblical theologian Adolf Schlatter, for example, wrote that “The word with which the New Testament confronts us intends to be believed, and so rules out once and for all any sort of neutral treatment. As soon as the historian sets aside or brackets the question of faith, he is making his concern with the New Testament and his presentation of it into a radical and total polemic against it.”<sup>71</sup> For Julian as for Schlatter, authoritative religious texts call for submission or belief, and to study the texts while attempting to brush off this call amounts to an attack on the texts. Henri Marrou’s classic formulation about *paideia* summarizes Julian’s stance well: for some, *paideia* came to represent a merging of religion culture and was, he says, itself “a thing divine—a heavenly game, a nobility of soul;” *paideia* “eventually became for many the equivalent of a religion.”<sup>72</sup> An attempt to disentangle the textual material of

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its difficult way through Byzantium to modern times; and perhaps, so long as there are men able to combine an austere religious sense with the cult of beauty, the indignant tones of the edict on education may yet continue to find a sympathetic audience” (12). For a more extensive and detailed argument for the long-term survival of Hellenism as a strong tradition, see Niketas Siniouoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> See Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49–75.

<sup>71</sup> Adolf Schlatter, “The Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics,” in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series 25 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 122.

<sup>72</sup> Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 98–99, 101.

*paideia* from the world it shapes is, thinks Julian, illegitimate and dangerous. If Christians want to be educated, they should find a way to do so with “Matthew and Luke,” he says in the letter, and not with texts whose contents they reject.

One final element of Julian’s notion of Hellenic cultural superiority as a gift of the gods needs emphasizing. Julian himself does not linger on this element, but Cyril will center it in his reexplanation of Hellenic *paideia*. As the block quote above from Julian’s letter discloses, Julian thought of the texts of the Hellenic canon as somehow directly given by the gods. He does not provide a theory for the process of this gifts (he at least gives nowhere near the theoretical detail or clarity that Christians provide in doctrines of inspiration for the Bible or that Muslims provide for their explanation of the Quran’s bestowal). But Homer’s *Iliad* and Demosthenes’s *On the Crown* have divine provenience, regardless the lack of detail Julian provides about it. According to Athanassiadi-Fowden, Julian’s comments about the gods “leading . . . into all *paideia*” exemplify the belief in some fourth-century circles “that all Greek culture was literally a product of divine inspiration and, therefore, of a sacred character.”<sup>73</sup> When Cyril sets about dismantling this characterization of Hellenic texts and culture, his project will rest on an alternative account of the origins of texts and languages.

### III.B.2 *Cyril and Paideia: Against Julian 7.17-23*

This return to Julian’s texts has elucidated the intellectual and cultural superiority that Julian sees in the Hellenic tradition. It has furthermore elucidated how,

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<sup>73</sup> Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism*, 8.

for Julian, the various component pieces that provide and embody that superiority are a collective gift from the gods. Cyril's response is, at one level, full of lengthy counter-assertions: Christian Scripture *can* form admirable lives, he counter-claims; Christians *can* coherently pick and choose what they like from Hellenic literature, he insists. His response will also agree Julian on certain matters: for example, that the Greek/Hellenic language has the greatest aesthetic merit. But a deeper, conflicting vision lies underneath the mere assertions and counter-assertions.

To eventually get to the narrative-conflict dimension of this argument over culture and *paideia*, it will be helpful to first summarize Cyril's several points. After that, we can attend to the larger framework that enables and governs his varied responses. Why does he agree with Julian on some points? On what grounds does he agree? And when he disagrees, what *kind* of assumptions are latent as he articulates the disagreement? By attending to these layers of the argument we will be able to see how an essential dimension of Cyril's argument is a conflict of narratives. This time the contested "episode" is language—and, more broadly, *paideia* itself.

The nine pages of Cyril's response to Julian's fr. 55 has roughly four sections. The material in each section overlaps, but the four topics that loosely hang together are: first, five pages comparing the relevant features of the Bible and of the Hellenic canon (7.17–20); second, one and a half pages explaining Christian practices regarding idol-meat and how that compares to study of Hellenic texts (7.21); third, one and a half pages on the benefits and origin of the Hellenic/Greek language (7.22); and, fourth, one

concluding page which comments on Julian's thought experiment with children and which summarizes the place of Hellenic *paideia* in a Christian life.

From the outset, Cyril takes the main thrust of Julian's comments to be about texts: knowing how to think about the biblical corpus, on the one hand, and about the Hellenic corpus, on the other hand, is the way to disentangle Julian's misguided accusations. Cyril begins with the biblical corpus by insisting that "the divine scripture is sufficient for the requisite demonstration that the wise and excellent ones who have been trained in it also have fully adequate intelligence. And for this purpose," he goes on, "we have no need whatsoever for external teachers" (7.17.4–8). Cyril belabors this point throughout his response, suggesting that he took Julian's most offensive claim to be that the words of Scripture were incapable of making anyone "wiser" or "more courageous" or generally "improved" (οὐδὲ ἀνδρειότερος οὐδ' ἑαυτοῦ κρείττων) (fr. 55.27–27). Cyril insists to the contrary: Scripture can produce holy living. He argues throughout *Against Julian* (not just in 7.17–23) that pious living in accord with true dogma is the highest possible objective; furthermore, he argues throughout that Julian and his Hellenic masters regularly and wrongly elevate abstruse speculation over formation in holy living. In *AJ* 5.36–40, for example, Cyril addresses another of Julian's claims about divinely-gifted intellectual superiority—namely that the gods granted to the Hellenes disproportionately excelling advancements in various scientific branches of learning (fr. 38). Cyril responds there that Julian was "entirely ignorant about what things one *should* rightly hold in high esteem"—centrally right opinion about God and an ability to advance others in virtue (5.37.2–17).

As for the Hellenic corpus, Cyril explains that Christians survey these texts, too. He articulates his rationale with surprising casualness, given its universal scope: “But since it is sweet (γλυκὺ) to know everything, for this reason we quite understandably also examine the Hellenes’ opinions, which they have gathered about all topics and, above all others, about God” (7.17.8–11). In response to Julian’s attempt to restrict Christian study properly to their own sacred texts, Cyril treats the appropriate domain of Christian inquiry as, in principle, unlimited, including the Hellenic texts. He insists, though, that what Christians find when they peruse the Hellenic corpus is a “pretext for laughter” (γέλωτος . . . ἀφορμὴν)—those texts honor “innumerable gods” (really, he clarifies, “impure demons”), which are depicted sometimes as humans, sometimes as wild animals, as birds and as fish. Not even counting the content that would “straightway fill [one’s] mind with shame and impurity” from the mere hearing of it, says Cyril, the Hellenic texts “confuses all things above and below” (ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὰ πάντα συγχέοντες) (7.17.11–24).<sup>74</sup>

In contrast to this theologically embarrassing content, Cyril dwells on the sublime teaching of Christian Scripture (7.18) before considering another feature of the Old Testament: its authorship, and what one of its authors contributed to language itself. The prophets, he says, may have been uneducated (though they still accomplished “inexplicable signs”), but *Moses* was “remarkably skilled with words

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<sup>74</sup> Even if Cyril’s likely allusion to Euripides’ *Bacchae* 349 in this final phrase (they “confuse all things above and below”) is an unconscious insertion by one who is himself steeped in the Hellenic texts, it still aptly illustrates his concluding claim that Christians “borrow the words of the Hellenes “ and “lead Attic to the profession of pious dogmas” (7.23.12–16).

(λόγους) and with theories (θεωρίας),” even if he was a “Hebrew in language” (τὴν γλῶσσαν Ἑβραϊός) (7.19.6–8). Cyril will later clarify that this comment about Moses’s Hebrew language is a qualified concession—admittedly, Hebrew is linguistically blasé, but this fact actually suited Moses’s purposes of crafting a style that was accessible to all (7.20.1–7).<sup>75</sup> But Cyril is also interested in Moses’s contribution to *language*. Drawing on an apologetic trope going back at least to Hellenistic Judaism, Cyril suggests that Moses invented written language.<sup>76</sup> According to this tradition, Moses introduced writing to the Jews; and, later, the Jews’ neighboring Phoenicians picked up the practice from them; finally, Cadmus learned the conventions of writing from them and, as was commonly acknowledged, introduced written language to Greece. Cyril makes his point clearly: “seeing that the very science (ἐπιστήμη) of the first letters came from the Hebrews to the Greeks, when Cadmus was in their midst, let Julian lower his eyebrows” (7.19.18–21).<sup>77</sup> The texts that Julian scorns Christians for “nibbling at” couldn’t have existed *as texts* were it not for Moses.

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<sup>75</sup> Even though Cyril is ostensibly making an excuse for Moses’s low style, he may also intend to subtly compliment Moses’s rhetorical savvy. See Michael Schramm’s comments on the classical rhetorical theory behind Cyril’s praise of Moses for his simple, clear style and thus broad appeal, in “Kyrills Argumentationsstrategien in *Contra Iulianum*,” in *Interreligiöse Konflikte im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert: Julian “Contra Galilaeos” - Kyrill “Contra Iulianum*,” ed. Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich and Stefan Rebenich, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 181 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 139.

<sup>76</sup> The argument is at least as old as Eupolemus in the second century BCE—though he certainly built on Herodotus’s genealogy of writing. For more information, see Droge, *Homer or Moses?*, 13–19; Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, *Hellenistic Culture and Society* 30 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 153–60.

<sup>77</sup> That Cyril calls the practice of writing an ἐπιστήμη is also noteworthy, given his argument with Julian in *AJ* 5.36–40 over Julian’s claim that the gods gave the Hellenic tradition advancement in several ἐπίστημαι.

As a classically educated bishop, Cyril unsurprisingly affirms value in the Greek language—when in its proper place. He concedes to an imagined interlocutor that, in contrast to Scripture, the Hellenic material “sounds lovely and is rich in charm and, in addition to this, melodious.” But more important is that this admirable quality nevertheless “seems to have come about in tandem with the expulsion of what is fitting and to have strayed from the truth” (7.20.2–4, 8–11). Given the priority of truth and right living, one trained in Scripture and its “correct doctrine” wins out over the correct “pronunciation of words” that Hellenic training offers, Cyril says (7.20.15–16). He concludes with an analogy drawn from honey: given the option between an ornate, golden cup filled with poison and a simple cup filled with honey, any wise person will prefer the healthy content even if the vessel that holds it is unimpressive to the eye (7.20.30–36).<sup>78</sup>

Cyril’s second set of comments responds to Julian’s provocation about Christian policies around food derived from sacrificial rituals. We need not explore them in detail, other than to note that Cyril takes the opportunity, again, to emphasize that the gods associated with temple idols and sacrifices are merely what crazed people have chosen to *call* gods (7.21.11–14). After explaining his Christian policy (drawing largely on Paul’s comments in I Cor. 8), Cyril reemphasizes the principles undergirding

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<sup>78</sup> Cyril’s analogy about the “labor of bees” (τὸν τῶν μελισσῶν . . . πόνον)—honey—would likely have triggered several associations with educated readers (7.20.32–33). For further context on the place of bees in the ancient imagination, see W. Telfer, “‘Bees’ in Clement of Alexandria,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 28 (January 1, 1927): 167–78.

Christian engagement with Hellenic learning: Christians who “scrutinize<sup>79</sup> the writings of the Greeks do praise the composition of the texts and the rhythmic quality of the words—but we,” he says, “renounce the dogmas in them and rather cling to the holy scriptures” (7.21.29–33).

As he enters the third section of his response to Julian’s arguments in fr. 55, Cyril next returns to the topic of the origins of languages. His comments here are the strongest evidence yet that he is responding to the larger cultural challenge behind Julian’s argument and not just to Julian’s narrow claims in AG fr. 55. Cyril points out that Christians know that “Greek discourse is not at all an invention of religion (εὔρημα . . . θρησκείας).” He insists, too, that the “elite Hellenes thought themselves to be the inventors of beautiful language (εὔρεται . . . τῆς καλλιπείας).”<sup>80</sup> Cyril’s citation and explanation of Psalm 11(12):4–5 makes clear that he is, in fact, focused on the idea of Hellenic self-invention of language. Cyril comments that “The blessed David curses them when he says, *May the lord destroy all deceitful lips and those who speak in a boastful tongue, ‘We will exalt our tongue, our lips [are] ours’*; that is to say,” Cyril paraphrases, “we have become inventors of a beautiful language (εὔρεται . . . τῆς καλλιπείας)” (7.22.7, 14–18).

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<sup>79</sup> Cyril’s lexical choice of “περιεργαζόμενοι” might indicate that he thinks that Christian students of Hellenic learning—himself included—are always at risk of “overdoing” their attention to non-biblical texts.

<sup>80</sup> Similarly, in the section’s penultimate sentence, Cyril repeats the insistence that “no one should claim that [the Greek language] was a discovery (εὔρημα) of the superstition of the Hellenes” (7.23.17–18).

Julian, of course, made no claims about the origin of language or *paideia* in fr. 55 (his claim that the gods led Homer, Hesiod, etc. “into all *paideia*” is from the letter explaining his education edict, of which Cyril shows no explicit awareness). But Athanassiadi-Fowden’s claim that Julian provides an example of a larger fourth-century notion “that all Greek culture was literally a product of divine inspiration” explains why Cyril would include explicit denials (several times) to a proposition that Julian had not advanced. For this notion of the origin of Hellenic language and culture, Cyril also has a counter-explanation: Greek, he says, “was just one of the languages that, by the ineffable power of God, was parceled out” at Babel (7.22.9–11). All the languages are thus, as Cyril says, “given by God” (θεόσδοτοι) (7.22.19; he uses θεόσδοτος also at 7.23.16).

For Cyril, Hellenic language and culture—bound in a tight “unity” in Julian’s imagination—are and *must be* separable. Scripture, Cyril concludes, provides Christians with “every manner of virtue.” But Christians have still often and legitimately “borrowed the words (λόγους) of the Hellenes, such that,” Cyril explains, “we make use of them as a kind of preparatory exercise (προγύμνασμα) for the true *paideia* (τῆς ἀληθοῦς παιδείας).” Julian must have rolled over in his grave when Cyril penned this and the following explanation that Christians thereby “lead Attic to the articulation of pious dogmas” (7.23.11–18). The *paideia* that Marrou characterized (aptly for Julian, if not for all of his contemporary elites) as “a heavenly game, a nobility of soul” and “the equivalent of a religion,” Cyril downgraded to a mere set of προγυμνάσματα—introductory exercises that could assist *real* learning but which were never meant to be

components of the main event itself.<sup>81</sup> Cyril's conclusion to *AJ* 7.17–23 show that he was fully aware of how Julian thought about the “episode” of cultural and intellectual superiority—i.e., he thought of this superiority as evidence for his Hellenic narrative, in which the gods bestowed various gifts on the nations and especially on the Hellenes. Cyril reconstrues Julian's position that the many gods bestowed the best of intelligence and language on the Hellenes: his final word is that, “of both intelligence and of words [God] is the giver (καὶ νοῦ καὶ λόγων ἐστὶ δοτήρ).” The Christian God, as understood in the Christian narrative, is the source of the Attic of *paideia*.

The subordination of Hellenic *paideia* to the “true *paideia*” was not the only option of response available to Christians after Julian laid down his clear challenge in the 360s. Cyril was not the first to respond to Julian's challenge by claiming that Christians can legitimately study Hellenic literature. That honor likely belongs to Gregory of Nazianzus, whose *Orations* 4 and 5, written shortly after Julian's death, insist that Hellenes like Julian have no exclusive right to Hellenic λόγοι.<sup>82</sup> But, as Frances Young has observed, there was another Christian option for responding to Julian's education policy. The historians Socrates and Sozomen both record that the bishop Apollinarius and his father rewrote and paraphrased the Bible in a variety of classical literary forms, implicitly conceding Julian's point that one should learn language and culture from texts that one believes to be true. Young sees between this response and

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<sup>81</sup> For the role of προγύμνασμα in ancient education, see Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 221–30.

<sup>82</sup> See Gregory's *Or.* 4.100–107

Gregory's insistence that Hellenic literature "is the rightful resource of Christians" as illustrating a shift among Christians from a "confrontation" to an "interpenetration" of cultures. This is certainly correct, as long as "interpenetration" isn't necessarily thought of as a syncretistic blending.<sup>83</sup> As is clear in the response of Cyril—who was probably both a product of this shift and helped to further solidify it—the interpenetration is a subordinating one, wherein the norms of one tradition are used to reconfigure (rather than reject) the material of the other.

Where, in this conflict over culture, is the narrative conflict? These disagreements in *Against Julian* 7.17–23 illustrate how labeling the conflict between Julian and Cyril as "narrative conflict" is not to reduce every argument to an explicit disagreement over how to construe various narrative episodes. But here as elsewhere throughout *Against Julian* it is apparent how the largely-implicit competing narrative backdrops are tied up in the explicit arguments—and even how Cyril's narrative backdrop enables part of his argument.

The principal cluster of "episodes" that are construed differently in Cyril's Christian and Julian's Hellenic narrative revolve around language—the origin and history of distinct, different languages; the practice of putting language into writing; and specific, written texts. In other words, Cyril advances his culture-subordinating

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<sup>83</sup> Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 69–75, quotation at 75. Young suggests that in this shift, the "interpenetration . . . superficially gainsaid, yet largely effected, the supersession which the earlier claims had implied" (75).

arguments by historicizing language comprehensively and in a manner enabled by his Christian narrative.

First, Cyril returns to the Genesis 11 story of Babel to explain the origin of Attic Greek. Chapter 4 noted that Cyril regards the separating of the languages as a mercy from God, who thereby saved humanity from purposeless toil constructing a flood-proof tower for another flood that was never coming. Cyril's brief comments in *AJ* 7.22—to the effect that Attic was simply one (though the most beautiful one) of the languages bestowed on humans at Babel—adds another dimension to this positive appraisal of the new polyglossia. Attic is, indeed, a gift from the divine, but it is a gift from the Christians' God. Though Christians affirm its value as an aesthetically marvelous language, they also limit that value to the aesthetic realm. Stripped of the back-story that Julian presumes for Attic—wherein the gods imparted *paideia* in some mythical past to Hellenes as part of their overall status as best and most-favored of the nations—Attic becomes part of the universe of languages that God bestowed on humans. As such, it also becomes an entirely appropriate means of the “articulation of pious dogmas” (7.23.15). In this way the historical origin of the language at Babel aids Cyril's argument that Christians can rightly study it. As far as I know, Cyril was the first Christian to historicize language in this way—at the very least, he was the first to do so by linking it to the story of the multiplication of languages at Babel.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See Boulnois's note “La construction de la tour de Babel et le déluge” in *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien, Tome II*, 578–80.

Second, Cyril's explanation of the origin of *writing* is not as original, but it is also central in Cyril's waging of narrative conflict. To the haughty assertion of Hellenic educational and intellectual superiority, Cyril brings out another historical claim to deflate Julian's account: Hellenic education depends absolutely on methods introduced by God's prophet, Moses. The practice of writing—a *sine qua non* of Hellenic education—was invented by Moses, and only much later migrated to the Hellenes. How could *paideia* be a gift of the gods (and a gift which contributed to their general superiority to other nations) if a fundamental prerequisite of *paideia* (i.e., writing) came directly from a nation that is, by Julian's accounting, vastly inferior to the Hellenic people?

Finally, as Cyril does in greater detail elsewhere in *Against Julian*, he invokes an alternative explanation for the historical origin of the specific Hellenic texts that Julian regards as the repository of the Hellenic way of life. Within *AJ* 7.17–23, the explanation for the origin of classic Hellenic texts is indirect: for example, Cyril notes that when Christians survey Hellenic texts (because “it is sweet to know everything”) they discover Hellenic “theologians who have written about their gods the sort of things such that someone, having merely *heard* [what was written], would immediately become full in their mind with shamefulness” (7.17.22–25). He doubtlessly refers to the Hellenic myths, like those Julian owned up to in fr. 4. Whereas Cyril has some patience with the philosophical texts of Plato or Porphyry, the mythical texts which portray Kronos eating his children or Zeus sleeping with his mother and his daughter (see fr. 4) are judged to be full of impiety. As interpreters of Cyril, we don't have to extend his comments too far to infer that he thinks that these texts written “about their gods”

were texts whose composition was inspired by those gods, who are actually wicked demons.

Cyril does not center any of these three “episodes” (the origin of Attic, the Hellenic source of written language, and the origin of Hellenic texts) in his response to Julian’s arguments. But as he presents an alternative account of how Christians can and should relate to Hellenic literature, each of these linguistic episodes enable the arguments. Cyril’s narrative backdrop to the Attic language, in other words, works as part of the implicit foundation that lets Cyril’s arguments about Christians and *paideia* go to work. Contrary to Julian’s notion of *paideia* and language—a notion wherein both were granted to the Hellenes by the gods on their favored nation—Attic itself was a gift of beautiful language at Babel, though it was put to use expressing wicked tales under the influence of demonic actors. Once again, we see that Cyril’s response treats a cluster of episodes that Julian interpreted as gifts of the Hellenic gods as reconstrued episodes within a different, Christian narrative.

### III.C Cyril and Political Dominion

The final category in which I have grouped several of Julian’s purported gifts from the gods is political dominion. In Julian’s master narrative, the entire cosmos has an orderly arrangement wherein a densely packed hierarchy of divine beings oversees the many nations and affairs of the earth. The greater nations are such because they have greater divinities as patrons and governors; lesser nations have lesser divinities. In tracing several categories of gifts from these greater divinities to the (thereby greater) Hellenic people we’ve already seen strands of what is, for Julian, a culmination

of the gifts: political dominion. People like Minos and Numa were exemplary characters who were given by the gods and who also laid fundamental building blocks of the future empire; Hellenic texts and *paideia* is the cultural engine that continues to fashion the men who will uphold and further the Hellenic order.

In this final category of gifts, we will see again how Cyril's various responses to specific arguments and provocations reveal that, at a fundamental level, the disagreements between him and Julian are further, specific instances of a comprehensive conflict between the background narratives to their traditions and ways of reasoning. We saw earlier how the very terms that Cyril uses to re-evaluate Julian's exemplary characters of Socrates and Plato presumed a different master narrative about what kind of things humans are and what has gone wrong with the world; similarly, the very standards that Cyril appealed to for his reconstrual of classical education in Hellenic texts presumes a different master narrative that explains where all language came from and to what purposes they were given. In the same way, Cyril's responses to Julian about geopolitical history draw from a rival narrative with alternative ways of conceiving relations between peoples and of evaluating the rise and fall of nations.

Before moving to Cyril's arguments, I will first briefly recap the primary features of Julian's arguments about Roman political dominance. This will prepare for a summary of Cyril's responses and, finally, analysis of how the conflict of narratives lie in the background of the particular arguments that Julian and Cyril advance.

### III.C.1 *Julian and Politics Review*

At the beginning of this chapter I examined in moderate detail the two clusters of fragments from *Against the Galileans* that advance Julian's arguments about Roman political and military superiority. Those clusters focus on the history of Rome (and of Israel), highlighting the seemingly inevitable rise to world dominance for one and the equally inevitable and enduring subservience of the other. They also focus thematically on political dominance and political subservience; the second cluster particularly illustrates how, in Julian's way of thinking, political dominance reflects greater divine favor and subservience, less favor.

After enumerating several of the Hellenic accomplishments in sciences (fr. 38) and several representative characters in philosophy, law, the arts, and the military (fr. 39), Julian begins his history of the Roman Empire—stretching from the era of Minos and Perseus through the time of Romulus and Numa and extending to the present. The fact that this covers only three fragments of *Against the Galileans* might undersell the weight that Julian placed on this history. Cyril is clear that he did not preserve many of the, in his words, “wide sea of tales (διηγημάτων)” that Julian narrates after his comments about Minos (*AJ* 6.11.3–4). Julian's original history of the early foundations of Rome likely extended to several times the length of what Cyril preserved. For Julian, this history substantiates the general contours of his narrative by illustrating how the consistent work of the most powerful gods is evident in the long history of the most powerful nation. He juxtaposes this history to the Jewish history, which similarly substantiates his narrative, though now by illustrating how the consistent work of a less powerful god is evident in the long history of a less impressive nation.

Julian clearly respects Abraham for his theurgic knowledge (as is evident later, in frs. 87–88). But as for political matters, the constant wanderings and alien status of Abraham and his descendants (see fr. 49) make clear to Julian that, from the outset, the Jewish nation was never going to achieve lasting greatness. As I recounted above, Julian quickly sketches the relevant contours of Jewish history, noting that they have always been subservient—the only exception being a brief period when they had kings, though (in another display of his familiarity with the Bible) Julian notes that their god was *opposed* their having a king and being self-ruled. This allusion to I Samuel 8 reveals from another angle how Julian thinks of the geopolitical ordering of nations as basically static, tied to the governance of the ruling gods.<sup>85</sup> The Jews’ god is a relatively minor god, who knows its place in the divine hierarchy. It’s not too big of a jump to infer from Julian’s comments that this is why that god opposed the Jewish monarchy—knowing its place in the divine hierarchy, it also knew that self-rule was not fitting for the Jewish nation; though this god consented to monarchy, it also (in Julian’s words) “foretold that they would be poorly ruled (φαύλως βασιλευθήσονται)” (fr. 49.16). Some nations, it seems, just aren’t meant to rule themselves.

As Julian sees it, this god’s prediction turned out to be true, since after a scant few centuries of self-rule the Jews “became subject (ἐδούλευσαν) to the Medes, later the Persians, and now to us ourselves” (fr. 49.18–19). The causality at work from the

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<sup>85</sup> This allusion also subtly displays another way that Julian shows his account as able to make sense of the biblical data—the Bible seems to confirm his corresponding hierarchies of ruling divinities and ruled nations, since Israel’s only era when they weren’t subservient was an era of brief *rebellion* from their (minor) god, who didn’t want them to have a king.

divine realm is definitive for the role of nations, thinks Julian—and, conversely, the status of nations throughout history sheds light on the ordering of the powers of the divine realm. Roman rise is just as reflective of their specific, divine patronage as Jewish subservience is of theirs. Of note, too, in Julian's arguments is that he folds Jesus into the pattern of Jewish subservience. Cyril will build part of his response around this argument which is otherwise secondary within Julian's argument. Though Julian puts off the full argument until "a little later" (an argument which is no longer extant), he simply points out that Jesus, too, was "one of the subjects (ὑπηκόων) of Caesar" (fr. 50.3). Cyril will infer him as suggesting that no political *subject* could also accomplish worthwhile feats—an inference that may not be fully warranted, even if it is plausibly drawn. Whatever the case, Julian's passing comment about Jesus's political subjection certainly reflects his sense that the grain of the universe is such that one's political status is highly reflective of something like one's ontological status in the great hierarchy of reality.

Julian's arguments about political arrangements culminate in an exasperated pronouncement of the madness of Christians. Anyone with any sense, he insists, would choose a tradition which has been politically "free continuously and has ruled the whole sea and earth over two thousand whole years" over a tradition which has almost always been "subservient and lives under the command of others." The driving plot behind the intelligibility of the cosmos is, thinks Julian, evident in long-term political developments. To ignore those developments, as Julian thinks Christians have done, is to be ἀνάσθητος—unable to perceive what is at work in the cosmos (fr. 51.5–10).

### III.C.2 *Cyril and the Fate of Nations*

As Cyril responds piecemeal throughout the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh books of *Against Julian*, he does not dispute the historical data of Julian's arguments. For Cyril as much as for Julian, the Roman Empire has long ruled most of the known world, and the Jewish nation has been politically subjected to others. As delimited episodes, these features remain stable in their transplantation into a different narrative home. Cyril does not dispute that Caesars have dominated, politically or that Abraham and his heirs have not. But the status of nations in history and the human relation of dominance each play rather different roles in Cyril's construal. For Julian, political power and dominance are very close to the main plot of his tradition's constitutive narrative. For Cyril, as we'll now see, these episodes play only secondary roles, the importance of which is normed by the main, Christian plot.

We first survey several of Cyril's comments about the historical status of Rome and of Israel and then about dominion and subservience in general. He himself does not organize his responses in this way—rather, he responds by commenting almost slavishly on each point that he sees raised in Julian's argument. And since he thinks Julian's arguments to be incoherent at the macro level, his one-by-one responses don't build a single argument in response. Part of the value of my analysis will be (as in Chapter 4) to show how Cyril's various arguments and argumentative layers nonetheless hold together. By attending to the narrative framework out of which Cyril works to craft particular responses, we will be able to see a coherent task of

demonstrating the superiority of an alternative narrative—one which explains Julian’s central “episodes” in a rather different manner.

### III.C.2.i Israel and Rome

We saw earlier in *AJ* 6.10 that Minos, one of Rome’s legendary forebears, was driven by *πλεονεξία*, a kind of domineering greed. In this same passage Cyril also comments on the political character of Israel as a contrast to Minos’s greed. When they were ruled through Moses’s laws, they became wise and righteous, and “they did not want to manage or direct the affairs of others, and they did not take up arms against far off cities or places. Rather, they preferred to remain in their homeland, preserving their own [polis] and country” (6.10.14–19). In this comparison from ancient times, Cyril interprets national expansion or equilibrium as evidence of the vice and virtue of Rome and Israel, respectively—not as evidence of the divine hierarchies to which each country is linked. The same national episodes are still in his account, but they illustrate and support different themes.

Later in *AJ* 6.40, Cyril interprets again certain parts of Israel’s history, treating now the fact that Israel was often under the rule of others. Specifically, he accounts for their long subjection to the Medes, Persians, and others by explaining that God allowed this due to the Jews’ lack of faithfulness: because the people “neglected the worship under God that is pious and sacrificed to *their* gods . . . they became the victim of barbaric cruelty and went under the grievous yoke of servitude (*δουλείας*).” This historical fact is no reason think that the Persians’ gods are stronger than Israel’s God, says Cyril, but is instead another reason “to ‘scorn’ the gods of the Hellenes” (6.40.28–

31).<sup>86</sup> In one sense, the national fate of Israel does reflect something of the divine realm for Cyril—but as he argues elsewhere, such disciplinary subjection in response to apostasy is actually a sign of God’s continued *care* for Israel and certainly not reflective of a static divine order that determines geopolitics.<sup>87</sup> The geopolitical hierarchy can, in Cyril’s reckoning, be accounted for without describing it as the necessary and direct result of a divine hierarchy.

Cyril similarly re-explains the contemporary status of the Roman Empire. He readily acknowledges that Rome has political superiority over the Jewish people. But far from interpreting this political ascendancy as the culmination of divine influence, he subsumes it to another explanation:

... since the God who rules over all was not ignorant of what was going happen, he granted to the empire of the Romans the ability to rule over all, so that (ἵνα) every place and city and, along with the others, all who are famous for holy thrones of sovereignty might worship him. That this has been carried through to completion can be seen from the facts themselves (ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων). (7.2.21–26)

The superior status of Rome was granted not as an end itself, but so that (ἵνα) the worship of God might spread far and wide.

One other set of comments from Cyril is worth noting, since it is another instance of “dislodgment” in narrative conflict. Along with demonstrating his ability to provide an alternative explanation for Roman political superiority, he also can’t pass up the opportunity to undermine Julian’s way of accounting for the imperial dominion. On

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<sup>86</sup> Julian had asked why Christians “scorn our gods” in fr. 49.

<sup>87</sup> See *AJ* 5.18–23 for another example of God exercising benevolent care for his people, though it looks like a terrible political outcome for Israel as a nation.

several occasions throughout the political arguments Cyril points to the overthrow of pagan cultic practices as evidence that Julian’s narrative account of Roman superiority simply does not make sense—the “facts themselves,” as he often says, don’t support it. For how, Cyril wants to know, could the gods who orchestrated Roman ascendancy also consent to the desecration of their temples? Julian’s arguments, says Cyril, are

so weak as to be unsupportable from absolutely any angle. For he couldn’t prove [it] through the facts (διὰ πραγμάτων), and he is shown (and very easily) to be speaking nonsensically by the fact that the gods of the overthrown temples are unable to provide aid to their own people—since their altars were eradicated and every sacrifice was destroyed and the statues were engulfed in flames . . . . (7.5.3–9)<sup>88</sup>

We have already dwelt lengthily on Cyril’s prevalent campaign to dislodge the “gods” from their role in Julian’s narrative. Passages such as this one show a parallel dislodgment: if the supposed “gods” are actually rebellious demons (and are ultimately under the true God’s sovereignty), then Roman political superiority cannot be evidence of the authority of these “gods”—how could it, when they cannot even protect their own temples? The Roman Empire itself now needs a new explanatory home, which Cyril happily provides. That new home gives the Empire a support role to a bigger story.

Though Cyril makes comments elsewhere about the geopolitical status of Rome and of Israel, the foregoing illustrations will be adequate to discern how Cyril’s Christian narrative funds his arguments and how it reconstrues Julian’s narrative. To

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<sup>88</sup> See *AJ* 6.39.10–22 for a similar argument about the patent powerlessness of the gods who supposedly are the source of Rome’s power.

that task we will turn shortly, but only after seeing what Cyril says about dominance and subservience thematically.

### III.C.2.ii Dominance and Subservience

Cyril treats these themes clearly in two places. In the first he directly questions Julian's rationale for thinking that more powerful nations are better than weaker nations. Specifically, he wants to know why the fact that Abraham and his successors were often foreigners and servants reflects poorly on the Jews. He asks "why this state of affairs would be harmful to them" or would force them to do or speak evil? Political subservience alone says nothing about whether "they were shameful in their manner, if they were addicted to unjust gains, were slanderers and lovers of fault-finding and practitioners of greed (πλεονεξία), and slanderous and cheaters, and keen to work evil" (6.40.5–8). Being ruled by another nation does not produce any such vices—though he subtly implies that *ruling* other nations has its characteristic temptations, like πλεονεξία. Political subservience itself, Cyril argues, does not disclose as much about a people as Julian wants it to.

Cyril also treats subservience and dominance thematically while responding in AJ 6.43–46 to fr. 50. In this fragment, Julian comments on Jesus as a spin-off topic from Israel: the Jews have been subservient to the Medes, Persians, and Romans (fr. 49), and so too Jesus himself was a subject of Caesar (fr. 50). But what Julian treats as a derivative side-note will become a hinge in Cyril's renarration of the "gift" (in Julian's account) of political dominion.

Cyril infers from Julian's comment about Jesus's political subjection to Caesar that the Christian account of divine incarnation *would* have been more plausible if Jesus came in political power rather than as a lowly subject. "Why," Cyril formulates on behalf of Julian's position, "did the son not rather take a title of a king over people on earth, and [why was he not] born from a queen mother, at least according to the flesh?" (6.43.21–23). Cyril suggests that, according to Julian's logic of subservience and dominion, *if* the eternal, divine Word *were* to have become human, then he certainly would have come in a politically dominant manner. Political dominance and divine power are, after all, closely linked in Julian's narrative. In response, Cyril alleges that Julian has made a Feuerbachian projection, deriving the rationale of divine action from human political action.

Cyril counters that even Julian's (inferred) counterfactual point about how the divine Word would have become a human (i.e., in power) is mistaken. By Julian's implicit rationale, he suggests, the Word simply never would have become human—even a powerful human. The same rationale that would have led him to be a powerful human would have prevented him from becoming human in the first place, since "becoming human" itself consisted of a self-emptying, a taking on of the form of a slave (see *AJ* 6.43.24–35). Cyril insists to the contrary that, if God became human, then it was according to an entirely different rationale, and a rationale that Julian is incapable of perceiving (perhaps even because of his entanglement in *πλεονεξία*—more on this shortly). But the rationale itself is, in Cyril's account, beyond human understanding, and Julian's presumption to have understood it shows his error. Julian is, he says,

“entirely ignorant of what intervenes between (τὸ μεσολαβοῦν) both the sublimity of the divine glory and the smallness of understanding in you” (6.43.12–13). A little later he reinforces the point: “how could someone doubt that we are as inferior to the wisdom of God as we are poor in nature?” (6.43.35–36). The rationale of divine action is decidedly *not* a reflection of Julian’s ideas about human political action.

What, then, is the rationale of divine action in the incarnation? To answer that question, Cyril requires that we turn to the narrative of the Christian tradition. “Why, [Julian] says, did [Jesus] not appear to those on earth as established on seats of earthly royalty and distinguished with very high and lofty accomplishments?” The answer, Cyril responds, lies in the “σκοπός of the economy.” I have already written about this passage in Chapter 3, but a summary is again in order. As he does on several other occasions throughout *Against Julian*, Cyril provides a précis of the main plot of the Christian narrative. He explains that, when the entire earth had gone astray from God, the Son came “in our likeness, so that he might persuade” all to return to their creator. “It seemed good to Christ, the savior,” he reiterates, “to do so by persuasion instead and to set free those on earth from shame without threatening compulsion (οὐκ ἀνάγκης ἐπηρτημένης)” (6.45.1–18).

Essential here is how Cyril’s mode of reasoning about human relations is determined by the central plot-line in his tradition’s narrative. For reasons that I have already explored, Julian thinks that the human relationship of the politically dominant to the politically subservient is directly grounded in and authorized by the divine grain of the cosmos. Cyril is certainly not a forerunner of modern egalitarian models which

try to level these relationships.<sup>89</sup> But he does relativize such modes of human relation such that the human political ordering is subordinate to the divine economy and not a manifestation of it: human political hierarchy is not a direct function of a divine order. He is perfectly happy to concede that, by one kind of metric, Jesus was subject to Caesar. But to focus on this trivial fact is to miss the way in which Jesus is, by a more important metric, superior to Caesar:

For on the one hand, Caesar was known by the signs of an earthly kingdom and by things external (θύραθεν) to him and for goods that were not really goods in themselves. But on the other hand Christ, the ruler of all, since he has a glory within (οἴκοθεν) and not acquired from without (οὐκ ἔξωθεν), is known through the supremacy of perfections, and he should be thought of as the God of Caesar himself. (6.45.36–41)

### III.C.3 *Narrative Conflict and Politics*

With this material from Cyril's arguments now laid out, we can trace in summary fashion the narrative conflict that frames the arguments: first, with respect to nations and geopolitics; second, with respect to political dominion and subservience. If we think of peoples or nations themselves as "episodes," then we can see one component of the narrative conflict. For Julian, nation-episodes are part of the main plot of his narrative. The relative status of nations to one another is tied to the eternal hierarchy of the divine order. This divine order is fixed, and the rise and fall of peoples

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<sup>89</sup> See, for example, his claim at *AJ* 7.3.15–22 "But I say that there is nothing out of place—rather that it is necessary—for those who have a habit of wishing to throw off the state of being under [rulers] to submit to the charge of wickedness. Then if, indeed, it is of benefit for a life worthy of all praise to be ruled by laws, why has he slandered living under a command? For it was not reasonable for everyone on earth to pride themselves in the scepters of the kingdom. For where are the subjects? But [Julian] considers the matter a cause of shame for Christ himself."

in the earthly realm is the historical movement towards a human order which reflects the divine order.

For Cyril, the statuses of nations play supporting roles to the main plot. As earlier chapters emphasized, most nations were under the sway of deceiving demons throughout history. But God still put those nations to use for his program to rescue and reconcile humanity. The nations that oppressed Israel were tools of discipline in response to Israel's unfaithfulness; and the Roman Empire itself was allowed to rise to power so it could allow for the dissemination of true worship, even though Cyril is clear that Rome's history is entangled with demonic powers. For Cyril, nation-episodes play a secondary role in the unfolding drama of God's economy.

What of political dominance and subservience? As just suggested, the very surface of Cyril's arguments easily lend themselves to a narrative-conflict analysis. Specifically, the passages in *AJ* 6.45 show that Cyril's mode of reasoning about human relations is informed by the shape of the story he holds about the incarnation of God. Contrary to Julian's belief that political dominion is the pinnacle of divine favor, Cyril is unable to interpret political rule or subservience as the primary and divinely-ordained goal for human relations—and his reason for this is that when God became a man, it was contrary to the rationale of human political arrangements. Political dominance cannot be an end in itself. In Cyril's explicit reasoning, this fact is derived from the incarnation: the one who has glory innately and "within" (οἴκοθεν) does not operate by the same rationale as an earthly ruler whose constitutive goods are "external"

(θύραθεν). What was “subservience” by human political standards in fact achieved, in Cyril’s narrative, the release of humans from sin and death.

#### III.C.4 Conclusion: Emperor Julian Renarrated

To conclude this section on the “gift” (according to Julian) of political dominance, we should consider how Cyril’s refutation amounts to a renarration of Emperor Julian himself. MacIntyre’s comment that has structured this dissertation is slightly more expansive than I have yet taken into account: in certain kinds of conflict, he says, “that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, *not only* to retell their stories as episodes within its story, *but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes.*”<sup>90</sup> So far I have focused on the way that Cyril attempts to include Julian’s episodes within his story, but the topic of political reasoning raises an opportunity to show how Cyril also narrates Julian’s telling of his Hellenic story as itself an episode, reconfigured within Cyril’s Christian narrative.

MacIntyre’s expanded comment suggests that someone engaged in narrative conflict needs to not only re-explain their rival’s episodes but also to expand their own story enough to explain *why* their rival’s episodes need re-explaining—*why* the rival gets things wrong. This isn’t a direct response to a rival’s arguments so much as it is a diagnosis of the rival’s errors. Insofar as that diagnosis fits the standards of judgment that arise out of one’s own narrative account of reality, then the diagnosis itself becomes one more piece of evidence that substantiates the narrative.

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<sup>90</sup> *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 81 (emphasis added).

This kind of argumentative move is throughout *Against Julian*, but Cyril adds a layer in the arguments about political dominion and subservience. As noted earlier, Cyril treats Julian as unable to perceive the rationale of the incarnation. A comment that Cyril makes in *AJ* 7.3 explains why Julian might be unable to see this, and the comment places Julian in the long line of political (cosmic and human) failures that match Cyril's diagnosis of what is wrong with the cosmos: though Cyril's point is not explicit, it is easy to infer that he regards Julian's reasoning about political matters as corrupted by *πλεονεξία*.

At the beginning of book 7, Cyril steps back from Julian's specific argument about political dominance and subservience to wonder how they have arrived at this point in the argument. Julian, he says, "set out to prove that the worship (*λατρείαν*) of Christians is impure and that the teachers of our holy dogmas did not rightly grasp the pure divine vision . . ." Yet despite this objective, somehow ("I don't know how," says Cyril) Julian ended up discussing "irrelevant discoveries" (*ἐξαγωνίους . . . εὐρήμασιν*)—topics that Julian has introduced that are literally "out of the bounds of the contest" (*ἐξαγωνίους*). Cyril wants to know: if many Romans were "noble and skilled generals, learned and trained in tactical matters, maximally excelling in wars and battles," what does any of this have to do with right worship? How could this fact possibly speak against the "pious and worthy dogmas of the Hebrews and of the Christians? How is it not clear to all," he goes on to ask, "that the rationale (*λόγος*) concerning the two [categories] is of a completely different kind (*ἕτεροῖος παντελῶς*)?" (7.2.3–18).

Cyril’s accusations that Julian has confused himself—that, though he began talking about true dogma, he ended up talking about generals (7.2 and 7.6)—certainly doesn’t stick, if we’re trying to listen sympathetically or charitably to Julian’s arguments. Julian, after all, has his reasons for talking about the political superiority of his nation: that superiority is one more illustration of his larger cosmological system, with a hierarchy of nations which reflects a hierarchy of divine beings. Within Julian’s way of imagining and reasoning about the cosmos, noting which generals were successful has its place.<sup>91</sup> But Cyril isn’t a sympathetic listener, which isn’t (in my analysis) a criticism of him. It’s just to say that he’s something else—namely, a steward of a rival tradition. And, as such, part of his task is to expose the cracks in Julian’s way of reasoning. This is what Cyril thinks he’s doing when he accuses Julian of making the bizarre jump from doctrine to dominion: exposing a crack in how Julian reasons.

Cyril also implies an explanation for that crack. “How,” asks Cyril shortly thereafter, “did Julian, who himself joined the ranks of rulers, not cease in *πλεονεξία* . . .?” (7.3.11–12). This comment comes in a series of counterfactual queries about whether political subjection is an evil in itself. But the intimation that Julian was himself taken over by a greed to dominate—largely because he was a ruler, whose characteristic faults include *πλεονεξία*, in Cyril’s lexicon—is suggestive for why he would be unable to separate the rationales of worship and military matters. As I

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<sup>91</sup> As does noting which nations have superior craftsmen, scientists, etc.—these, too, could function as evidence of Julian’s larger cosmic scheme. But Cyril also takes issue with Julian’s claim about superior craftsmen and scientists in *AJ* 7.26, arguing again that these topics have nothing to do with true doctrine.

surveyed above, *πλεονεξία* was close to (if not *at*) the source of cosmic disorder. The spiritual rebellion of Satan and the demons was driven by *πλεονεξία*, and the result was a disordering of the entire created order. If Julian himself is an ongoing participant in the *πλεονεξία* that has corrupted relations in the spiritual and earthly realms since the beginning, then of course he does not understand the rationale which would solve this cosmic disorder. If he is possessed by the demonic powers who want to institute an order alternative to God's sovereign order—and Cyril insists throughout *Against Julian* that Julian *is* possessed<sup>92</sup>—then it only makes sense that he would reject the rationale governing the incarnation. Julian isn't simply wrong about how to account for the rise and fall of nations and for the themes of political dominance and subservience—he's wrong about these things because he's tied up in the very problem that the Christian narrative exposes.

This chapter has covered a wide range of material: from arguments about Socrates, to the qualities of the Attic language, to the Roman Empire itself. What should be clear by now, though, is that the intellectual conflict between Julian and Cyril that is manifested in this wide variety of topics can be coherently understood as individual fronts in a larger conflict of narratives. The differences in how Julian and Cyril evaluate historical figures; the conflict over the proper way to be educated; the alternative claims about how to interpret the history of nations—all of these differences are either

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<sup>92</sup> See, for example, *AJ* 6.15.21–24: “Therefore, that he . . . was possessed by an evil and God-fighting spirit (θεομάχῳ πνεύματι κάτοχος), I would not deny at all.” See also *AJ* 6.38.1–3, where Cyril suggests that Julian “composed these things while possessed by a worldly and unclean spirit (τῷ κοσμικῷ τε καὶ ἀκαθάρτῳ πνεύματι κάτοχος).”

directly about how to construe various “episodes” in the narrative backdrops of Hellenism and Christianity; or, they are differences that obtain because each narrative structure of their traditions has generated different forms of living and reasoning.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### I. Cyril Against Nestorius

Close to when Cyril was penning his final words of *Against Julian*, another literary brawl was brewing. In 428 Nestorius was called to be the new bishop of Constantinople, where his preaching and administration quickly aggravated several long-standing social and theological fault-lines. Within the year, from Alexandria Cyril was already involved in one of the disputes, namely over the propriety of “*theotokos*” as a title for Mary, Jesus’s mother. With several letters to groups in his Alexandrian see and, shortly afterwards, letters directly to Nestorius, Cyril entered the fray that would consume his attention for the rest of his life.

As a literary affair, the conflict escalated markedly after Cyril’s initial engagement in 429. At first the disagreements were largely expressed in sermons, lectures, and letters. In the spring of 430, Cyril left behind these brief, occasional mediums to produce a lengthy, studied refutation of several lectures that Nestorius had given in Constantinople the prior year. That text, *Five Tomes Against Nestorius* (or just “*Against Nestorius*”) took full-scale the skirmishes that were, until then, mostly threatening snipes and ominous warnings.<sup>1</sup> The sheer size of *Against Nestorius* and its sustained criticisms dashed any chance of de-escalation, unlikely though it already was.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations of *Against Nestorius* are my own, in consultation with Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*; E.B. Pusey and P.E. Pusey, eds., *Cyril of Alexandria, Five Tomes Against Nestorius*, A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church: Anterior to the Division of the East and West 47 (Oxford: James Parker & Co., 1881). The

*Against Nestorius* is not as long as *Against Julian*, but in several ways it resembles Cyril's direct refutation of the pagan emperor from years prior, especially in its formal similarities. Cyril employs, for example, the same, quote-and-response format that he had deployed against Julian. Alongside other rhetorical and argumentative parallels, Cyril's acerbic wit is equally prominent as he excoriates the unfathomable (as he would have it) errors of a new but equally bumptious opponent.

Despite the similarities of *Against Nestorius* and *Against Julian*, Nestorius was no pagan, as was Julian (notwithstanding the occasional allusive suggestion to the contrary from Cyril, about whom Nestorius insinuated the same).<sup>2</sup> He was a highly respected Christian ascetic who was able to rally prominent theologians to his side as the conflict over how to speak about Christ unfolded. To this day, Nestorius remains a figure of veneration in the Church of the East, and modern theologians still argue about the orthodoxy of his teachings. Though some modern interpreters have taken his conflict with Cyril as fundamentally *not* one of intellectual substance—rather, as one where ostensibly substantive disagreement served merely as occasion for ecclesio-

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critical edition is Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Concilium Universale Ephesenum*, vol. 1.6, Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (ACO) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1928), 13–107.

<sup>2</sup> As Norman Russell comments several times in his translation of portions of *Against Nestorius*, Cyril and Nestorius both implied that their opponent was guilty of pagan notions of deification. See note 44 to page 157 and note 54 to page 172. Cyril probably also meant to insinuate the same with the charge that Nestorius fails to keep the church from “god-manufacturing” (θεοποιίας) out of men (AN 2.10; ACO 48.17), and perhaps when he implies that Nestorius commits “anthropolatry” (άνθρωπολατρία) (AN 3.2; ACO 61.28–29).

political or rhetorical contest<sup>3</sup>—their disagreement was real. Though ecclesial and social power dynamics were undeniably at play, Cyril and Nestorius genuinely *disagreed* about a central teaching of the Christian faith.

*Against Nestorius* thus provides a useful point of comparison and contrast with *Against Julian*. In both texts Cyril carries out substantive intellectual conflict, and many of his rhetorical and argumentative tools are equally on display. But the conflict with Julian is inter-traditional, whereas the conflict with Nestorius is intra-traditional. At the close of my study of *Against Julian*, a comparison with *Against Nestorius* will accentuate what is characteristic about the inter-traditional conflict of narratives that underlies Cyril's disagreements with Julian.

First, though, a few more comments about the text, occasion, and arguments of *Against Nestorius* itself are in order. Tracing the *kind* of intellectual conflict between Cyril and Nestorius requires a basic understanding of the substance of the conflict. Unlike *Against Julian*, *Against Nestorius* has come down to us with quite a bit of information about the immediate context and occasion of its composition.<sup>4</sup> The text, as noted above, is a response to several lectures that Nestorius delivered in Constantinople. These lectures were prompted by a series of events in 428, beginning with Nestorius's attempt to adjudicate a local dispute over the proper title of Mary: was

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<sup>3</sup> Such is Susan Wessel's argument in *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> For recent introductions to Nestorius and his dispute with Cyril, see Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 31–58; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 126–75. Though now over a century old, the study of J.F. Bethune Baker (*Nestorius and His Teaching: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908]) is still a significant analysis of Nestorius.

she *theotokos*, “God-birther,” or *anthropotokos*, “a man-birther”? Mary’s place in the conflict would remain central throughout—the selection of Ephesus, known for its devotion to Mary, as the location for the council which would resolve the dispute was surely no accident. But from the outset, the dispute centered on Jesus and how to speak of him as divine, given the narrative of his life in the Gospels. Was Jesus divine such that the woman who gave birth to him could be said to have birthed God? Or must the way we speak about his divinity respect the fact that the Godhead is eternal and unoriginated, incapable of being birthed? Nestorius attempted to sidestep the disputants’ framing and to resolve the issue by labeling Mary *christotokos*, “Christ-birther.” Such a solution, however, was unacceptable to a theological stream of thought prominent in Alexandria, and tensions escalated as clerics sympathetic to Nestorius, on the one hand, and to Alexandria, on the other, delivered pointed sermons in defense of and against the title of *theotokos* for Mary. Nestorius himself quickly decided on a more forceful intervention, and so in early 429 he composed and delivered the public addresses that Cyril would respond to the next year. As Norman Russell notes, if the earlier sermons attacking the title *theotokos* “had caused a sensation, Nestorius’ lectures came as a bombshell.”<sup>5</sup>

The substance of the affair was complicated in its own right, and the dispute was exacerbated by several terminological confusions and pre-existing political hostilities. Still, a summary sketch is possible. Nestorius’s central concern was to speak

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<sup>5</sup> Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 34.

with proper piety about the absolute transcendence of God, who is beyond all creaturely realities—like coming-to-be, suffering, and death. As much an inheritor of pro-Nicene Trinitarian thought as anyone, Nestorius ascribes all these qualities to each member of the Trinity, including the Son who came to earth for the salvation of humanity. Given that the Son is fully divine, and the divine cannot suffer or change, then the Son cannot straightforwardly be said to have been himself born (or died—how could the Godhead die?), and thus Mary cannot be “God-birther.” It is not difficult to imagine how opponents like Cyril took from this reasoning an inevitable conclusion that there must be “two sons”—if the Son of God was not born, did not suffer, did not die, then another entity did. While some of Nestorius’s language left room for such an inference, he also insisted emphatically that the joining (“συνάφεια” is his favored term) of Son and man was such that the “two sons” accusation was completely unfounded.<sup>6</sup> A large part of his lectures, in fact, seem to have been an exposition of how scriptural patterns of naming “Jesus” and “Christ” and “Son” and “Word” and so forth *require* this position. For Nestorius, saying that God was born would undo the coherence of Christian belief and practice. It would imply that God is, among other things, passible—and how could a passible, corruptible God save humans from passion and corruption?

Cyril was equally concerned about faithfulness to Scripture and about soteriology. The norming canon within Cyril’s Scriptural canon lay in the Christ-hymn

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Nestorius’s protestations in AN 2.6 or 2.8.

of Philippians 2 and in the statement of John’s prologue that “The Word became flesh”—which he repeats numerous times throughout *Against Nestorius*. Cyril shakes off Nestorius’s worry by insisting that the bare Godhead did not suffer—rather, it was the Son who suffered only by the fact that he became human. The suffering was truly *his*, Cyril will often say, just as any human’s suffering can be ascribed to the soul, though the soul couldn’t be said to suffer absent its identification with the body. This suffering was a necessary piece to the larger salvific program of re-opening communion with God for humans, of making humans participants of the divine. As Cyril’s much-respected predecessor had said, “He became man so that we might become God.”<sup>7</sup> With these accents on soteriology, Nestorius’s apparent undermining of the full truth that “the Son *became* man” threatened to collapse the coherence of Christian life and doctrine. As Cyril says at the end of *Against Nestorius*, “But you yourself destroy the principles of the economy (τοὺς λόγους τῆς οἰκονομίας), and you think it not good to confess that the word of God suffered for us in the flesh” (AN 5.1; ACO 94.44–45).

With this overview in mind, we can now compare the mode and methods of intellectual conflict in *Against Nestorius* and *Against Julian*—first, the similarities; and second, the differences. The most obvious and pervasive of the formal similarities is Cyril’s method of writing. In *Against Nestorius*, as in most of *Against Julian*, Cyril opens each book with a short, polemical reflection, and he then proceeds by quoting several lines from his opponent’s text before responding at length. This format greatly

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<sup>7</sup> Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* 54.3.

restrains the flow of Cyril's arguments. It is true that in both refutations he often strays far from the likely intent or focus of the text excerpted from his opponent—what was likely an insignificant gloss for Julian or Nestorius can become occasion for pages of Cyril's scorn. Still, Cyril's responses are reliably tied to the actual texts that he is rebutting. Sometimes an apparent break in the flow of his argument can be resolved by simply looking back to Julian's or Nestorius's excerpt—and realizing that, at the apparent "break," Cyril has simply finished dealing with a first phrase from the excerpt and moved to a second or third phrase. This writing method sets apart *Against Julian* from, for example, Augustine's *City of God* or Theodoret's *Cure for Pagan Maladies*, and the differences are clear: Cyril binds himself to engaging the very words of his opponent, Julian. He cannot rely only on generalizations or imprecise characterizations, and this shapes the character of the conflict. The same dynamic permeates and structures *Against Nestorius*.

To find another example of formal similarities, we can look to a rhetorical feature that is related to Cyril's favored quote-and-respond format. As Thomas Brüggemann has explored, *Against Julian* is suffused with the direct address of the rhetorical convention of apostrophe, even though Julian was long dead. As Brüggemann points out, this constant return to direct, second-person address is what makes *Against Julian* feel as if Julian's text was mere months old, rather than many decades.<sup>8</sup> Nestorius's provoking text was, indeed, only months old when Cyril

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<sup>8</sup> Brüggemann, "Αποστροφή in *Contra Iulianum*: Julian als fiktives Gegenüber Kyrills," 153.

responded. Still, this shared rhetorical feature contributes to the similarity between the two texts.

Similar to such basic formal features of *Against Julian* and *Against Nestorius* are stylistic and rhetorical tropes that are clearly Cyril's go-to polemical tools. For instance, the opening of *Against Nestorius* and *Against Julian* (after the dedicatory preface to Theodosius II) are remarkably similar in their style, organization, and even wording. The opening lines of each start with generic musings about those who understand Christian doctrine and Scripture:

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Those who are wise and shrewd experts in holy dogmas marvel at the beauty of the truth and hold in high regard the ability to understand “a parable and a riddling word, the sayings and enigmas of the wise” (Prov. 1:6). (AJ 1.1.1–4)

The attainment of absolutely every good will be for those who desire to investigate the holy scripture and to drive away carelessness in this endeavor, and who rather thirst for accomplishment in the affair and who stir themselves up vigorously and without any hesitation. (AN 1.1; ACO 13.6–8)

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Cyril explains shortly thereafter how each group is filled with “divine light” (φωτὸς . . . τοῦ θεοῦ)—“filled in their souls,” in *Against Julian* (1.6–7), and “filled in their mind,” in *Against Nestorius* (1.1; ACO 13.8–9).

In both texts, he shortly comes to the opposite classes:

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But those who are perverted in heart and who have a deformity of mind and no involvement with the divine light—[these] set themselves against the dogmas of piety . . . . (AJ 1.1.11–13)

For those who say that “Jesus is Lord” could not speak this in any other way than through spirit. But those who, out of their stupidity, loosen an abusive tongue against them . . . not only say “anathema, Jesus,” but they can do this as from Beelzeboul. (AN 1; ACO 13.18–20)

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Within the first paragraphs of each text, Cyril quotes a Proverb, and Paul. In both he expresses remorse that he simply can’t let certain kinds of errors slide, which would have been possible if the one kept his shameful thoughts to himself (AJ 1.2.11–15) and if the other was silent (AN 1.1, 14.30–33)—though both, of course, endangered others by spreading their error.

In both texts, Cyril only eventually mentions the specific stimuli for his seemingly generic musings, and his language is almost exactly the same:

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And I say these things after reading the books of Julian (Καὶ ταῦτά φημι τοῖς Ἰουλιανοῦ βιβλίοις ἐντυχῶν), who made an intolerable accusation against our holy worship . . . . (AJ 1.3.1–2)

And I say these things after encountering one of the books (Καὶ ταῦτα φημι τινὶ τῶν βιβλίων περιτυχῶν) composed by him, which also had a manifold collection of sermons . . . . (AN 1.1; ACO 13.28–29)

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Cyril concludes that it is his duty, then, to protect Julian’s and Nestorius’s readers. Julian’s ilk are “like snakes lying in ambush at a crossroads, who cruelly rush against those who pass through the roads” (AJ 1.2.15–16), says Cyril. He must, similarly, “strip for battle and fight on behalf of [Nestorius] readers, lest some harm come thence” (AN 1.1, ACO 14.35–36). The stylistic, rhetorical, and lexical parallels are striking, and they

could be amassed—not just from the prefaces. We could unsurprisingly identify many more parallels such as standard argumentative tropes. It’s tempting to imagine that Cyril had a handbook on how to write refutations, and that he reviewed it closely before writing his tomes against Julian and, later, against Nestorius.

Though striking, these similarities exist largely at a superficial and stylistic level of the texts, and they do not tell us much about “intellectual conflict,” as I have been using the concept. Let us consider, then, one more similarity that reaches deeper into the mode of reasoning evident through Cyril’s arguments. As I suggested in the introduction with the help of Alasdair MacIntyre and Kavin Rowe, narrative is the most fundamental category of intelligibility; it provides the framework in which the rationality of a tradition makes sense as reasonable. Not all texts are “narratives,” genre-wise, but their intelligibility depends on a narrative lying in the background (or sometimes in the foreground!). The claim is equally true of intra- and inter-tradition conflict. By this rubric, in *inter*-tradition conflict, it is the narrative structures themselves of two (or more) different traditions that most fundamentally come into conflict. In the preceding chapters, I argued that this is what obtains between Cyril and Julian. But in *intra*-tradition conflict, the rationality of the disputants is just as narratively grounded—the conflict occurs within the criterial parameters that arise from the narrative.

Which leads to a final category of similarities between *Against Julian* and *Against Nestorius*—similarities which will also ground, next, the most significant differences in the intellectual conflict displayed in Cyril’s two texts. These similarities pertain to the

narrative-style analysis I have centered throughout. In *Against Nestorius* there are a variety of “narrative moments” where key features of the tradition’s constitutive narrative rise very close to the surface of the text and which function to clarify and substantiate Cyril’s explicit argument at hand—just as in *Against Julian* (see Chapter 3 for several of its obvious narrative moments). These narrative moments are very close, to borrow again Steinmetz’s terminology, to a summary “second narrative”—“the disclosure of the architectonic structure of the whole story.”<sup>9</sup>

There are several examples throughout *Against Nestorius* where the narrative backdrop comes close to the fore. Cyril deploys one of the clearest examples at the opening of book 3.<sup>10</sup> He claims “that the mystery of Christ does not at all need subtle searches or an intellect passing beyond excessive inquiry, but rather faith which holds to a simple and guileless tradition.” He then elaborates what he “has been taught to think and believe” (3.*praef*; ACO 53.13–15). Though he starts with the sending of the Son by the Father, most of the central elements of Cyril’s narrative structure are here—Triune creation, captivity of humanity under death and decay, a first focus of redemption in Israel but a planned inclusion of the Gentiles, rectification through the Son’s taking a servant’s form, and so forth.<sup>11</sup> This summary recap of the central plot of the narrative soon fulfills its function of making intelligible a specific point—namely, it

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<sup>9</sup> Steinmetz, “Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method,” 55.

<sup>10</sup> For another example, see AN 1.1 where Cyril draws out the significance of the first and second Adam motif.

<sup>11</sup> Notably missing, compared to *Against Julian*, is the part played by the rebellious demons in the afflicting of humanity—but more on this absence shortly.

substantiates his response to Nestorius's upcoming excerpt. In that excerpt Nestorius suggests that the titles from Hebrews 3:1 of "apostle" and "high priest" for Jesus cannot refer to the divinity (θεότητα), because apostolic ministry (Nestorius probably means literally the "being sent" of "ἀπόστολος" language) does not pertain to the divinity, nor can the divinity be a "high priest" (since such a figure *offers to God* and thus cannot *be God*) (AN 3.praef; ACO 54.40). Cyril's summary recap explains how the rationale of the Christian narrative does, indeed, require the confession that the "Word of God" was sent (ἀπεστάλθαι) into the world (AN 3.1; ACO 55.9), and that the Word itself be an interceding priest to "help our condition" (τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς ὀνήσας) (AN 3.1; ACO 55.24). Cyril explicitly invokes the shape of the Christian narrative to validate his point against Nestorius, as he did against Julian.

A second narrative-analysis similarity between *Against Nestorius* and *Against Julian* is that Cyril also attempts to renarrate Nestorius himself, as he did with Julian (see the end of Chapter 5). One of the clearest instances of this maneuver is in the opening of tome 5 of *Against Nestorius*. Here Cyril focuses on Nestorius's central concern about Jesus's suffering: he thought that the Godhead could not have died at the crucifixion, since this would introduce a "passible God" (παθητόν τον θεόν) (AN 5.1; ACO 92.33). Cyril begins by contrasting Paul—who, he notes, does not boast "except in the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:14)—to "certain people [who are] ashamed of the cross . . . and, in their wretchedness, despise the sufferings of Christ and dishonor the gospel." We might expect Cyril to have Nestorius in mind with this generalization, and he does—but by means, first, of identifying him with another group of characters from the

Christian narrative. These “certain people” are, he says, “ill with the Jewish naivety (Ἰουδαϊκὴν νοσοῦντες ἀμαθίαν)” (5.praef; ACO 91.14–20). Cyril traces several of the exact actions of the Jewish leaders who contributed to Jesus’s crucifixion, and he emphasizes the errors that blinded them to his true identity: despite Jesus’s claims, “they did not think that he was God by nature nor that he was truly the Son of his God and Father,” and this failure led them to condemn him to death (AN 5.praef; ACO 91.29–30). Their error, it turns out, is exactly the error of Nestorius, who likewise refuses to acknowledge Jesus’s divinity and is further repulsed by Jesus’s sufferings—the cross is a stumbling block to him. According to Cyril’s narration, Nestorius does not fit the role of a Christian pastor and leader but begins to make more sense as a revival of the Jews who sent Jesus to death. He is “ill with the Jewish naivety,” ranked now by Cyril, snidely, as “among those who seem to be Christians (ἐκ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι Χριστιανῶν)” (AN 5.praef; ACO 91.37). Nestorius himself has been renarrated.

These several examples might begin to make the mode of intellectual conflict in *Against Nestorius* and *Against Julian* appear to be of the same kind. This last example of Cyril’s renarration of his interlocutor is a good place to switch to the differences in the intellectual conflict within the two texts. This character-narration, repeated in both texts, also illustrates the central difference between the modes of conflict within *Against Julian* and *Against Nestorius*: Cyril renarrates Julian as a character in a narrative that is not Julian’s own, while he locates Nestorius as a different character within Nestorius’s (and his) own narrative.

As we saw at the end of Chapter 5, Cyril insinuates that Julian, as emperor, was implicated in *πλεονεξία*, a concept whose meaning, for Cyril, is tied to the larger cosmic narrative of rebellion against God in the spiritual realm, of oppression of the nations by these rebelling and deceptive demons, and so forth. But in Julian's narrative there was no such cosmic rebellion; the spiritual actors in the world are benevolent, suitably appointed overseers. Cyril takes Julian out of one narrative and depicts him as a character within a different narrative—a character, furthermore, whose moral features are intelligible in light of the various details of that different narrative.

Nestorius surely objected to being identified with the Jewish leaders who sought Jesus's death (as he would have objected to the insinuation, noted above, that some of his lines of reasoning were fundamentally pagan in character). But *that* those Jewish leaders played this important and condemnable role against Jesus in the narrative, and *that* pagans are the kind of people who reason in such a way—these points were shared between Cyril and Nestorius. In other words, Cyril assigned Nestorius a role that was intelligible within Nestorius's own narrative, because Cyril and Nestorius were reasoning within the same narrative structure.

Two other differences are related to this point that Cyril and Nestorius share narratives, while Cyril and Julian do not. These two differences further illustrate how the mode of conflict differs when intellectual conflict occurs between narratives and when it occurs within a shared narrative. These differences lie (1) in the role of authoritative sources, and (2) in the mode of theological reasoning, evident in how Cyril draws on the doctrine of the inseparable operations of the Trinity in each text.

Appeal to authorities (to texts, mostly) works differently in the Cyril/Julian conflict than in the Cyril/Nestorius conflict. This is, of course, unsurprising—we should expect a Neoplatonist and a Christian to treat certain texts with differing degrees of deference. But we still need to attend to this difference in the terms of an intellectual-conflict analysis. As I briefly suggested above, a large share of the arguments within *Against Nestorius* are about how to interpret scriptural patterns of naming “Jesus,” “Christ,” “Lord,” “Son,” “Word,” and so forth. What is clear, though, is that both Cyril and Nestorius take the scriptural pattern—whatever that pattern actually *is*—to be determinative for their doctrine. The text itself is non-negotiable; what is disputable is how to understand the text. The same goes for the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Cyril may insist that Nestorius opposed “the very symbol of the church’s faith which . . . was defined by the fathers who were gathered at Nicaea” (AN 1.5; ACO 25.34–37), but in reality both explicitly appeal to the language of the creed to substantiate their position (see AN 1.6–8). The Creed, like Scripture, is authoritative.

It is also true, of course, that Cyril and Julian sometimes appeal to the same texts as expressing truth—and even to one another’s texts as, if not inherently authoritative, then at least as *true* about this or that. Julian quotes Moses *against* Cyril’s position—as if Christians need to learn true things from Moses. And Cyril quotes Plato *against* Julian, as if Julian needs to learn true things from Plato. But the way in which Cyril and Julian appeal to these authorities is still fundamentally different than how Cyril and Nestorius appeal to authorities. This is most evident in the fact that both Cyril and Julian each locate the Hellenists’ and Christians’ texts, respectively, in their own

narrative in such a way that creates a filter by which the true and false material within their rival's texts can be discerned.

For Julian, in their original form, Moses's texts contained limited-but-genuine philosophical insights and reliable cultic prescriptions. Julian thinks this is so because of the place of Moses in his Hellenic narrative, as one of the many sages and lawgivers from ancient times, within the broader Neoplatonic cosmos. But Julian also thinks that the rest of the texts that are authoritative for Christians are representative of successive apostasies from Moses—first, the prophets who twisted several of Moses's teachings, then the apostles who furthered these prophetic distortions, and finally the Christians of his own day, who went even further than the first followers of Jesus in their perversions. Julian appeals sometimes to Moses as authoritative, but he only does so by treating Moses as a very particular kind of character—and a character that is fundamentally *not* who Christians say he is.

For Cyril, the collection of Hellenic texts also contains limited-but-genuine philosophical insights, though they are mixed in with the many errors that grew out of the effects of human sin and demonic deception. As I outlined in Chapter 3, Cyril's narrative about these texts is more explicit than Julian's mostly implicit narrative framework for the texts of Moses, the prophets, and the Christian apostles. According to Cyril, the truths that Plato or Pythagoras recount were ultimately derived from Moses, whose teachings they studied in Egypt. Moses—as interpreted in the long tradition in which he and (eventually) Christians stand—thus creates, for Cyril, the interpretive sieve by which true and false teachings can be sorted from the Hellenic

texts. Cyril may appeal to Plato against Julian as, in a sense, authoritative, but he only does so by treating Plato as a very particular kind of character—and a character that is fundamentally *not* who Julian says he is.

It is noteworthy that, in *Against Nestorius*, there is no “epistemological narrative” (as I called Cyril’s story about Hellenic authors in Chapter 3). Cyril had no need to explain to Nestorius which texts are authoritative and which are problematic. They both knew which were authoritative, and they set straight to making arguments from those texts. It is not necessarily the case, of course, that every text engaging in inter-traditional conflict will contain an explicit epistemological narrative like Cyril’s. But given the many formal similarities between *Against Julian* and *Against Nestorius*, it is striking that, in *Against Nestorius*, Cyril launches straight into the subject-matter of the disagreement; but in *Against Julian* he spends the entire first book explaining (and giving examples of) how to read Hellenic texts. He even feels the need to explicitly defend why he spent the first book on this program, instead of jumping straight into Julian’s arguments.<sup>12</sup> In *Against Julian*, disagreement over which texts are authoritative (and in what way they and others are truthful) points to different tradition-constitutive narratives. In *Against Nestorius*, implicit agreement about which texts are authoritative points to a shared tradition-constitutive narrative.

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<sup>12</sup> He imagines an objector asking: “Why in the world, when you set out to collect the dogmas of the Christians and are eager to reply to the slanders of Julian with a helpful argument, did you not plan to set straight out on that path; [why], diverting, as it were, your argument’s momentum, which leads straight to what is proper, did you throw yourself into your own genealogies and scrutinize the teachings of the Hebrews and Hellenes?” (AJ 2.1.6–12).

The final difference between the intellectual conflict within *Against Julian* and within *Against Nestorius* moves one step out from the narrative structures of thought and to the way that different narrative structures can produce different modes of rationality. This is evident in the way that the Christian doctrine of the inseparable operations within the Trinity functions in Cyril's arguments with Julian and with Nestorius.

As I examined in Chapter 4, Cyril objects to Julian's attempts to explain all kinds of earthly diversities by appealing to the diversity of governing gods, and his objections often rely on the Christian doctrine of the inseparable operations of the Trinity. This teaching—like teaching on the fundamental difference between γένητος and ἀγενήτος—is firmly rooted in fourth-century developments in Christian thought. As I explored in Chapter 4, these doctrinal developments were themselves catalyzed by pressures that were exerted on Christian reasoning by features of the Christian narrative. Given that the doctrine's intelligibility lies in these peculiarly Christian developments, the patterns of reasoning entailed in the doctrine would have been objectionable if not unintelligible to a Neoplatonist like Julian. In other words, Cyril's deployment of the rationale of the inseparable operations of the Trinity in critique of Julian's ethnarchic theology amounts to the use of a doctrine foreign to Julian's mode of theological reasoning.

If we step back and ask what these specific arguments in *Against Julian* tell us about the kind of intellectual conflict between Cyril and Julian, we have to conclude that, at least in the particulars of these arguments, it is an instance of incompatible

rationalities. On questions of who these spiritual beings are and of what roles they play in the happenings of earth, Cyril deployed against Julian a standard of adjudication that Julian did not and could not share. Cyril's and Julian's structures of theological reasoning themselves were as much at odds as were the substantive theological conclusions about the identity of the gods/demons.

The first half of tome 4 in *Against Nestorius* revolves around the doctrine of the inseparable operations of the Trinity—and Nestorius himself brings it up. Cyril's argument with Nestorius proceeds differently than it did with Julian because of the shared commitment to the pattern of reasoning encapsulated by the doctrine. In other words, this corner of the larger disagreement between Cyril and Nestorius further illuminates the dynamics of intra-traditional conflict—of conflict that proceeds within substantially shared criteria for reasoning.

In the first excerpt of tome 4, Nestorius makes an explicit unity-of-operations argument:

God the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. The Father seated with himself (συνεκάθισεν ἑαυτῷ) the humanity that was assumed. For he says, "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right [hand].'" The descending Spirit assembled the glory of the one assumed. For he says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he [i.e., the Father] will glorify me." Do you want also another operation (ἐνέργειαν) of the Trinity in addition to these very ones? The Son dwelled in (ἐνώκησεν) the body, the Father established (συνέστησεν) him when baptized, the Spirit formed (διέπλασεν) [him] in the virgin. (AN 4.1; ACO 76.33–38)

In this passage, Nestorius treats the incarnation itself as the object of a unified operation: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each are unitedly engaged in the constituting of Jesus as the savior—Jesus, in whom the Son dwelled, whom the Spirit glorified (and

formed), and whom the Father established (and “seated with himself”). We can see within this formulation the central dynamics of the disagreement at play throughout *Against Nestorius*: within “Jesus” there is enough space to distinguish the divine Word from something else—“Jesus” and “Word” are not entirely identical, at least grammatically. Cyril thinks this grammar unavoidably entails two Sons, while Nestorius insists that their “conjunction” constitutes a unity that adequately rebuts this charge.

In his first response to Nestorius’s argument from the unity of operations in the Trinity, Cyril entirely agrees with the underlying principle:

Indeed, the nature of divinity is one, and the Father exists personally (ἰδικῶς), as well as the Son, and likewise also the Spirit. But all things are performed from (παρὰ) the Father and through (δι’) the Son in (ἐν) the Spirit, and when the Father is moved (so to speak) into operation (ἐνέργειαν), in every way (πάντως) the Son in the Spirit works (ἐνεργεῖ); and if the Son or the Spirit should be said to complete something, this is in every way (πάντως) from the Father, and the operation and will (ἐνέργειά τε καὶ βούλησις) toward anything at all proceeds through the entire holy and consubstantial Trinity. (AN 4.1; ACO 77.2–7)

Given this apparent agreement of theological principles, Cyril’s choice of language to describe Nestorius’s error is noteworthy: Cyril notes immediately thereafter that Nestorius “misrepresents (παρρασημαίνει) the meaning of the concepts” (AN 4.1; ACO 77.9). This “misrepresentation” is a counterfeiting—producing a replica that seems acceptable but which is, upon closer scrutiny, unlike the genuine artefact.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In his translation and notes, Pusey cleverly suggests that Cyril implies throughout *Against Nestorius* that Nestorius’s sin is analogous to counterfeiting money. Pusey translates “παρρασημαίνει” as “mis-coins,” and he points to several other instances of the same term throughout the text. He furthermore calls attention to one of Cyril’s opening comments to the entire treatise where Cyril quotes a variant of I Thessalonians 5:21–22, which says: “Become skillful *bankers* (τραπεζίται). Test all things. Hold to the good

Cyril considers several angles of Nestorius’s assertion, but the overriding critique is that Nestorius treats Jesus as the object of a Triune operation, whereas the Christian account of salvation requires that *humans* be the object of an operation in which Jesus, as the Word, is himself equally operator alongside the Father and Spirit.<sup>14</sup> The imparting of the Spirit (in baptism, especially) is a central element in Cyril’s response. He insists that if, as Nestorius suggests, Jesus is only *recipient* of the Spirit, then Jesus is no more able to give the Spirit to others than is any other human (like saints) who themselves received the Spirit (see AN 4.1; ACO 79.36–44). What humanity needs, rather, is one who has the Spirit naturally “in himself”—οἴκοθεν, as opposed to ἔξωθεν, “from without” (AN 4.1; ACO 78.23)—and who can thereby “render them sanctified, himself infusing [into them] from his own fullness, as God by nature” (AN 4.1; ACO 79.35–36).

Nestorius’s deployment of the doctrine of inseparable operations fails this requirement, according to Cyril. The doctrine is supposed to show how the incarnation opens an uninterrupted channel of grace, directly from the Triune God to humans, in a

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and depart from every kind of evil.” He suggests that Paul’s command is to imitate “those who accept [only] genuine currency” and who reject what is “counterfeit” (τὸ παράσημον) (AN *praef*; ACO 13.25–29).

The analogy of Nestorius as a counterfeiter suggests another apt illustration of inter- and intra-tradition conflict: Nestorius offers a plausible but ultimately false version of *the same thing* that Cyril offers. Cyril does say once that Julian “misrepresents (παρασημαίνει) the truth” (AJ 4.43.3), but the frequent imagery of coins, bankers, and counterfeiting that is prominent in *Against Nestorius* is absent in *Against Julian* where Julian presents an entirely different system of meaning-making (and not a subtle “counterfeit” of the true thing).

<sup>14</sup> Cyril says that, in Nestorius’s account, Jesus “was operated on (ἐνηργησθαι) as (ὡς) one of us” instead of “working (ἐνεργῆσαι) divine gifts as (ὡς) through his own Spirit” (AN 4.1; ACO 78.3–4)

new way, beyond the ordinary ways that people have received grace. But Nestorius makes Jesus out to be someone who was operated on by the Trinity, and thus he is no different. For Cyril, the mystery of salvation lies in communion with God, and that communion is only assured when the Word becomes man and, as both Word and man, imparts the Spirit in a new way.<sup>15</sup>

Much more could be said about the disputed theological content, but the foregoing should be adequate to illustrate Cyril's and Nestorius's kind of intellectual grappling. In *Against Julian*, Cyril deployed a pattern of reasoning against Julian's claims which Julian's narrative directly disbarred—in that narrative, the different features of the different gods explain differences on earth, and thus a unity-of-operations doctrine like that which crystallized in Christian discourse was *prima facie* untenable. Unlike this conflict, *Against Nestorius* shows what it looks like when central patterns of reasoning are shared, but their application to explain certain episodes from their (also shared) narrative is disputable. Both Julian and Nestorius may fail, respectively, in “proper” or “fitting reasoning,” as Cyril puts it,<sup>16</sup> but their failure is of a different sort. Julian fails because he deploys a system of reasoning grounded in the features of a narrative that is

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<sup>15</sup> Of course, Cyril might object to my claim that Nestorius did, indeed, hold to a doctrine of inseparable operations—he thinks, after all, that Nestorius has “misrepresented” the true doctrine so as to render it ineffective for salvation. In a certain sense, then, Cyril might not like my characterization of him and Nestorius as having a “shared” pattern of reasoning. But as I suggested two notes above, these dynamics still illustrate intra-tradition conflict. There is genuine conflict: a real and substantive disagreement. But it is of the sort that occurs within a wide range of agreement: about scriptural authority and about broader Trinitarian commitments, primarily. It is clearly the kind of argument that constitutes a tradition. For more on Cyril's critiques of Nestorius's deployment of the doctrine of inseparable operations—or, suggests Crawford, “common operations,” to differentiate with Cyril's preferred position—see Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 35–42.

<sup>16</sup> “λογισμοῦ τοῦ καθήκοντος” in AN 4.1; 77.27; “τοῦ καθήκοντος λογισμοῦ” in AJ 10.15.52.

radically different than Cyril's. Nestorius fails because he misapplies the shared system of reasoning that is grounded in the narrative he shares with Cyril.

In the terms of my narrative analysis of intellectual conflict, Cyril and Nestorius disagreed over which teaching about the person of Christ would maintain the coherence of the narrative itself. Roch Kereszty has expressed the Cyrilline position by suggesting that “the truth of the hypostatic union becomes intelligible as the necessary metaphysical presupposition for God’s acceptance of ultimate solidarity with sinful humankind.”<sup>17</sup> With only a slight modification of this definition, we can explain Cyril’s and Nestorius’s disagreement as a conflict over what the “metaphysical presupposition” is for God’s salvation of humanity in Jesus—or what the “metaphysical presuppositions” are for the Christian narrative to remain plausible and coherent. Who this God was, where it was acting throughout history, what is its intent for humanity—all these things that made up the contours of the Christian narrative posed little problem for Cyril and Nestorius. What they disagree about is how to articulate the metaphysical suppositions within that narrative. Their dispute was over which words of confession maintain the integrity of their story, and which words ultimately undermine the coherence of the plot. The basic description of the various “episodes” that make up the narrative and how they relate to one another is not disputed. How to

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<sup>17</sup> Roch A. Kereszty, *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology* (New York: Alba House, 2002), 355. Kereszty’s use of “hypostatic union” probably evokes a more technical, post-Chalcedonian sense than Cyril’s “ἕνωσις καθ’ ὑπόστασιν” implied in the 430s, but my point is unchanged.

carry out focused, second-order reflection on the details of one of the central episodes is.

## II. Traditions in Narrative Conflict

The general difference in Cyril's intellectual engagement with Julian is clear. Julian in *Against the Galileans* and Cyril in *Against Julian* certainly do carry out second-order reflection on the metaphysical suppositions of their respective episodes, or the interconnection between episodes, and so forth—the “narrative conflict” is not simply an explicit or direct argument about how to construe each episode. But when we peel back the layers of their arguments (about cosmology, or politics, or theology, or history, or difference between humans, etc.) it becomes evident that the various episodes that provide the basic content for the arguments are understood in fundamentally different ways by Julian and by Cyril because of the different shape of the maximal narratives that give the episodes their significance.

But even if the *general* difference between inter- and intra-tradition intellectual conflict is clear, in *particular* arguments, it can be hard to determine the mode of conflict. The kinds of similarities I pointed out above between Cyril's treatment of Nestorius, on the one hand, and of Julian, on the other, are real. Those similarities can make it difficult to discern whether an argument is the sort that constitutes a tradition (MacIntyre's definition of a tradition, again, is “an historically extended, socially embodied *argument*”) or is the sort of argument that arises between traditions.

The following are a variety of features gleaned from my study of Cyril and Julian. They are signs that the kind of intellectual conflict within a given disagreement is narrative conflict. No one of these guarantees that narrative conflict is ongoing—to one degree or another, each of these could occur in intra-tradition conflict. And a case of inter-tradition conflict may not clearly display any of these features (though I suspect that truly lively conflicts between traditions will do so). But the occurrence of one or several of these features in any given disagreement should raise the possibility that the disagreement extends all the way down to the narrative bedrock that grounds the tradition.

#### II.A. Renarration of Episodes

The first feature is simply definitional of narrative conflict: episodes will be given different roles by the interlocutors in a disagreement. As we saw in Cyril's narrative subsumption of Julian, this means that some of the characters will have equally central roles in the respective narratives, but they will be demoted or upgraded significantly. Central stewards of the course of human life in one narrative (like Julian's gods) will become central antagonists in the ongoing plight of humanity (like Cyril's demons.) Other characters will be removed from central roles entirely, while others will be elevated from obscurity to prominence—like Julian demotes Moses (who is central for Christians) to the status of a minor lawgiver and elevates Asclepius (not so central for Christians) to a paradigmatic gift of a healer from the gods; or, like Cyril demotes Minos (central for Julian) and elevates the prophets (central for Julian only as a data point in the pattern of corruption). Historical events and eras may similarly be

resituated—Julian’s Roman Empire is the culmination of divine oversight of humanity, but Cyril’s Roman Empire was only allowed to come into existence to enable the unfolding of another, more consequential plot, and its continued prominence is tied to its rejection of the demons who used to deceive the nations. Texts that play prominent roles within one tradition may be explained and treated very differently. Historical explanations may be given for why an authoritative text simply cannot be regarded as reliable—as Julian suggests that the Mosaic corpus was corrupted by later prophets with different theological agendas; or as Cyril argues that the handful of truths preserved in the Hellenic canon exist only thanks to their genealogical reliance on Moses.

#### II.B Non-intersecting Authority Structures

The topic of *texts* points to another feature that indicates possible narrative conflict. Authority structures—like prominent texts—will not correspond. No argument can ever demonstrate all of its constituent (and often implicit) premises (even *if* there is agreement about what constitutes adequate “demonstration”—which there might not be), and thus every argument must rely on some range of assumptions, which are themselves evidence of intellectual authority structures. That which can be assumed often derives its reliability from its authoritative source—whether “Scripture,” or “reason,” or “science,” etc.<sup>18</sup> In inter-tradition conflict, the authority structures won’t

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<sup>18</sup> Which isn’t to say that all authority structures are objectively equal, of course, or that appeal to an authority structure amounts to a kind of stubborn fideism. Push a competent theorizer about a strong tradition, and you will get extensive demonstrations of the reliability, the coherence, and adequacy of

match up. This may become evident when one interlocutor will accuse another of relying on an unreliable text, or the other will fault the one for ignoring the expertise of an exemplary reasoner within the tradition. Such disagreements happen on a certain scale all the time *within* traditions—Platonists disagreed over how perspicuous the human intellect really was and thus how dogmatic its tradition could become, and over the authenticity of Aristotle as a Platonic authority;<sup>19</sup> Christians still argue over how large the canon of Scripture is. But in narrative conflict, each participant will probably push towards calling into question their rival’s authority structure in its totality. And the way they do that will, if you dig deep enough into the arguments, rely on a narrative that reorders the relevant episodes that, in the rival’s configuration, gave the authority structure its plausibility in the first place.<sup>20</sup>

### II.C Incompatible Modes of Reasoning

The fact that interlocutors in inter-tradition conflict will be working out of different authority structures points to another feature of narrative conflict: their modes of reasoning themselves will show signs of incompatibility. MacIntyre was

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the authority structure—“demonstrations,” by the standards the tradition itself has settled on, of course. But *which* authority structure someone goes to for a certain question, and how that structure is related to others (there will almost certainly be a bundle of them, ordered by a logic internal to the tradition) can reveal much about the rationality of the tradition, and it can shed light on the narrative that ultimately explains the reliability and ordering of authority structures.

<sup>19</sup> For further examples, see John Dillon’s treatment of early and middle Platonist disputes (including over the status of Aristotle within the tradition) in Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, 1–51.

<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, it’s not simply a question of how a certain kind of authority structure—authoritative texts, for example—matches up (or doesn’t) between two interlocutors. It’s also sometimes a question of whether a certain kind of authority even exists. The early church had authoritative councils (even if they didn’t always produce clean resolutions); Neoplatonists had nothing that functioned in the same way.

probably right to suggest that certain features will probably exist in every tradition—I find it hard to imagine how a tradition that denies the logical law of non-contradiction, strictly-considered, could maintain anything like “rationality.” But as I suggested in the Introduction, such common features are going to be largely formal. Another example of universally shared features of rationality, like the law of non-contradiction, would be MacIntyre’s “identification of incoherence” as a likely common method of refutation. As a *form* of an argument, it is doubtlessly true that rival interlocutors will try to identify incoherence in their opponent’s position. But when interlocutors get into the substance of issues, what counts as “coherent” or “incoherent” can quickly become tied to the canons of their particular tradition. Cyril accuses Julian of being incoherent in his interpretation of the “originated” gods from Plato’s *Timaeus*. But as Chapter 4 suggests, that judgment of incoherence was reached after subjecting Julian’s explanation of earthly diversity to a canon of theological reasoning that was tied to the development of Christian Trinitarian thought.

#### II.D Proliferating Entailments

Cyril’s argument with Julian over the nature of divinity points to another feature that may arise in inter-tradition, narrative conflict. As I pointed out in Chapter 4, Cyril had to reformulate much of Julian’s argument to make it even judicable by the Christian-Trinitarian criteria. Cyril had to lean heavily on *entailments* that he discovered within Julian’s explicit arguments. When modes of rationality diverge within an argument, the reliance of each interlocutor on discovering problematic entailments within their adversary’s arguments will only increase. As I explained in the

Introduction, traditions will, to varying degrees speak different languages, and the particulars of the languages and their vocabularies will be tied to the contingent histories of the traditions. Some kind of translation is therefore necessary for engagement between traditions. But to the extent that accurate translation is not possible, interlocutors are left trying to force from their rivals' statements answers to questions that may not be important to the rival—or even to questions that the rival's tradition does not have the conceptual resources to address. It became of utmost importance for Christians to fundamentally distinguish between what is γένητος and what is ἀγενήτος. Neoplatonists thought a great deal about what Plato meant by γένητος, but they clearly did not create the strict dichotomy that Christian theology centered.<sup>21</sup> When Cyril read Julian's comments on creation, he wanted to know what Julian thought about the central distinction between what is γένητος and what is ἀγενήτος. Not finding this question central to Julian's thought, Cyril had to search out where implicit *entailments* might lead him to an answer to the question he cared about. The less that traditions emphasize questions that overlap with one another, the more their representatives will be left searching out answers among material that doesn't explicitly provide answers.

Arguing with the entailments of an interlocutor's argument rather than the explicit terms of the argument itself occurs within intra-tradition intellectual conflict, too, of course. But in inter-tradition conflict, this process will have a way of

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<sup>21</sup> See Phillips, "Neoplatonic Exegeses of Plato's Cosmogony (Timaeus 27C-28C)", and particularly his discussion of Calvernus Taurus' list of the several possible meanings of the term (174).

proliferating, since attempts to engage a rival will find a wider range of material that fails to address the questions central to one's own tradition. *Against Julian* and *Against Nestorius* are indicative of this dynamic. Cyril's arguments in response to a single fragment from Julian often have an uneven quality—he will follow out a line of argument about the a fragment's first claim, and then when he moves to the next claim of the fragment, he almost seems to change subjects. What he found significant about one of Julian's argument was clearly not what Julian thought was significant, given that Julian takes the argument in a very different direction. This is true, too, at the macro-level: *Against Julian* covers a wide range of topics, and when Cyril focuses for the longest stretch of writing (as is the case with his treatment of the Trinity and incarnation in book 8), he is more clearly manipulating Julian's comments to fit his own preoccupation. By contrast, it is remarkable how long Cyril maintains a focused argument in response to Nestorius's lectures. The argument considers a wide range of Scripture, and of metaphysical implications of this or that term, but it remains remarkably focused on a narrow question about the person of Jesus. It is hard to imagine Cyril maintaining this kind of focus refuting Julian's text—he is too busy translating Julian's concerns into his own conceptual scheme. He is too busy, that is, sorting out and building arguments from entailments.

#### II.E "Caricature"

When the preceding two features are present, they can easily lead to another: the appearance to observers that the disputants are interacting with caricatures of their rivals. As I noted in the Introduction, William Malley has suggested that Julian and

Cyril “really parodied the position of each other to such an extent that the true thought of the opponent was hidden behind a caricature.”<sup>22</sup> This is a tricky possibility to entertain—it is certainly true that Julian and Cyril both regularly fail to present their opponents’ position fairly before outlining their own disagreement. But the distasteful connotation of “caricature” stems from how it *misrepresents* someone, and often through gross exaggeration. But at the plane of disagreement where narratives conflict, the whole question is over how to *represent* different episodes. In such circumstances, calling something a “caricature” begs the question. Cyril and Julian certainly represent their opponents in unflattering ways, but whether those representations are *misrepresentations* is the very question under dispute. Furthermore, many of the candidates for “caricature” in Julian’s and Cyril’s arguments are not primarily built from *mere* exaggerations. Cyril does emphasize Socrates’s putative sexual predilections, and compared to his source, Porphyry (whose point is about the relative sexual restraint of Socrates), Cyril might be said to grossly exaggerate. But his construal of Socrates is part of larger strategy of giving a textured moral evaluation. The extent to which someone is entangled with pleasure (ἡδονή) which prevents the self-control (ἐγκράτεια) necessary for right living is quite important in Cyril’s narrative, and so focusing on sexual habits in the way he does not necessarily constitute an exaggeration.

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<sup>22</sup> Malley, *Hellenism and Christianity*, 43.

Recognizing that such dynamics may stem from narrative conflict may not cause the things that look like caricatures to appear any more tasteful, but in such inter-tradition conflict something much more intellectually substantive is underway than mere caricature. What is under dispute is which narrative (and its concomitant mode of reasoning) can most coherently explain—can best represent—all the relevant features of a character.

### II.F Interminability

A final clue that narrative conflict is underway is its interminability. Protracted dispute can exist within traditions, of course—many Christians still disagree over the orthodoxy of Cyril and Nestorius—and thus this feature does not distinguish narrative conflict from intra-tradition conflict by itself. But it will nonetheless be a likely marker of narrative conflict that disagreements with features like those listed above will continue as long as the two traditions have living members who want to talk with one another about their traditions. By contrast, alongside the long-running arguments that do exist within a tradition, a stream of resolutions to new challenges will emerge from the kind of *internal* conflict that constitutes traditions. But when rival traditions are disagreeing, the intellectual disagreements over matters central to each tradition's identity will resist resolution.

The social shape of interminable disagreement may vary widely, of course. Intellectual disagreement may eventually manifest in acrimonious polemics, much like Julian's and Cyril's case, or even in armed conflict. But it may manifest in patient friendship, as rivals try to sort out how far they can agree, or what common action they

can pursue together even if they can't seem to provide the same kind of rationale for the action. But there will always be limits—they will always reach the point, to borrow from Wittgenstein, where the 'spade turns' as they try to dig for common ground.<sup>23</sup> Wherever they choose to dig for the kind of shared criteria that would allow a resolution of disagreements about central commitments within their traditions, they will continue to reach the narrative bedrocks, past which they cannot go.

### III. Traditions and (In)commensurability

At the outset I said that this study would not be less than an account of a text but that it would also be more than such—namely, that it would also be an opportunity to consider what happens more broadly when developed traditions of life and thought enter into intellectual conflict. I conclude with some final reflections on these larger questions.

Many doubtless will still find it improbable that late ancient Christianity and Hellenism were, in fact, strong traditions who shared so little in the constitutive features of their tradition that they could not rationally adjudicate disagreements about their traditions.<sup>24</sup> Analyses that rely on notions of “Christian Platonism” or the

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<sup>23</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, Rev. 4th ed (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), §217. Wittgenstein is talking about the attempts to justify “acting in *this* way.” He says, “Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: ‘This is simply what I do.’”

<sup>24</sup> As I intimated in the Introduction, members of rival traditions can adjudicate a whole range of certain kinds of disagreements—perhaps how much taxes should be collected from whom, or whether to go to war, or who should coach a community track and field team. But disagreements about central features of a tradition—about, in short, “the goods which constitute a tradition,” in MacIntyre’s terms—are a different question.

like—not to mention studies on the syncretism that late ancient material culture putatively proves—suggest that such incommensurability between traditions simply does not obtain. And even if *traditions* are incommensurable, traditions are always made up of *people* who live in complex nexuses of social and intellectual currents. By the terms of many traditions themselves, very few (if any) people perfectly embody the commitments of a tradition.

But this isn't to say, as some have taken it, that people live many traditions at the same time.<sup>25</sup> On the existentially pressing questions, the extent to which someone follows the guidance of one tradition is the extent to which he rejects that of others. Though most of us have at least some tolerance for performative incoherence in our lives, the lived grammar of a tradition beckons us to train for coherence—and that coherence is meant to produce a kind of harmony and single-orientedness within all the parts of ourselves and with the way the world really is. One might dabble with this or that feature of a tradition, but such an approach impedes rather than leads to a coherent life.<sup>26</sup>

Many traditions do, indeed, “influence” one another, in one sense. To Stout's point about *bricolage*, they share a common pool of words, phrases, images, etc. to draw from as they continue to face the existential challenges of life. But as the dynamics of

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<sup>25</sup> Several contributors to *The New Testament in Comparison* (Dale Martin, Troels Engberg-Pederson, and Margaret Mitchell) hint—or outright insist—to the contrary that people do live multiple lives. For references and Rowe's response, see “A Response to Friend-Critics,” 129–31.

<sup>26</sup> Of course, one who holds to a certain kind of religious pluralism might insist that the shape of a coherent life must be assembled from among the many religious communities around the world. But this position is just another tradition, with its own narrative about the way the world is and how to get along in it.

narrative conflict illuminate, the significance or meaning of each shared tool (whether a word, or image, or logical test) is inextricably tied to the larger patterns of meaning-making that belong to a tradition. “Episodes” drastically change in meaning when placed in different traditions and in different narratives. What is “shared” about the common pool turns out often to be only surface deep—sometimes only deep enough, that is, to mean that a word or episode is recognizable to people in two traditions only enough for it to be a viable candidate for rival use. If “explanatory adequacy” is the basic criterion of narrative conflict, then rival narratives will be competing with one another to offer a better explanation for many of the *same* bundles of episodes.

Most of this is theoretical. What about in the concrete—are Cyril’s Christianity and Julian’s Hellenism incommensurable? In MacIntyre’s terms, incommensurability obtains when, with “two large-scale systems of thought and practice,” “the terms in and by means of which judgment is delivered in each are so specific and idiosyncratic to each that they cannot be translated into the terms of the other without gross distortion.”<sup>27</sup> With respect to Cyril and Julian, this seems exactly right. However, the question is a bit harder with respect to Cyril’s *Christianity* and Julian’s *Hellenism*. There are good reasons to withhold judgment, even though I think the evidence points towards incommensurability.

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<sup>27</sup> MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 5–6. As noted in the Introduction, MacIntyre goes on to explain how he thinks such incommensurability is in principle always surmountable. With Rowe, I think he is mistaken.

The reasons to withhold judgment are tied to the concrete, historical figures of Cyril and Julian themselves. Though they are, as I argued in the Introduction, each strong representatives of their traditions, rarely (if ever) will any one person perfectly embody the commitments of a tradition. Given that a tradition is itself an embodied argument, any one representative of a tradition will inevitably take positions (sometimes very strongly) on arguments *within* the tradition. Sorting out which of a figure's commitments are indicative of the broad agreement within a tradition, and which commitments represent one of several options within the tradition can be tricky. For example, there is good reason to wonder about the extent to which Julian's Hellenist political vision is, in fact, representative of Hellenism as a whole. Not only does he belong to the Iamblichan stream of Platonism (as opposed to the Porphyrian stream), which doubtlessly influenced his zealous commitment to an empire-wide reinstatement of animal sacrifices. His social location as an *emperor* almost certainly shaped the way he saw political success as evidence of divine favor. When Cyril criticized Julian's political arguments, was he trying to engage a fundamental feature of Hellenism, or did he face a version of it idiosyncratic to Julian?

If the main accent of this study were on Christianity and Hellenism, rather than *Against Julian* and *Against the Galileans*, I could have mitigated this possible distortion by juxtaposing *clusters* of strong representatives of traditions. Which commitments are integral to a tradition and which are merely legitimate (though not necessary) options within that tradition could have then been better sorted out by looking at agreement and disagreement among exemplary members within a tradition. This is an advantage

of Rowe's *One True Life*, which works with three first- and second-century Christians and three Imperial Stoics. But such a strategy trades advantages for disadvantages. Partially because Rowe's study covers a wider range of exemplars and texts, it requires an *imagined* juxtaposition of early Christians and Stoics. Paul did not write about Seneca, and vice versa. The conflict in ways of life is still there, but for all Rowe's concern with abstracting, his study still has to abstract features and juxtapose them in the scholar's mind. My study of Cyril and Julian offers an opportunity to consider what intellectual conflict looks like in the concrete.

But this advantage of concreteness trades for another disadvantage. The concreteness of the conflict makes it harder to measure how deep the disagreement on certain issues truly goes. The haze of polemical battle possibly obscures places where advancement in mutual understanding might be possible. As I said above, even if traditions are incommensurable, *people* are not (that would be a category mistake). If we grant that incommensurability is possible, then the interesting question becomes what the contours of the incommensurability looks like. What commitments ingrained in Cyril's and Julian's lives are mutually unintelligible? What commitments are tied to the weight-bearing parts of the tradition? And what commitments can they agree on, for being rooted in shared social contexts or interests?

As I've traced throughout this study, the argumentative dynamics between Cyril and Julian strongly point towards incommensurability, as MacIntyre defines it. The implicit, narrative-conflict strategy of both was, I've argued, to reconfigure the episodes of their rival—which is very close to saying that each was trying to 'grossly

distort' the 'terms in and by means of which the other delivered judgment,' to rearrange MacIntyre's definition. But since that was their strategy, this means they *wanted* their readers to think about their rivals in terms that were (from the perspective of the rival) grossly distorted. In other words, if their disagreements weren't actually so deep—or if, at least, the depth of the disagreement didn't foreclose opportunities for friendship—neither of them are motivated to show this. As Rowe points out, Seneca's and Paul's authorial personalities made it possible in late antiquity to imagine them exchanging friendly letters.<sup>28</sup> No such imagined scenario is possible with Cyril and Julian. Yet the attempt to imaginatively indwell another tradition in a charitable manner is what enables comparative exercises that take seriously the traditioned nature of rationality.<sup>29</sup> The polemical nature of Julian's and Cyril's texts make that imaginative exercise harder.

But here again, we trade for another advantage of posing questions about conflict between traditions to an instance of direct, open, polemical engagement. There is probably something appropriate about the fact that Cyril and Julian each argue so vehemently against their opponents. This feature emphasizes the existentially pressing nature of the conflict. Though I criticized Malley earlier for too hastily wishing Julian and Cyril would have been nicer to each other, I, too, would like to have seen what slightly more patience might have yielded. Julian and Cyril doubtlessly had pricklier-

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<sup>28</sup> Rowe, "Making Friends and Comparing Lives," 23.

<sup>29</sup> It is, of course, only an "attempt"—as suggested in the introduction, the imaginative indwelling is probably not fully possible, *pace* MacIntyre. But we can do better or worse jobs at trying.

than-average personalities, and a bit more intellectual patience might have yielded interesting changes in their arguments. But the heatedness of the exchange is such that only a very cynical reader indeed could overlook the fact that both interlocutors thought that questions of life and death were at stake.

That's an advantage. Still, it makes it harder to imagine what Julian might have said to Cyril's critique about cosmology and human diversity, for example. He certainly wouldn't have agreed to Cyril's starkly dichotomous, either-or scenarios that putatively flow from some of his comments. But what could he have said in response? And what could Cyril have said in answer to *that* response? This is the imaginative exercise that would be required for a more sure-footed judgment about the relationship between not just Julian and Cyril, but Hellenism and Christianity. But the hostility of Julian's and Cyril's texts make such an exercise harder.

Surmounting these challenges would require a study well beyond the scope of this dissertation. To realistically imagine a much lengthier back-and-forth between Julian and Cyril, a wider account of their entire corpuses would provide some help. More than this, though, the way to push further into the analysis would be to pick up each figure's lines of thought where those lines develop in their traditions more widely—with Iamblichus and Proclus, and Athanasius and Maximus, and so forth. I attempted to briefly model this kind of larger analysis in Chapter 4, when I drew on Plotinus to address questions of providence. But that attempt is part of why this dissertation is now longer than it should be. Questions of the larger conflict between Christianity and Hellenism will have to wait—though the question about the conflict

between Cyril and Julian can, I think, be answered. The many features of *Against Julian* clearly show that their engagement was one of narrative conflict.

## Appendix A: AGfr. 70 and LXX Leviticus 16:5–16

<p style="text-align: center;">Translation of <i>Against the Galileans</i> fr. 70</p> <p>And listen, in turn, to how much he [Moses] says about the ἀποτροπαίων: “And he will take two goats from the goats for sin and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron will offer a calf for his own sins and he will atone for himself and his house. And he will take two goats and place them before the lord by the gate of the tabernacle of the witness. And Aaron will cast on the two goats one lot for the Lord, and one lot for the ἀποπομπαίος,”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Against the Galileans</i> fr. 70</p> <p>Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀποτροπαίων ἐπάκουσον πάλιν ὅσα λέγει· «Καὶ λήψεται δύο τράγους ἐξ αἰγῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ κριὸν ἓνα εἰς ὀλοκαύτωμα. Καὶ προσάξει ὁ Ἀαρὼν τὸν μόσχον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. Καὶ λήψεται τοὺς δύο τράγους καὶ στήσει αὐτοὺς ἔναντι κυρίου παρὰ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου· καὶ ἐπιθήσει Ἀαρὼν ἐπὶ τοὺς δύο τράγους κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ» . . .</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LXX Leviticus 16:5–16</p> <p>. . . λήμψεται δύο χιμάρους ἐξ αἰγῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ κριὸν ἓνα εἰς ὀλοκαύτωμα. <b>6</b> καὶ προσάξει Ααρων τὸν μόσχον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. <b>7</b> καὶ λήμψεται τοὺς δύο χιμάρους καὶ στήσει αὐτοὺς ἔναντι κυρίου παρὰ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου· <b>8</b> καὶ ἐπιθήσει Ααρων ἐπὶ τοὺς δύο χιμάρους κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ κλῆρον ἓνα τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ. <b>9</b> καὶ προσάξει Ααρων τὸν χίμαρον, ἐφ’ ὃν ἐπῆλθεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ὁ κλῆρος τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ προσοίσει περὶ ἁμαρτίας· <b>10</b> καὶ τὸν χίμαρον, ἐφ’ ὃν ἐπῆλθεν ἐπ’</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Translation of LXX Leviticus 16:5–16 (from the NETS, with modifications)</p> <p>“And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two χιμάρους for sin and one ram for a whole burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer the bull calf for sin, which is his own, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. And he shall take the two goats and set them before the Lord at the door of the tent of witness, and Aaron shall place on the two goats one designation τῷ κυρίῳ, and one designation τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the designation τῷ κυρίῳ came and he shall offer it for sin. And the goat on which the</p>
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<p>‘so as to send it out,’ he says, ‘as an ἀποπομπή’ and ‘to send it into the desert.’</p>	<p>‘ὥστε’ ἐκπέμψαι ‘αὐτόν’, φησίν, ‘ἀποπομπήν’ καὶ ‘ἀφεῖναι αὐτόν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.’</p>	<p>αὐτόν ὁ κλῆρος τοῦ ἀποπομπαίου, στήσει αὐτόν ζῶντα ἔναντι κυρίου τοῦ ἐξιλάσασθαι ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ ὥστε ἀποστεῖλαι αὐτόν εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπήν· ἀφήσει αὐτόν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.  <b>11</b> καὶ προσάξει Ααρων τὸν μόσχον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ μόνον καὶ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ καὶ σφάξει τὸν μόσχον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν αὐτοῦ.  <b>12</b> καὶ λήμψεται τὸ πυρεῖον πλήρες ἀνθράκων πυρὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ ἀπέναντι κυρίου καὶ πλήσει τὰς χεῖρας θυμιάματος συνθέσεως λεπτῆς καὶ εἰσοίσει ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος  <b>13</b> καὶ ἐπιθήσει τὸ θυμίαμα ἐπὶ τὸ πῦρ ἔναντι κυρίου· καὶ</p>	<p>designation τοῦ ἀποπομπαίου came, this one he shall set alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, to send it away εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπήν<sup>2</sup>—he shall let it go into the wilderness.  And Aaron shall offer the bull calf for sin, which is his, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house, and he shall slaughter the bull calf for sin, which is his own. And he shall take the fire-pan full of coals of fire from the altar that is before the Lord and shall fill his hands with a fine incense-compound, and he shall bring it inside the veil and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the vapor of the incense shall cover the the propitiatory that is upon the witnesses, and he will not die. And he shall take some of</p>
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<sup>2</sup> NETS: “into the place for sending away.”

<p>So, in this way the one sent to the ἀποπομπαίος is sent out, and he says of the other goat, “And he will slaughter the goat for the sin of the people before the lord and he will bring its blood into the inner part of the curtain</p> <p>and he will sprinkle the blood on the altar of the covenant</p>	<p>‘Ο μὲν οὖν ‘τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ’ πεμπόμενος οὕτως ἐκπέμπεται, τὸν δέ γε ἕτερον τράγον φησί· «Καὶ σφάζει τὸν τράγον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ ἔναντι κυρίου καὶ εἰσοίσει τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος</p> <p>καὶ ῥανεῖ τὸ αἷμα ἐπὶ τὴν βᾶσιν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου</p>	<p>καλύψει ἡ ἀτμὶς τοῦ θυμιάματος τὸ ἱλαστήριον τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν μαρτυρίων, καὶ οὐκ ἀποθανεῖται.</p> <p><b>14</b>καὶ λήμψεται ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ μόσχου καὶ ῥανεῖ τῷ δακτύλῳ ἐπὶ τὸ ἱλαστήριον κατὰ ἀνατολάς· κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου ῥανεῖ ἑπτὰκις ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τῷ δακτύλῳ.</p> <p><b>15</b> καὶ σφάζει τὸν χίμαρον τὸν περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὸν περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ ἔναντι κυρίου καὶ εἰσοίσει ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος καὶ ποιήσει τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ὄν τρόπον ἐποίησεν τὸ αἷμα τοῦ μόσχου, καὶ ῥανεῖ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ἱλαστήριον κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου</p>	<p>the blood of the bull calf and sprinkle with his finger onto the propitiatory towards the east. In front of the propitiatory he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.</p> <p>And he shall slaughter the goat for sin that is for the people before the Lord and bring in from its blood inside the veil and he will do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull calf,</p> <p>and he shall sprinkle its blood on the propitiatory in front of the propitiatory.</p>
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and he will make atonement for the holy ones from the defilements of the sons of Israel and from their injustices for all their sins.”	καὶ ἐξιλάσεται ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἀπὸ τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδικημάτων αὐτῶν περὶ πασῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν.	<b>16</b> καὶ ἐξιλάσεται τὸ ἅγιον ἀπὸ τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδικημάτων αὐτῶν περὶ πασῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν.	And he shall make the holy place ritually acceptable because of the unclean things of the sons of Israel and because of their wrongs – concerning all their sins.
Ὡς <sup>1</sup> μὲν οὖν . . . τοὺς τῶν θυσιῶν ἠπίστατο τρόπους Μωυσῆς, εὐδελόν ἐστὶ που διὰ τῶν ῥηθέντων.	Thus it is clear through what has been laid out that Moses knew the methods of sacrifices.		

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<sup>1</sup> The final phrase in these columns comes at the beginning of the next fragment within Cyril’s *Against Julian*, where Julian’s text is preserved. It is likely that in the original, complete text of *Against Julian* this phrase followed directly on the text that precedes in this paragraph.

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