Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Exegesis

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Abstract

Cyril of Alexandria's scriptural exegesis is markedly Trinitarian in scope and Christological in focus throughout his writings. In the following thesis, I explore how Cyril reads Scripture as speaking about the Son of God both *as God* and *as incarnate*. While I focus on his *Dialogues on the Trinity* (*dial. Trin.*), Cyril's vision of partitive exegesis permeates his entire corpus. Early Christian reading culture consists of more than simply *how* one reads, but also considers *who* reads and *to what end*. Accordingly, Cyril envisions that an *ideal reader* undertakes partitive exegesis with certain Nicene commitments. Partitive exegesis is a reading strategy whereby interpreters identify some texts as speaking of the Son *qua* divine and others as *qua* human. This method of reading does not speak of there being two Sons, nor does it intend to divide the unity of the single incarnate Word. I identify two modes of Cyril's Christological exegetical framework to describe the single prosopon: (1) *epochal exegesis* (in which Cyril identifies any given text as speaking about one of the three stages in the Son's economy) and (2) *partitive exegesis* (in which Cyril subsequently identifies whether texts speak about the Son *qua* divine Word, or Son as incarnate Word during His *oikonomia with the flesh*).

Declaration

This thesis is the product of my own work and does not include work that has been presented in any form for a degree at this or any other university. All quotations from, and references to, the work of persons other than myself have been properly acknowledged throughout.

Statement of Copyright

to Jeff

Acknowledgements

This thesis began long before I began reflecting on Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian exegesis. While finishing my work on the Didache, I soon observed my love for biblical studies being matched with a love for Patristic dogmatics. From the start, I wanted to pursue theological exegesis of the New Testament Scriptures and hermeneutical reflection on a book still left untranslated within Patristic literature. Essentially, these features should intersect with each of my interests. So, I first considered Cyril's commentary on Hebrews, only to discover someone was currently translating the commentary.[1] I feared taking on Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity* (hereafter, *dial. Trin.*), still left untranslated, due to its size and the sheer difficulty of his Greek. So, I spent an entire year putting together a loose translation of this Trinitarian volume. And, now that I'm at this point, I regret not picking up this task sooner. As Augustine reflects, to consider the Trinity is the beatific vision: "The fullness of our happiness, beyond which there is none else, is this: to enjoy God the Trinity in whose image we were made."[2] And so, what follows is both a humble attempt at contributing to Cyrilline studies and pursuing one feature of the happy life: contemplating the divine realities of the Trinity.

As with a product of any nature like this, mentors, colleagues, and friends—and often the lines of distinction are quite blurred—become deeply treasured in these moments. Their help, insights, presence, intrigue, and criticisms have only deepened this project and added value to my life. First, of course, I mention Lewis Ayres. The wit, humor, patience, breadth of insights in early Christianity and the academic discipline, and much more have been beyond helpful and refining for me. My time working this closely with him will certainly be considered

[1] David R. Maxwell, trans., *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentaries on Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Hebrews*, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022).

[2] *trin.* 1.9.18.

among the highlights of my academic life. He has helped me to anchor my academic feet, find my writing voice, and tighten my vision of the research and writing process.

I consider myself quite lucky to have these relationships, and my work is better due to their help. Each assisted me in various ways: Coleman Ford, Matthew Crawford, Mark DelCogliano, Francis Watson, Madison Pierce, Amy Hughes, Megan Devore, Brian Arnold, Trey Moss, Phil Carey, Greg Hillis, Blair Smith, John Gill, David Rathel, Clayton Jefford, Luke Stamps, Grant Sutherland, and Kevin Hill. I additionally feel a deep sense of gratitude to three respective institutions: California Baptist University, namely Dirk Davis, Thomas Schneider, Sandra Romo, Chris Morgan, Tony Chute, and Keri Murcray; Gateway Seminary, namely Gregg Watson, Chris Chun, and John Shouse; and my spiritual community, Redeemer Baptist Church, namely those that would let me bend their ear about my research (especially Merissa, Kristel, and Matt). During this project, each of them provided encouragement, vision, and balance to my life in unique ways.

While a writing project like this requires a person to take residence at a quiet desk, peruse the stacks at libraries, revisit the coffee maker early in the morning, one must not forget the writer itself. Over the years, and especially in comparing ancient reading practices with contemporary hermeneutics, I have come to see how the private life of the reader influences what a person is able to see. C. S. Lewis, in *The Magician's Nephew*, writes the following: "What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are."[3] This thesis is dedicated to Jeff, well, two Jeffs: Jeff Mooney and Jeff Biddle. As Lewis reflects, in terms of "what sort of person" one becomes, these two have shaped the *kind* of person I am becoming to see and hear differently.

I turn last to mention my family, and while being mentioned last, to each of them is reserved my deepest love: Allyson, Mercy, and Caden. Augustine, again, defines virtue as "rightly

[3] C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, The Chronicles of Narnia 1 (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 148.

ordered love" and that to live well is to display proper virtue.[4] My family is an immediate presence to draw out of me rightly ordered loves for God, for them, and for neighbor. I treasure each time I put the pen down to play baseball, or to skate out front, or to go on little adventures, or to draw what we envision in our imagination. While these activities prolonged me from completing this thesis, I have not regretted a single moment with you—more so, my writing distracts me from life's adventures with you. And, especially to Allyson, my love and my best friend, your support, confidence, patience, virtuous life, and presence will be surpassed by no one. You are a gift and sign of the Triune God's graces and favor to me.

Advent 2021

Riverside, CA

[4] *Civ.* 15.22.

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Abbreviations

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum
ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AugStud	*Augustinian Studies*
AW	*Athanasius Werke*
BDAG	Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BLE	*Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CCR	*Coptic Church Review*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CH	*Church History*
CNS	*Cristianesimo nella storia*
CPHST	Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
ECF	Early Church Fathers
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
GE	Franco Montanari, *GE – The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015)

GL	*Grammatici Latini*. 7 vols. Ed. Henrich Keil. Vol. 8 ed. H. Hagen (Leipzig: Teubner, 1857–80)
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
GSECP	Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics
HeyJ	Heythrop Journal
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JTI	*Journal of Theological Interpretation*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LFC	A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996)
MScRel	*Mélanges de Science Religieuse*
NedTT	*Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift*
NPNF	Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers
NRTh	*La nouvelle revue théologique*
NV	*Nova et Vetera*
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
OSAT	Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology
OSHT	Oxford Studies in Historical Theology
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
PG	Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca
PGL	G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961)
PhA	Philosophia Antiqua
PO	Patrologia Orientalis

PPS	Popular Patristics Series
ProEccl	*Pro Ecclesia*
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RB	*Revue biblique*
RechAug	*Recherches augustiniennes*
RelS	*Religious Studies*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCH	Studies in Church History
SEAug	Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
StPatr	Studia Patristica
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
TEG	Traditio Exegetica Graeca
TS	*Theological Studies*
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*

Introduction

I

Early Christian exegesis has become a subject of great interest both among scholars of the period and modern theologians. One of the key themes of recent scholarship in this area has been a focus on analysing what early Christian authors say about exegesis, and what they actually do. In this thesis, I follow this tradition of scholarship by examining one aspect of the work of one of the most important early Christian writers, namely Cyril of Alexandria (*c.* AD 378–444).[1] My focus is the question of how he reads Scripture as speaking both about the Son of God as God and as the incarnate one—a practice known as partitive exegesis (a fuller definition is provided in this introduction). I will argue that a key to Cyril's Christological exegesis is a two-fold manner of reading Christological texts, which will include an exegetical framework and repeating theological themes within his Trinitarian vision. His two-fold model attends to the following: speak about the Son in his proper season and speak about the Son in two ways during his incarnation. Cyril distinguishes between: (1) the Son in a designated season to discern what is proper to the Son and (2) the Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh.* Given the immense size

[1] Rather than detailing the life of Cyril, I defer to several histories and biographies of Cyril's life. See Joseph Kopallik, *Cyrillus von Alexandrien, eine Biographie nach den Quellen* (Mainz: F. Kirchheim, 1881); Hubert du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité chez Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944), 441–47; E. R. Hardy, "The Further Education of Cyril of Alexandria (412–444): Questions and Problems," StPatr 17 (1982): 116–22; Lionel R. Wickham, ed., *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, OECT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xi–xxviii; P. Évieux, eds., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales I–VI*, SC 372 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 11–72; John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, VCSup 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1–125; A. Davids, "Cyril of Alexandria's First Episcopal Years," in *The Impact of Scripture in Early Christianity*, ed. M. L. van Poll-van de Lisdonk and Jan den Boeft, VCSup 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 187–201; Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, ECF (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3–63; Sebastian Schurig, *Die Theologie Des Kreuzes Beim Frühen Cyrill von Alexandria: Dargestellt an Seiner Schrift „De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate,"* STAC 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 7–28; Lois M. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John*, GSECP 29 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 11–69.

of Cyril's literary *corpus*, I focus particularly on Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity* (*dial. Trin.*), written before his controversy with Nestorius erupted, even though I will consider other texts periodically.

Many works have examined Cyril's Trinitarian and Christological theology in the past few years, and others have explored Cyril's exegetical patterns more broadly,[2] but few volumes have pursued how the two intersect.[3] Comments on Cyril's Trinitarian and partitive exegesis are relatively scattered throughout articles and monographs on Cyril's literature. Lars Koen asserts that Cyril uses partitive readings "more heavily than any Father of the Church before him"[4] and defines partitive readings as follows: "an exegesis of Scriptural texts whose content must somehow be related to both the divine and human natures in Christ. Partitive exegesis implies a separation or partition of the interpretation of certain Scriptural statements vis-à-vis the human and divine natures in Christ."[5] As Koen argues, Cyril's partitive strategy ascribes what belongs to the divine and human nature. He limits much of his analysis to Cyril's

[2] Robert L. Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria," in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, vol. 2, Bible in Ancient Christianity 1 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2006); Dimitrios Zaganas, *La formation d'une exégèse alexandrine post-origénienne: Les Commentaires sur les Douze Prophètes et sur Isaïe de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, TEG 17 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019); Dimitrios Zaganas, "Cyrille d'Alexandrie aux prises avec un exégète allégoriste au début de son *In Oseam*: Didyme l'Aveugle ou Piérius d'Alexandrie?," *VC* 64 (2010): 480–91; J. David Cassel, "Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis," StPatr 37 (2001): 413–20; Hauna T. Ondrey, "Cyril of Alexandria's Hermeneutics of Identity in the Commentary on the Twelve Prophets," in *Doing Theology for the Church: Essays in Honor of Klyne Snodgrass*, ed. Rebekah Ecklund and John E. Phelan (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 233–46; Hauna T. Ondrey, *The Minor Prophets as Christian Scripture in the Commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Farag, *A New Testament Exegete*.

[3] Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique,* Collection de Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1994); John A. McGuckin, "Moses and the 'Mystery of Christ' in St. Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis," *CCR* 21 (2000): 98–114; Schurig, *Die Theologie Des Kreuzes*; Shawn J. Wilhite, "'Was It Not the Only Begotten That Was Speaking Long Ago': Cyril of Alexandria's Christological Exegesis in His Commentary on Hebrews (Heb. 1:1–2)," StPatr 129 (2021): 39–50.

[4] Lars Koen, "Partitive Exegesis in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John," StPatr 25 (1993): 120; Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, Studia Dotrinae Christianae Upsaliensia 31 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991).

[5] Koen, "Partitive Exegesis," 116.

formulae of ὡς Θεός and ὡς ἄνθρωπος in his *Commentary on John* (*Jo.*).[6] Hans van Loon explores the attribution of sayings in Cyril's *Contra Nestorium* and then more broadly in Cyril's literature. He regards Cyril as safeguarding the unity of Christ and thereby emphasizing that all sayings refer to the single subject. He catalogues how Cyril makes these two-nature distinctions in the single Son: "Christ does some things 'as God,' 'divinely,' or things 'as man,' 'humanly,' 'economically,' 'in the flesh,' or 'according to the flesh.'"[7]

Few Cyrilline scholars have explored the tripartite reading strategy as displayed in the exegetical use of the following Greek terms: καιρός, πρόσωπον, and πρᾶγμα.[8] Ruth Siddals recognizes these terms relative to Cyril's exegesis and the patterns that emerge from them.[9] Furthermore, she highlights Cyril's use of these three terms and that he depends upon an Athanasian exegetical logic. Still, she stops short of addressing how these terms are embedded within Cyril's interpretive framework.[10] Much of my argument depends quite extensively upon

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[6] Maurice Wiles offers an initial name for partitive exegesis as "two-nature exegesis." As he compares Theodore and Cyril's Christological exegesis from the Gospel of John, Wiles sets out to describe how the two "describe the divine and human elements within the one Christ." I will periodically use "two-nature exegesis" to refer to the reading strategy proper for describing Cyril's scriptural exegesis in relation to the Son's *oikonomia with the flesh*. Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 136–39.

[7] Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, VCSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 549.

[8] Jacques Liébaert, "Saint-Cyrille d'Alexandrie et l'Arianisme: Les sources et la doctrine christologique du *Thesaurus* et des *Dialogues sur la Trinité*" (PhD thesis, Lille, Université catholique de Lille, 1948), 116–24; Jacques Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951), 158–67; Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 190–91; van Loon, *Dyophysite Christology*, 180; Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 14; Schurig, *Die Theologie Des Kreuzes*, 156–59.

[9] Although she does not give an exegetical name, Siddals certainly describes Cyril's partitive reading strategy. "He holds that the sentences of scripture to be analysed comprise two distinct sets of predications. On the one hand, things are said and done that befit divinity; on the other hand, things are said and done that befit humanity. The key presupposition underlying Cyril's exegesis, following Athanasius and the Arians, is that both sets of predicates apply to *one* grammatical subject; and he strongly opposes the Antiochene view that the story of Jesus Christ contains two grammatical subjects, namely the Word (of whom divine predications are made) and the man (of whom human predications are made)." Ruth Siddals, "Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria," *JTS* 38 (1987): 358–61.

[10] Siddals regards Cyril as a consistent thinker. "Throughout the Cyrilline corpus, this pattern of exegesis is maintained with a marked degree of consistency. This is due partly to the rigorous analytical concepts upon which Cyril is relying, and partly to the integrated nature of theology. His method of exegesis is guided by the inner structure of his christology; and both exegesis and christology are, in turn, determined by complex issues of soteriology." Siddals, "Logic and Christology," 361.

Marie-Odile Boulnois's study.[11] Noting the tripartite set of terms, she identifies Cyril's triadic exegetical rule as follows: "Cyril declares that to be sure of not missing the purpose of the commented passage, and, if he wants his speech to be pure and irreproachable, the exegete must specify the καιρός, the πρόσωπον and the πρᾶγμα of the action narrated by Scripture."[12] And, while I nuance her findings slightly, she discerns how Cyril uses καιρός to portray two seasons of the Son: the single subject *before* and *after* the incarnation. "Cyril uses this category to distinguish the two fundamental epochs between which the events of the divine economy are divided: before and after the incarnation. These do not correspond to the distinction between the Old and New Testament. Indeed, it can happen that, in the Old Testament, it is spoken of the Word incarnated by anticipation."[13] As Cyril begins to explore the multiple sayings of Scripture that apply to the incarnate Son, she regards how the *communicatio idiomatum* comes to the fore to discern the appropriation of sayings.[14]

II

Before proceeding with the argument, I first want to offer introductory comments to Cyril's Christological exegetical vision and then define these two reading strategies. Partitive exegesis is a reading strategy whereby interpreters identify some texts as speaking of the Son *qua* divine and others as *qua* human. This method of reading does not speak of there being two Sons, nor does it intend to divide the unity of the single incarnate Word. I identify two modes of Cyril's Christological exegetical framework: *epochal exegesis* and *partitive exegesis*.

[11] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*; Marie-Odile Boulnois, "L'eucharistie, mystère d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Les modèles d'union trinitaire et christologique," *RSR* 74 (2000): 147–72; Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity According to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and Its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 75–111.

[12] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 87. Throughout this thesis, all translations of Boulnois are mine and are meant to simplify the reading process for English readers.

[13] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 90.

[14] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 91–92.

The *epochal* mode of reading attends to three individual seasons to make sense of the realities proper to the Son—more specifically, Cyril identifies any given text as speaking about one of the three stages in the Son's economy. The *partitive* mode of reading attends strictly to the season of the incarnation to register the metaphysical realities of a two-natured Son—more specifically, it discerns whether texts speak about the Son *qua* divine Word, or Son as incarnate Word during His *oikonomia with the flesh* (οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός).[15] While partitive exegesis in general can interpret Christological Scriptures as *qua* divine and *qua* human, I further nuance the two by amending the description: *epochal exegesis* as a *diachronic* concern for the *qua* divine and *qua* human interpretative pattern across the full economy of the Son, and *partitive exegesis* as a *synchronic* concern for the *qua* divine and *qua* human interpretative pattern solely limited to the season of the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Cyril's Trinitarian exegesis considers the seasonal timeline of the Son to distinguish what is proper of the Son *before* and *after* the incarnation (i.e., *epochal exegesis*). He also contemplates the exclusive season of the incarnation to consider what is proper of the Son as subsisting in the two natures (i.e., *partitive exegesis*). This Christological exegetical vision consists of two different ways of reading Christological texts to describe the single *prosopon*: (1) *epochal exegesis* to discern between the temporal and spatial placement of the Son and (2) *partitive exegesis* to discern the metaphysical realities proper to the Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh*. And, as will be displayed, Cyril uses epochal exegesis to frame his partitive exegesis.

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[15] I explore Cyril's idiolect use of *oikonomia with the flesh* (οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός) in chapter 4. Per Evert van Emde Boas and Peter Lampe, μετά and σύν can be used to convey an *accompaniment* function. Within classical Greek, μετά + gen is preferred and more common than σύν + dat to convey this function (see Evert van Emde Boas, et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 390, 393). Lampe offers helpful data to consider μετά (PGL, s.v. μετά) and σύν (PGL, s.v. σύν) within theological and Trinitarian contexts. Σύν within theological contexts appears in early Trinitarian doxologies about the persons of the Trinity (1.a) and is more prominently used with the Spirit in the Cappadocian literature (1.b). Μετά, likewise, is used within theological contexts that include Trinitarian doxologies (B.1); however, Lampe distinguishes between μετά + gen and μετά + acc to distinguish between orthodox and "Arian" relationships of Trinitarian persons, respectively (B.2). To support his findings, Lampe supplies examples from Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Athanasius. Thus, it appears that Cyril's use of μετά σαρκός is situated within a common use of μετά comparable to Athanasius and the Cappadocians. While the phrase *oikonomia with the flesh* is not solely unique to Cyril, his use of the phrase far exceeds any other figure in the Patristic era as I will discuss in a later chapter.

Cyril privileges καιρός ("season" or "epoch") within a tripartite set of terms (καιρός, πρόσωπον, and πρᾶγμα) that together function as an exegetical reading strategy.[16] More specifically, he uses the temporal movements already available in the Philippian hymn to situate the Son within a tri-seasonal framework. Philippians 2:6–11 already supplies Cyril the scriptural language—both logical divisions and spatial transitions—to describe this three-fold temporal division.

Epoch 1: Eternal Monogenes in the heavens (Phil 2:6)

Epoch 2: Incarnated Son and the *kenosis* on the earth (Phil 2:7–8)

Epoch 3: Exalted Son in the heavens (Phil 2:9–11)

Cyril privileges καιρός in this tripartite rule so that one must properly situate the seasonal station of the Son before speaking of his realities: discern the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον.

Following Cyril's concern for καιρός, I will use the phrase *epochal exegesis* to describe one feature of Cyril's Christological reading strategy. I define *epochal exegesis* as follows:

> DEFINITION: Epochal exegesis is a pattern of reading Scripture texts whereby an interpreter attends to the epochal or seasonal position (καιρός) of the Son to assign the properties suitable to each season. By noting the epochal stations of the Son, interpreters identify the spatial situation of the Son in heaven or on earth, provide three temporal boundaries that confine the career of the Son, and carefully assign the properties germane to the Son proper for each epoch. The seasonal boundaries delimit what properties can be attributed to the Son during the following three stations: eternal Monogenes, humiliation and incarnation, and exaltation.

Early in *dial. Trin.* 1, Cyril argues that this reading strategy is necessary to discern what is

[16] I desire to provide a translation note this early in the argument. Throughout this thesis, I translate καιρός as "season" or "epoch." "Season" and "time" are the first two glosses provided by Lampe (PGL, s.v., καιρός). "Exact or critical time," "season," and "opportunity" are the listed glosses in LSJ (s.v., καιρός III, III.2). "Moment," while a less frequent gloss, may still be used (BDAG, s.v., καιρός 2; GE s.v., καιρός B). G.-M. de Durand repeatedly translates καιρός as *époque* in *dial. Trin.* (see G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Dialogues sur la Trinité*, SC 231, 237, 246). Thus, I will predominantly use "season" and "epoch" to translate καιρός to remain sensitive to PGL and de Durand's translation.

appropriate of the Son in each season:

> Is the distinction between these texts, therefore, quite necessary for us, in our opinion, the one which separates and discerns properly what is appropriate for each season (τὸ ἑχάστῳ πρέπον καιρῷ)?[17]

In *dial. Trin.* 5, Cyril uses the Philippian hymn to distinguish what is appropriate of the Son as eternal and as incarnate, and he further notes how even Paul "divides his narrative between two seasons (δυσίν . . . διανέμαι καιροῖς) and introduces a double point of view on the knowledge of the mystery."[18] This distinction predicates the Christological properties and activities that belong to each season and applies them to a single-subject Son. So, Cyril's epochal scriptural exegesis serves as an initial framework to read Christological texts that specify the seasons of the Son. As will become more apparent, Cyril's perceived exegesis is more about following the scriptural grammar than his creativity.

Cyril's partitive exegesis additionally considers the Son in the *oikonomia with the flesh* and suggests two more additional ways of speaking about the Son *after he has been united to the flesh*. Cyril first mentions this partitive reading rule in *dial. Trin.* 1.

> The one whom we regard as truly venerable and very wise, Paul, or rather the entire choir of saints, has known and introduced to us two ways of speaking about the Son *after he has been united to the flesh*, that is to say, that he became like us all, except only sin.[19]

By noting the phrase "in the days of his flesh" (Heb 5:7–8), Cyril warrants a two-fold pattern to speak of the Son. "There are therefore two ways of speaking about the Son. We must therefore attribute to him what is of God, as to God, and as to him who has become as we are, what is what we are, that is, what is human."[20] By following Cyril's exegetical concerns, I define partitive

[17] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e (SC 231:164).

[18] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547b (SC 237:266).

[19] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396e–97a (SC 231:162).

[20] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398d (SC 231:166).

exegesis as follows:

> DEFINITION: Partitive exegesis is a pattern of reading Scripture texts whereby an interpreter assumes the seasonal position of the Son during the incarnation—the *oikonomia with the flesh*—to register the two properties germane to the single Son. By noting the single season of the Son, interpreters identify the nature and activities of the Son that derive their origin in the eternal divine nature or the finite human nature. This epoch situates what properties can be attributed to the single Son: the eternal, immutable, divine nature or the finite, passible, human nature. Thus, partitive exegesis registers what is proper for the eternal single Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh* as to what is of God (*qua* divine) and humanity (*qua* human).

Partitive readings require the interpreter to decide whether the Son is in the season of the incarnation or not. If so, then there are two more ways of speaking about the Son because of the two natures present in the *single prosopon* during this season. Readers of Scripture must learn to attribute what is of God to the Son *qua* divine when appropriate, and they must also attribute what is of humanity to the Son *qua* human.

Cyril's partitive exegesis is situated within a broader exegetical culture. This exegetical culture, and especially for early Christian interpreters, observes how complex sets of doctrinal and exegetical strategies intersect with finite human language and cultural formation. The Christian reading *habitus* is shaped by new situations, cultural practices, and the Christian theological imagination.[21] To explore the Nicene tradition, one may assume both a culture of theology and a culture of reading strategies. *How* early Christians read Scripture does not paint the entire picture of an early Christian reading culture. *Who* reads, *to what end*, *what* theological

[21] The use of Scripture serves as the primary point of departure for Christian theology, and the philosophical themes and language are "conceived not as necessary *transposition* of ideas, but as an *elucidation* of the text of Scripture." Even as learned Christian scriptural readers were taught within grammatical and rhetorical traditions, the tension still emerges of speaking finitely about infinite realities. How does human reason ascend to divine realities by using Scripture and philosophical language, assuming the condescension of God to assist human knowledge, their participation in the divine life, and spiritual reflection of Scripture? And by referring to a pro-Nicene culture, I convey a broad sense of symmetry between theologians committed to the pro-Nicene theologies of the fourth and fifth centuries. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 274–78; Lewis Ayres, "Scripture in the Trinitarian Controversies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 439–40.

premises inform and are upheld by reading Scripture, and much more each consists of aspects of an early Christian reading *culture*.[22] The fourth-century controversies provided much of the essential contours of classical Trinitarian and Christological theology. And while these controversies included philosophical and dogmatic reflections, they were first and foremost exegetical. Christian theologians appropriate their reading strategies, developed within a rhetorical and philosophical context, and read Scripture to speak about the transcendent realities of God. Furthermore, Christian readers use the grammar of human dialogue to speak about the divine realities, perceive God as descending from heaven so that they may participate in God's life. And, Cyril's partitive exegesis resides within the currents of a pro-Nicene tradition—including ideal readers, reading strategies, and theological commitments—to assume the language of a pro-Nicene exegetical culture.[23]

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[22] See the following works for more on ancient reading culture, including broader socio-rhetorical approaches and early Christian appropriation: William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities*, Classical Culture and Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1100*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception*, Yale Studies in Hermeneutics (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to Be Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text*, PhA 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

[23] This idea is certainly not unique to me and, to ward off objections, I do not aim to provide tight categories here. Instead, I build from Ayres's general descriptions of Nicene and pro-Nicene theologies. Ayres defines pro-Nicene as follows: "by 'pro-Nicene' I mean those theologies, appearing from the 360s and 380s, consisting of a set of arguments about the nature of the Trinity and about the enterprise of Trinitarian theology, and forming the basis of Nicene Christian belief in the 380s. Intrinsic to these theologies were compatible (but not identical) accounts of how the Nicene Creed should be understood. These accounts constituted a set of arguments *for* Nicaea—hence *pro*-Nicene." If, as John McGuckin suggests, Cyril was born in 378, then certainly Cyril resides outside of what constitutes the formation of theologies within the 360s and 380s. But, proper for the language of "pro-Nicene" is not strict historical categories but a *culture* of theological discourse and a *culture* of scriptural exegesis that coincides with said theology. The language of a "pro-Nicene culture," as suggested by Ayres, minimizes the supposed differences of an East/West divide, and considers the shared taxis of Trinitarian theological commitments. Even the dates of the 360s and 380s are a bit elastic as they expanded to include the 390s and beyond to include Augustine in the Latin tradition. So, Cyril is considered a pro-Nicene theologian because of his (1) commitment to, preservation of, and continuation of the Nicene formula; (2) Trinitarian commitments—person and nature distinction, eternal generation of the Son, and inseparable activity; and (3) exegetical creativity and scriptural reading *habitus* that support the general culture of pro-Nicene thought. In this way, he does not need to be in complete agreement with those theologians between the 360s and 380s to be

III

To situate Cyril's exegetical and theological argument, I will briefly sketch the early episcopal career of Cyril and suggest a dating schema for the works I treat in this thesis. We know little about Cyril's early rise to the bishopric and the subsequent years until the Nestorian controversy (beginning 429). Cyril was born *c.* AD 378 in an Egyptian town, Theodosios, and was seven years old when his uncle, Theophilus, became bishop of Alexandria in 385.[24] John, bishop of Nikiu (in the seventh century) and Severus, bishop of El-Ashmunien (in the tenth century) provided this information about the earliest experiences of Cyril.[25] These accounts tell us that he resided in the desert of Saint Macarius for five years (395–400), studying the Scriptures with Serapion the Wise.[26] Cyril is recorded as reading what amounts to the whole of the New Testament on a nightly basis![27] In addition to the Scriptures, he is said to have never ceased studying theology and reading "several doctors of the orthodox Church."[28] According to John's

considered pro-Nicene. For more on pro-Nicene language, see Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 11n3; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 6, 236–40; Lewis Ayres, "*Nicaea and Its Legacy*: An Introduction," *HTR* 100, no. 2 (2007): 141–44; Lewis Ayres, "A Response to the Critics of *Nicaea and Its Legacy*," *HTR* 100, no. 2 (2007): 159–71; Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 42–71; Michel René Barnes, "The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon," in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London: Routledge, 1998), 47–67; Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*, OSHT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10n27.

[24] See R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiu* (London, 1916), 76; McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 2.

[25] *hist.* 11–12 (PO 1:427–44). See B. Evetts, trans., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, vol. 1, *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: Librairie de Paris, 1907), 427–44.

[26] For a discussion on Serapion the Wise, see Farag, *A New Testament Exegete*, 16–21.

[27] *hist.* 11 (PO 1:429): "He used to stand before his teacher studying, with a sword of iron in his hand; and if he felt an inclination to sleep, he pricked him with the sword, and so he woke up again; and during most of his nights he would read through in a single night the Four Gospels, and the Catholic Epistles, and the Acts, and the first Epistle of the Blessed Paul, namely, that addressed to the Romans; and on the morrow after this, Cyril's teacher would know, by looking at his face, that he had studied all night. And the grace of God was with Cyril, so that when he had read a book once, he knew it by heart; and in these years in the desert, he learnt by heart all the canonical books."

[28] *hist.* 11 (PO 1:429): "Cyril's conduct was excellent, and his humility great; and he never ceased to study theology, nor to meditate upon the words of the doctors of the orthodox Church, Athanasius and Dionysius and Clement, patriarch of Rome, and Eusebius, and Basil, bishop of Armenia, and Basil, bishop of Cappadocia. These are the orthodox fathers whose works he studied. And he would not follow the doctrine of Origen, nor even take his books into his hand for a single day."

account, Cyril was numbered among Theophilus's readers at a young age. Then, he was, at a later time, ordained as deacon and priest, and eventually he became Patriarch of Alexandria.[29] In 403, Cyril accompanied Theophilus at the Synod of the Oak in Constantinople where John Chrysostom was deposed.[30]

The immediate events surrounding Cyril's appointment to the bishopric are shrouded with controversy. Theophilus died on 15 October 412 and two factions immediately appeared.[31] Some desired Timothy, an archdeacon, and some Cyril to replace Theophilus. As Socrates records, three days after Theophilus's death (18 October), Cyril assumed the episcopate and "went beyond the limits of its sacerdotal functions," immediately closing down Novatian churches, seizing their consecrated vessels, and stripping Theopemptus, a Novatian bishop, of his property.[32] We do not know what Cyril's role may have been in the death of the pagan philosopher Hypatia (March 415). Socrates claims Hypatia "fell victim to political jealousy," and it was rumored among the Christians that she prohibited Orestes, the prefect of Egypt at the time, from being reconciled to the bishop.[33] A large mob arrived at Hypatia's home. She was dragged from a carriage, taken before the church called *Caesareum*, stripped bare, and was murdered by the mob with tiles; she was then torn to pieces, brought to a place called *Cinaron*, and burned.[34] Of this event, Socrates concluded: "And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort."[35] Of all the extant accounts, only Damascius's *Life of Isidore* directly implicates Cyril for Hypatia's

[29] *Chronicle of John*, 79.12–17.

[30] See Cyril, *ep.* 33.7; 75.3; 76.7.

[31] *h.e.* 7.7.

[32] *h.e.* 7.7. Socrates of Constantinople has been recognized as a Novatianist sympathizer, in that he speaks positively about this group without self-identifying as an adherent of the group, and pro-Constantinople. See Theresa Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 26–29.

[33] *h.e.* 7.15. For a more critical account of this event, see Ari Belenkiy, "The Novatian 'Indifferent Canon' and Pascha in Alexandria in 414: Hypatia's Murder Case Reopened," *VC* 70, no. 4 (2016): 373–400.

[34] *h.e.* 7.15.

[35] *h.e.* 7.15.

murder.[36]

Cyril's literary output before the Nestorian controversy occurred at the same time as the events described in the previous paragraph. Most of his writings from this period are exegetical, with a special focus on the Old Testament: *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*, *Glaphrya*, *Commentary on Isaiah*, and *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*. Cyril explored the doctrine of the Trinity in three works, one of which is a New Testament commentary: *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinite* (*thes.*), *dial. Trin.*, and *Jo.* Cyrilline scholarship affirms that *thes*. is the first of Cyril's Trinitarian volumes and this work displays awareness of Athanasius's *Ar*. Providing more precise dates for these three Trinitarian works by Cyril is difficult.[37] According to Cyril's first letter to Nestorius (d. AD early 429), *dial. Trin*. was composed while Atticus, Patriarch of Constantinople was still living and Cyril had yet to distribute the treatise.[38]

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[36] Suda, s.v. Hypatia Y166: "And when he learned this he was very upset and soon planned her murder, the most unholy of all murders." *Chronicle of John* 84.103 echoes this sentiment and notes that the mob named Cyril as the "new Theophius," because he destroyed the final remnants of idolatry: "And all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him 'the new Theophilus'; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city." According to Edward Watts, "Aside from Damscius, 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" (*Hypatia: The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher*, Women in Antiquity [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017], 117). Peter Brown summarizes the political context of Hypatia's death and implicates Cyril (*Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* [Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992], 115–16). According to Christopher Haas, the historical accuracy of this event may be unknowable: "History has consigned to oblivion any evidence that would directly link Cyril to the murder of Hypatia. We will never know if Cyril himself orchestrated the attack, or if, like the assault upon Orestes, certain partisans unilaterally 'resolved to fight for the patriarch'" (*Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* [Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997], 313 [see pages 295–316]).

[37] Joussard suggests the following dating schema: *thes.* (*c.* 423–25); *dial. Trin.* (*c.* 423–25); *Jo.* (*c.* 425–28). Charlier suggests *c.* 412 for *thes.* De Durand offers the following: *thes.* (*c.* pre-412); *dial. Trin.* (*c.* 420); *Jo.* (*c.* pre-429). For further discussion on the dating schema, see the following Georges Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428," in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon, 1945), 159–74; Georges Jouassard, "Saint Cyrille d'Alexendrie aux prises avec la 'communications des idioms' avant 428 dans ses ouvrages Anti-arien," StPatr 6 (1962): 112–21; Georges Jouassard, "La date des écrits anitiariens de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *RB* 89 (1977): 354–74; Noël Charlier, "Le 'Thesaurus de Trinitate' de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Questions de critique littéraire," *RHE* 45 (1950): 25–81; G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Dialogues sur la Trinité*, SC 231 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 38–43; J. Mahé, "La date du Commentaire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie sur l'évangile selon saint Jean," *BLE* 9 (1907): 41–45; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 19.

[38] *ep.* 2.2: "In fact, I say that, while Atticus of happy memory still lived, a book concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity was composed by me in which also is a treatise about the incarnation of the only begotten in harmony with which I have now written. I read it to him, to bishops, to clerics, and to those of the faithful who listened eagerly. Thus far, I have given a copy to no one. It is likely that when the treatise is published, I will be accused again, because, even before the election of your reverence, the little treatise was composed."

It seems, also, that Andrew of Samosata may have been aware of *dial. Trin.* by AD 433.[39] Cyril thus provides a *terminus ante quem* of 10 October 425 for *dial. Trin.*, as Atticus died in that month. Scholars do agree on the *order* of Cyril's Trinitarian volumes: *thes.*, *dial. Trin.*, and *Jo.*; *Jo.* must come last because he mentioned both *thes.* and *dial. Trin.*[40] In each of these three books, Cyril engages "Arian" and "Eunomian" ideas. In fact, Hermias functions as an "Arian" interlocutor for Cyril's *dial. Trin.* and *inc. unigen.*[41] And, Nemesinus serves as the intended recipient of both *thes.* and *dial. Trin.*

IV

Accordingly, after this introduction, in chapter 1, I begin by looking at the profile of Cyril's ideal reader. By situating Cyril's reading profile in Late Antique philosophical training, I show that readers would receive moral training and pursuits of virtue as an initial trajectory for the pupil. The skilled reader is virtuous. As I consider how Cyril unfolds this vision, his description of the *ideal reader* becomes loosely autobiographical, as Cyril desires Hermias to read as he does. This ideal reader is envisioned as a wayfarer, who travels along a "royal road" with Nicene commitments to contemplate the divine realities. The reader must be illumined by the Spirit, possess wisdom, and display several exegetical virtues to perceive a partitive exegetical vision.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore the contours of Cyril's epochal reading strategy. In chapter 2, I describe how Cyril unfolds this reading pattern. Cyril's epochal strategy privileges καιρός and

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[39] de Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité* (231), 38n1.

[40] While *Jo.* 1:10 may refer to *thes.* or *dial. Trin.*, I understand *Jo.* 1:13 to refer to *dial. Trin.* 7. This final book in *dial. Trin.* solely considers the Spirit. *Jo.* 1:4: "Concerning the eternity of the Word with the Father, since we have already treated it sufficiently in the present book and in the book called the *Thesaurus*, we think we should say no more about it." *Jo.* 1:10: "In the discourse on the holy Trinity, we have already sufficiently gone through the fact that since the son is by nature God, he is altogether different from creation." *Jo.* 1:13: "But since we have already discussed the Holy Spirit sufficiently in the book on the holy Trinity, we will refrain from speaking at length here."

[41] Also see G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Deux Dialogues Christologiques,* SC 97 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976).

utilizes a tripartite formula (καιρός, πρόσωπον, and πρᾶγμα) to discern the *time*, *person*, and *reality* of the Son. While these terms appear in a list from Quintilian, Cyril most likely acquires this tripartite reading strategy from Athanasius. Cyril uses the Philippian hymn as a central text to offer scriptural proof for using the tripartite rule. In chapter 3, I further consider Cyril's use of this reading strategy and explore how his Trinitarian theology is shaped, in part, by this practice. Through these two chapters, a repeating premise emerges: readers must attend to the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before one may attend to the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον.

Chapters 4 and 5 display a similar structure as the previous two chapters, but they explore the contours of Cyril's partitive reading strategy. In chapter 4, I describe *how* Cyril describes this two-nature reading strategy. I begin by considering partitive exegesis in other early Christian writers as a possible background to Cyril. In some of the trajectories of partitive readings that precede Cyril, theologians link partitive exegesis with the *communicatio idiomatum* and something like a distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia*. Cyril's partitive reading strategy registers two ways of speaking about the single Son *qua* divine and *qua* human during the season of the incarnation—the *oikonomia with the flesh*. And, in this way, *epochal exegesis* serves as the initial frame to make sense of his *partitive exegesis.* And, finally, in chapter 5, I explore how Cyril's theological interests overlap with his partitive readings. This chapter focuses on Cyril's Trinitarian theology, including especially his understanding of the Trinitarian relations. While Cyril's partitive exegesis is Christological in focus, his theological reasoning underscores the divine immutability of the Son, the eternal relation of the Son and the Father, and how the Spirit relates to the Son. Thus, we return to the intersection of Christological scriptural exegesis and Trinitarian theology.

Patristic exegesis, in general, serves as the first set of resources for Christians to discern *ways* of reading Scripture within a pro-Nicene heritage. And, for modern sensibilities, partitive exegesis teaches us a model for scriptural exegesis as a way of life. Whereas exegesis is intrinsically tied to the formation of what became "standard" or "orthodox" theology, many reject the value or legitimacy of early Christian readings through the lens of modern interpretive

commitments. Patristic exegesis consists of a fuller interpretive matrix, whereby the spiritual life of the interpreter is considered, more awareness of the prior theological and philosophical commitments, and the social settings in which the Scriptures are used. The exegetical culture of early Christianity—and more specifically of Cyril—constitutes a fuller matrix for scriptural interpretation. Moral formation and an *a priori* commitment to the Trinity influence *who* reads and *how* one reads Scripture. Cyril models for modern readers how the complex techniques of partitive exegesis intersect with the moral life of the reader and the divine life. If theologians are to begin appropriating this exegetical practice of partitive exegesis as prescribed within a pro-Nicene heritage, one may account for the reading strategies, their particular techniques, and the spiritual vision of the interpreter to *ressource* this ancient interpretive culture. Without considering the reader and the Nicene doctrinal commitments, partitive exegesis will lack a substantial presence in modern scriptural interpretation.

1

A Profile of Cyril's Interpreter

In this chapter I offer an account of Cyril's vision of the virtuous interpreter. I do so not only because Cyril frequently refers to the qualities of readers who read well (and to the qualities that supposedly mark out his opponents as lacking virtue), but because Cyril insists that a central part of being a good reader is an appropriate set of doctrinal commitments. Commitments to Nicaea—more so Cyril's understanding of Nicaea—and his vision of partitive reading are marked out as intrinsic to reading Scripture well. Whether or not one finds his accounts of his enemies as intellectually and morally corrupt convincing, it is important to understand this dimension of his exegetical vision. As Matthew Crawford writes: "The question at hand is what kind of reading Scripture requires, which in Cyril's view is inseparable from the kind of reader one is."[1] For Cyril, there remains a relatively close connection between the *kind* of reading strategies used and the *kind* of reader one might be, and this premise is closely connected to Late Antique reading culture. Thus, a guiding question that permeates the following enquires about the *kind of reader* that Cyril envisions to be inseparably tied to the *kind of reading strategies* within his reading profile. I draw our attention *to whom* Cyril envisions can read partitively. These two examples display a concern for the reader's identity: following

[1] Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 183–84. While I venture towards a different line of reasoning, my findings simply add texture to this broader question. To read Scripture well also requires one to be a *certain kind* of reader. Whereas I comment more generally on exegetical virtues and how the "royal road" coincides with his reading profile, Crawford generally stays focused on a Trinitarian theological vision: "I will argue that Cyril thinks the interpreter of the inspired word must have faith in Christ and must possess the indwelling Spirit, and that for such persons the practice of exegesis results in growth in virtue and understanding of the Christological mystery. In other words, exegesis takes place in the Spirit, proceeds through contemplation of the Son, and leads ultimately to the Father."

the royal road with balance and common sense, wise readers provide partitive readings.

> In fact, the duty to follow the royal road merges, we would say, with that of not deviating too much to the right or too much to the left. Consider with what lack of common sense they let themselves be guided by their good pleasure, without weighing or examining what passages of Scripture are to relate to the Word naked (γυμνῷ τῷ Λόγῳ)—that is to say, in his real and ideal state before the incarnation—and what others relate to him when he has already taken on our likeness.[2]

> Who, I must say, can be considered wise and shrewd? Who is able to speak a bipartite and double language in these matters, distributing their explanations of the mystery according to the proper seasons (καιροῖς διανέμοντες τοῖς καθήκουσι τήν μυσταγωγίαν)?[3]

I will begin by exploring how Cyril interweaves his account of the "royal road" which the interpreter must travel down with an account of their necessary Nicene commitments. I will then briefly consider the interaction between Cyril's Trinitarian theology and his vision of interpretation. Finally, I turn to some of the basic virtues that Cyril expects the good interpreter to exhibit. But first, it is important to call to mind that Cyril reads in the context of ancient grammatical practice, and that part of training in grammar was a training in virtue.[4] Cyril's account may thus be firmly Christian and Nicene in some ways, but it is also deeply traditional in others.

READING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN LATE ANTIQUE

Grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers would interlace teaching virtue with

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[2] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164).

[3] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547d (SC 237:268).

[4] Whereas I explore how grammatical education involves virtuous formation, David Cassel and Lois Farag have pursued Cyril's indebtedness to rhetorical and grammatical strategies within late antiquity. J. David Cassel, "Cyril of Alexandria and the Science of the Grammarians: A Study in the Setting, Purpose, and Emphasis of Cyril's Commentary on Isaiah" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1992); J. David Cassel, "Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis," StPatr 37 (2001): 413–20; J. David Cassel, "Cyril of Alexandria as Educator," in *In Dominico Eloquio = in Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken*, ed. Paul M. Blowers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Lois M. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John*, GSECP 29 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007).

teaching literary skills.[5] Jaap Mansfeld emphasizes that moral education often even preceded literary study:

> In order that students be prepared for the strenuous efforts required of them when devoting themselves for a number of years to the study of these often-difficult works, they were first given a preliminary moral instruction, which purified their souls of greed and passion, and taught them what are man's primary obligations towards his fellow men and towards the gods. To that end, the pseudo-Pythagorean *Golden Verses* or the moral *Handbook* of the stoic philosopher Epictetus could be used. A number of Aristotle's so-called school-writings, that is to say his systematic monographs and treatises, came next. The Aristotelian works themselves were read as a preparation for the study of a selected group of Plato's dialogues, which were read in a definite sequence. The first dialogue to be studied was the *Greater Alcibiades*, which demonstrates to its readers that man's real self, or essence, is his soul. The last dialogue to be taught was the *Parmenides*, which was interpreted as dealing with the highest metaphysical realities. . . . The study of the *Categories* itself was preceded by that of a little book by the influential third-century Platonist Porphyry which itself was called *Isagoge*, 'Introduction'—an introduction to the *Categories*, or rather to the whole of logic as an introduction to the whole of philosophy.[6]

From this initial description, Mansfeld highlights how Plato's *Greater Alcibiades*, Pythagoras's *Golden Verses*,[7] and Epictetus's *Enchiridion* were used to train the pupil in virtue.[8] Regarding this

[5] See discussion in Robert Kaster. He details the use of *doctrina* and *mores* as inseparable items, and he observes how "virtue is a prerequisite for true learning" in Late Antique literature. Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity*, The Transformation of Classical Heritage 11 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 61–66; Andreas Hellerstedt, "Introduction," in *Virtue Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andreas Hellerstedt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 9–36.

[6] Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to Be Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text*, PhA 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1–2. For further resources on education in the fifth century, see Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

[7] This brief poem (300–250 BC) was known to educated readers in antiquity. As Johan Thom summarize, "The roughly forty testimonia (including four ancient commentaries) indicate that the *Golden Verses* was known to a wide range of authors from late antiquity, including Plutarch, Epictetus, Galen, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Calcidius, Stobaeus, Proclus, Simplicius, and other Neoplatonists." From this wide range of awareness, the poem would influence the formation of virtues within a philosophical way of life. The Neoplatonists, beginning with Iamblichus, "probably all used the poem as a propaedeutic moral instruction preparing the way for philosophy proper." Johan C. Thom, *The Pythagorean* Golden Verses, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 123 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 13.

[8] The two primary foci that Epictetus presents coalesce around the inward virtue of the philosopher and how to perceive items inwardly, and the external virtue of the philosopher and how to live wisely in the world. Much of the ethics will either focus on the inward thinking of items or how the philosopher ought to live an external

list, Martens observes how "these preliminaries provide an important window into Late Antique exegetical cultures, for they indicate the guiding interpretative concerns of generations of grammarians and rhetoricians who taught their pupils how to study authoritative texts."[9] Grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers would interlace the importance of virtue before acquiring literary skills, during the educational process, and accompanied in the *telos* of education. One feature of early *grammitikē* training considers and develops virtue in the student before acquiring grammatical and rhetorical training as a "way of life."[10] The exegetical traditions of the *ars grammatikē* remain relatively constant between 200 BC–AD 200.[11] The

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virtuous life. Peculiar to this brief work are the mutual and overlapping virtues of the philosopher. They are not exhorted to have an inward set of virtues distinct from the external portrayal of virtues. As Epictetus regards, "seek not the things which happen should happen as you wish; but with the things which happen to be as they are, and you will have a tranquil flow of life" (*Ench.* 8).

Much of Epictetus's philosophy aims at the contented soul. For example, if one desires to improve in life, one must be at peace within themselves: "If you would improve, submit to be considered without sense and foolish with respect to externals. Wish to be considered to know nothing: and if you shall seem to some to be a person of importance, distrust yourself" (*Ench.* 13). Additionally, he aims at the satiating desires of the philosopher: "If it should ever happen to you to be turned to externals to please some person, you must know that you have lost your purpose in your life. Be satisfied then in everything with being a philosopher; and if you wish to seem also to any person to be a philosopher, appear so to yourself, and you will be able to do this" (*Ench.* 23). To appear externally to someone which has not likewise been internalized portrays a person who has lost their way.

In Galen's *De const. art. med.* I, 244.4–45.7K, he lists seven qualities necessary for the medical student. All these qualities govern the person's learning: sharp-witted, properly educated as a child, attend courses from the best people available, works day and night, strives for truth their whole life, learns methods to discern right and wrong, and practices such a method.

Origen's *Ep. Greg.* describes the process of the Late Antique curriculum before the reading of the Scriptures and the study of theology: "I would wish you to employ the full power of your pursuit ultimately for Christianity; therefore, as a means I would beseech you to extract from the philosophy of the Greeks all those general lessons and instructions which can serve Christianity, and whatever from geometry and astronomy will be useful for interpreting the Holy Scriptures. Thus, what the children of the philosophers say about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, as handmaids to philosophy, we also may say concerning philosophy itself in relation to Christianity."

[9] Peter W. Martens, "Ideal Interpreters," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 149.

[10] While observing inscriptions in the first century BC and AD, Kaster notes the role of virtue and progress of the human soul as part of the grammarian tutelage. One such grammarian instructs the youth of Priene in language and literature "through which souls progress towards excellence (ἀρετή) and the condition proper to humanity (πάθος ἀνθρώπινον)." Kaster notes a relative consistency that echoes through fifth-century literature that displays the concern for order and a "coherent way of life." Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 15–16.

[11] Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1100*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 23–48; Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 174.

Roman model of *grammatikē* (*c.* 50 BC–AD 75), as grounded in Marcus Terentius Varro (116–57 BC) and Marcus Fabius Quintilian (AD 35–100),[12] formed the exegetical culture later displayed in the fourth and fifth centuries.[13] Concurrent with the training process, pupils undergo training in intellectual and moral virtues, literary techniques, and philosophical training.[14] The interpreter would envision moral and intellectual virtues that would generate literary and philosophical reflections in Late Antique reading culture.

A virtuous way of life is understood as the soil in which intellectual reflection is cultivated. The interpreter's life perceives virtue to be at the front end of training and orients them towards the goal of the intellectual life.[15] The "art of living" and literary exegesis intersect not as a linear set of ideas but as two integrated aspects of a reading culture.[16] Reading texts is

[12] Book 12 of *Inst.* concerns the virtue and the orator. Quintilian defines the good orator, assuming a phrase from Marcus Cato, as "a good man, skilled in speaking." He focuses upon the "type of style which the ideal orator is to use" and the "moral principles" that should accompany said orator (12.1.4). This order is important for Quintilian and the present argument. Virtue precedes and accompanies skill. Quintilian regards the virtue of "goodness" as a requisite for skilled oration. Near the end of Book 1, he notes the following: "I am proposing to educate the perfect orator, who cannot exist except in the person of a good man. We therefore demand of him not only exceptional powers of speech, but all the virtues of character as well" (1. *prooemium* 9). The vision of *paideia* consists of beautiful oration to convince others and the formation of a moral person. This moral vision would be seen in the ethical oration delivered. For more on the use of *vir bonus*, its association with Platonism, and rhetorical education, see Alan Brinton, "Quintilian, Plato, and the 'Vir Bonus,'" *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 16, no. 3 (1983): 167–84; Robert E. Terrill, "Reproducing Virtue: Quintilian, Imitation, and Rhetorical Education," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 19, no. 2 (2016): 157–71.

[13] Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, 49–55.

[14] Aristotle comments on the role of *virtue* as a *state* of a human. Thus, for virtue to imbibe the state of the person, they can perform their activities well (*Eth. nic.* 1106a15–24). For more on Aristotle's vision of virtue, see the following: T. Irwin, *Classical Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); T. Irwin, "The Virtues: Theory and Common Sense in Greek Philosophy," in *How Should One Live?*, ed. R. Crisp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); N. Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[15] As Hadot reflects on the *when* of philosophical reflection and virtue, he positions the "way of life" theme as an integrated way of being throughout the person's life and not simply the goal. So, philosophy is not simply a set of theoretical ideals and then virtue comes as a result, but philosophy is a way of living in the world that includes ethical expression and philosophical ideals. "At least since the time of Socrates, the choice of a way of life has not been located at the end of the process of philosophical activity, like a kind of accessory or appendix. On the contrary, it stands at the beginning, in a complex interrelation with critical reaction to other existential attitudes, with global vision of a certain way of living and seeing the world, and with voluntary decision itself." In this manner, the way of life is not simply an addendum to a lengthy set of theoretical reflections. The choice of life and the existential theoretical ideals reflects philosophical discourse—not the other way around. Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3.

[16] The Stoic, Epictetus, reflects how reading Chrysippus, simply an exposition of his material, consists of living virtuously (*Diatr.* I, 4). See the section "On Progress." The prompting of virtue and happiness intersects with reading

understood as a spiritual process that corresponds to intellectual ideals and assumes spiritual formation. As Pierre Hadot writes,

> Reading texts is a "spiritual" process closely related to the progress of the soul. The philosophical notion of spiritual progress constitutes the very backbone of Christian education and teaching. . . . Yet although some Christian authors might present Christianity as a philosophy, or even as *the* philosophy, this was not so much because Christianity proposed an exegesis and a theology analogous to pagan exegesis and theology, but because it was a style of life and a mode of being, just as ancient philosophy was.[17]

Readers, attending to philosophy, give attention to their virtue and contemplate the gods as their telos. Reading helps to prompt this spiritual formation by requiring the presence of moral virtue and producing moral transformation.[18] This cyclical process that leads to upward contemplation consists of part of the exegetical culture in Late Antique.

A "READING PROFILE" IN CYRIL'S EXEGETICAL PARADIGM

It is against this background that we situate Cyril. As we will observe, Cyril's vision of the reading life consists of more than exegetical patterns but a moral vision of the reader who can see, experience, and contemplate God in concert with the Nicene tradition. Cyril often uses a road metaphor to describe the reader walking along a pathway, unencumbered by obstacles, to affirm Nicene theological commitments. In a few examples below, Cyril envisions a virtuous and wise reader, who assumes Nicene theological commitments, reads in a partitive manner,

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Chrysippus and living out related virtues. Philo of Alexandria displays two lists of spiritual exercises, both of which include "reading" (Philo, *Leg.* 3, 18; *Her.* 253). For a special focus on Philo's exegetical heritage, see Maren R. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[17] Hadot, *Ancient Philosophy*, 240.

[18] Hadot, *Ancient Philosophy*, 155: "Moreover, each commentary was considered a spiritual exercise—not only because the search for the meaning of a text really does demand the moral qualities of modesty and love for the truth, but also because the reading of each philosophical text was supposed to produce a transformation in the person reading or listening to the commentary."

has been illuminated by God, and lives a spiritual life.[19]

The "Royal Road" and Nicene Commitments

Cyril uses a two-fold road metaphor throughout the *dial. Trin.* to evoke virtuous actions or observe vicious qualities in a reader.[20] He describes the reader as one who is (1) virtuous and enters the road with proper reading patterns that attends to a Nicene Trinitarian vision or (2) vicious and traverses the pathway that includes poor reading patterns and, thusly, errant theology.[21]

The first example that I want to draw out displays how Cyril uses a road metaphor that directly corresponds to a theological description about the Son.

> As for us, let us examine the path that leads in both directions and try to make plausible reflections on this problem. If they concede that this mediator is not subject to becoming, they will have attributed to him what is proper only of the things according to the only divine nature and thereby have presented him as passing the limits which define mediation and now situated higher than he did not have to.[22]

Cyril invites Hermias to consider what kind of road he will travel and reflects upon a moral quandary. If Hermias chooses the improper path, he will venture towards an improper Christology, which will inevitably be immoral. One of the two roads already includes what Cyril

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[19] e.g., *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164); *dial. Trin.* 5, 547d (SC 237:268).

[20] In *hom. pasch.* 8.2, Cyril quotes Phil 3:14 and Matt 19:19 to combine the road metaphor with heavenly contemplation and a virtuous life: "For while the path that leads to the ability to accomplish virtuous deeds has many a fork, and one may arrive with difficulty 'at the prize of the upward call' by way of a road that is complex, yet our entire good is nonetheless bound together in one thing: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

[21] One feature of the ideal reader that I do not address is the opposite of what constitutes the ideal. Who is the non-ideal reader according to Cyril's vision? It can be generally assumed that the antonym of Cyril's constructive vision describes the non-ideal reader. While virtuous readers are spiritual, non-virtuous readers display a non-spiritual life. From a selected sampling of Cyril's profile of the non-virtuous reader in the *dial. Trin.*, to read poorly is to (1) be impious or display personal impiety (1, 386; 2, 418, 445, 454; 3, 462, 466; 5, 525, 568), (2) be intellectually inferior and display a sense of stupidity (1, 391–92, 400, 406, 410, 414, 415; 3, 462; 4, 532, 533; 6, 597, 623), (3) be simple as a child (1, 391; 2, 418, 435, 458–59; 5, 554; 7, 649), and (4) promote blasphemy (1, 389, 414; 3, 487; 4, 506; 5, 546).

[22] *dial. Trin.* 1, 411e (SC 231:204–6).

describes as the Son being subject to becoming.[23]

Next, the road metaphor is evoked as Cyril comments on a partitive exegetical pattern. To follow the road also assumes readers will model partitive readings. First, Cyril comments on the disposition and common sense as readers approach the Scriptures:[24]

> In fact, the duty to follow the royal road merges, we would say, with that of not deviating too much to the right or too much to the left. Consider with what lack of common sense they let themselves be guided by their good pleasure, without weighing or examining what passages of Scripture are to relate to the Word naked (γυμνῷ τῷ Λόγῳ)—that is to say, in his real and ideal state before the incarnation—and what others relate to him when he has already taken on our likeness.[25]

To travel along the "royal road" is to display partitive Christological exegesis. As good readers will discern the Son *as is* and the Son *incarnate*, they must follow the royal road to derive this reading. The virtue of a balanced reader—not deviating too much to the right or left—anchors the reader from swerving. The metaphor of a road conveys the moral virtue of readers who walk in a straight manner, requiring moral virtue and a balanced life.[26]

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[23] In a related metaphor, Cyril mentions that readers ought to model the Greek who would use a nautical metaphor: "And since you are of the opinion that this is the best thing to do, let's go by the moored lines being cast off, as the Greek poets say, and leaving what would be the coast and our bases, let's launch our speech like a ship on the high seas!" (*dial. Trin.* 2, 419ab [SC 231:228]). Cyril vaguely mentions the "Greeks" once more in *Jo.* as it relates to the royal road: "But in fact, these words of yours do not take the straight path but strut right off the well-traveled royal road. You have forsaken the highway, as the saying of the Greeks has it, and you press ahead to cliffs and rocks" (*Jo.* 6:38–39). In what follows this example, Cyril speaks of the consubstantial nature of the Trinity and the indivisibility of God.

[24] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397bc (SC 231:164): "Because we must not go to the Holy Scriptures with an indifferent and defeatist spirit, as if they are amused with revered objects, turn off the right way, I do not know, to escape and rush on both sides of the trail (τρίβον)."

[25] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164). Cyril likewise joins partitive readings and the road metaphor in *Jo.* 17:4–5: "Come, then, let us consider a double path, as it were, of interpreting these statements and discuss how this statement was made both in a human and a God-befitting way."

[26] The beginning of *ep.* 55 conveys a similar set of premises. Cyril begins with the concern for virtue: "Faith that is true and not subject to derision, because it has the brilliance attendant on good works, fills us with every good and reveals those who have found illustrious glory. The splendor of our actions if it appears to have no share in orthodox teachings and blameless faith would not at all benefit the soul of man, in my opinion" (*ep.* 55.2). He continues by quoting Jas 2:20 to link faith with the uprightness of living. "Just as 'faith without works is dead' (Jas 2:20), so also we say that the reverse is true. Therefore, let integrity in faith shine forth along with the glories of upright living" (*ep.* 55.2). That is, the purity in faith and the nobility of life must intersect with "orthodox teachings." In these ways, a person's soul is benefitted. Rather than speaking of a "straight pathway," Cyril beckons for the person to see straight, quoting Prov 4:25 ("Let your eyes see straight"). If virtue is not present, if readers do not

Next, I want to link how Cyril speaks about the "royal road" with the Nicene creed.[27] To underscore this line of reasoning, I explore Cyril's literature beyond the *dial. Trin*. to show how these two features overlap. By following the theological logic of the Nicene Creed, Cyril underscores two movements of the Son: *X of X* eternal relations and the self-emptying of the Son in the incarnation. Cyril's unreserved commitment to Nicaea serves as a primary criticism of Nestorius:

> But is shall not suffice for your reverence to confess with us just the profession of the faith set forth in the Holy Spirit during critical times by the holy and great synod assembled in the city of Nicaea. You have not understood and have not interpreted it rightly, but rather perversely, even if you confess the text with your lips.[28]

In his *Second Letter to Nestorius*, Cyril considers those who gathered at the synod to be "of great value." Quoting 2 Corinthians 13:5, he desires to follow the Scriptures and test his theological vision according to the "upright and blameless judgments" of the Nicene expression.[29] Whereas

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attend to the scriptural vision, then one would fall away from the soundness of teachings and do harm to the person: "For to slip away from the rightness of holy doctrines would be nothing else except to sleep in death (cf. Ps 13:3 [12:4 LXX]), and we depart from this rightness when we do not follow the divinely inspired Scriptures. Either by unpraiseworthy preconceptions or by a partiality toward some who are not walking rightly with regard to the faith, we are overpowered because we share the inclinations of their minds and above all else do damage to their souls" (*ep.* 55.3–4). Also see *hom. pasch.* 13.4 where Cyril quotes Prov 2:13 and says, "But we will pass by the twisting path to walk in the one that this is straight, following the divinely inspired scriptures."

[27] Mark Smith's recent monograph on the reception of Nicaea assists in discerning Cyril's use of Nicaea. Per Cyril's literature, it is no longer whether one can affirm Nicaea but one's interpretation of Nicaea. The Creed becomes part of the interpretative strategy. As Smith comments on Cyril's *Second Letter to Nestorius*, he comments as follows: "for the Nicene Creed to be heard rightly in a new context of Christological dispute, Cyril's *Letter* must be employed as its hermeneutical key." That is, Cyril's *Letter* becomes a litmus to discern a right reading of Nicaea. Mark S. Smith, *The Idea of Nicaea in the Early Church Councils, AD 431–451*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 61–62.

[28] *ep.* 17.5.

[29] *ep.* 4.2. It is worth noting the role of the Nicene confession in the thought-life of Cyril, especially as it intersects with his hermeneutical and theological commitments. The foundation of the *dial. Trin.* centers upon his reading of the Nicene confession for Trinitarian theology. In his constructive vision of theology, he does not necessarily question or want to change the Nicene formulation (*ep. 4*). In *dial. Trin.* 1, 390b (SC 231:144), Cyril describes a divinely inspired vision for Nicaea, claiming the Spirit has revealed the words of Nicaea. By quoting the Creed in the beginning of the *dial. Trin.*, it reveals Cyril's dogmatic method and how much of the remaining portions of the book are an exposition of the creedal affirmation. This use of Nicaea becomes a reocurring pattern, especially as seen in *ep.* 1, 4, 17, and 55, or an appeal to its authority, as seen in *ep.* 4.3; 15.3; 17.5, 7; 33.7, 10; 37.1; 38.2; 40.3, 9; 46.3; 48.1; 69.4; 93.2–3; 101.6. I conclude with one more example from the *Formula of Union of 433*: "We will not allow the faith, or rather the Symbol of the faith that was defined by our holy Fathers who formerly came together in Nicaea, to be unsettled by anyone. We will not permit ourselves, or anyone else, to change one word of

in *ep.* 4.3, Cyril summarizes the Nicene confession, in *ep.* 17.6–7, Cyril quotes the Nicene Creed in full. To follow the "royal road" corresponds to interpreting Scripture as a virtuous reader, affirming certain Christological themes, and, especially in *ep.* 17.7, following the pathway of the inspired crafters of the Nicene formula.

> Following in every way the confessions of the holy Fathers, which they made by the Holy Spirit speaking in them, and following the meaning of the thoughts in them, and, as it were, going along a royal road, we say that he, the only begotten Word of God, begotten of the very substance of the Father, true God of true God, light of light by whom all things were made both those in heaven and those on earth, having descended for our salvation, and having come down to an emptying of himself, was incarnate and was made man.[30]

Cyril's pro-Nicene vision and theological method come together in this section: affirmation of his reading of the Creed, following the "royal road" of the ancient Fathers, and affirming a two-fold season of the Son that distinguishes the eternal relations and the incarnation.[31]

Related to the previous two premises—the "royal road" being linked to partitive readings and a Nicene confession, we are in a better position to attend to a related theme in Cyril's *dial. Trin*. An exegetical virtue that emerges is a commitment to attend rightly to one's predecessors.[32] Cyril appears to conflate the predecessors in the Scriptures and the predecessors

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what is laid down there, or to go beyond even one syllable" (*ep.* 39.10; also see 38.2 and 39.3). Cyril desires the Nicene formula to be preserved and upheld by ecclesial communities. As seen from these brief examples, Cyril can be described as a pro-Nicene theologian seeking to preserve the creedal formula. After the Council of Ephesus, Cyril writes to John of Antioch affirming the inspired nature of the Creed and ensuring that his interpretation of Scripture and theology is governed by the unchangeable language of Nicaea's formula (*ep.* 39.7–8). In *ep.* 76.1, Cyril uses the synod creatively to discern judgments about John Chrysostom, essentially using the Synod and Creed as living voices.

[30] *ep.* 17.7.

[31] It is debated how much Cyril is aware of the Constantinople revisions in 381 or whether he strictly adheres to the 325 expression of Nicaea. Per *ep.* 85.1 (*c.* pre-428), Cyril claims to send the "truest copies of the authentic synod at Nicaea" to bishops in Carthage. See Paul L. Gavrilyuk, "The Legacy of the Council of Nicaea in the Orthodox Tradition: The Principle of Unchangeability and the Hermeneutic of Continuity," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Council of Nicaea*, ed. Young Richard Kim, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 327–46; Tarmo Toom, "Appealing to Creed: Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria," *HeyJ* 62 (2021): 290–301.

[32] Cyril displays a similar sentiment in *dial. Trin.* 5, 547d (SC 237:284) and 5, 553a (SC 237:284).

in the tradition, namely the holy Fathers.

> It is certainly not that I pretend to scrutinize the spiritual sense (τὸν νοητὸν ἐκβασανίσαι λόγον), as if I could promise to say or explain something better than our predecessors. For it is enough, yes enough, in this respect, the writings of the holy Fathers, who would decide to attend to them wisely and use them with vigilance would immediately fill his mind with the divine light. For, it was not them "speaking," according to the word of the Savior, "but the Spirit of God the Father speaking in them" (Matt 10:20). For, is not "all Scripture inspired by God and profitable" (2 Tim 3:16)?[33]

Cyril considers the spiritual sense of his theological predecessors as he attends to the Scriptures and the pro-Nicene predecessors. To listen to the holy Fathers permits one to hear the Spirit of God.[34] Through these holy Fathers, divine light shines forth and the Spirit speaks.

Moreover, Cyril clings tightly to Scripture and the holy Fathers in his theological discourse. They represent, for Cyril, a way to speak rightly about the Son's mysteries and the Son's substance.

> While we must cling with tenacity and love to the irreproachable doctrine of the holy Fathers, what need should we have to enjoy what was foreign to them and thusly to share in such savage thinking? A savage thought, indeed, is one that barks against the glory of the Son, "he speaks iniquity against God" (Ps 74:6), according to what is written! For the opinion, quite right I think, of these famous men—beloved and well-tested—who have been the stewards of the mysteries of our Savior: the unbegotten is by no means the essence of God the Father (οὐσίαν μὲν οὐδαμῶς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον) but it is only a word signifying to those who hear it that there was no generation.[35]

Cyril joins together the authority of the Scriptures and the holy Fathers to correct faulty thinking. Both the Scriptures and the holy Fathers attest to the mysteries of the unbegotten Son; moreover, it appears that if one veers from either one, they venture in a way that "speaks

[33] *dial. Trin.* 1, 388ab (SC 231:138).

[34] *dial. Trin.* 1, 390b (SC 231:144). As Cyril comments on Nicaea, he maintains that the Fathers provided this Creed and is a product of the Spirit: "To have no other ideas than these, not to express verbally, rather to follow the verdict and the words which the Spirit has revealed, is a duty to which I would willingly know well. It is the highest price."

[35] *dial. Trin.* 2, 433cd (SC 231:270).

iniquity against God." It is good for theological clarity to have recourse to the Scriptures.[36]

As I finish this section, I highlight selected examples of Cyril's use of "road," "royal road," or the metaphor of a road to depict his exegetical patterns and theological commitments.[37] Cyril places a simple path before Hermias for anyone who wants "to think straight," which is to follow Cyril's reading of Philippians 2.[38] Not to think straight is to follow the Arian interlocutors or another devised pathway. As the Son descends to human form, Cyril regards the *oikonomia* of the Son as a proper way to describe this theological reading.

On several occasions, Cyril quotes Numbers 21:22 as a proof-text to describe the "royal road" as coinciding with good readings and proper doctrinal commitments. From Numbers 21:22 LXX, Cyril draws upon the phrase ὁδῷ βασιλικῇ πορευσόμεθα to call Hermias to follow the "royal road."[39] To read Scripture rightly corresponds to following the "royal road" and not deviating "too much to the right or too much to the left."[40] The "royal road" will lead straight

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[36] *dial. Trin.* 3, 464c (SC 237:18): "We must, therefore, dear friend, have recourse to Holy Scripture. Let's examine the words of the saints and then, come, yes suppose that we examine if any of them ever called the Son the only God, also calling him true."

[37] Cf. *Jo.* 14:11: "Why then do those who 'pervert what is right' not persuade their own disciples to travel on the straight road of understanding instead of driving them off the royal and well-traveled road to take an untrodden and rugged route, both deceiving themselves and destroying those who think they should follow them? We, however, will not take that road. We will keep to the direct road. Persuaded by the Holy Scriptures, we believe that the Son, who was begotten of the Father by nature, is equal in power and consubstantial with God the Father and that he is his image, and that is why he is in the Father and the Father is in him." I quote this example in full because it serves as a good example where the phrase the "royal road," traveling a well-trodden road, and a pro-Nicene Trinitarian vision coincide. To follow the well-trodden, royal road is to affirm that the Scriptures convey the Son as begotten of the Father, equal in power and consubstantial with God. Only mentioning the road metaphor, Cyril likens the straight path as one who affirms the coequal and likeness of the Son and Spirit with the Father (*Juln.* 8.27; all translations of *Juln*. are from a forthcoming translation by Matthew R. Crawford, Aaron P. Johnson, and Edward Jeremiah).

[38] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485c (SC 237:80): "This is a flat and unified path, leading to the truth, for those who want to think straight. Understand it, dear friend, to receive, in the manner of a favor, the name above every name, this is the one being called an emptying—the lowering of the Word to us by virtue of the economy."

[39] *dial. Trin.* 5, 561ab (SC 237:308). Num 21:22 LXX reads as follows: Παρελευσόμεθα διὰ τῆς γῆς σου, τῇ ὁδῷ πορευσόμεθα, οὐκ ἐκκλινοῦμεν οὔτε εἰς ἀγρὸν οὔτε εἰς ἀμπελῶνα, οὐ πιόμεθα ὕδωρ ἐκ φρέατός σου, ὁδῷ βασιλικῇ πορευσόμεθα, ἕως παρέλθωμεν τὰ ὅριά σου.

[40] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164). By quoting the Nicene Creed in *dial. Trin.* 1, 389e–390a (SC 231:142), and by warning one from turning from the "royal road," Cyril quite possibly envisions that the royal road leads to a Nicene theology (see *ep.* 4.3; 17.7).

to the truth.[41] Cyril raises a few rhetorical questions to counter the errant doctrine of his interlocutor.[42] The eternal Son's relationship to creation and his origin occupies Cyril's interest in these questions. The Son does not "participate in life." Rather, he is life, light, wisdom, and power. Thus, to "follow the royal road" affirms divine simplicity, the Son's eternality, and that he is life in himself.[43]

As the two continue in this exchange, Cyril intuitively discerns what Hermias seeks, and evokes the wayfaring journey to describe the obstacles of the wrong road.[44] Cyril quotes Proverbs 8:9 to highlight discernment and how knowledge and moral uprightness cohere together. However, if a person decides to leave this correct road, they will encounter difficult obstacles. The "straight road of contemplation" (τὴν εὐστιβῆ τῶν θεωρημάτων) will be exchanged

[41] *dial. Trin.* 4, 538e (SC 237:240).

[42] *dial. Trin.* 5, 560e–61a (SC 237:308): "So, they suppose that life was brought forth by the Father. But how could it not be enough to have them accused and condemned definitively for insanity? Will they not say that the things that become came forth from nothingness? And for what was originally introduced into being, non-being is no more than an ancient being? But that is not life, O most dear friends, and far from it! He is the Life, not what has been brought to life. What might be clearly seen in him moreover is always to have been, his existence without beginning or end. Now, perhaps they think wisely and thoughtfully, arguing that the Son participates in life, even though he is Life itself?"

[43] More work is certainly needed to understand Cyril's doctrine of divine simplicity. I provide these few examples from the *dial. Trin.*: "We are not simple by nature, the divine principle is totally simple and without composition. He has in himself absolutely all riches; he lacks nothing. Every bodily nature is, moreover, composed of certain parts which contribute to the completion of a single perfect being" (1, 393e [SC 231:154]); "There is after all in him no difference between begetting and creating, since God is simple (ἁπλοῦς ὁ Θεός)" (2, 439a [SC 231:286]); "because God is simple (ἁπλοῦς ὁ Θεός), his operation has only one form" (2, 442a [SC 231:296]). Also see *dial. Trin.* 2, 442de (SC 231:298); 5, 555a (SC 237:290); 5, 580b (SC 237:366); 7, 641a (SC 246:170); 7, 651c (SC 246:200). From this small sampling in the *dial. Trin.*, divine simplicity is intimately connected to: (1) generation of the Son; (2) co-operation of the Son and Father; (3) the fullness of God and the divine nature; (4) differences in the hypostasis are different than differences in the divine nature (cf. *Juln.* 8.29); (5) distinction between humans as composite and God as simple. For more on divine simplicity, see Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 30 (London: T&T Clark, 2015); Pui Him Ip, "The Emergence of Divine Simplicity in Patristic Trinitarian Theology: Origen and the Distinctive Shape of the Ante-Nicene *Status Quaestionis*" (PhD diss, Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2017).

[44] *dial. Trin.* 5, 570e–71a (SC 237:338–40): "It is really not hard to know what you are seeking after, provided we have a wise and sound mind. It is indeed written, 'To those that are discerning all seems right; and to those who have found knowledge they are upright' (Prov 8:9). But if someone decides to abandon the journey upon the straight pathway in a state of drunkenness to travel along the most foolish indirect course, if one exchanged the straight road of contemplation for another, he will fall into thorns, ditches, and the obstacles that will come to the cross in the road. From where I think the statement, enigmatic nevertheless, of the Law, 'Follow the royal road, without turning to the right or the left' (Num 21:22; Deut 5:32)." Also see *Mich.* 4.8 (667) and 7.14–15 (730).

for a "the most foolish indirect course" (εὐηθέστατα σκολιοδρομεῖν). The virtue of the right road is replaced by thorns and obstacles and thorns in the ditch. Therefore, Cyril beckons Hermias to "follow the royal road." The wise reader traverses this road by not even veering to one side or the other. In this exchange, Cyril joins the "royal road" metaphor with reading strategies and doctrinal commitments, namely a non-univocal assumption of the Son's human nature in relation to the ineffable divine nature.[45]

Theological Belief as a Moral Criterion

In the former section, reading well corresponded to walking along the right pathway. Here, to travel along the proper pathway is to assume proper theological beliefs as a criterion of moral virtue. For Cyril, a proper portrayal of the Son follows the great road already traveled by wise predecessors.[46] The power of the Father is also the power of the Son.[47]

> Let us, then, follow the faith of the Holy Scriptures, walk along the great highway having been traveled by all the wise and say that the power of God the Father is the same as the Son's, without an intermediary and at the same time continually. Through him and in him [the Son], he [the Father] has his ineffable work over all things. He has established the heavens and the things in it, firmly established the earth, and also produce the things which are support and food, and "he makes the angels spirits and his servants flames of fire" (Ps 103:4//Heb 1:7), according to what is written.[48]

While Cyril's exegetical creativity occupies a complex matrix of ideas, he downplays creativity

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[45] *dial. Trin.* 5, 571b (SC 237:340): "When, therefore, there is something mentioned about the Son which is below the glory of God and does not surpass a nature subject to becoming, do not put it immediately in relation to the ineffable nature which comes from correspondence to the Father's own nature. But if it is through contemplation, then let the aim be according to the current [of the road]." In *Heb.*, Cyril mentions that if the union is merely between the *prosopa*, thereby separating the two natures in the incarnation, they "have been carried off the straight path" (see *Heb.* ACT, 132 because the manuscript headings do not register what verse upon which Cyril is commenting). Also see *ep.* 55.41, 81.1.

[46] Cyril displays those that have also fallen away from the road (*dial. Trin.* 7, 633e [SC 246:148]). He even asks Hermias if they should embark on a different path (*dial. Trin.* 1, 402a [SC 231:176]).

[47] See Michel René Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

[48] *dial. Trin.* 6, 616e–17a (SC 246:98).

and attends to a well-trodden path.[49] Likewise, to traverse along the wrong road also includes a particular set of vices, the absence of virtue, and a set of beliefs. For example, Cyril claims to turn onto the "correct road," which entails believing in the divinity and the generation of the Son.[50] Cyril walks on the right road because it "head[s] straight for the truth" along the royal road.[51] As Cyril articulates a co-equal and co-operating relationship between the Father and the Son, he speaks about the royal road leading straight towards the truth.

> As he did it by his Word, his Wisdom, and the strength that is in him. The Son is indeed all this for the Father. But let us consider this somehow, while being on the royal road and heading straight for the truth. Do you not agree, and even quite willingly as if we say that the Father is Creator, it will undoubtedly follow the obligation to think that, as he is neither without strength nor without wisdom, neither does he create without the Word?[52]

As Cyril articulates a co-equal and co-operating relationship between the Father and the Son, he speaks about the royal road leading straight towards the truth.

In another example, Cyril describes the road as having been cleared to perceive a Christological vision. The road has also been cleared of rubble and obstacles, providing readers with clear reasons to affirm Cyril's Christology. "That's what I would say, know it well, without the slightest scruple. For the greatest road urges us from untried reasons, and as a swarm of bees nodding its brow, stripping bare and traveling across a carriage road as some urge against this belief."[53] Thus, well-ordered and tried reasons clear a path to consider the Son as both the Word and Wisdom of the Father. Cyril describes this Christological vision to display his reading

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[49] Cf. *hom. pasch.* 10.1: "Behold, once again we take it to be our duty to obey the voices of the saints, and in our eagerness to follow as it were in the footsteps of the custom they practiced, to extend a hand of mutual affection to those who are as brothers and at the same time all but children, addressing them in the following sacred words: 'Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom 1:7)."

[50] *dial. Trin.* 4, 532c (SC 237:220): "As for us, we will turn to the road without error, God is truth and believing that the Word was manifest from God according to the ineffable generation." In *ep.* 74.6, Cyril joins together the road metaphor with teaching clearly.

[51] *dial. Trin.* 4, 538e (SC 237:240).

[52] *dial. Trin.* 4, 538e–39a (SC 237:240–42).

[53] *dial. Trin.* 6, 628bc (SC 246:132).

profile.

The wayfaring metaphor applies to all persons, and one must consider what road they travel: "Do not be carried away by the words of these people to a dishonest mind, as they cannot stand to leave, so to speak, the untrodden roads to pass through unprepared and inaccessible ways."[54] To be carried away by faulty teachers is to traverse along an ill-prepared pathway. Cyril then criticizes the teacher and offers a few disparaging descriptions:

> It will say of every individual of this kind, and not from intention (οὐκ ἀπὸ σκοποῦ), "Who is firmly fixed upon a lie, he shepherds the wind, he banishes the flying bird. For he leaves behind the roads of his own vineyards, he has led astray the courses of his own fields. He goes through a waterless desolate and designated land with water. He gathers a barren hand" (Prov 9:12).[55]

Following aberrant Christology is similar to shepherding the wind. It describes one who ventures from already demarcated paths in one's vineyard and wanders in a stream-less land, off the path of a pro-Nicene Christological vision.[56]

Trinitarian Inspiration and Scriptural Exegesis

In this section, I want to show that, for Cyril, only those illuminated by the Spirit of God can properly interpret the Scriptures, and thus his Trinitarian theology is also important for his vision of the good interpreter.[57] Without being enlightened with the wisdom "from

[54] *dial. Trin.* 1, 409de (SC 231:198).

[55] *dial. Trin.* 2, 445c (SC 231:306).

[56] Later in *dial. Trin.* 6 (609c [SC 246:76]), Cyril quotes Prov 9:12 once more to insinuate a similar idea. In this instance, however, Cyril merely quotes the Proverb without much interpretation: "Spread an idea of such ridiculous mirth! Whoever has put this in mind and repeats, 'Leave behind the roads of one's own vineyard, he has led astray the courses of his own fields. He goes through a waterless desolate and designated land with water. He gathers a barren hand' (Prov 9:12), according to what is written." The quote is preceded by comments that criticize the ideas presented by Hermias. Thus, as he quotes Prov 9, he describes the road of his heritage.

[57] Crawford provides the most up-to-date reading of Cyril's theology of Scripture and Trinitarian activity of revelation. Cyril considers the traditional language of the Son revealing the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. This *from* the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Spirit formula begins the process of humans comprehending God. When the Spirit illuminates readers, they are brought upwards to the Father in reverse order.

above," no one is able to undertake the task of scriptural exegesis.[58] My observations parallel Crawford's two categories of enlightenment:

> First, all humanity possesses reason by virtue of divine illumination given by the Son at the moment of a soul's coming into existence. Second, and more importantly, the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit grants believers a knowledge of those things that surpass reason through an increased participation in the Son.[59]

Illumination is the supernatural work of God, who resides in the heavens and descends to humanity to illuminate the spiritual vision of a virtuous reader. If wisdom is from above and God is from above, alluding to James 1, reading properly requires wisdom from God. Each of the examples that I provide below can be sub-categories within Crawford's second observation about illumination. As I look at a few examples in the *dial. Trin.* and *Jo.* that highlight the necessity of divine illumination, I offer two categories: (1) visual illumination that enlightens what interpreters see and (2) auditory illumination that highlights what interpreters hear.

Divine and Visual Illumination

Cyril underscores the supernatural work of interpretation in the first few lines from *Jo*. Quoting Psalm 67:12 LXX ("The Lord will give words to those who proclaim the gospel with

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Trinitarian revelation and scriptural exegesis merge with the spirituality of the human life. Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, chs. 2–3.

[58] In *Os*. 6.1–3, Cyril provides an example where he alludes to illumination that produced the two testaments. He comments on the phrase: "we shall find him ready as the dawn . . . as early and late rain." Of this Scripture text, he notes the following: "The fact that it is through him that we know also the Father, and that the Son has become for us the fullness of every good in us they admit by saying, *we shall find him ready as the dawn*, that is, as a rising light, as the sun, as a sunbeam when darkness departs. He will be for us *as early and late rain*: he bedews us who have accepted the faith, and have a correct knowledge of his coming, in my view, in two senses. He imparts in the Spirit the former teachings and laws, as well as knowledge of prophetic teachings (the meaning, in my view of *early rain*); and, as *late rain*, he gives in addition to that the understanding of the Gospel teachings and thrice-desirable grace of the apostolic preaching." He thus begins with an epistemological framework that assumes God's revelation of himself, both the Father and the Son come to us as "a rising light" and then Cyril turns to describe the two-fold division of Scripture: the Laws and Prophetic teachings, and the apostolic testimony. The *early rain* and the *late rain* serve as a metaphor of divine illumination that has come in two different seasons for the people of God.

[59] Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 185.

great power"), Cyril regards the act of scriptural interpretation first to be a work of the Lord.[60] He then quotes Sirach 1:1 and James 1:17 to note that "all wisdom" is a gift that comes down from the heavens—even limiting those who might try their hand at interpretation.[61] Because one encounters the mystery of God's essence, an "ordinary person" must not speak about transcendent items. Rather, spiritually illumined people can rightly speak of the heavenly essence because they too have wisdom from the heavens. Silence, in this case, is far safer because "it is dangerous for ordinary people to speak about the essence that transcends all things and about its mysteries."[62] Those who teach and interpret the Scriptures must be illuminated by God.[63]

Early the in *dial. Trin.*, Cyril reflects upon the advent of the Spirit to illuminate the person who sets out to read the Scriptures.[64] The Spirit gives light and reveals Christ to the reader. Cyril interprets James 1:5 as the divine and spiritual light that will be given to any who lack light. To mention light prompts Cyril to quote Colossians 1:13 and 2 Corinthians 4:7. Cyril

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[60] This premise—only those who have been enlightened can read rightly—appears in one of Cyril's earlier works too. In the beginning of each book in the *Glaphyra*, Cyril offers several interpretative paradigms and *how* to read the Pentateuch Christologically. The features of virtue, divine illumination, and scriptural exegesis meld together in *glaph. Gen.* 6.1: "Yet, with some effort its meaning becomes apparent, not so much to those who merely have the desire, but to those who are right-minded, since they are illuminated by divine grace, are wise and perceptive, and are knowledgeable in the writings of the law and the prophets." Even if some desire to read, they are unable to do so well because they still have not been illuminated. Divine illumination serves as the necessary requisite to prompt good readings of the Scriptures.

[61] *Jo.* Pref.: "I do not think just anyone should attempt this, however, but only those who are enlightened by grace from above."

[62] *Jo.* Pref.

[63] *Jo.* Pref.: "God did not want them to refuse to give instruction so necessary to those whom they were leading to godliness and the knowledge of God, or to choose silence, which would harm those who were progressing toward discipleship."

[64] *dial. Trin.* 1, 387cd (SC 231:136): "What do you think they must do, if not obey the words of the saints, who have shouted so very well: 'If one of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all, without reproach, and it will be given to him' (Jas 1:5)? Certainly, the divine and spiritual light will illuminate all that lack this light; wisdom will also make wise what is deprived of reason and wisdom. Light makes known the wisdom of Christ, 'which shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of him' (2 Cor 4:7). For the God and Father has bestowed to us, as the divine Paul has stated, 'from the domain of darkness, he transferred to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in the light' (Col 1:13). In addition, one of the saints called it Splendor of the day and the Morning star. For it says that 'Until the day dawns and the Morning star rises in our hearts' (2 Pet 1:19). By the Splendor of the day and the Morning Star, he hears the illumination through Christ in the Spirit."

quotes Colossians 1:13 to signify that readers are transferred into the presence of the Son in the light. The light makes the wisdom known and then subsequently shines in our hearts. The rising of light lastly prompts Cyril to quote 2 Peter 1. The Morning Star as Christ rises in our hearts. Hermias follows these comments with a statement to which Cyril agrees: "may Christ be the Light, the Day and the Splendor and the Morning Star, among those whose initiation (τελούντων) has now made them elected by faith, there is no one to doubt it."[65] Christ is the Light, the Day, the Splendor, and the Morning Star—each description of visible illumination.[66] This Christological illumination invites readers to participate in the divine life.

The activities of the Spirit and the process of interpretation are linked again as seen in *dial. Trin.* 7: "We will receive our initiation (μυσταγωγούμενοι) only from the Holy Scripture. Perceiving the immaculate glory of the Spirit, we will believe him to be God and from God, not adorned with foreign and extrinsic goods, but being by his nature all that is also God."[67] As the Spirit is life in himself, he gives life to others. The immaculate glory of the Spirit is revealed to permit one to believe God. In a string of four Scripture texts (Acts 17:28; 1 Tim 6:13; John 11:25; 6:63), Cyril speaks to the process of knowing and coming to a right reading of Scripture through

[65] *dial. Trin.* 1, 387e (SC 231:136).

[66] I want to draw attention to one example where initiation and the association with the Church affect how the interpreter can perceive the Trinity. In his *Zach.* 2.6–7 (309), Cyril addresses the readers's ability to see. If people will flee from sin and the depravities—the "daughters of Babylon"—the Christian will be able to see the Trinity more clearly. To rid oneself of sin, see the Church, and dwell in it, then one may see the Trinity with more clarity. "As a result, we may see reference to the Church of Christ, and when we are in it, we shall have a vision of God's will and grasp the doctrine of the Trinity, holy and one in being, and shall find Christ himself bringing us together from every direction and binding us together in harmony in a spiritual manner."

[67] *dial. Trin.* 7, 655b (SC 246:212). For more on *mystagogy* (and μυσταγωγ- the word group), see the work by Hans van Loon. While the term overlaps with initiation, divine mystery, the mystery of Christ, Christians guided for worship, and others, more work can explore the use of *mystagogy* and scriptural interpretation. Cyril, in this example, describes Paul as the best of the *mystagogues*, who speaks rightly of the mystery of Christ. In the *dial. Trin.*, Cyril renders the Christ (3, 475a [SC 237:50]), John the Evangelist (2, 437a [SC 231:282]; 4, 504e [SC 237:140]), the writer of Proverbs (6, 609d [SC 246:76]), and Paul as *mystagogues*. These persons ought to lead readers of the Scriptures in their spiritual transformation and participation in the divine mysteries. See Hans van Loon, *Living in the Light of Christ: Mystagogy in Cyril of Alexandria's Festal Letters*, Late Antique History and Religion 15 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017); Hans van Loon, "The Meaning of 'Mystagogy' in Cyril of Alexandria," in *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, ed. Paul van Geest, Late Antique History and Religion 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 37–53; Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1989), 7–13; Aaron Riches, "Mystagogy and Cyrillian Orthodoxy: Christology as Fidelity to a Carnal Presence," *Modern Theology* 36, no. 3 (2020): 606–28.

the illumination of the Spirit. Humans have their life in God, the Father gives life to all things, the Son speaks of himself as the resurrection and the life, and the Spirit makes alive.

God is the divine source that gives light to some to understand the Scriptures. The Father sends the Son as divine wisdom "from above" to illuminate and the Spirit to secure divine understanding. This Triune paradigm secures God sending himself to humanity so that humanity can dwell with God, know God and the Scriptures, and ascend to participate in the divine life of God.

Auditory Illumination from the Scriptures and the Preceding Fathers

I focus next on Cyril's "auditory" commentary for his theology of divine illumination. God reveals himself *visibly* and *audibly* to the reader through the Scriptures and the holy Fathers. Cyril complements visual illumination from heavenly wisdom with auditory illumination from the Scriptures. Scriptural exegesis requires readers to be illuminated by the divine light, attend to the previous traditions of the Fathers, and hear the divine voice of God in the Scriptures. In *dial. Trin.* 1, Cyril mentions the "spiritual sense" (τὸν νοητὸν . . . λόγον) of the Scriptures and a concern to attend to the writings of the holy Fathers.[68] Readers of Scripture hear the voice of Christ speaking.[69] While Cyril could pretend only to be scrutinizing what the Spirit reveals, he insists that in attending to the writings of the preceding Fathers, one experiences divine illumination.[70] This spiritual sense assumes the divine voice from the

[68] *dial. Trin.* 1, 388ab (SC 231:138): "It is certainly not that I pretend to scrutinize the spiritual sense (τὸν νοητὸν ἐκβασανίσαι λόγον), as if I could promise to say or explain something better than our predecessors. For it is enough, yes enough, in this respect, the writings of the holy Fathers, who would decide to attend to them wisely and use them with vigilance would immediately fill his mind with the divine light."

[69] Also see *dial. Trin.* 4, 510a (SC 237:154–56): "So then, they hear Christ in person crying forth, 'You neither know me nor my Father. If you had known me, you would have known my Father' (John 8:19)."

[70] At this point in Cyril's career, he has yet to name who these predecessors might be. Per *thes.* and *dial. Trin.* 1, the predecessors certainly refer to the Nicene formulation and Athanasius (cf. *hom. pasch.* 8.6). In *ep.* 66.5 (*c.* 431), he mentions a host of preceding Fathers that he openly affirms (in full and partial): "But if this is done, we would be about to retract and repudiate many things also openly said by other holy Fathers, for we find certain statements similar to those excerpts in the thrice-blessed and noble Athanasius, some also in the blessed Basil, and

Scriptures. Quoting Matthew 10:20 and 2 Timothy 3:16, Cyril notes how the Spirit speaks to them through the Scriptures. "For, it was not them 'speaking,' according to the word of the Savior, 'but the Spirit of God the Father speaking in them' (Matt 10:20). For, is not 'all Scripture inspired by God and profitable' (2 Tim 3:16)?"[71] By putting these two texts together, Cyril comments upon the spiritual sense of the Scriptures. An interpreter attends to their predecessors because they too attend to the Scriptures, and the Spirit of God speaks "in them." Thus, the divine light from heaven shines down upon readers of Scripture, and by attending to predecessors and the Scriptures, one may *hear* the voice of the Spirit.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I wed together two features to describe reading profiles: (1) the moral virtue required for the spiritual process of reading within Late Antique *grammtikē* and (2) Cyril's profile of the reader involved in Trinitarian exegesis. As a result of these observations, a premise emerges: a reading culture is not simply *what* reading strategies are displayed but

some in both blessed Gregories. Many also have been often stated in the writings of Amphilochius, and not a few also in our common Father, the blessed Theophilus. For there are some which your holiness confesses in the same way also and has the same opinion. There are also by the God-loving Proclus himself some statements in the very same tome which he sent to the Armenians in which in many senses he agrees with those excerpts. Time will run out for us going through the others: blessed Eustathius, bishop of Antioch who was given a place of honor for the true faith at the Council of Nicaea, and your own Alexander of great renown, and after those most holy bishops, Meletius, and Flavian, by whom many things were said which agree with these statements." From those in this list of people, Cyril mentions them quite a few times in his *ep.*: Alexander of Alexandria (1.9; 66.5; 75.3; 76.9; 76.10); Athanasius (1.6, 9; 14.2; 29.1–2; 39.7–8; 40.25; 44.3, 8; 45.14; 66.5; 67.7; 68.2; 69.2; 71.2; 77.2, 4), Basil of Caesarea (14.2; 66.5; 67.7; 68.2; 69.2; 71.2), Gregory of Nazianzus (66.5; 67.7), Gregory of Nyssa (14.2; 66.5; 67.7; 68.2; 69.2; 71.2), Theophilus (14.2; 29.1; 66.5; 67.7; 68.2; 69.2; 75.1–2; 87.7–8, 12), and a general description of "Fathers" or "holy Fathers" (see the brief sampling in: 1.5, 10, 14; 4.2, 7; 5.3, 5, 9; 8.2; 11.5, 8). In these letters, it remains difficult to discern which Gregory is referred to because Cyril will often mention "Gregory" or the "Gregories" without the modifying location (i.e., Nyssa or Nazianzus). As I mention this sample of names, I do not imply that these names are assumed in every mention of "the holy Fathers." But these names do show Cyril's predilection to certain names over others. While Cyril often mentions "Fathers" without naming a specific person (cf. *dial. Trin.* 1, 388b; 2, 433b; 7, 633c; *Jo.* 6:32; 14:11 [2x]; 15:1; 15:26), I mention one more example from *ep.* 1 where Cyril mentions the general phrase "holy Fathers" and then a particular figure, Athanasius. In discussing the *Theotokos*, Cyril mentions how the disciples handed down such an idea, even though they did not mention the term, and he had been taught to think this way "by the holy Fathers." The very next line reads: "our father Athanasius, of hallowed memory, adorned the throne of the Church of Alexandria for the whole of forty-six years" (1.6). It remains at least reasonable to conclude that when Cyril mentions the "Fathers," he at least has Athanasius in mind.

[71] *dial. Trin.* 1, 388b (SC 231:138).

considers *who* is reading, *to what end*, and *what* theological premises inform and are upheld by reading Scripture. A reading *culture* in Late Antique included moral transformation throughout the process of a pupil's instruction.

Cyril envisions a *kind of reader* to be inseparably related to the *kind of reading strategies* involved in his vision of Trinitarian exegesis. To synopsize the lines of reasoning as displayed by Cyril, I offer the following in a coherent manner. First, I displayed how Cyril envisions a road metaphor to describe the interpreter and interpretative process. As he comments on the partitive reading strategy, Cyril observes that it is a balanced and wise reader who can do so. Cyril's reading profile uses a "road" or "royal road" metaphor that depicts the interpreter wayfaring towards contemplation of God with Nicene commitments. Scriptural exegesis is likened to a person *walking* along the correct pathway that heads towards a theological vision with Nicene commitments and a partitive mode of reading. Second, Cyril continues the wayfaring metaphor but tethers the journey to one's moral posture. That is, to follow the right road, to listen to the right predecessors, and to believe rightly all correspond to the moral regard of the interpreter. To affirm the right theological premise is a matter of virtue. Not to affirm the right theological premise is a vice. And, third, Cyril provides at least two features of divine illumination as necessary for scriptural interpretation: visual and auditory illumination from the heavens, the Scriptures, and previous holy Fathers. The Father sends the Son and Spirit from above to permit readers to understand and participate in God's life.

2

Epochal Scriptural Exegesis

In this chapter, I describe how Cyril prescribes for readers a tripartite rule to read the Scriptures, essentially highlighting how one ought to discern the *season* (καιρός), *person* (πρόσωπον), and *reality* (πρᾶγμα) being discussed. Cyril's exegesis of the Philippian hymn (Phil 2:6–11) is a central tool in setting out these distinctions, even as they are also drawn on the rhetorical tradition. While Cyril's *partitive exegesis* (which I consider in chapters 4 and 5) attends to "two ways of speaking" about the Son when he is in the flesh, that partitive exegesis is framed by an *epochal exegesis* first identifies three seasons in which the Son may be placed.

Καιρός is one of three terms that, when applied within Cyril's Christological exegesis, distinguishes the Son in three distinct seasons to assign what is proper of the Son for each season. His epochal exegesis identifies the Son within one of the three seasons, following the temporal and literary movements of the Philippian hymn (Phil 2:6–11), and discerns what is proper of the Son for each season.[1] And while Cyril uses the tripartite rule, he privileges the use of καιρός as a Christological exegetical rule to read the Scriptures according to the seasons of the Son. As a result, a general hermeneutical premise underscores his exegetical logic: interpreters ought to consider the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before considering the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον.

[1] As I mentioned and defined in the introduction, Cyril uses the scriptural language (logical and spatial movements) of the Philippian hymn (Phil 2:6–11) to identify the three-fold temporal division: eternal Monogenes in the heavens as epoch one (Phil 2:6); incarnated Son and the *kenosis* on the earth as epoch two (Phil 2:7–8); and, exalted Son in the heavens as epoch three (Phil 2:9–11). So, when I refer to the three epochs of the Son, I refer to this framework.

THE TRIPARTITE FORMULA BEFORE CYRIL

Cyril utilizes this tripartite rule in his earlier Trinitarian works—and not in his later literature—to discern the meaning of Scripture texts concerning the Son, while refraining from where he acquired this practice. This rule is not original to Cyril and most likely reveals a debt to Athanasius.[2] The tripartite rule, however, precedes Athanasius and stems from distinctions made in the rhetorical traditions.[3] In this section of the chapter, I will consider that classical heritage before tracing the use of language as far as Athanasius.

For Quintilian, referring to Aristotle,[4] every question can be addressed through a list

[2] Cf. *thes*. XX (PG 75:337). While Boulnois notes the origins of the tripartite rule in Athanasius, Sieben observes the use of this rule in Tertullian and Origen (see Hermann J. Sieben, "Herméneutique de l'exégèse dogmatique d'Athanase," in *Politique et théologie chez Athanase d'Alexandrie*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, Théologie Historique 27 [Paris: Beauchesne, 1974], 198–205). Although I refrain from discerning the origins of this literary rule, the tripartite rule, in fact, precedes Athanasius. To such a question, Quintilian records these three items in a longer list of rhetorical features (*Inst.* 3.6.25–28). Crawford provides a list of where the triad occurs in addition to Boulnois's list: Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Thus*. 34; 45 (LCL 465.564, 600); *Lysia* 13; 15 (LCL 465.46, 50); Aelius Theon, *progym.* 4 (Spengel, 84); ps-Hermogenes, *progym*. 10 (Rabe, 22); Valerius Apsines, *rhet*. 2 (Spengel, 344); Aphthonius, *progym*. 8; 9; 10 (Rabe, 21, 27, 31); Cyril of Alexandria, *Jo.* 14:11 (Pusey, 2.448); *thes.* XX (PG 75:337). Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection de Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1994), 87–91; Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 14; Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 106; C. Stead, "Athanasius als Exeget," in *Christliche Exegese zwischen Nicaea und Chalcedon*, ed. J. van Oort and Ulrich Wickert (Kampen: Pharos, 1992), 174–84.

[3] While I do not pursue the continuity or discontinuity of how Christian exegesis utilizes this rhetorical heritage, I simply comment that these three terms have the rhetorical tradition as their origin. For the scope of this thesis, I certainly refrain from engaging with the following question: to what extent do early Christian readers utilize and cohere with a rhetorical heritage? And, to what extent does early Christian scriptural exegesis prove to be discontinuous with a rhetorical tradition? See the following for an entryway into this discussion. Frances M. Young, "The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 182–99; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul, the Corinthians and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception*, Yale Studies in Hermeneutics (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1100*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Martin Irvine, "Interpretation and the Semiotics of Allegory in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine," *Semiotica* 63 (1987): 33–72.

[4] Aristotle, *Cat.* 1b25–2a4. In *Cat.*, Aristotle denotes that each uncombined word or expression can be understood as one of the following: "what (or Substance), how large (that is, Quantity), what sort of thing (that is, Quality), related to what (or Relation), where (that is, Place), when (or Time), in what attitude (Posture, Position), how circumstanced (State or Condition), how active, what doing (or Action), how passive, what suffering (Affection). Examples, to speak but in outline, of Substance are 'man' and 'a horse,' of Quantity 'two cubits long,' three cubits in length 'and the like, of Quality 'white' and 'grammatical.' Terms such as 'half,' 'double,' 'greater' are held to denote a Relation. 'In the marketplace,' 'in the Lyceum' and similar phrases mean Place, while Time is intended by

of elements, a list of *staseis*, upon which an argument can be developed.[5] Quintilian mentions the ten elements "on which every question seems to turn" that derive from Aristotle: (1) οὐσίαν; (2) quality (*qualitatem*); (3) quantity (*quantitatem*); (4) relation (*ad aliquid*); (5) place (*post haec*); (6) time (*quando*); (7–9) to do, to suffer, and to have (*deinde facere pati habere*); (10) κεῖσθαι.[6] Quintilian then notes how the first four are relevant to issues, and the remaining terms tend to various objects. Then, he lists ten more additional items that "others have listed": (1) person (*personam*); (2) time (*tempus*), or "what the Greeks call χρόνον"; (3) place (*locum*); (4) time (*tempus iterum*) "in a second sense (what the Greeks call καιρόν)"; (5) act (*actum*, πρᾶξιν); (6) number (*numerum*); (7) cause (*causam*); (8) τρόπον; (9) opportunity for action (*occasionem factorum*).[7] Without naming such persons, Quintilian concludes this list by noting: "these authorities too believe that there is no question that does not come under one or other of these heads."[8] He also notes that some omit "number" and "opportunity" and substitute these two terms with *res* (*id est* πράγματα).

Clement of Alexandria may be the earliest to display this *staseis*-like rhetorical heritage in the Christian tradition.[9] In two examples, he considers the growth in virtue (*Paed.* 2.1) and whether one is given in marriage (*Strom.* 2.137.3). Clement uses the terms καιρός, χρόνος, τρόπος, and πρός τι together in *Paedegogus*, and raises several questions: who is to marry, what

phrases like 'yesterday,' 'last year,' and so on. 'Is lying' or 'sitting' means Posture, 'is shod' or 'is armed' means a State. 'Cuts' or 'burns,' again, indicates Action, 'is cut' or 'is burnt' an Affection." See Cyril's *hom. pasch.* 12.6 where he makes similar Aristotelian moves regarding how one defines "substance."

[5] On *staseis*-theory, see Joy Connolly, "The New World Order: Greek Rhetoric in Rome," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. Ian Worthington, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 149–52.

[6] *Inst.* 3.6.23–24.

[7] *Inst.* 3.6.25–28.

[8] *Inst.* 3.6.28.

[9] For more on Clement of Alexandria's scriptural exegesis and use of the rhetorical tradition, see J. M. F. Heath, *Clement of Alexandria and the Shaping of Christian Literary Practice: Miscellany and the Transformation of Greco-Roman Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Veronika Černušková, Judith L. Kovacs, and Jana Plátová, eds., *Clement's Biblical Exegesis: Proceedings of the Second Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria*, VCSup 139 (Leiden: Brill, 2017); H. Clifton Ward, "'Symbolic Interpretation Is Most Useful': Clement of Alexandria's Scriptural Imagination," *JECS* 25 (2017): 531–60.

situation, with what person, and what about them.[10] As he comments, "there is a time when it is appropriate (χρόνος ἐστὶν ἐν ᾧ καθήκει); there is a person for whom it is appropriate (πρόσωπον ᾧ προσήκει); there is an age up to which it is appropriate (ἡλικία)."[11] Origen of Alexandria is the first to use the terms as they correlate to exegesis and uses this triadic formula to interpret John 4:24 in *princ.* 1.1.4.[12] He uses a formula of questions as an exegetical guide to interpret the text: *when*, *to whom*, and *what* is being peered into. As Origen considers, "Let us enquire when (*quando*) our Savior spoke these words, to whom (*apud quem*), and what was being sought (*uel cum quid quaereretur*)."[13] Tertullian, likewise, utilizes a similar formula to provide a way to read a Scripture text. While Origen uses a list of *staseis* in his scriptural exegesis, Tertullian may be closer to how Athanasius uses the tripartite rule. To consider 1 Corinthians 9:20 and 22, Tertullian comments: "therefore it was according to times and persons and causes (*pro temporibus et personis et causis*) that they used to censure certain practices, which they would not hesitate themselves to pursue, in like conformity to times and persons and causes."[14]

While these examples display a simplifying of the rhetorical heritage, neither Clement nor Tertullian make use of these phrases to articulate a scriptural rule that is true of

[10] Clement, *Paed.* 2.1: "For the occasion (καιρός), and the time (χρόνος), and the mode (τρόπος), and the intention (πρός τι), materially turn the balance with reference to what is useful, in the view of one who is rightly instructed."

[11] Clement, *Strom.* 2.137.3.

[12] While a bit dated, Averil Cameron pursues Origen and his overlap with the rhetorical heritage. On Origen's scriptural exegesis, see the following: Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Sather Classical Lectures 55 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); Peter W. Martens, "Interpreting Attentively: The Ascetic Character of Biblical Exegesis According to Origen and Basil of Caesarea," in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress Pisa, 27–31 August 2001*, BETL 164 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 1115–21; Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*, PTS 28 (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 1986); Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro, *The Soul and Spirit of Scripture Within Origen's Exegesis*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 3 (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005).

[13] *princ.* 1.1.4. Origen offers a reading of John 4. He uses the tripartite rule for exegesis and to answer his inquiry. The Son speaks to the Samaritan woman to clarify the nature of God as Spirit and Truth. "He called [God] *spirit* to distinguish him from bodies, and *truth* to distinguish him from a shadow or an image."

[14] Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 24.3.

the entire Scriptures. A notable shift occurs with Athanasius as he counters Arian exegesis.[15] In using the tripartite rule, he highlights the καιρός, πρόσωπον, and πρᾶγμα/χρεία/διάνοια of a text—the final term is quite fluid in Athanasius's examples.[16] To read Scripture texts Christologically, he first refers to the καιρός and then varies between attending to the πρόσωπον or the πρᾶγμα. The Son's movement towards the incarnation, for Athanasius, serves as a seasonal hinge to distinguish between the Son eternal and the Son incarnate before commenting upon the πρᾶγμα of the Son.[17]

Athanasius first uses the tripartite rule in *Ar.* I, 54–55, listing several positive and negative uses of the rule. The negative use of the rule wards off errant readings concerning the Son. Quoting Hebrews 1:4, Athanasius claims: "it is right and necessary, as in all divine Scripture, so here, faithfully to expound the *time* (καιρός) of which the Apostle wrote, and the *person* (πρόσωπον), and the *reality* (πρᾶγμα); lest the reader, from ignorance missing either these or any similar particular, may be wide of the true sense."[18] Thus, this three-fold rule is applicable to the entirety of divine Scripture, and is a principle that all good interpreters should know. Athanasius then offers a few positive examples of how to use the rule. The first few instances are not examples of Christological exegesis. He first highlights the *timing* of the Eunuch's question in Acts 8:34. Then, he mentions the *time* of the prophecies in Matthew 24:3 and the

[15] Stead, "Athanasius als Exeget," 181–83. In particular, Stead counters Sieben, who suggests the tripartite rule is not a principle of scriptural exegesis, and is used without exception to counter Arian exegesis („Die genannten Kriterien werden ausnahmslos dazu benutzt, die arianische Bibelauslegung zu entkräften").

[16] For more on Athanasius's indebtedness to the rhetorical tradition, see George Christopher Stead, "Rhetorical Method in Athanasius," *VC* 30 (1976): 121–37; Wijnand Adrianus Boezelman, *Athanasius' Use of the Gospel of John: A Rhetorical Analysis of Athanasius' Orations against the Arians*, GSECP 77 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021).

[17] Basil of Caesarea provides another non-Christological use of καιρός and πρόσωπον. In his response to inquiry ΕΡΩΤΗΣΙΣ ΣΚ, Basil offers a few comments after quoting 1 Cor 10:31. He considers the "who," "what," "when," and "how" of the text. These four elements help determine the season, place, and person to be tested. See the Greek of Basil's text here: Τὸ δὲ, Τίς, καὶ πότε, καὶ πῶς, ἵνα καιρὸς καὶ τόπος, καὶ πρόσωπον δοκιμάζηται, ἀφ' ὧν κακοῦ μέν τινος οὔτε ὑποψία ἔσται (*reg. br.* ΣΚ [PG 31:1228C]).

[18] Athanasius, *Ar.* I, 54. For the critical edition see M. Tetz, AW 1.1. *Die Dogmatischen Schriften.* Volume 2. *Orationes I et II Contra Arianos* (New York: De Gruyter, 1998); M. Tetz and D. Wyrwa, AW 1.1. *Die Dogmatischen Schriften.* Volume 3. *Oratio III Contra Arianos* (New York: De Gruyter, 2000).

timing of events described to the Thessalonian church. "When then one knows these points properly, his understanding of the faith is right and healthy; but if he [i.e., the reader] mistakes any such points, forthwith he falls into heresy."[19] To get the *time* of the text correct is healthy and to attribute καιρός to the wrong season leads to heresy. He eventually gives a few errant examples that misidentify the proper καιρός and πρόσωπον of a given text. He notes how Hymenaeus and Alexander misidentify the *time* of the resurrection (cf. 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 2:17–18).[20] And, the Galatians were well beyond the *time* to make circumcision such an important marker. Yet, according to Athanasius, it was the Jews who misidentified the πρόσωπον in the prophecies from the Hebrew Bible—Athanasius mentions Isaiah 7:14, 53:7, and Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18 as proof-texts.[21]

In *Ar.* I, 55, Athanasius uses Hebrews 1:1–4 to ground the tripartite rule in the Scriptures. Up to this point, the three-fold rule has been a general way to interpret the Scriptures and less about Christology. Now, he speaks more directly about the Son.

> Such has been the state of mind under which Christ's enemies have fallen into their execrable heresy. For had they known the *person* (πρόσωπον), and the *subject* (πρᾶγμα), and the *season* (καιρός) of the Apostle's words, they would not have expounded of Christ's divinity what belongs to his manhood, nor in their folly have committed so great an act of irreligion.[22]

Then, after quoting Hebrews 1:1–4 in full, Athanasius writes: "It appears then that the Apostle's words make mention of that time, when God spoke unto us by his Son, and when did purging

[19] *Ar.* I, 54.

[20] It appears that Athanasius joins together Hymenaeus and Alexander from 1 Tim 1:20 to be the persons who misconstrue the timing of the resurrection in 2 Tim 2:17–18, saying that the resurrection has already happened. See Ernest's discussion about this connection in James D. Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 262n12.

[21] Robert Wilken briefly explores Athanasian readings and his comments about Judaism in the first two chapters of the following work: Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971).

[22] *Ar.* I, 55.

of sins take place and when did he become man?"[23] While Athanasius enquires about the καιρός, he then repeats a temporal adverb a few more times to determine the temporal moment. *When* did the Apostle denote these words? And *when* did the Son purify sins and become a human? Athanasius restricts the *when* of the Apostle's words to the *economy* of the Son.[24]

Athanasius begins *Oration* 2 by quoting Proverbs 8:22 and Hebrews 3:2 to discuss the Father and Son's eternal relations.[25] How can the Son be eternal if he originated with the Father's creative work?[26] Athanasius identifies the time (καιρός) and purpose (χρεία) of Hebrews 3.

> But further, since the drift also of the context is orthodox, showing the time (πότε) and the purpose (πρὸς τί) to which this expression points, I ought to show from it also how the heretics lack reason; that is, by considering, as we have done above, the occasion *when* (τὸν καιρόν) it was used and for what *purpose* (τὴν χρείαν).[27]

Thus, by noting the *when* of Hebrews 3, Athanasius identifies *when* the Scriptures mention this season. The Apostle does not comment upon the eternal essence or generation of the Son, but rather, he mentions the time of the Son's economy.[28]

Aaron becomes a typological marker for the Son. Athanasius points to the *when* of the Son assuming the role of High Priest. Aaron was not born a High Priest, he became one in time. Athanasius notes too that the Son became High Priest after some time. While the Son

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[23] *Ar.* I, 55.

[24] As Ernest observes, Athanasius mentions the three-fold rule to discern the Son's economy and warns against Arians who apply human features to the divine Son (Ernest, *Bible in Athanasius*, 137). T. F. Torrance explores the use of οἰκονομία in Athanasius's literature. He more so describes the use of such a term in his theological discourse than how the term is used in his scriptural exegesis. See Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 259–72.

[25] Athanasius quite possibly learned this reading of Prov 8 by Marcellus of Ancyra. According to Stead and without much documentation, Athanasius may have learned such a pattern from Origen's exegetical literature. For a history of interpretation of Prov 8:22, also see Simonetti's chapter "Sull'interpretazione Patristica di *Proverbi* 8:22." Manlio Simonetti, *Studi sull'Arianesimo* (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1965), 58; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 106; Stead, "Rhetorical Method in Athanasius," 123.

[26] *Ar.* II, 2–3.

[27] *Ar.* II, 7.

[28] *Ar.* II, 7.

existed initially with the Father (cf. John 1:1), the Father willed for ransoms to be paid for all. As a result, the Son was robed with humanity like Aaron, who put on his robe.[29] The Son assumes the features of humanity similar to how Aaron becomes High Priest. The time of the incarnation serves as the moment for *when* the Son mirrors Aaron typologically and *when* he becomes Priest. Then, Athanasius denotes the two conditions for how the Son is similar to Aaron: (1) the Son remains immutable when he becomes human and (2) the Son does not become human as part of his eternal origin, but the eternal Son takes on the flesh.

> In the same way, it is possible in the Lord's instance also to understand aright, that he did not become other than Himself on taking the flesh, but, being the same as before, he was robed in it. And the expressions He became and was made but not be understood as if the Word, considered as Word, were made, but that the Word, being Creator of all, afterwards was made High Priest, by putting on a body which was originate and created, and such as He can offer for us.[30]

Athanasius's exegesis of these Hebrews texts and his use of the tripartite rule hinges upon the two seasons of the Son: the Son eternal and the Son incarnate.

In this exposition of Hebrews 3 and John 1, Athanasius attends to the eternal Word, the incarnate Word, and the scriptural order of Hebrews 2 and 3. He observes the relationship between καιρός and πρόσωπον. It is proper of the Scriptures to speak of the Son as "in the beginning" to describe the eternal Son and to speak differently of the Son as becoming human. Thus, the question becomes, for Athanasius, when and who is being described? "And this meaning (διάνοια), and time (καιρός), and person (πρόσωπον), the Apostle himself, the writer of the words, 'who is faithful to him that made him' (Heb 3:2), will best make plain to us, if we attend to what goes before them."[31] When was the Son one of the Father's creative works? Athanasius's reading of Hebrews 3 requires him to attend to Hebrews 2 and discern the καιρός

[29] *Ar.* II, 7.

[30] *Ar.* II, 8.

[31] *Ar.* II, 8.

as during the economy of the Son's incarnation. Athanasius notes that one such reading will condemn the Arians because the Apostle regards this text to refer to the Son's "human economy"—and not to the Son univocally.[32]

Athanasius explores how Proverbs 8 corresponds to the Son eternal and incarnate in his defense of the Nicene council.[33] The Son is recognized as a created being. He possesses what properly belongs to humans: "'So, is this passage simply pointless?' . . . Not at all; it is not pointless but is rather quite to the point. He is indeed said to be created also, but that is when he became a human being, for this is what properly belongs to being human."[34] He centers on two items: the createdness of the Son and how the eternal Son can also be created. To identify the text's meaning, one must attend to the καιρός, πρόσωπον, and χρεία of the text:

> Such a meaning will be found to be well laid out in the sayings of the Scriptures by one who undertakes the reading of them not as it were some subsidiary matter, but rather searches out the *time* (καιρόν) and the *persons* (πρόσωπα) and the *purpose* (χρείαν) of what is written, on this basis judges and contemplates what is read.[35]

Athanasius next modifies the three-fold rule so that one attends to the καιρός, χρεία, and πρόσωπον of a text, switching the previous order of πρόσωπον and χρεία. It is quite possible that Athanasius understands χρεία in a similar way as σκοπός and διάνοια.[36] Commenting upon καιρός, Athanasius differentiates between two states of the Son: the Son eternal and the Son as

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[32] *Ar.* II, 9.

[33] While the traditional date for *decr*. is AD 350 or 351 (see E. Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius, Gesammelte Schriften* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1959], 3:85), I follow the line of reasoning from T. D. Barnes to date *decr.* to AD 353. See the following: T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 189–99.

[34] *decr.* 14.1. For an English translation, see Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*, ECF (London: Routledge, 2004), 176–211. For a critical edition, see H. G. Opitz, AW 2.1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1940), 1–45.

[35] *decr.* 14.1.

[36] Ernest explores the tripartite terms briefly in relation to several other terms in Athanasius's framework. He suggests that χρεία may be synonymous with σκοπός and διάνοια. If this synonymous relationship is as close as Ernest suggests, then I will suggest a tighter connection between the tripartite terms and the "scope of Scripture." See James D. Ernest, "Athanasius of Alexandria: The Scope of Scripture in Polemical and Pastoral Context," *VC* 47, no. 4 (1993): 350.

human. "He will thus discover and come to knowledge of the time of this text: that, forever being Lord, he later, at the completion of the ages, became human; and, being Son of God, he also became the Son of Man."[37] Athanasius assumes the eternal Son as a theological *a priori* to the Son becoming human. Next, he considers the *use* or *purpose* (χρεία) of a text:

> Such a reader will also perceive the purpose: that, wishing to nullify our death, he took to himself a body from the Virgin Mary so that, having offered this as a sacrifice for all to the Father, "he might set free us all who, through fear of death, had been subject to slavery our whole life long" (Heb 2:15).[38]

The Son becoming created corresponds to soteriological ends and nullifying death. The economy serves as a *telos* for the *createdness* of the Son. He assumed a body from Mary; and quoting Hebrews 2:15, he frees humanity from death. Then, Athanasius turns to the πρόσωπον. Proverbs 8 refers to the Savior. The Son assumes a body at the incarnation as it says in Proverbs 8:22, "the Lord created me."

> As to the person, it is that of the Savior: but it is said when he takes a body and then says, "The Lord created me as a beginning of his ways for works" (Prov 8:22). For just as it well befits the Son of God to be eternal and to be in the bosom of the Father, so also, upon becoming human, it is fitting for him to say, "The Lord created me." Then it was that this was said of him.[39]

Athanasius, thus, assumes the eternal Son to be "created" strictly *when* the Son becomes human.[40] The phrase "in the bosom of the Father" could be an allusion to John 1:18 to convey the eternal generation of the Son.

Athanasius applies this rule to Proverbs 8 and Hebrews 1 and 3. The καιρός of the text

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[37] *decr.* 14.2.

[38] *decr.* 14.2.

[39] *decr.* 14.2.

[40] For a lengthier reading of Athanasius's reading of Prov 8:22, see Lewis Ayres, "Scripture in the Trinitarian Controversies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 440–46.

quite regularly identifies two different seasons of the Son: the Son eternal and the Son incarnate.[41] Whereas Athanasius lists the rules in order of καιρός, πρόσωπον, and πρᾶγμα/χρεία/διάνοια, the application of such a rule regularly begins with καιρός as the initial step, and then the subsequent components can be reordered.[42] From these three examples, it is clear that Athanasius uses καιρός and πρόσωπον more regularly than the third component.

CYRIL'S EPOCHAL READING STRATEGY

In the remainder of the chapter, we exclusively consider Cyril's use of the tripartite terms and, more specifically, his use of καιρός in contexts about scriptural exegesis. The tripartite terms appear more prominently in his Trinitarian literature and then no longer are used together in this exegetical structure. The change may refer to the perceived differences between that of "Arianism" in his Trinitarian volumes and then his concerns within the Nestorian controversy. Whereas the concerns of successive seasons of the Son become less of a concern in Cyril's subsequent Christological exegesis, Boulnois comments on how Cyril attends to unitive Christology and the *communicatio idiomatum* to explain the two natures during the incarnation.[43]

I explore several passages from *dial. Trin.* in more detail, also considering his first use

[41] According to Allen Clayton, Athanasius displayed a general order of the tripartite rule. The *time* or *purpose* of the text was deduced before the person of the text. Allen L. Clayton, "The Orthodox Recovery of a Heretical Proof-Text: Athanasius of Alexandria's Interpretation of Proverbs 8:22–30 in Conflict with the Arians" (PhD diss., Southern Methodist University, 1988), 222; Hans Boersma, "The Sacramental Reading of Nicene Theology: Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa on Proverbs 8," *JTI* 10 (2016): 1–30.

[42] Sieben notes that the καιρός and πρόσωπον play a more significant role in Athanasius's reading strategies than his use of πρᾶγμα/χρεία/διάνοια. Sieben, "Herméneutique de l'exégèse dogmatique d'Athanase," 202–3.

[43] Per Boulnois's observations, this reading strategy was then surpassed by Cyril's concern for the *communicatio idiomatum*. Cyril, especially in his exegesis of John 5:26–28, regards the concerns for the seasons of the Son to be part of "his polemic against the Arians." Boulnois continues by noting, "In fact, this method makes it possible to better preserve the unity of Christ by not distinguishing the Son before the incarnation and the incarnate Son, but the intention of Christ, who urges him to speak sometimes according to his divine nature, sometimes according to his humanity." This subtle move *away from* the epochal patterns in Cyril's later Trinitarian volumes provides space for Cyril to focus more on the unity of the Son rather than successive seasons, and to provide more space for the *communicatio.* Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 95–97.

in *thes.* XX and his last use in *Jo.* 14:11.[44] Cyril's first use of the tripartite terms appears in *thes*. XX and displays his awareness of Athanasius's *Contra Arianos*. While *thes.* is *anti-Arian* in scope, Cyril more so focuses on refuting Eunomius. Cyril, too, does appear to be countering contemporary versions of "Arianism," as is more prominent in the *dial. Trin*.[45] The last use of the

[44] Cyrilline scholarship affirms that *thes*. is the first of Cyril's Trinitarian volumes and displays awareness of Athanasius's *Ar*. It remains relatively difficult to provide tighter dates for these three respective volumes. Joussard suggests the following dating schema: *thes.* (*c.* 423–25); *dial. Trin.* (*c.* 423–25); *Jo.* (*c.* 425–28). Charlier suggests *c.* 412 for *thes.* De Durand offers the following: *thes.* (*c.* pre-412); *dial. Trin.* (*c.* 420); *Jo.* (*c.* pre-429). To help date the three works, Cyril provides a *terminus ante quem* of 10 October 425 as an initial boundary to date *dial. Trin*. This date corresponds to the death of Atticus, the Patriarch of Constantinople. According to Cyril's self-testimony, he claims to write the *dial. Trin.* during the life of Atticus. "In fact, I say that, while Atticus of happy memory still lived, a book concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity was composed by me in which also is a treatise about the incarnation of the only begotten in harmony with which I have now written. I read it to him, to bishops, to clerics, and to those of the faithful who listened eagerly. Thus far, I have given a copy to no one. It is likely that when the treatise is published, I will be accused again, because, even before the election of your reverence, the little treatise was composed" (*ep.* 2.2). For further discussion on the dating schema, see the following Georges Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428," in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon, 1945), 159–74; Georges Jouassard, "Saint Cyrille d'Alexendrie aux prises avec la 'communications des idioms' avant 428 dans ses ouvrages Anti-arien," StPatr 6 (1962): 112–21; Georges Jouassard, "La date des écrits anitiariens de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *RB* 89 (1977): 354–74; Noël Charlier, "Le 'Thesaurus de Trinitate' de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Questions de critique littéraire," *RHE* 45 (1950): 25–81; G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Dialogues sur la Trinité*, SC 231 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 38–43; J. Mahé, "La date du Commentaire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie sur l'évangile selon saint Jean," *BLE* 9 (1907): 41–45; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 19.

[45] I find it difficult to refrain from mentioning this larger concern about the language of "Arian," "anti-Arian," or "Arian exegesis." To offer these sweeping labels proves problematic for historians by continuing to refer to this movement as the Arian controversy. Ayres notes the following: "This controversy is mistakenly called Arian. No clear party sought to preserve Arius' theology. Many who are termed Arian justly protested their ignorance of his teaching or works: their theologies often have significantly different concerns about preoccupations." I recognize Rowan Williams's concern that "the time has probably come to relegate the term 'Arianism' at best to inverted commas, and preferably to oblivion—with all its refinements of early, late, neo or semi. I suspect that such a moratorium will not be imposed for a while (the present reviewer has to plead as guilty as anyone, alas, for delaying it), but the sheer uselessness and inaccuracy of the word becomes clearer with every new piece of research in the period." Yet, Cyril still perceives the problem to be a lineage issue, finding its source in Arius. He enquires about the heresy of Arius and how Hermias and his interlocutors may still, in fact, be "Arian." In *dial. Trin.* 2, 417d (SC 231:244), he states the following: "consider only the heresy of Arius and his acolytes." In addition, Cyril mentions Arius on multiple occasions almost exclusively in *thes*., *dial. Trin.*, and *Juln.* (*thes.* PG 75:12B; XV [252C]; *dial. Trin.* 2, 417d [SC 231:244]; *Juln.* 1.36, 48; 4.700; 5.765) and Eunomius (*thes.* PG 75:12B; V [57B]; V [69A]; VI [72D]; VI [73D]; VI [77A]; VI [81C]; VII [96C]; VII [97B]; VII [100B]; IX [112B]; IX [113B]; X [124D]; X [125C]; X [128C]; X [129A]; XI [140B]; XI [144D]; XIX [313A]; XIX [316C]; XIX [317B]; XIX [321A]; XIX [325A]; XXV [412C]; XXVI [413C]; XXVIII [421D]). It is possible that Eunomian bishops still possessed enough influence *c.* AD 413 to warrant a response (see *CTh* 16.5). It remains quite unclear in Cyril's literature *why* he pursues an anti-Arian engagement for an extended amount of time early in his episcopate. The *Codex Theodosianus* records an Arian and Eunomian connection to both Theodosius I and Theodosius II (*CTh* 16.5). In AD 410, Theodosius II still perceived Eunomians as a threat and provided further legislation that prohibited any receiving or bequeathing of properties. In AD 413, he prohibited any assembling of the Eunomians and confiscated property from those who presided over such gatherings. Philostorgius (*d.* AD 439), an "Arian" ecclesiastical historian, observes the presence of Eunomians in Constantinople well after Theodosius I provided anti-Arian laws in AD 383/384 (*Hist. eccl.* 12.11). For more on the "Arian" controversy, even though the term still proves to be somewhat problematic, see the following volumes, especially

tripartite rule in his Trinitarian literature occurs in *Jo.* 14:11, where he simply comments on the phrase, "the Father is in me."[46] Cyril's *thes.* will be considered first for two reasons: (1) it serves as the first of Cyril's trilogy of Trinitarian volumes and (2) this example is Cyril's first use of the tripartite rule. In the four examples from *dial. Trin.*, Cyril clarifies *how* one ought to read Christological texts. Philippians 2 becomes a reoccurring Scripture text that provides Cyril the scriptural grammar to discern the three seasons of the Son. The incarnation of the Son serves as a hinge to distinguish between the time *before* and *after* the incarnation. Boulnois rightly comments: "Cyril uses this category to distinguish the two fundamental epochs between which the events of the divine economy are divided: before and after the incarnation."[47] In this way, Cyril will describe the Son one way *before* the incarnation and in another way *after* the

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Wessel for Cyril's environment: Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Rowan Williams, "Article Review: R. P. C. Hanson's *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*," *SJT* 45 (1992): 102; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 13; Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, OECS (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 57–72; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Scotland: T&T Clark, 1988), xvii–xxi; Joseph T. Lienhard, "The 'Arian' Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered," *TS* 48 (1987): 415–37; Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II* (*408–450*), Sather Classical Lectures 64 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006); Christopher Kelly, ed., *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 18–19; Jacques Liébaert, "Saint-Cyrille d'Alexandrie et l'Arianisme: Les sources et la doctrine christologique du *Thesaurus* et des *Dialogues sur la Trinité*" (PhD thesis, Université catholique de Lille, 1948); de Durand, *Dialogues: Tome 1*, 32–37.

[46] While not appearing as a rule, per se, Cyril quotes Ps 21:9 (20:10 LXX) that uses both καιρός in relation to πρόσωπον (*glaph. Gen.* 3.8). He comments on the "sacred mystery of the incarnation." Quoting Ps 21:9 as a proof-text ("You will make them like a fiery furnace at the time of your presence [εἰς καιρὸν τοῦ προσώπου σου], Lord"), Cyril interprets the time of this passage to correspond with the incarnation of the Son. "The time of the Father's presence is reasonably understood as the time of the incarnation, seeing that the Son is both the presence and image of God the Father. He is a fierce flame and a furnace to those who wish to reject the mystery of the incarnation of the Only-Begotten." In this section of *glaph. Gen.*, Cyril presents his two-fold model of Christological exegesis. He describes the Son according to what constitutes *as divine* and *as human*, and according to what corresponds to the divine mystery (eternal generation and incarnation). I highlight this move to note that Cyril does perform a partitive reading of the Scriptures without noting concern for the καιροί of the Son first. Here, his reading observes each animal being used in ratifying the Abrahamic covenant. His partitive exegesis pursues how each animal denotes one of the two natures of the single Son. Of the young bull, he notes the two-fold distinction: ". . . a young bull serves on occasion as a fitting likeness to Christ's deity. At other times, with respect to his human nature . . ." Of the animals being cut into two pieces, he notes: ". . . we perceive his divine and ineffable generation from the Father, while on the other we speak also of the mystery of his incarnation." Cyril provides another similar reading of the two birds in the cleansing process for the leper in Lev 14 (*glaph. Lev.* 11.2; cf. 11.4). So, while two birds appear, they refer to the two natures of the single Son. "For the Only-Begotten, although he was God by nature, bore the flesh of the Holy Virgin, and was indeed composed, as it were, of two, by which I mean his heavenly nature and his human nature, in a way that is ineffable and beyond understanding."

[47] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 90.

incarnation.

Determining the "Time" of the Son's "Realities"

In this first section, I explore Cyril's first and last use of the tripartite set of terms in his Trinitarian literature. In *thes*. XX, Cyril displays an awareness of *Contra Arianos*; and in *Jo*. 14:11, Cyril provides very little explanatory detail on how to use the terms. After exploring both passages, I then define the three terms as used by Cyril in contexts proper for scriptural exegesis.

Cyril uses and reworks many of Athanasius's arguments from *Contra Arianos* in his *thes*. In *thes*. XX, Cyril begins with a disputation over Hebrews 1:3–4. He writes contrary to those who misrepresent the nature of the Word and who reduce the Son to be among the creatures, especially focusing on the line that the Son was "made better than the angels."[48] As Cyril continues the opposing line of reasoning, the Son was brought into a better state of being and underwent a change in nature, which is proper for creation.[49] In response to this reading of Hebrews 1, Cyril mentions a necessary way to read the Scriptures: "First of all, the one who undertakes the interpretation of the divine Scriptures determines the moment (καιρόν) in which something is said, and the person (πρόσωπον) concerning whom, by whom, and concerning whom it is being said."[50] Cyril's initial prescribed manner of reading considers the καιρός of when something is said and the πρόσωπον being discussed.[51]

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[48] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337A).

[49] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337A). "But that which can be changed into the universe, and be transferred from one thing to another, must necessarily be of a changeable nature. But if it is of a changeable nature, it will also be created, to which change is proper."

[50] *thes*. XX (PG 75:337B).

[51] In more recent years, Dimitrios Zaganas looks at Cyril's use of πρόσωπον in Cyril's commentary material on the twelve prophets. His use of πρόσωπον attends to the referent of the text. Furthermore, Schurig considers the use of the Philippian hymn in *ador*. These two works, in particular, display more recent volumes that engage Cyril's scriptural exegesis. Sebastian Schurig, *Die Theologie Des Kreuzes Beim Frühen Cyrill von Alexandria: Dargestellt an Seiner Schrift „De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate"*, STAC 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Dimitrios Zaganas, *La formation d'une exégèse alexandrine post-origénienne: Les Commentaires sur les Douze Prophètes et sur Isaïe de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, TEG 17 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 34–38.

He then provides scriptural proof-texts that apply to each term. As already noted above, Athanasius describes the terms by comparing positive and negative examples before turning to Christological examples (*Ar.* I, 54–55); however, Cyril presents a different line of reasoning while using the same proof-texts. He does not simply rehearse Athanasius's arguments but seeks to clarify what the three terms may insinuate. Whereas Athanasius's use of the tripartite rule in *Ar.* I, 54 progresses in two stages, Cyril's argument progresses in three stages according to the three terms.[52] Concerning καιρός, Cyril says: "we will then know the usefulness of time (τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ χρήσιμον) when we hear the holy apostles saying to Christ."[53] Like Athanasius, Cyril uses Matthew 24:3 and 1 Timothy 1:20 for καιρός. Concerning πρόσωπον, Cyril comments as follows: "But that the knowledge of the persons (τῶν προσώπων) is necessary and useful." However, Cyril quotes Acts 8:34 and Hebrews 7:13–14—Athanasius quotes these two Scriptures to comment upon καιρός. Up to this point, Cyril has yet to mention the third term, πρᾶγμα. Instead of using Isaiah 7:14 and 53:7 for πρόσωπον, Cyril uses these texts to describe the πρᾶγμα. To introduce this concern, he mentions: "But that it is necessary not to ignore the reality (τὸ πρᾶγμα) itself is evident."[54] To visualize the use of scriptural proof-texts for each term, see Table 1.

Table 1: Proof-Texts for the Tripartite Rule

	Athanasius, *Ar.* I, 54	Cyril, *thes.* XX (PG 75:337BC)
καιρός	Acts 8:34; Matt 24:3; 1 Tim 1:20; Heb 7:13–14	Matt 24:3; 1 Tim 1:20
πρόσωπον	Isa 7:14; Isa 53:7	Acts 8:34; Heb 7:13–14
πρᾶγμα		Isa 7:14; Isa 53:7

[52] Cyril mentions πράγματος in *thes.* XX (PG 75:337D) and in relation to the nature of the Son in the incarnation. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 88–89.

[53] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337B).

[54] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337C).

After supplying the scriptural rationale for these three terms, Cyril returns to his reading of Hebrews 1 and interprets as follows:

> If anyone, therefore, carefully observes the time, person, and reality (καιροῦ καὶ προσώπου καὶ πράγματος), he will find that this was said by Paul, that the Word of God was incarnate for us; when our sins were cleansed, he sat on the right hand of the majesty on high; then he became better than the angels: his nature was not changed into something else, or what was not before, after which he was made; for Paul does not now speak of the nature of the Son, but of the thing which took place at the time of the incarnation.[55]

Thus, the author of Hebrews speaks of the Son during his incarnation. Instead of speaking about a changed nature, the Apostle speaks of *when* the Son is incarnate. Cyril elaborates by noting how the Son is greater than the angels:

> When he first ascribes so much glory to the Son and accommodates to him those things which are proper to the nature of the Father, then he says that he was made so much more excellent than the angels, inasmuch as he obtained the name even more excellent than those, as the Son and the heir, and the splendor, and the character, and the image, and sitting on the same throne, and the Creator. But if by these he is considered to be much more excellent than the angels, his administration will be even more excellent than that of them.[56]

So, when was the Son made greater? According to Cyril, the Son being made greater is not according to his nature, for the Word was in the beginning with the Father (cf. John 1:1), but rather it is concurrent with the season of his incarnation as he is exalted back to the majesty on high.

Cyril displays an awareness of Athanasius's material in this triad of terms, but he does not simply copy his argument. In this use of καιρός—the first of the triadic terms, Cyril applies the term more narrowly to the season of the incarnation, as opposed to the σκοπός of the Scriptures. The use of this term will be narrowed even further in his *dial. Trin.* whereby he

[55] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337D).

[56] *thes.* XX (PG 75:340AB).

uses Philippians 2 to delineate more specifically three distinct seasons of the Son. The πρόσωπον is obviously a referent to the Son; however, and proper to this setting here, Cyril remains quite vague on the meaning of πρᾶγμα. The only phrase that remotely clarifies what Cyril means concerns the immutable nature of the Son, even during the incarnation: "his nature was not changed into something else, or what was not before, after which he was made."[57]

Except for the *dial. Trin.*, Cyril mentions the tripartite rule only one more time in the texts composed before the Nestorian controversy. After this usage, he no longer uses all three terms together. In *Jo.* 14:11, Cyril comments on quotations from a pamphlet.[58] His use of the tripartite rule occurs embedded within a line of reasoning about the use of prepositions, what is proper to the Son's nature, and the eternal generation of the Son. Furthermore, Cyril raises the following issue: how can the Son dwell in the Father, and how can the Son dwell in us? To differentiate this concern, Cyril mentions the tripartite rule:

> We will say neither that the Son is made by the Father nor that God the Father, from whom all things exist, is created by the Son. Rather we will apply the usage of the divinely inspired Scripture appropriately to each time and person and reality (καιρῷ καὶ προσώπῳ καὶ πράγματι), and we will weave together an account that is pure and irreproachable in all essential points.[59]

Cyril refrains from explaining *how* to use this rule, but instead, he simply comments that he applies this rule to the phrase "the Father is in me." By distinguishing the difference between "in me" and "through me," Cyril discerns what is proper for the Son and humanity. A distinct difference remains as one considers the "person" and *when* this union is upheld. As Cyril concludes this section, he notes, "He is naturally in the Father and exists in him and has the

[57] *thes.* XX (PG 75:337D).

[58] *Jo.* 14:11. Cyril begins by noting, "I happened upon a pamphlet of the opponents. And when I looked into what they say about this passage, I found this statement after some other comments." Cyril will quote from this pamphlet on multiple occasions and then present his dogmatic exegesis in retort. Crawford has commented upon this pamphlet, seemingly authored by Theodore of Heraclea in opposition to Marcellus of Ancyra. See Matthew R. Crawford, "The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology Over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10–11," *JECS* 21 (2013): 537–67.

[59] *Jo.* 14:11.

Father in himself by a clear identity of substance, and it is completely impossible for anything to divide and separate them into different substances."[60] Thus, as Cyril applies the rule to the Scriptures, he distinguishes between a univocal meaning irrespective of the "person" and "time" and insinuates how the phrase's meaning is different when referring to the Son. While the tripartite rule—at least explicitly mentioned—seems to fall out of Cyril's use, he more appropriates the phrase *oikonomia with the flesh* in *Jo.* to convey the *time* of the incarnation and the *reality* (πρᾶγμα) of the Son pertaining thereto.

Thus, while the rule derives in part from the rhetorical tradition, Christological concerns shape the rule for Cyril. The term καιρός can affect the σκοπός of Scriptural interpretation to distinguish the *when* as a historical/literal referent of the idea mentioned or the *when* of the author speaking. I suggest that Cyril develops the Athanasian heritage to clarify how to use the tripartite terms that identify three distinct seasons rather than Athanasius's two.[61]

The meaning of the second term (πρόσωπον) depends on the meaning of καιρός. Over the 100+ uses of πρόσωπον in the *thes.*, *dial. Trin.*, and *Jo.*, the term is used in many ways. It has the meaning of "face," appears in quoted scriptural material, can denote the grammatical "person" or the *realis* "person," and can distinguish the individual persons of the Trinity.[62] If καιρός signifies the σκοπός of the Scriptures or the literal referent, then πρόσωπον can refer to either the scriptural writer or a character in the narrative.[63] However, if καιρός refers to the

[60] *Jo.* 14:11.

[61] According to Ernest, σκοπός is a term that corresponds to Athanasius's reading patterns in such a way that σκοπός is "one of several interchangeable terms that Athanasius has for describing the theological—or better, Christological and soteriological—unity of Scripture. Ernest, "Scope of Scripture," 342.

[62] Cf. *thes.* XII (PG 75:181D): "Therefore, while the nature of the Godhead is simple and uncomposed, it would not be divided by our thoughts into the dyad of Father and Son, if not some difference were posited, I mean, not according to substance, but thought to be external [to the substance], through which the person (πρόσωπον) of each is made (εἰσφέρεται) to lie in a peculiar (ἰδιαζούσῃ) hypostasis, but is bound into unity of Godhead through natural identity." Quoted in Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, VCSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 182.

[63] For Cyril, the σκοπός of the Scripture is the mystery of Christ. Boulnois looks at the use of σκοπός in some of Cyril's earlier literature. She observes the use of the term to specify the subject, meaning of a passage, the goal, the intention of God, or the target aimed by the Scriptures. And so, the exegesis of Scripture seeks both the meaning

Christological seasons, then πρόσωπον obviously and always refers to the personhood of the Son.[64] When it relates to the tripartite rule, van Loon regards the following: "The archbishop frequently applies this [i.e., πρόσωπον] to Jesus Christ: it must be established whether a statement refers to the time before or after the incarnation, to the Word 'without the flesh', or 'with the flesh'."[65] When appearing in the tripartite rule, the use of καιρός will govern the meaning of πρόσωπον to refer to the Son.[66] As an epochal season in Cyril's Trinitarian exegesis, πρόσωπον refers to the individual subsisting persons in the Godhead. It speaks to nothing of nature but signifies the character—the term is used in Christological contexts to distinguish

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of the Scriptures and the *aim* of the divine economy. She concludes her observations by denoting the value of the incarnation. "The finality of the incarnation is therefore the only explanation that is accessible to us. By answering the question 'why,' it gives the σκοπός of the Scripture and is the foundation of the entire Cyrillian interpretation." In *Jo.* 16:25, Cyril mentions the proper σκοπός of the Scriptures is through speaking and believing the Trinity rightly. To possess perfect knowledge is to follow the Trinitarian vision of the Scriptures, only given through the illumination of the Spirit. "By perfect knowledge, we mean that which is right and unswerving, which cannot bear to think or say anything discordant, but which has the right view concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity. Though now we 'see through a mirror and in an enigma' and we 'know in part,' as Paul says (1 Cor 13:12, 9), nevertheless, since we do not depart from the precision of the dogmas but follow the intent (σκοπός) of the holy and divinely inspired Scripture, we have a knowledge that is not imperfect, which one could not get in any other way than by the illumination of the Holy Spirit" (*Jo.* 16:25). In his *glaph. Gen.*, he denotes the *skopos* of the Scriptures as the mystery of Christ: "It is the intent (σκοπός) of inspired Scripture to indicate to us the mystery of Christ through innumerable objects" (*glaph. Gen.* 6.1). This example also corresponds to Athanasius in *Ar.* III, 29: "Now the scope and character of Holy Scripture, as we have often said, is this—it contains a double account of the Savior; that He was ever God, and is the Son, being the Father's Word and Radiance and Wisdom; and that afterwards for us He took flesh of a Virgin, Mary Bearer of God, and was made man. And this scope is to be found throughout inspired Scripture, as the Lord Himself has said, 'Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me' (John 5:29)." Especially with this example from Athanasius, *skopos* and epochal readings can interlace together. According to Keating, and rightly so, "But whether speaking of how the Old Testament realities foreshadow salvation in Christ, or of how the gospels reveal the full humanity and divinity in Christ, Cyril is always concerned to manifest the unity of the plan of redemption through the Incarnate Word." Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 76–87 (quote from 87); Zaganas, *La formation d'une exégèse*, 339–40; J. David Cassel, "Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis," StPatr 37 (2001): 413–15; Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952); Daniel A. Keating, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, OTM (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14.

[64] Apart from the passages that Cyril mentions "times" and "persons" in shared contexts—similar to the tripartite rule—πρόσωπον is not used in specific Christological contexts in the *dial. Trin.* van Loon, *Dyophysite Christology*, 184.

[65] van Loon, *Dyophysite Christology*, 180.

[66] At this point, I refrain from a fuller analysis of πρόσωπον and its use in relation to Cyril's Trinitarian and divine grammar. De Durand, followed by Boulnois and van Loon, notes that Cyril uses πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις to convey two different aspects of the same entity. Whereas ὑπόστασις refers to the internal aspects of the single entity, πρόσωπον refers to the external aspects of the same entity. De Durand, *Dialogues: Tome 1*, 82; Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 309; van Loon, *Dyophysite Christology*, 183–84.

the single Son *before* and *after* the incarnation.[67]

Whereas the first two terms are relatively fixed—even if the order of appearance is changed—the third in the formula is flexible. In the sampling of Christian and non-Christian sources above, we find: *uel cum quid quaereretur*, *causae*, πρᾶγμα, χρεία, and διάνοια. This third term may change to convey relative interests within the same author. Even Cyril exchanges πρᾶγμα with λογισμός at various times.[68] Marie-Odile Boulnois notes:[69]

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[67] Outside of the use of πρόσωπον in the tripartite rule, Cyril uses πρόσωπον twice in his Trinitarian volumes to signify a single-Son Christology: "Even though God the Word has descended from heaven, he says that the Son of Man descended, refusing, after he became human, to be divided into two persons" (*Jo.* 3:12–13) and "He is indivisible, then, after the union, and he is not divided into two persons, even though we recognize that the Word of God is one thing and the flesh in which he has come to dwell is another" (*Jo.* 6:69). Even though πρόσωπον is not used in other settings, Cyril still vies for a unitive Son quite early: "For, the Christ is one, having been mixed from humanity and from the Word of God" (*thes.* XX [PG 75:333A]), "Being thought of as one from two, the Son, in whom there is one nature mixing together and laboring concurrently, both divine and also human, existing ineffably and mysteriously, as in a way that he cannot but be conceived of as a unity" (*dial. Trin.* 1, 405b [SC 231:184]), "Christ is in a sort of middle ground between divinity and humanity, having in him as the union of the two" (*dial. Trin.* 3, 501a [SC 237:126]), "But they are one by that coming together and ineffable concurrence" (*Jo.* 6:52–53), "We must observe, however, that he does not allow himself to be divided into two christs" (*Jo.* 6:61–62), "He is not two as some think, who do not seem to understand the depth of the mystery" (*Jo.* 6:69), "They dare to separate from the Word of God that temple that was assumed for us from the woman, and they divide the one true Son into two sons just because he became a human being" (*Jo.* 9:37), "There is one Son and Christ with no division after the incarnation" (*Jo.* 12:23; also see *hom. pasch.* 11.8), "Whoever divides the one and only Son into a dyad of sons, let them realize that they are surely denying the faith" (*Jo.* 14:1), "Therefore, whoever divides them, parceling out the flesh from the one who dwells bodily in it, and dares to say that there are two sons, let them realize that they believe only in the flesh" (*Jo.* 14:1), "there is one Christ and one Son, even after he becomes human" (*Jo.* 17:22–23), "He did not divide Emmanuel into a pair of sons" (*Jo.* 20:28), and others think there are two Christs and "we maintain, in accordance with our holy and divinely inspired Scriptures, that Jesus is one Christ and one Son" (*Jo.* 20:30–31).

[68] Cf. *dial. Trin.* 4, 516c (SC 237:174): "Where are you going when you cannot bear to examine the moments (καιρούς) and the characters (πρόσωπα)? What are you doing, you who are carried away like prey by any evil spirit? Why do you confuse what cannot be mixed, without considering the season (καιροῦ), the persons (προσώπων), the reasonings (λογισμῶν) that could make it much clearer and easier to eclipse any consideration of the language used about the Son?"

[69] The only two references she mentions are the following, one from the *dial. Trin.* and one from *Jo.* "We must therefore attribute to him what is of God, as to God, and as to him who has become as we are, what is what we are, that is, what is human. As for the unorganized and indiscriminate mixture of realities, it is necessary to refuse it altogether, it eludes the exact and thoughtful comprehension of notions, and more than half undermines the beauty of truth" (*dial. Trin.* 1, 398d [SC 231:166–68]) and "He always maintains the combination of the two facts into one (τοῖν δυοῖν πραγμάτων τὴν εἰς ἓν ἀναπλοκήν). I am referring to the human nature, which possesses lowliness like ours, and the divine nature, which is pregnant with the highest glory of all" (*Jo.* 17:11). Given the amount of occurrences of this term, we could appeal to a few more to help support Boulnois's claim. See also, "Or who seems to conceive of a kind of confusion, a mixture of realities, and also of the seasons, so as not to make any distinction? They would apply the items that belong to the flesh and what follows from his presence in the Word from the Father, and they would assign the properties and peculiarities of the Monogenes to the flesh and the time which it characterizes" (*dial. Trin.* 5, 547d [SC 237:268]) and "This is really going all the way upside down and plunging into the jumble of a complete confusion of realities to the very distinct nature: while a long and exact list of their

> Πρᾶγμα—used then most often in the plural—serves to designate, in a context of Christological exegesis, the different realities united in Christ, that is to say his two natures. Thus, when Cyril mentions the necessity of distinguishing πράγματα, it is a question of discerning between human properties and divine prerogatives.[70]

She argues that when πρᾶγμα appears in Cyril's Christological exegesis, the term is used to speak of the Son's internal makeup—the divine and human properties.

The Philippian Hymn and "what is appropriate for each of the seasons"

Cyril uses the scriptural resources and language from Philippians 2 to provide the basis for using the tripartite rule.[71] More specifically, Cyril begins to privilege καιρός as the initial interpretive move before considering the realities of the Son. As a result, the tripartite rule appears to be more of a focus in the *dial. Trin.*—as compared to the *thes.* and *Jo.* Cyril highlights the following about Philippians 2:5–11: "he [Paul] divides his narrative between two seasons (δυσίν . . . διανέμαι καιροῖς) and introduces a double point of view on the knowledge of the mystery."[72] The Philippian hymn (Phil 2:6–11) is used to identify the three epochs of the Son:

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respective qualities keeps them at a distance, they are made 'to flow' in the manner of waters of two rivers, as the expression of one of the Greek sages" (*dial. Trin.* 2, 436c [SC 231:280]). From these four examples and the lines of reasoning involved, Cyril's use of πρᾶγμα—proper to Christological discourse in his Trinitarian volumes—conveys the indiscriminate union of two realities in the single Christ. These two realities are the two natures, which will often prompt certain activities: divine nature and divine actions, and human nature and human actions. In *hom. pasch.* 8.5, Cyril describes a way to affirm the single Son and yet confess the two natures: "Even when we have distinguished them in this way, and separated by thought alone what may be said of each of them, we will constrict them again in an inseparable unity."

[70] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 91. «Πρᾶγμα – utilisé alors le plus souvent au pluriel – sert à designer, dans un contexte d'exégèse christologique, les différentes réalités unies dans le Christ, c'est-à-dire ses deux natures. Ainsi, lorsque Cyrille mentionne la nécessité de distinguer les πράγματα, il s'agit de discerner entre les propriétés humaines et les prérogatives divines.»

[71] John McGuckin regards Phil 2:6–11 as a central text in Cyril's Christology. Not only is this assertion proper to my current study, but I would add John 1 and Heb 1 as reoccurring Scriptures that underscore Cyril's Christological vision. For more on Cyril's reception of the Philippian hymn, see John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, VCSup 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 186; Schurig, *Die Theologie Des Kreuzes*, 114–78; Michael C. Magree, "'Shaped to the Measure of the Kenosis': The Theological Interpretation of Philippians 2:7 from Origen to Cyril of Alexandria" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2019).

[72] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547ab (SC 237:266).

eternal Monogenes in relation to the Father, the incarnated Son and assumption of the flesh, and the exalted and glorified Christ. While Cyril mentions "two seasons," he more prominently focuses on season one and two in this section. Philippians 2 is used to correspond to: (1) three successive temporal time frames from eternal to incarnate to exalted states; (2) two different spatial categories are assumed to convey what is in heaven and on earth; (3) two transitions that distinguish the eternal to incarnate season and the incarnate to exalted season.

Initially, Hermias is presented as confusing the Son's properties and activities. He suggests that all that the Son possesses is given to him by the Father *ad extra*. Even affirming God is true and admitting the Son is consubstantial with the Father, Hermias notes how the Son received the very name of God through participation with the Father and submits to the Father.[73] By making these arguments, Hermias concludes that the Son "came back to life after three days by the power of the Father, and the very name of God he acquired by virtue of participation. He prays with us and he submits to the Father, he receives royalty and power, such is the tradition transmitted to us by the divine and sacred texts."[74] For Hermias, the Son is glorified and sanctified by the Father, lives through the Father, and prays and submits to the Father alongside humanity.

To counter Hermias, Cyril criticizes a univocal reading of Christological texts and then models an epochal reading of Philippians 2.

> But if our ideas are disorderly and without order, our discourse will slip easily from this to that, then from that to this, leading on every point to knowledge that will be neither clear nor lucid. On the other hand, it will show very well what is exceedingly true, which is also blameless, if one makes a distinct and separate examination regarding each test. Take courage, then, that we may speak with the utmost clarity and distinct and in order.[75]

Hermias's blasphemous Christology, for Cyril, is the result of careless and disorderly readings of

[73] *dial. Trin.* 5, 546b (SC 237:264).

[74] *dial. Trin.* 5, 546c (SC 237:264).

[75] *dial. Trin.* 5, 546cd (SC 237:264).

the Scriptures.

This criticism prompts Cyril to articulate the tripartite exegetical rule. He quotes Philippians 2:5–11 in its entirety and states that "Paul writes about the Monogenes."[76] After interpreting the Philippian hymn as relating to the eternal Monogenes, he then divides two ways to observe the Son as follows:

> Is it not, O friend, that he divides his narrative between two seasons (καιροῖς) and introduces a double point of view (διττὴν εἰσφέρει) on the knowledge of the mystery? First, he delimits an initial, first moment (καιρόν), during which the Word was in the form and likeness of God the Father. Then, second, at a later moment, according to whom as though neglecting (μεθεὶς) to be in the form and likeness of the Father, he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant and by enduring death upon a cross. Then, he is considered to receive moreover by grace what belongs to him by nature, I mean the name above all names and the right to be worshiped by us and also the holy angels.[77]

While his theological exegesis of the Son includes three epochs, Cyril only highlights two seasons of the Son. The double point of view that Cyril mentions refers predominately to the Son's position in seasons one and two, even though he alludes to season three (i.e., the exaltation). So, Cyril speaks to three successive temporal movements (eternal Monogenes, incarnation, exaltation) and two spatial placements (heaven and earth), and he uses the scriptural resources of Philippians 2 to do so. The first moment restricts the eternal Son in the form of the Father, the second moment defines the *kenosis* of the Son, and the final moment provides the boundaries of the Son's exaltation.

According to Cyril, Paul divides the epochal position of the Son into two different seasons. These two seasons reflect the Son *as is* and the Son *enfleshed*. In the first moment, the Son possesses the same likeness of the Father. During the second epoch, the Son assumes the form of a servant. Rather than describing the *third* epoch, Cyril merely highlights how the Son

[76] *dial. Trin.* 5, 546e–47a (SC 237:266).

[77] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547b (SC 237:266).

returns to "what belongs to him by nature." Especially in *dial. Trin.* 5, we are left wondering about the Son's relationship to the third epoch. Throughout *dial. Trin.*, Cyril spends considerably more time discussing the Son within the first and second epochs. This gap in Cyril's exegetical rationale could result from his need to attend to the first and second epochs. It could be the result of a vague theology of exaltation and ascension. Alternatively, and more probable, all that applies to the *theologia* of the eternal Monogenes in the first epoch applies equally and unequivocally to the Son in the third season—essentially upholding the divine immutability of the Son. However, Cyril does not focus on the two natures of the Son in the exalted position. If the single Son still possesses two natures, how do the two natures manifest themselves in a glorified Son?

As Philippians 2 supplies scriptural language for Cyril about the epochs, Cyril reflects upon the properties of the Son in each season. He uses the scriptural language to display two spatial domains for the Son, essentially describing the Son from two different points of view and three different temporal seasons. After this initial reading of the Philippian hymn, he further reflects upon the eternal relations between the Son with the Father. The Son existed in the condition of the Father.[78] After a brief comment about equality, Cyril describes how the Son abandons the form and likeness of the Father through the *kenosis*. He describes the *kenosis* not by divesting the Son of his eternal nature but by acquiring a servant's form. By following the literary logic of Philippians 2, Cyril highlights what previously belonged to him before the incarnation. After enduring the death of a cross, the Son then receives "by grace what belongs to him by nature."[79] The grace that belongs to the Son by nature will prompt corporate human and angelic worship directed towards the Son: "I mean the name above all names and the right to be worshiped by us and also the holy angels."[80]

While Hermias agrees with this line of reasoning, Cyril clarifies how the divinely

[78] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547b (SC 237:266).

[79] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547b (SC 237:266).

[80] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547bc (SC 237:268).

inspired Scripture presents a narrative of the Son across multiple epochs. To understand a Christological text rightly, one must discern the epochal position of the Son before assessing his πρᾶγμα:

> The entire text of divinely inspired writing thus presents both these items. Sometimes, in fact, it declares God the Son, who has not yet lowered himself to an emptying (εἰς κένωσιν), who is in the heights of divinity, where the Father is. Sometimes, on the other hand, he is called to an emptying by a voluntary movement of mercy towards us. He has descended from his heights to the state of the flesh without the glory, which the text presents clearly.[81]

Cyril's *epochal exegesis* frames the Christological temporal spaces to supply him with the necessary categories to read the Scriptures and distinguish between the two natures of the incarnate Son. For Cyril, some Christological texts display the Son in the heights of divinity with the Father before the *kenosis*. Other Christological texts display the Son's voluntary movement towards humanity. Cyril's creative scriptural exegesis discerns between the Son *as is* eternally with the Father and the Son *as enfleshed* during the incarnation.

A shrewd and wise reader observes these two necessary distinctions for the Son. This mode of reading helps readers to discern what is proper for each season, which would include a two-nature partitive reading of the single Son during the incarnation.

> Who, I must say, can be considered wise and shrewd? Who is able to speak a bipartite and double language in these matters, distributing their explanations of the mystery according to the proper seasons (καιροῖς διανέμοντες τοῖς καθήκουσι τήν μυσταγωγίαν)? Or who seems to conceive of a kind of confusion, a mixture of realities (πραγμάτων), and also of the seasons (καιρῶν), so as not to make any distinction?[82]

Cyril clearly distinguishes the need to discern the two-fold manner a text can portray about the Son. Not only must readers distinguish the proper seasons, but they must use a "bipartite and

[81] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547c (SC 237:268).

[82] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547d (SC 237:268).

double language" to distinguish between the properties of the Son.[83] Readers ought to distinguish between two statements because the properties predicated to the Son are different in both seasons. To speak of the seasons first situates the Son *before* the incarnation and *during* the incarnation. To speak of a "mixture of realities" (ἀναφυρμὸν πραγμάτων) refers to the indeterminate mixture of the two natures in the incarnation.[84] This interpretive order arranges the καιρός as a first principle before one may consider the πρᾶγμα of the Son. Πρᾶγμα, when used in Cyril's Christological exegesis, is a way to convey the realities of the Son, and more specifically, the term is a way to encapsulate the divine and human nature subsisting in the incarnate Son.[85] To speak in this two-fold manner, readers need to assess the epochal placement of the Son, and then they may speak of all the properties proper to the Son in each epoch. Readers may apply the peculiar items belonging to the Monogenes (à la eternal relation with the Father) and the flesh (à la incarnation). The wise reader places guards around each epoch to speak appropriately about the Son. Cyril further necessitates this division when he states: "They would apply the items that belong to the flesh and what follows from his presence in the Word from the Father and they would assign the properties and peculiarities of the Monogenes to the flesh and the time which it characterizes."[86] The proper realities (πράγματα) are applied to the Son (πρόσωπον) during the specific epoch (καιρός); therefore, language to describe the Son must not be confused when one "weighs what is appropriate for each of the seasons."[87]

Hermias responds to Cyril in a way that anticipates a two-Son concern.[88] As Hermias responds to Cyril, he seeks to preserve a single Son and retorts with the following:

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[83] According to Liébaert, this double language corresponds to the condition of the Son as divine and human, before and after becoming human. Liébaert, "Les sources et la doctrine christologique," 119.

[84] The double language and confusion of the realities correspond to the two properties of the Son: divine and human. See Liébaert, "Les sources et la doctrine christologique," 121.

[85] See Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 91.

[86] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547d (SC 237:268).

[87] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547e (SC 237:268).

[88] This two-Son concern being involved with partitive readings appears several more times in Cyril's literature. In *apol. orient.* 4, the bishops of Oriens notes: "But there is absolutely no need at all to match up different verses to two different persons, or to two concrete existences, or two sons, which would mean dividing up the

> How can one have doubts about what is the best? It is to confess a single Christ and Son, according to the Scriptures. Ideally, to consider things from the rational point of view, as long as the Monogenes has remained far from the contest with the flesh in unity, it has shown, as it should, the honours of the deity, since they were proper and natural.[89]

Hermias struggles to affirm Cyril's categories by preserving a single Son. Cyril does not affirm a double Son; instead, Cyril advocates a two-fold seasonal distinction when speaking about the single Son.[90] "The language to be used in both cases is self-evident, therefore, if one weighs what is appropriate for each of the seasons (εἰ τὰ ἑκάστῳ πρέποντα βασανίζοι καιρῷ)."[91]

The Two Seasons of the Son and the Incarnation as a Hermeneutical Pivot

In this next section, I show how Cyril further explains *how* wise readers continue to read in a partitive manner and provides the first scriptural rule in the *dial. Trin*. Because Cyril

union, the single Son." And, even in his explanation of *anathema* 4, Cyril anticipates this two πρόσωπα concern: "For this reason we apply all the sayings in the Gospels, the human ones as well as those befitting God, to one *prosopon*. We believe that Jesus Christ, that is the Word of God made man and made flesh, is but One Son" (*expl. xii cap.* 14). In his letter to Eulogius (*ep.* 44), Cyril continues a similar theological reason for upholding the single Son. Simply signifying a difference between the two natures or knowing the difference between the natures is not the same as affirming two Sons. John 1:14 ("The Word was made flesh") serves as a repeating proof-text to support the single *physis* of the Son. But even in *ep*. 44, Cyril affirms such distinctions are possible and necessary to speak of the Son in the incarnation, but there is one nature of the flesh and another of the eternal Son. "For we, when asserting their union, confess one Christ, one Son, the one and the same Lord, and finally we confess the one incarnate *physis* of God. It is possible to say something such as this about any ordinary man, for he is of different natures, both of the body, I say, and of the soul. Both reason and speculation know the difference, but when combined then we get one human *physis*. Hence, knowing the difference of the natures is not cutting the one Christ into two" (*ep.* 44.2).

[89] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547e (SC 237:268).

[90] Cf. *Letter to the Monks of Egypt* 13 (see *ep.* 1.22). Cyril quotes Phil 2:6–8, and he distances himself from a two-Son Christological vision. "There are some who divide the One Lord Jesus Christ into two, that is into a man alongside the Word of God the Father." Also, in anticipation of *anathema* 4, Cyril regards his partitive strategy to refer to a single *prosopon*: "Moreover, we do not allocate the statements of our Savior in the Gospels either to two *hypostaseis* or indeed to two persons, for the one and only Christ is not twofold, even if he be considered as from two entities and they different, which had been made into an inseparable unity, just as, of course, man also is considered to be of soul and body yet is not twofold, but rather one from both. But, because we think rightly, we shall maintain that the statements as man and also the statements as God have been made by one person" (*ep.* 17.13).

[91] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547e (SC 237:268).

quotes the Nicene Creed in *dial. Trin.* 1, 389–90, this portion of Cyril's scriptural exegesis seeks to make sense of ὁμοιοούσιος and reveals his Nicene commitments. Cyril frames his partitive exegesis with epochal exegetical readings in *dial. Trin.* 1, 396–98. He moves between the epochal placement of the Son and a partitive reading of the Son's two natures during the incarnation. I comment on *dial. Trin.* 1, 396–98 in a subsequent chapter too because both epochal and partitive readings appear in this brief segment. In this current section, I will only draw out Cyril's comments about epochal readings.[92] He presents a scriptural rule: "There are therefore two ways of speaking of the Son. We must therefore attribute to him what is of God, as to God, and as to him who has become as we are, what is what we are, that is, what is human."[93] This reading practice requires two distinct ways of reading to attribute to the Son what is proper of his two seasonal positions.

Cyril begins this set of arguments about eternal generation based upon the spatial origins of the Son.[94] He argues that the Son derives his source from the ineffable nature of the Father and is therefore not subject to becoming.[95] Hermias objects, offers a competing reading of "from above," and he asks whether or not "from above" can be read differently than what Cyril has just defended. Hermias suggests "from above" refers to spatial superiority. So, the Son has heaven as a source and another nature superior to humanity.[96] Hermias disputes the use of *consubstantial* with Cyril and defers to *homoiousios* (ὁμοιοούσιος)—Cyril also claims that if Hermias dismisses ὁμοούσιος for not being found in the Scriptures, then they should likewise dismiss ὁμοιοούσιος on similar grounds.[97] For Hermias, consubstantial is not a valid category, and

[92] See chapter 4, where I comment on *dial. Trin.* 1, 396–98 (SC 231:160–68) with a specific focus on his two-nature partitive exegesis.

[93] *dial. Trin.* 1, 393a (SC 231:152).

[94] *dial. Trin.* 1, 395de (SC 231:158).

[95] *dial. Trin.* 1, 395e (SC 231:158).

[96] *dial. Trin.* 1, 395e (SC 231:160).

[97] Cyril eventually defines and summarizes the differences between substance and hypostasis: "substance seems to designate a common reality (κατὰ κοινοῦ τινος . . . πράγματος), while the term hypostasis predicts and is said of each of the beings who are subsumed to this common reality" (*dial. Trin.* 1, 408e [SC 231:196]). Van Loon discerns an Aristotelian logic used here: "It appears, then, that here Cyril utilizes 'substance' for Aristotle's

yet the Son can still be "from above." He displays a three-tier ontological hierarchy of beings so that the Son is the mediator between God and humanity. The Father is superior to the Son. However, the Son is beyond superior to humanity and yet inferior to the Father. This three-tier model prompts Hermias's denial of the Son's consubstantial nature with the Father.[98] In response to these concerns, Cyril presents two Christological options—distinct from Hermias's three options. According to Cyril, the Son is eternal with and possesses the same nature as the Father. Or, the Son remains subject to becoming and is counted among God's creation.[99]

And to uphold this theological vision, Cyril offers two ways of speaking about the Son. Here, καιρός determines the placement of the Son that precedes his comments about the πρᾶγμα of the Son. He sets forth the epochal station of the Son that properly situates a partitive reading of the Scriptures. He suggests that readers need to consider the state of the single subject and how the Son relates to human nature. Do Scripture texts reveal the Son in a pure and ideal state before the incarnation? Or do Scripture texts discuss the Son already having taken the likeness of humanity?

> The one whom we regard as truly venerable and very wise, Paul, or rather the entire choir of saints, has known and introduced to us two ways of speaking of the Son after he has been united to the flesh, that is to say, that he became like us all except only sin. . . . Sometimes they present the Monogenes still bare, apart from the limits of the creation, not implied in the nature which is ours; sometimes on the contrary almost concealed in the shadow of the form of a slave, possessing nevertheless and firmly attaching the good which suits his own nature, authentically adorned with the honors

secondary substance rather than for his primary substance, while the secondary substance is said to denote a reality (πράγμα). And 'hypostasis' seems to be his word for a primary substance." van Loon, *Dyophysite Christology*, 126–27.

[98] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396c (SC 231:160–62). According to Hermias: "They say that he is not consubstantial with God the Father and he makes him descend, I do not know how, below the ineffable nature, but by preserving some superiority over his creation. He is not, they say, of the same nature as the beings that have been made, he occupies a kind of average situation, in other words, he goes beyond the frame of nature, but he is also not in complete continuity and substantial with the one who begot him, while not going all the way down, that is, among the creatures."

[99] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396d (SC 231:162).

of divinity.[100]

Although Cyril devotes most of *dial. Trin.* 1, 397 to describe partitive readings of the Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh*, he inserts these two brief epochal comments. These two different ways of speaking are part of the *economy with the flesh*—that is, only after the Son has been united with the flesh are there two additional ways to speak of the Son. Cyril assumes that this pattern is a normal reading that extends back to Paul. The Son *as is* consists of a different nature than the Son enfleshed. Quoting Hebrews 13:8 ("Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever"), Cyril comments on the eternal, immutable nature of the Son, even during his incarnation.[101]

Cyril also comments on good readings of Scripture that consider the *Son as is* and the *Son enfleshed*. Cyril insists that some passages address the Son *as he was* before the incarnation and other texts speak about the Son after he has acquired a human nature. The *kenosis*, for Cyril, serves as a hermeneutical fulcrum to speak about the Son.

> Consider with what lack of common sense [readers] let themselves be guided by their good pleasure, without weighing or examining what passages of Scripture are to relate to the Word naked (γυμνῷ τῷ Λόγῳ)—that is to say, in his real and ideal state before the incarnation—and what others relate to him when he has already taken on our likeness.[102]

Cyril concludes this first line of reasoning with a rhetorical question to affirm the necessity of epochal readings. To discern the properties of the Son rightly, one must first consider the καιρός. "The distinction between these texts is, therefore—quite necessary for us, in our opinion—the

[100] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396e–97a (SC 231:162).

[101] Cyril interprets Heb 13:8 similarly in *Chr. un.* After quoting Heb 13:8, he comments: "The Word was made man as we are, but was not changed . . . where the term 'yesterday' signifies time past, where 'today' signifies present time, and 'to the ages' signifies the future and what is to come" (*Chr. un.*, PPS 13, 92). The immutability of the Son remains even during the three epochal movements of the Son.

[102] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164).

one which separates and discerns appropriately what is appropriate for each season (καιρός)."[103] Cyril presents what is necessary when reading Christological texts about the Son: to identify the season of the Son and then to assign all the properties that belong to each season.[104] To read a text in this manner will prohibit readers from conflating qualities of the *enfleshed* Son to the Son *as is* and attributing some qualities, exclusive to the incarnation, to the eternal Son. For example, as Cyril continues, the Son's fatigue, his eating and sleeping, or even his experience of pain and death are not conflated with the experiences of the eternal Word.[105] A passage will depict the Son either before or during his incarnation; however, in each case, the incarnation is the fulcrum to distinguish between the two states of the Son. The epochal divisions serve a more careful purpose in Cyril's exegetical framework. Epochal readings help readings to uphold the

[103] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e (SC 231:164).

[104] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397c (SC 231:164). It is worth raising the concern of Cyril later in his first letter to Succensus (*ep.* 45). Here, Cyril condemns, once more, Nestorius for his supposed partitive readings of the Scripture that divides the Son into two (*ep.* 45.3). This concern will remain a pressing concern for Cyril's epochal and partitive reading strategies: how can interpreters speak of the two natures without creating two Sons? While Cyril appears to divide the two natures and the respective activities in this section of the *dial. Trin.*, he certainly refines his language later in his career. In *ep.* 45.4, Cyril appeals to the Scriptures that teach the Son is one before and after the incarnation. He was begotten of the Father before the ages began and that he was "begotten for us according to the flesh from the Holy Virgin." But in both cases, it is the single Son. But concerning the incarnation, interpreters may examine the *oikonomia with the flesh*. "Sometimes he speaks as a man according to the *oikonomia* and according to his humanity, and sometimes as God he makes statements by the authority of his divinity. And we make the following assertions also. While skillfully examining the manner of his *oikonomia* with the flesh and finely probing the mystery, we see that the Word of God the Father was made man and was made flesh and that he has not fashioned that holy body from his divine nature but rather took it from the Virgin Mary. . . . Therefore, whenever we have these thoughts in no way do we harm the joining into a unity by saying that he was of two natures, but after the union we do not separate the natures from one another, nor do we cut the one and indivisible Son into two sons, but we say that there is one Son, and as the holy Fathers have said, that there is one *physis* of the Word [of God] made flesh" (*ep.* 45.6).

[105] Cyril provides a few guardrails to his partitive readings. He criticizes those who read to distinguish the human activities to the human Son and not to the true Son. "But I will explain the significance of their teachings, in so far as I am able, by offering examples from the sacred Scriptures. Christ was hungry and tired from the journey. He slept, climbed in a boat, was struck by the servants' blows, was scourged by Pilate, and was spat on by soldiers. They pierced his side with a spear, and offered him vinegar mixed with gall. He also tasted death, suffered on the cross, and suffered the other insults of the Jews. They would say that all these things are applicable to the man, even though they may be 'referred' to the person of the true Son. We believe, however in one God the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible, and also in one Lord Jesus Christ, his Son. And we refuse to separate off the man Emmanuel as distinct from the Word, for we know that the Word became man like us, and so we say that the selfsame was truly God from God, while humanly he was man from a woman, just as we are. We maintain that because of the intimacy he had with his own flesh, he even suffered its infirmities; though he retained the impassibility of his own nature, in so far as he was not only man but the selfsame was also God by nature" (*schol. inc.* 35). Also see *Jo.* 11:36–37.

properties of the Son that are proper to each season of the Son.

Cyril uses three texts from Hebrews to indicate the time and the Son's properties. Quoting Hebrews 1:3 and 4:12–13, he notes how these texts describe the Son "without the flesh."[106] He quotes Hebrews 5:7–8 and focuses upon the phrase "in the days of his flesh" to highlight this text's temporal features. The two seasons of the Son enable readers to speak properly about the πρᾶγμα of the Son. Before quoting these two passages, Cyril states the following: "Thus, it is proved for everyone that it is necessary and excellent to distinguish between the various oracles uttered to one's subject. Now hear, please, what Paul described he is by nature."[107] Not only is this pattern necessary, but this way of reading also considers how Scripture addresses the single subject. Cyril then quotes Hebrews 1:3 and 4:12–13 to describe what the Son is by nature.

> "For, who being," he says, "the radiance of the glory of the Father and the character of his nature, bearing all things by the word of his power" (Heb 1:3). And in another place, "For the Word of God is living, and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, and dividing between soul and body, joint and marrow, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and laying bear in his sight, to whom you must give an account" (Heb 4:12–13).[108]

By placing these two texts in relation to one another, Cyril identifies the Son as a single subject, his relation to the Father, and the activities of the divine Son.[109]

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[106] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e–98a (SC 231:164–66).

[107] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e (SC 231:164).

[108] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e–98a (SC 231:164–66).

[109] Single-subject Christology is a normal way of describing Cyril's Christology. McGuckin calls this principle the "flagship" of Cyril's Christology: "There can only be one creative subject, one personal reality, in the incarnate Lord; and that subject is the divine Logos who has made a human nature his own." McGuckin frequently refers to the "single subject" or "single subjectivity" as a Cyrilline concept. Brian Daley places this Cyrilline "single subject" motif in relationship to Christology, hypostatic language, and scriptural exegesis. And, rightly, Richard Norris, Mark Edwards, and though dated and has problems, Aloys Grillmeier each note the inconsistency of language, morphing some categories, and the Cyrillian phrase "one nature of the Word enfleshed," though an Apollinarian formula. Cyril's "single-subject" Christology can be discerned in a few examples: *ep.* 4.7; 17.8 (also see *Anath.* 4 and 8); 39.6; 44.3; 45.6 (cf. 40.15); *apol. orient.* 3; *apol. Thds.* 25–26; *apol. Thdt.* 4; *Jo.* 1:2; 9:37; 13:33; 14:1, 24; *hom. pasch.* 8.4. While not a prominent focus, Cyril does affirm a "single-subject Christology" in *dial. Trin.* 1, 405ab (SC 231:184): "Being thought of as one from two, the Son, in whom there is one nature mixing together and laboring concurrently, both divine and also human, existing ineffably and mysteriously, as in a way that he cannot but be conceived of as a unity." For more on this topic, see McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 186, also see 191–94, 211, 219; Brian E. Daley S. J., "Antioch and Alexandria: Christology as Reflection on God's Presence in History," in

While he points out the seemingly difficult conundrum of speaking in a two-fold manner about the Son, Cyril presents the problem more clearly before presenting his solution.

> To consider only the signified in the two cases, is there not decidedly internal conflict in the nature of the facts? The resplendent glory of God the Father, the imprint for us of the divine hypostasis, the one who supports the universe by his powerful Word, the living Word, effective and very incisive, we are told that he has resigned himself to imploring and supplicating, all in tears, to be removed from the assaults of death.[110]

How can the Son be both the imprint of the Father, displaying activities only the divine being can perform, and then resigned to tears, prayers, and death? These two polarized qualities and activities seemingly conflict with what is proper to the Son by nature. To remedy this quandary, Cyril offers a reading of Hebrews 5:7–8 that displays an epochal difference. The Son in Hebrews 1:3 and 4:12–13 is in a different temporal station than the Son in Hebrews 5:7–8.[111] Cyril interprets Hebrews 1:3 and 4:12–13 to refer to the Son when he was without the flesh: "That is about the Monogenes still conceived without the flesh."[112] Then, quoting Hebrews 5:7–8, Cyril highlights the temporal phrase "in the days of his flesh" to describe the properties of the Son in his incarnation. He cues into phrases and particular comments by the author of Hebrews to describe two different temporal placements of the Son. Through the seasons of the Son, Cyril can speak about a single subject in two different ways.

Cyril models his epochal readings and notes how these three Hebrews texts highlight the Son in a season just before the incarnation and the Son "in the days of his flesh." For Cyril,

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The Oxford Handbook of Christology, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Troy A. Stefano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 121–38; Richard A. Norris, "Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria," StPatr 13 (1975): 255–68; Mark Edwards, "One Nature of the Word Enfleshed," *HTR* 108 (2015): 289–306; Aloys Grillmeier S. J., *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon* (*451*), trans. John Bowden, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1975), 1:473–83.

[110] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398bc (SC 231:166).

[111] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398ab (SC 231:166): "That is about the Monogenes still conceived without the flesh. 'Who, in the days of his flesh, will offer up prayers and supplications to the one who is able to save him from death with loud cries and tears, and he was heard on account of his reverence. Although being the Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered' (Heb 5:7–8)."

[112] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398b (SC 231:166).

the Scriptures already make these epochal distinctions.

> But, he says, "in the days of his flesh," that is when the Word was God, he became flesh, according to the Scriptures, but did not come into a man, as in the case of the saints in whom he lives by participation, as what the Holy Spirit says. There are, therefore, two ways of speaking of the Son. We must therefore attribute to him what is of God, as to God, and as to him who has become as we are, what is what we are, that is, what is human. As for the unorganized and indiscriminate mixture of realities (τῶν πραγμάτων), it is necessary to refuse it altogether.[113]

By commenting on one feature of Hebrews 5:7–8, Cyril temporally situates the interpretation about the Son during the days of his flesh; moreover, he offers a reading rule. There are two ways to speak about the Son. He maintains the single subject and attributes two modes of discourse about the single subject that correspond to the two spatial and temporal divisions of the Son. Furthermore, the discourse concerning the Son must correspond to what is proper of the single Son *as is* and *as enfleshed*.[114]

The Necessity to Divide the Scriptures According to the Seasons

In this following section, I simply explore one example from *dial. Trin.* 3 that displays Cyril's privileging of καιρός for his scriptural exegesis. Cyril will continue a similar line of reasoning as we've already seen in the previous sections. To structure his ideas, Cyril uses καιρός six times to situate single Son in the proper season. And, he exhorts Hermias to practice epochal readings as a necessary pattern for scriptural exegesis: "As you have quickly forgotten, it is

[113] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398cd (SC 231:166). While being written much later than the *dial. Trin.*, I perceive a developing of Cyril's thought or at least a shift in his approach. In *Chr. un.*, he comments on the blasphemous charge of simply dividing statements to what is solely attributed to the divine nature and human nature—essentially to uphold the single *prosopon* and signify the indiscriminate mixture of what the incarnate Son is by nature. "My friend, this would be blasphemy, and a proof of complete madness, but doubles it would evidently suit those who do not know how to conceive of the matter properly. They split up and completely divide his words and acts, attributing some things as proper solely to the Only Begotten, and others to a son who is different to him and born of a woman. In this way they have missed the straight and unerring way of knowing the mystery of Christ clearly" (*Chr. un.*, PPS 13, 106).

[114] Liébaert, "Les sources et la doctrine christologique," 122.

necessary to divide the features of Scripture according to the moments (τοῦ χρῆναι καιροῖς) that suit them and, even if one would speak of the Monogenes, to leave in the times of the incarnation all that does not suit what would be fitting for God!"[115] Cyril describes this exegetical rule using καιρός as a way to assign what is proper to the Son according to each of the seasonal limits. Cyril requires a suitable use of καιρός as a scriptural rule to distinguish what is appropriate for the eternal Monogenes and the incarnate Son.

Without quoting the Philippian hymn, Cyril certainly alludes to the hymn as a necessary lens to describe the economy of the Son:

> While he was in the form of the Father, indeed, his equal in all things, he submitted to a voluntary emptying. Lowering himself to an appearance similar to ours, he has become a man—a being for whom reigning and legislating are never anything but gifts. Once a beggared like us, once clothed under the economics of a size that suits a slave, he recognizes that he possesses as through addition that which fits him by nature and he adapts [himself] exactly to the acts and words of the emptying.[116]

Two movements of the Son occupy this theological reasoning—the Son equal in all things with the Father and his submission concurrent with the *kenosis*. To advance this line of reasoning, Cyril underscores the co-equality of the Son with the Father in a prior season and situates his submission during the season of his *kenosis*. Once he has descended to a level equal with humanity, then and only then the Son assumes the qualities and properties of that emptying exclusive to that season. However, readers must attend to the season to speak appropriately about the Son.

> There is nothing, in my opinion, to blame in those who believe in him, as long as they pay attention to the moment (καιρόν) when to apply to him such language. When, indeed, did Christ legislate for the nations, when did He come to announce the commandment of the Lord in Zion? Was it not when he became a human?[117]

[115] *dial. Trin.* 3, 479e (SC 237:64).

[116] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478b (SC 237:58).

[117] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478bc (SC 237:58–60).

A necessary exegetical posture of the interpreter must consider the *when* of particular language as it applies to the Son. Readers must refrain from conflating the different seasonal positions of the Son. Cyril's Christological exegesis discerns the season of the Son, how he appropriates the activities of the Son proper to each season, and applies Scripture texts to the eternal Monogenes or "when he became a human."

Cyril models this epochal reading by displaying how the Father sent the Son to give commands to Israel in no other time but his incarnation.

> The Son was not sent to announce the command of the Lord to the sons of Israel in another time than he did when he took up begging similar to ours, where the Master of the prophets was called a prophet, where the Word who is in the bosom of the Father manifested himself to be counted among the beings of the earth.[118]

The Son, only in the season of the incarnation, occupies the role of a legislator for Israel. Cyril then quotes Deuteronomy 18:18.[119] In particular, the language of "I will raise up" alongside "among the midst of their brothers like you" proves to be notable for Cyril's epochal readings. He then enquires whether this timing coheres with the flesh: "Dear friend, was it when he did not yet have the flesh as a fellow companion, when he was not united, in an ineffable way and exceeding all conception, to human nature, that the Word could be considered as the brother of the sons of Israel, born of the earthly beings themselves?"[120] Cyril's rhetorical question displays his interpretation. During the Son's mysterious union with the flesh, the Son is a brother alongside the sons of Israel. Even further, Cyril claims to provide a better way to read this text.

> Or is it not better and more true to say that he was called a brother and placed in the rank of Moses, that is to say, a pedagogue, that he came to have to legislate and to fulfill a kind of subordinate ministry when he pushed aside the transcendent glory that was natural to him and, at the moment of need (ὡς ἐν καιρῷ τε καὶ χρείᾳ), was

[118] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478cd (SC 237:60).

[119] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478d (SC 237:60): "God has said somewhere, to give assurance to the Most Holy Moses, 'I will raise up a prophet for them from among the midst of their brothers like you. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them whatever I command him' (Deut 18:18)."

[120] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478de (SC 237:60).

> reduced to voluntary emptying?[121]

The Son was called brother, placed in the rank of Moses, and embodied the pedagogue during his incarnation. By using καιρός, Cyril allocates the proper season by which the Son occupies this role. The Son sets aside the transcendent glory during the καιρός of need. During his incarnation, he embodies the pedagogue for the sons of Israel.

Cyril then suggests the necessity of καιρός as an interpretive framework that wards off false teaching. If readers do not discern the proper καιρός, they will fall into error:

> Thus, if they decided to make an exact distribution of what suited each moment (τὸ ἐχάστῳ πρέπον καιρῷ), they would not, I think, fall into the deviation of the spirit and the perversity of the heart and the possibility of thinking the exact doctrinal truth will therefore remain open to them.[122]

Cyril furthers this argument to include the proper seasonal distinction between the Monogenes and the incarnated Son. These seasonal distinctions prohibit readers from speaking about the Monogenes, who died on the cross.[123]

> Do we attach little importance to the obligation to match each of the features

[121] *dial. Trin.* 3, 478e (SC 237:60).

[122] *dial. Trin.* 3, 479a (SC 237:60).

[123] Cyril was accused of advocating a version of *theopaschism* by Nestorius (*ep. Cyr.* 2 [see Cyril, *ep.* 5]), Theodoret, and the bishops of Oriens. He communicates as much in his *Second Letter to Succensus* (*ep.* 46.10): "For it was necessary and proper to maintain with reference to the one true Son both that he did not suffer in his divinity and that it is affirmed that he suffered in his humanity, for his flesh suffered. But they again think that we are thereby introducing what is called by them *theopatheia* (θεοπάθεια), and they do not understand the economy, but most maliciously attempt to transfer the suffering to man separately, stupidly practicing a harmful reverence, so that the Word of God would not be confessed the Savior, as the one who gave his own blood for our sakes, but rather so that a man, considered separately and by himself, Jesus, might be said to set this aright." *Anathema* 12 is directly related to this concern and has served to heighten the controversy: "If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh, becoming the first-born from the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving, let him be anathema" (*ep.* 17). Andrew of Samosata accuses Cyril of leading people astray through his expression "he suffered in the flesh." He nuances the argument by using a preposition: "Someone who says that 'he suffered in the flesh' can hardly be preserving the impassibility of the divine nature, since to say that 'he suffered in the flesh' is exactly the equivalent of saying that he 'suffered with his flesh,' and if one admits this latter statement, then one has confessed him to be passible" (*apol. orient.* 12). In retort, Cyril quotes Gregory of Nyssa, *beat.* 1; Basil, *Spir.* 8.18; and Athanasius, *Ar.* III, 32 to situate his argument in a previous theological heritage. To explain this dilemma, he discerns what is impassible and passible in a single Son: "It is one thing to say that he suffered in the flesh, but quite another to say that the suffering was in his divine nature. Because the same individual is at the same time both God and man, impassible insofar as his divine nature is concerned,

> recorded in divinely inspired Scripture at the proper time (καιρόν) for him and the most appropriate, what will prevent us to say, even thinking in this case, of the Monogenes—the Word of God—before he became like us that he died for having suffered the crucifixion and this who is accompanying him?[124]

This example continues an unfolding thread within the *dial. Trin.* that readers of Scripture must match the properties of the Son to the proper seasons, essentially noting how the καιρός informs the πρᾶγμα of the Son. For, if we do not make these necessary distinctions, we may misapply qualities of the incarnate Son to the eternal Monogenes, or vice versa. Cyril points out how nothing would prevent us from speaking about the crucifixion of the Monogenes before

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passible insofar as he is human, what is so extraordinary if one says that he suffered in respect of what does not experience suffering?" (*apol. orient*. 12). In both his *expl. xii cap.* and *schol. inc.*, he denounces the divine nature as passible: "the divine and ineffable nature is above all suffering" (*expl. xii cap.* 31) and "He suffered impassibly . . . he suffers, insofar as the body suffers which is his very own. Nevertheless, he himself remains impassible insofar as it is his special characteristic [as God] to be unable to suffer" (*schol. inc.* 35; also see *schol. inc.* 13). Even before the Nestorian controversy (pre-428), Cyril describes how the Son suffers (cf. *dial. Trin.* 4, 535): "No obstacle will prevent this, it seems, once in the Son the true divinity will have suffered the affront of being counted among the beings subject to becoming" (*dial. Trin.* 4, 505a [SC 237:140]; he deems this phrase blasphemous), "even suffered death according to the flesh" (*dial. Trin*. 5, 572a [SC 237:342]), "B: He suffered as a man . . . A: When he manifested himself as a man, all the wisdom and power of the Father that he was, when he had triumphed over death and filled his own body with the life that came from himself, he attributed this result to that who was like the source of his hypostasis" (*dial. Trin.* 6, 600b, d [SC 246:50]), "In order that no one out of great ignorance might suppose that the Word departed from his own nature and was changed into flesh and suffered—which was impossible because the divine" (*Jo.* 1:14), "When you see him speaking as flesh, that is, as a human being, receive the discourse that is fitting for humanity in order to keep the proclamation certain. In no other way could we know clearly that, which being God and Word, he became human, unless the impassible is recorded as suffering something" (*Jo*. 4:6), "It is clear that tasting death would be fitting for him insofar as he became a human being, while divinely going up belongs to him by nature" (*Jo*. 12:24), "he has suffered this according to the flesh, since the body is receptive of death. He is said to have died for this reason: his own body died. . . . According to the *oikonomia*, he did, in fact, allow his body to die for us, and he breathed his own life into it again, but not to rescue himself from the bonds of death, since he is understood to be God" (*Jo*. 17:18–19). Paul Gavrilyuk explores *theopaschism* in Cyril's literature. The idea of *appropriation* is a proper category for Cyril's explanation of the Son's suffering. Possibly acquired from Athanasius, Gavrilyuk states, "The appropriation of the flesh meant that in the incarnation God acted and suffered in and through the flesh, and did nothing apart from the flesh." McGuckin regards the impassible suffering to Cyril's vision of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 135–71 (quote from 162); Paul L. Gavrilyuk, "Theopatheia: Nestorius's Main Charge against Cyril of Alexandria," *SJT* 56 (2003): 190–207; Dana Iuliana Viezure, "*Verbum Crucis, Virtus Dei*: A Study of Theopaschism from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to the Age of Justinian" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2009); John J. O'Keefe, "Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-Century Christology," *TS* 58 (1997): 39–60; J. W. Smith, "Suffering Impassibly: Christ's Passion in Cyril of Alexandria's Soteriology," *ProEccl* 11 (2002): 463–83; Marcel Sarot, "Patripassianism, Theopaschitism and the Suffering of God: Some Historical and Systematic Considerations," *RelS* 26 (1990): 363–75; McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 191–92.

[124] *dial. Trin.* 3, 479ab (SC 237:60–62).

acquiring the human flesh and becoming like us. As he quotes Isaiah 50:6 about the Son,[125] Cyril again raises the question about properly assigning the seasons. "Would it not be delusional and ridiculous to think that this Son did not endure at the right moment (ταυτί μὴ ἐν καιρῷ τῷ καθήκοντι), that is to say, obviously the one where he was endowed with flesh?"[126] The Son occupies the flesh and undergoes suffering that accompanies the experiences in the incarnation during the proper season (ἐν καιρῷ). To conflate these seasons will create unneeded Christological errors.

Hermeneutical Ordering of the "Season" and the "Person" of the Son

In this final section, Cyril situates a proper ordering of exegetical comments: discern the season of the Son before commenting upon the natures proper to the Son. As a result, we observe that Cyril utilizes epochal categories to discern what is proper of the Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh*.[127] As will be seen in chapters 4 and 5, epochal exegetical categories

[125] *dial. Trin.* 3, 479b (SC 237:62): "As well, did Christ say somewhere, as if he had already suffered, 'I gave my back for a strike, my jaw for a slap, I have not turned my face from the spit of dishonor' (Isa 50:6)."

[126] *dial. Trin.* 3, 479c (SC 237:62). Shortly after this quote, Cyril continues to explore one more example. He comments on the absurdity of ignoring or conflating the seasonal categories. Not to distinguish the proper seasons with the assigned economic actions, as Cyril argues, confuses a proper Christological vision. Without noting the seasonal changes, faulty Christological thinking rises to the fore. Proper use of the καιρός elucidates the economic activities and the nature proper to the Son so that Cyril's Christological exegesis distinguishes the nature of the Son before the incarnation and the Son's two natures during the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Cyril criticizes Hermias for forgetting the proper season of the Son. He refrains from dividing the seasonal moments and thereby conflates the properties of the Son. "As you have quickly forgotten, it is necessary to divide the features of Scripture according to the moments (τοῦ χρῆναι καιροῖς) that suit them and, even if one would speak of the Monogenes, to leave in the times of the incarnation all that does not suit what would be fitting for God" (*dial. Trin.* 3, 479e [SC 237:64]). To observe the proper καιρός of the Son, readers will apply the suitable properties available to the Son. Cyril continues a similar line of reasoning even in his later Christological arguments. It is not that a different Son has been introduced during the incarnation, but the eternal Word made flesh according to the *oikonomia*. Cyril makes this observation a matter of interpreters who are "unable to plumb the depths of the sacred Scriptures." To apply what belongs to the flesh is to appropriate the *oikonomia* to the eternal Son. "We say that these human things are his by an economic appropriation, and along with the flesh all the things belonging to it" (*Chr. un.*, PPS 13, 109–10).

[127] Cyril defines these limits quite clearly in *Jo.* 6:11: "He helped, by his example of reverence, those to whom he was revealed as a teacher of excellent truths, and according to the *oikonomia*, he hid his divine dignity for the time being until the time of his passion was at hand." This example displays the temporal window of the Son's *oikonomia*. See chapter 4 where I consider this phrase in more detail.

provide the frame for Cyril to pursue partitive exegesis of the Son during the incarnation. So, even though I've yet to describe more fully Cyril's partitive readings, I will weave together his comments about epochal categories and partitive exegesis. Cyril situates his interpretative partitive paradigm within a modified version of the tripartite rule (καιρός, πρόσωπον, λογισμός).

> Where are you going when you cannot bear to examine the seasons (καιρούς) and the persons (πρόσωπα)? What are you doing, you who are carried away like prey by any evil spirit? Why do you confuse what cannot be mixed, without considering the season (καιροῦ), the persons (προσώπων), the reasonings (λογισμῶν) that could make it much clearer and easier to eclipse any consideration of the language used about the Son?[128]

One cannot speak correctly about the Son without first addressing the moments. And, Cyril notes the seemingly impossible feat of discriminating between the natures present in the Son's incarnation.

This exegetical rule is raised on account of Hermias's inquiry about the title "firstborn." Speaking on behalf of others, Hermias raises two specific issues. If the Son is a firstborn, does he have any additional siblings? And, if it was also said of the children of Israel, "I have begotten and raised up children" (Isa 1:2), then is generation unique only to the Son? For Cyril, the "firstborn" language conveys *when* the Son enters the season of the flesh.[129]

> The firstborn word, it is said, was necessary, but when and under what circumstances, that's what I thought I needed to realize before anything else. Thus, one could now reorient the impulses of his heart towards the most righteous thoughts, the most appropriate to the mysteries. The moments (καιροί) and the differences of persons (προσώπων διαφοραὶ) would be very easily decipherable indications of the course, free from error and corruption, and from a straight pathway, having the language of the Holy Scriptures. Or is what I say not true? Is there no need to consider the seasons (καιρούς) and the times (χρόνους) when the Word was still without the flesh and when he was already with it?[130]

[128] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516c (SC 237:174).

[129] *dial. Trin.* 4, 519b (SC 237:182).

[130] *dial. Trin.* 4, 514e–15a (SC 237:170).

The temporal categories of the Son provide safeguards against a univocal reading and a way to assess the "firstborn" language exclusive to a proper temporal placement. Cyril provides a hermeneutical ordering of his comments: temporal placement provides the initial frame to discuss the realities proper to the person of the Son.

To these concerns, Cyril uses Matthew 17:25–27 and the collection of coins for taxes to display why partitive readings are necessary. In this scene, Cyril highlights the phrase "the sons are free" to signify how the divine nature can co-dwell with all the human limitations of the Son's incarnation and still be unbound.

> You see him, he has testified to the freedom of his own nature, that is, to his superiority over creation; because what has been brought to being is the slave of the one who did it. It is also what the divine David shouts to us, addressing God who has supreme control over the universe, "because all things are your servants" (Ps 118:91 LXX). Therefore, the Son is not enclosed within the limits of a slave, he is not among the beings who are under the yoke, but in the transcendent divine nature which surpasses the beings subjected to becoming.[131]

Thus, in the season of the incarnation, we offer two observations: the Son under the limits of a slave and the Son unprohibited by such a yoke. In this narrative, Cyril certainly highlights the undiminished divine nature and how the Son's decisions reflect this undiminished set of divine prerogatives. And once more highlighting the freedom trope by alluding to Philippians 2, Cyril notes the freedoms of the Son to display himself even unconfined by any human limitation.

> He was in the form of a slave, yes, but before having this form, he lived in the absolute freedom of an unhindered nature. No being can become what he was. If he dropped what he was, it would be normal to make the transition to something else. So, the Son went for us not from the midst of servants to a servant's place, but from a free nature to the form of a slave. But if there is no interval, if time is nothing (εἰ μηδὲν ὁ χρόνος), if a search for the persons (εἰ προσώπων ἔρευνα) brings nothing useful, even thinking of the Word naked (γυμνός) and again without the flesh, we only say that he is not free,

[131] *dial. Trin.* 4, 515e–16a (SC 237:172).

> but a slave, he cannot be reckoned with those who are under the yoke.[132]

The uniqueness of the Son prohibits any comparison to another being. As the "firstborn" title is ascribed to the Son, the Son remains unbound by the confines of human experiences and yet no other being can become what he is. If there are no temporal categories, there is no use in describing the Word as naked and the Word under a yoke. No fundamental difference would exist between the Son as free and the Son as enslaved if we cannot discern the proper temporal categories.

By discerning the seasons and the person, interpreters can assign the properties rightly. I provide the quote provided at the beginning of this section now in the flow of Cyril's argument. His "seasonal" readings inform how to speak of the Son during the incarnation.

> Where are you going when you cannot bear to examine the moments (καιρούς) and the characters (πρόσωπα)? What are you doing, you who are carried away like prey by any evil spirit? Why do you confuse what cannot be mixed, without considering the season (καιροῦ), the persons (προσώπων), the reasonings (λογισμῶν) that could make it much clearer and easier to eclipse any consideration of the language used about the Son?[133]

Cyril anchors his partitive distinction of the natures according to the rightly defined seasons for the Son. Following this argument, Cyril quotes Philippians 2:6–8 once more to note how the Son is both like humanity and still retains his qualities as from the Father; and, in this season, the Son is considered the firstborn to redeem humanity.[134] Cyril's epochal and partitive readings highlight how the divine Son redeems humanity through an upward, heavenly journey.[135]

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

As Cyril utilizes the tripartite set of terms for scriptural exegesis, he offers readers a

[132] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516ab (SC 237:174).

[133] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516c (SC 237:174).

[134] *dial. Trin.* 4, 517a (SC 237:176).

[135] *dial. Trin.* 4, 517bc (SC 237:176–78).

way to distinguish what is proper of the Son *before* and *after* the incarnation. And in this chapter, I argue that Cyril prescribes a mode of reading that privileges a use of καιρός to regard this seasonal distinction as *before* and *after* the incarnation. This epochal reading strategy observes a marked use of καιρός to attend to the season of the Son to assign the properties germane to the Son. This epochal reading strategy will frame Cyril's partitive exegesis and he uses the *kenosis* as the temporal distinction to speak one way about the single Son *before* and another way *after* the incarnation. Considering this premise, I now summarize a few additional elements related to epochal exegesis. First, early Christian readers draw from the rhetorical tradition and utilize a tripartite set of terms. Quintilian lists out ten elements from Aristotle that "every question seems to turn" and then adds ten more terms from contemporary rhetoricians. Early Christian readers use several of these terms in relation to scriptural exegesis.

Second, Athanasius uses a tripartite set of terms to govern scriptural exegesis across the entire Scriptures. He, essentially, serves as the primary figure to use these terms even though predecessors use rhetorical terms to govern scriptural exegesis. Third, Cyril's epochal exegesis and use of the tripartite formula is derived from an Athanasian heritage. Cyril acquires this epochal reading strategy from Athanasius and observing this pattern in the Scriptures. While the tripartite terms are situated within the rhetorical tradition, Cyril learns this reading strategy from Athanasius *Ar.* I, 54. To help him offer a fitting exegetical vision, Cyril uses the Philippian hymn to situate the Son in one of three distinct seasons. After reading the Philippian hymn, he comments on this two-fold seasonal reading: *before* and *after* the incarnation. "Is it not, O friend, that he divides his narrative between two seasons (καιροῖς) and introduces a double point of view (διττὴν εἰσφέρει) on the knowledge of the mystery?"[136] While καιρός is privileged in this tripartite formula, Cyril underscores an essential premise: consider the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before considering the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον.

[136] *dial. Trin.* 5, 547b (SC 237:266).

3

Trinitarian Discourse and Epochal Exegesis

My main goal in this chapter is to consider how Cyril distinguishes the use of καιρός with reference to Christ, especially as it intersects with several of his other fundamental dogmatic concerns. When Cyril distinguishes what is proper of the Son *before* (i.e., season one) and *after* (i.e., seasons two and three) the incarnation, what theological concerns come to the fore of Cyril's theological vision? I will discuss three topics. In the first place, I consider the interrelationship between Cyril's understanding of the Son's three seasons and his exegesis of the Philippian hymn. Second, I consider the role of Hebrews 1:6, which describes the language of "firstborn." And then, third, I consider Cyril's use of *oikonomia with the flesh* to observe theological observations proper of the Son during the season of the incarnation. By using this epochal reading strategy, he maneuvers through a host of theological concepts, such as eternal generation, the *kenosis*, the soteriological necessity of the incarnation, inseparable operations, divine immutability and passibility, and the *timing* of certain activities of the Son. As a result, Cyril's scriptural exegesis is also a display of his theological commitments and dogmatic exegesis.

THE PHILIPPIAN HYMN AND THE SON'S CAREER

Cyril displays, in the following section, how καιρός and Philippians 2 delineate three distinct seasons for the Son. While predominantly focusing upon seasons one and two, namely the season of his begetting and incarnation respectively, he touches upon season three with

some commentary, namely the Son's exaltation. Cyril links his understanding of eternal generation and of the Son's *kenosis* to his epochal reading of Philippians 2. In Cyril's reading, Paul describes the Son as *God from God*—eternal generation—and as having lowered himself to the human condition—*kenosis*. While he focuses upon the first and second seasons of the Son, Cyril makes much use of the literary structure of the Philippian hymn:

> He, the Word being yet again as the Monogenes from the Father, then sometimes as a man, and then also as the firstborn among many brothers, is it not altogether suitable and clever to hold two types of discourse: the one which tends towards the highest sphere, the other which descends and goes down to a lower level, to that of ours? This is precisely because his desire and his purpose were to convince those upon the earth that he is truly God from God, but he has lowered himself for us to our own state, he did not disdain the limits of his emptying, or he will condemn his own foolishness and not particularly his own council altogether.[1]

Cyril here differentiates not simply between natures but the two consecutive states of the Son. On one level, he describes the Monogenes in the heights of heaven. On the other hand, he depicts the same Son as having descended to a lower condition. This theological exposition of the Philippian hymn holds together what is proper for the eternal Monogenes and the finite limitations of humanity.[2] To descend to the earth was to convince others that the Son is *X of X* with the Father.

Why describe the Son in these two different seasons? He answers this question by posing two others:[3] (1) even if the Son is from the Father and is brought forth by the Father, why must the Son become human? (2) If the Son becomes as we are, is the divine nature changed when he is joined to the flesh? During his discussion of the Son during the incarnation, Cyril

[1] *dial. Trin.* 5, 548ab (SC 237:270).

[2] Cyril continues to explore the use of the Philippian hymn and partitive reasoning in *expl. xii cap.* 13: "The Word of God is in the form of God the Father and equal to him but did not consider that equality with God was something to be grasped, as it is written, but rather humbled himself to a voluntary self-emptying, and freely chose to lower himself into our condition, not losing what he is but remaining so as God while not despising the limitations of the manhood. So, all things pertain to him: those befitting God, and those of man."

[3] *dial. Trin.* 5, 548bc (SC 237:270).

focuses upon the premises of the Son's eternal generation and divine immutability.

> But no one, I think, will ever be so foolish as not to admire the Monogenes highly. He who, because of us, has not taken upon jealousy in his form and likeness of the Father, worthy of excellence and the utmost height, has taken instead to suffer the emptying in the flesh with all its normal and probable consequences, which held the whole thing for nothing since he restored for us to have an unblemished station, bringing nature back to its original state, recreating in him unto the newness of life through sanctification of the Spirit.[4]

Cyril follows the logic of the Philippian hymn: the Monogenes is in the form and likeness of the Father and then takes upon himself the likeness of humanity to suffer. So, why did the Son become incarnate? For Cyril, the Son restores humanity to its original condition. By describing the movements from the Monogenes to the emptying, Cyril portrays why the Son took upon himself the normal experiences of humanity: to bring humanity back to its original state.[5] As we learn from elsewhere in this corpus, the incarnation restores humanity by joining what is human to the divine life and through the sanctification of the Spirit.[6]

In addition to appealing to the Philippian hymn, Cyril next narrates these Christological movements by appealing to four Scriptures from Hebrews, essentially describing certain activities of the Son in the incarnation. First, Hebrews 2:17 and 2:14 are used to explain

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[4] *dial. Trin.* 5, 548cd (SC 237:270–72).

[5] Cyril, much later, describes what happens to the human nature when the Son assumes the flesh. In his *dogm.* 3, Cyril describes the original condition of Adam and what Christ restores: "The first epoch (χρόνος) of man's life was holy, but sin intervened and the marks of likeness to God no longer stay bright within us. When the Monogenes Word of God became man, man's nature was created again, reformed by relation to him through hallowing and righteousness. . . . Man's nature then underwent a renewal, a re-molding as it were, in Christ, with our flesh being realigned with holy life in the Spirit." That is, the human nature, when joined together with the Son in the incarnation, was recreated and renewed with life in the Spirit. In *1 Cor.* 15:3–9, Cyril further comments on the soteriological necessity of the death of Christ and his two natures: "By dying the flesh he proves that he was made flesh, even though he is God and therefore impassible. And by rising again, he proves that he is God by nature. Just as suffering is a human characteristic, so also conquering death is a divine one. Thus, we are said to be buried and raised with him and even to be seated with him in heaven. He is not talking about Christ's two natures, but he is saying that in Christ all of humanity, or rather the entire human race, obtains immortality and the other blessings."

[6] Brian Daley reflects on the role of the Spirit in the life of God, and more notably, comments upon the role that the Spirit occupies in saving humanity. Brian E. Daley S. J., "The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 113–48 (see in particular 128–48).

why the Son became incarnate—needing to become like the race of Abraham. Then, Hebrews 10:8 (Ps 39:7–9 LXX) is quoted to highlight how the Son has openly cried out to the Father. And finally, Cyril quotes Hebrews 9:15–17 to highlight how it is the wise and saving will of the Father to abolish death in the death of Christ for redemption. After quoting these four Scriptures with a single comment about each, he offers the following summary:

> It was therefore necessary for the Son to die to accomplish the economy, for it was not without profit that it was necessary for him to take hold of death. How then would it not be useful and indispensable for him also to lower himself to a nature capable of this death? Even the humiliating language we use about this nature should not be rejected by someone who has once for all taken upon themselves to suffer.[7]

Cyril then makes a passing comment about what is proper for the Son and uses the incarnation to mark out the two seasons: what the Son is *before* and *after* the incarnation.[8] "For also what the Word was, and having been begotten in the flesh, he was whatever he was before the flesh. On the other hand, what he appears to have received in addition because of the flesh, he was not so since the beginning."[9] Cyril reiterates, once more, that in becoming human, the Son was

[7] *dial. Trin.* 5, 549bc (SC 237:272–74).

[8] Cyril's *hom. pasch.* 8 includes a seasonal distinction that uses the flesh as the point of difference. There remain two ways of speaking about or describing the Son *before* and *after* the incarnation. In recalling the concern, Cyril mentions that before the Son was born of a Virgin according to the flesh, he descended from heaven. In *hom. pasch.* 8.5, Cyril distinguishes what is *before* and *after* the flesh to differentiate features in the single Son: "Do you see how, when he constricts the Word in the inseparable and indefinable unity of the ineffable conjunction, he intends that Christ be confessed by us as one both before the flesh and with the flesh?" And further, Cyril begins this discourse by warding off concerns of the mutability of the Son. Who the Son is in his eternal nature remains fixed even when he becomes incarnate? "The things which belong peculiarly and naturally to the Word, even before the flesh, are what he applies to him again even when he has come into the flesh, knowing that he has not become other on account of the flesh, but preserving intact for him the dignity of divinity even when he became a human being" (*hom. pasch.* 8.5).

In *Thds.* 30, Cyril explains how the two seasons and the two natures relate to one another: "Just as the condition of being the Only-Begotten, which belongs especially to Christ, became a property of his humanity when the latter was united to the Word (a conjunction that occurred in accordance with the plan of salvation), so also in turn did the conditions of being 'one among many brothers' and of being the firstborn become properties of the Word after being united to the flesh. Because his being God and his eternal changelessness were firmly established, he remained just what he was even when he became a man who was crowned with the highest glory and transcendence."

[9] *dial. Trin.* 5, 549d (SC 237:274).

what he was before the flesh.[10] And, the Son becomes not what he was previously because of what has been added to him. The Son as impassible *becomes* the impassible-passible Son because of his humanity.[11]

The Son Cries Forth and is Exalted in the Season of the Incarnation

Next, in a brief exchange about the inferiority of the Son, Cyril uses καιρός and the Philippian hymn to situate what actions are proper for the Son during the season of the incarnation. Setting the stage for this argument, Hermias asks about the cooperating activity of the Father and the Son. Quoting John 14:28 and 20:17, Hermias asks how the Son can be equal with the Father and yet perform actions inferior to those performed by the Father. Cyril first criticizes the spirituality of his interlocutor. Second, Cyril sets out his key seasonal divisions to differentiate what should be applied to the Son at what point. Before one can speak of the

[10] Cyril's vision of the *communicatio idiomatum* enters his concerns, even later during his exposition of the Creed. Who the Son was before the incarnation remains immutable, even though the divine realities are met with their antitheses in the Son's incarnation. "Therefore there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the very Only-Begotten Word of the Father made man, who did not relinquish being what he was, for he remained God in his humanity, master in the form of a slave, having in the emptying like unto us the fullness of divinity, being in the weakness of the flesh the Lord of power, and in the measure of his humanity having as his own that which is above all creation. For, what he was before the flesh, he has, being incapable of losing it, for he was God, true Son, the only begotten, light, life, and power. But what he was not, these he is seen to have taken in addition through the incarnation, for he made his own what is of the flesh. The flesh was not that of someone else, but rather his own ineffably and unspeakably united to him" (*ep.* 55.22; also see *1 Cor.* 3:7–8).

[11] Cf. *ep.* 46.4. Also, "Therefore, the Word is impassible when he is considered God by nature, yet the sufferings of his flesh are known to be his according to the *oikonomia* of the dispensation (κατ' οἰκείωσιν οἰκονομικήν)" (*ep.* 50.14). McGuckin notes how Cyril presses the language of paradoxes, including this idea of passible-impassible (McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 185). Cyril regards, much later, in his *schol. inc.*: "The Logos suffered impassibly" (*schol. inc.* 33–35). To note the paradox in such stark contrast aims to communicate the seriousness of these two polarized features without minimizing their reality. "The point he [Cyril] wishes to make is that of the intimacy of the connection between two realities in Christ: one a reality of the glorious power of the godhead, and the other the tragic reality of the suffering human condition." So, in the incarnation, the impassible nature redeems what is passible through its ineffable union. For more on a Cyrilline vision of the impassible Son suffering, see John J. O'Keefe, "Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-Century Christology," *TS* 58 (1997): 39–60; J. M. Hallman, "The Seed of Fire: Divine Suffering in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople," *JECS* 5 (1997): 369–91; J. W. Smith, "Suffering Impassibly: Christ's Passion in Cyril of Alexandria's Soteriology," *ProEccl* 11 (2002): 463–83; Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology*, VCSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 212–24.

inferior qualities of the Son, one must describe the eternal heavenly Son. To speak of what is human, one must first differentiate what is eternal and proper to the Son. Cyril then quotes John 3:31 to show that the incarnate Son is "from above," indicating that he comes from a place that is superior to all things:[12]

> To consider the property of the Son from a creaturely point of view, he is not in the midst of all creatures, but above them all, since he reaches an infinite height, beyond which there is nothing. Is it not "God" that is the name that is above all names, just as the divine Paul has said to us?[13]

By considering the vantage point from a "creaturely point of view," Cyril uses the spatial language of "above" to convey what is from heaven and divine. Yes, as Cyril later affirms, the Son is inferior to the Father, but he first describes the Son as eternal and then as incarnate to situate this season of his inferiority.[14]

Now Cyril describes how the Son has the name above all names. For, if the Son is God from the beginning—thereby God by nature—how can the Son too be endowed with deity and given the name of God? To answer this concern, Cyril quotes the Philippian hymn and attributes it to the Monogenes. The Son cries forth during the καιρός of the incarnation.

> Is this not the very moment of the incarnation of the Word (ὁ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου καιρός) for us, since he is able to cry forth, who would openly say it to those who have not yet thought about it? He is not conceived as the Word being God, but in so

[12] In *Jo.* 3:31, Cyril differentiates the difference between "from above" and "from heaven." Whereas the angels are from above but are not God, the Son is instead from the Father. The phrase "from above" communicates the idea of eternal generation: "The word, however, shines forth ineffable from God the Father, possesses the birth from above as his own and 'comes' in the sense that he is from the Father's substance as from a spring. . . . He will be 'over all' as someone besides them by nature and by God-befitting power and by the other attributes that belong to the one who begat him."

[13] *dial. Trin.* 5, 566cd (SC 237:326).

[14] This kind of reasoning really does not leave Cyril. He makes a similar argument in his defense of *Anathema* 4 to Theodoret. "We never denied that a distinction does need to be made between different sayings; we are aware that some of them are more appropriate to the divine, others to the human; the former belong to transcendent glory, while the latter fit better with the limitations of his emptying of himself" (*apol. Thdt.* 4). While this defense of *Anathema* 4 may be the season of the incarnation, Cyril predicates what is eternal and divine and what fits with the *kenosis* to belong to two distinct seasonal situations of the Son. As he denotes simply later in this defense, Cyril warrants the eternal nature of the Son to remain immutable during the movements towards the incarnation.

> far as he has appeared as a man that he has ascended to the glory of the deity, and with the flesh, and when he had emptied and humbled himself, then it says he was to be exalted.[15]

For Cyril, the Philippian hymn highlights the character of the season of the incarnation. The Son cries forth to the Father, ascends to the glory of deity, and is exalted in the season of his incarnation. So, for Cyril, it is not that the Son is never inferior to the Father; it is essential that we situate *when* we see an inferior Son. While the Son is eternally the immutable Monogenes, the Father bestows an exalted name upon the Son as part of the *oikonomia*.

Cyril uses the Philippian hymn to set out the full career of the Son. The Monogenes empties himself to the form of a servant, and *then* he is given the exalted name—thereby situating *when* he is exalted.

> The Monogenes has emptied himself by descending to the form of a servant. He suffered the cross in contempt of shame and obedience to death. This is why, it is said, it was given to him the name above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in the heavens, upon the earth, and under the earth. Is he then on the same level as us, as a reward for good deeds, a reward of obedience, a crown for bravery, that he has obtained the right to be called God and to be worshiped by the holy angels, also by us on the earth, and by those who have already left it?[16]

Because of the faults of humanity, the Son receives glory from the Father. But again, Cyril situates this activity to the *time* of the incarnation. In other words, it is only because humanity has sinned that the Son became human and then received glory to redeem what is human.

> Let it be known that the manner of glory that divinizes him are the faults of humanity. For if we had not sinned, he would not have become like us. And if he had not become like us, he would not have suffered the cross. And if he did not die, he would not have the right to be worshiped by us or his holy angels.[17]

Cyril argues that the sins of humanity are the cause of the Son needing to become human, suffer,

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[15] *dial. Trin.* 5, 567bc (SC 237:328).

[16] *dial. Trin.* 5, 567de (SC 237:328–30).

[17] *dial. Trin.* 5, 567e–68a (SC 237:330).

and then receiving worship from the angels. So, even though the language of exaltation is used, Cyril understands this to indicate that the Son returns to his original status.[18]

When Does the Son Receive an Excellent Name from the Father?

In *dial. Trin.* 3, 485–88, Cyril sets out the three epochs of the Son to correct one of Hermias's Christological premises, and the Philippian hymn is used as a proof-text to situate how certain activities are peculiar to specific seasons. *When* does the Son receive an excellent name, and *when* does the Father bestow honor to the Son? Hermias begins his argument by quoting Philippians 2:9. If a person calls the true Son God, it marks an occasion for laughter. If the Son is true God, why does he need to be given a name and be exalted?

Before quoting Philippians 2, Cyril highlights how the Scriptures assume the proper epochal divisions of the Son:

> They are only looking—and with what activity!—for words which they could seize, which would constitute a possible obstacle to the honor and the glory of the Son, so that there is nothing where they see something that is better. Yet the inspired Scripture delimits the season when this gift was made (τὸν τοῦ δεδωρῆσθαι καιρόν).[19]

Cyril criticizes his interlocutors for finding words to limit the Son's glory. And instead, if readers would observe the seasons (καιρός), they would situate the *when* of the Son receiving the name from the Father. He then quotes the Philippian hymn in full, ascribing it to the Monogenes, and shows that his interlocutors do not consider *when* the Son is exalted.[20]

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[18] *dial. Trin.* 5, 568a (SC 237:330): "If also he was in the equality of and in the form of the Father when he had limitations of his emptying, could he have an increase of glory receiving a name that is above all names at the time of his emptying (τὸν τῆς κενώσεως κρόνον)? Do you not understand where they might end up, if they are scrutinized more carefully?"

[19] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485a (SC 237:78–80).

[20] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485b (SC 237:80). Cyril amends Phil 2:6–11 as follows: "'The Monogenes existing in the form of God the Father did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,' according to what is written, 'but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of mankind and being found in the appearance as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient up until death, even death of a cross. For then God exalted him and graced upon him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee would bow whether

Cyril describes his reading as one that travels upon an easy path, flat and straight, and one that is seemingly available to readers.

> This is a flat and unified path, leading to the truth, for those who want to think straight. Understand it, dear friend, to receive, in the manner of a favor, the name above every name, this is the one being called an emptying—the lowering of the Word to us by virtue of the economy.[21]

Reading according to the seasons enables one to conclude: the Son receives the name above every name as part of the *kenosis*—the *oikonomia*.

> Now, if we discover that receiving is one of the limitations linked to the emptying, it appears that everything that is before the emptying completely escapes the need to receive. He is possessed by his very nature what it was to know to be in the form of God the Father. And if he has lowered himself, passing a sublime and excellent reality (ἐξ ἀνῳκισμένου τινὸς καὶ ὑπερανέχοντος πράγματος) to a lower one, he will undoubtedly return to that previous elevation. He will not be rushing upon a foreign glory and honor, but what was his own from the beginning.[22]

The incarnation and *oikonomia* serve as a hinge for the Son's transitions. *Before* and *after* the incarnation, the Son has no need to receive. *During* the incarnation, the Son is in a condition to receive and transition back to what he was from the beginning.

Cyril reflects a bit further on the two transitions of the Son. The emptying is the moment just before the *kenosis* and the exaltation is the moment just before his exalted state.

> The real emptying, then, would be the moment before the emptying and the moment of supremacy and glory (ὁ πρὸ τῆς κενώσεως καιρός, ὑπεροχῆς δὲ καὶ δόξης ὁ καθ' ὃν οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως κεκενῶσθαι λέγεται), it would be the one where, I do not know why, it is said that he was emptied, whereas he acquired what went beyond his intrinsic nature and limitations and which he leaped unexpectedly to heights incomparably superior to

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in the heavens, on the earth, or under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord unto the glory of God the Father.'"

[21] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485c (SC 237:80).

[22] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485cd (SC 237:80).

his previous state.[23]

In this first transition, Cyril describes how the Son went from supreme glory and supremacy to his emptying. It is not proper for the Son to receive except in the emptied state. He then explains both transitions of the Son: (1) in eternal glory moving to an emptied state and (2) in an emptied state moving to an exalted state. Thus, the proper καιρός of the Son occupies either side of the incarnation whereby he assumed flesh in the incarnation and then he was given an incomparable state again.

Cyril finally answers the question initially raised by Hermias: *when* does the Son receive an excellent name from the Father?

> To agree, therefore, with the exact situation and with your opinion, it should be thought that the name above every name was given to the Son when, having assumed a similar appearance to ours, he was appointed as a Son to God just like one of us, adopted with us and because of us. He is a legitimate Son, so that we too, because of him, become sons of glory that surpass nature and appear as partakers of his divine nature.[24]

The Son receives an exalted name while he is in the condition of humanity. And, as the Son is exalted—transitioning back to epoch three—humanity too is glorified and becomes a partaker of the divine nature.[25] If the Son "receives," it marks out his human condition.

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[23] *dial. Trin.* 3, 485e–86a (SC 237:82).

[24] *dial. Trin.* 3, 486a (SC 237:82).

[25] I refrain from exploring Cyril's anthropology and soteriology, and how these two intersect. Cyril's vision of anthropology comprises of participation in the divine life and a restoration back to what humanity originally was. This idea certainly appears in the *dial. Trin.*; for the clearest example, see 7, 639a–e (SC 246:164–66). In his *1 Cor.* 6:15, he regards the following: "How might our bodies be members of Christ? We have him in ourselves sensibly and spiritually. For on the one hand, he dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and on the other we are partakers also of his holy flesh, and we are sanctified in a twofold way. And he dwells in us as life and life-giving, in order that death which had visited our members might be destroyed through him." John McGuckin describes Cyril's incarnational soteriology as dynamic to signify the participatory themes: "The Logos had no need whatsoever to appear as man. Two deductions thus followed inevitably about the incarnation: . . . Secondly, that it was not for God's benefit but mankind's. Thus, the incarnation was a restorative act entirely designed for the ontological reconstruction of a human nature that had fallen into existential decay as a result of its alienation from God." Cyril's divinization of the human nature is first linked to his Christology as a first principle. The restorative act of nature follows the trajectory of the Son's *oikonomia* for restoration to an original condition. For more on this topic, see the works by Blackwell and Keating. McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 183–85; Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*, WUNT 2.314 (Tübingen:

Cyril anticipates an additional concern and qualifies the meaning of "name above every name." He compares the Son's condition in epoch one and three. What the Son is by nature in season one is what the Son is by nature in season three by virtue of the Son's union of substance with the Father. Cyril raises the following question: if the Son is in the form of God in season one and receives a name above all names in season three, does the Son then surpass the qualities of the Father?

> If the Son has gained something better by taking the name above all names, he will transcend over all things according to himself and surpass God the Father as to nature. That's what they showed us just now, these harsh words. Do we consider, on the contrary, that he is not at all in a better position than before, given the name that he has taken (it is thought), that this grace does not add nothing at all? Will those who are not convinced of silliness and falsehood also not deny having been so brazen as to maintain that the ineffable nature of the divinity surpasses the creature only by very little, if not by anything at all? It would contribute in a small way to enhance the brightness of a being by conferring on him his properties.[26]

This dilemma poses a problem for the Son-Father relationship. If the Father and Son are co-equal in season one, how can the Father grant properties to the Son in season three to outrank the Father? "The divine Paul, moreover, knew that the Son was not adorned with illegitimate honors, but moreover he perceived him to be God by nature. He binds him to God the Father by a union of substance and nature."[27] By focusing on "was" from John 1:1, Cyril states that the eternal divine nature is eternally present in the Son. And, as the Son cannot outrank the Father in season three, the Son can only be exalted back to his original condition.

Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 71–99; Daniel A. Keating, "Divinization in Cyril: The Appropriation of Divine Life," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 144–90; Keating, "Divinization in Cyril: The Appropriation of Divine Life," 54–104.

[26] *dial. Trin.* 3, 487bc (SC 237:86).

[27] *dial. Trin.* 3, 488c (SC 237:90).

When does the Son Become Firstborn?

When does the Son receive the title of "firstborn," what is this title's relationship to the title of "Monogenes," and what accompanies this language of "firstborn" for the Son? Cyril uses both καιρός and πρόσωπον with some regularity to designate the temporal stations of the Son. Answering these questions leads Cyril to discuss a range of theological topics: eternal generation, the divine immutability of the eternal nature even during the incarnation, the *kenosis*, and how Christological names signify divine realities. As we will see, this discussion is ultimately related to the discussion of Philippians 2, but first we must make something of a detour.

In *dial. Trin.* 4, Cyril utilizes a modified form of the tripartite rule to determine *when* the Son is firstborn. Throughout this section, he describes the καιροί and πρόσωπα from selected Scriptures. Cyril begins his argument by denoting two exegetical decisions when describing the "firstborn" title about the Son. First, readers must detect *when* (πότε) and under *what circumstances* (ἐν τίσι γεγονὼς) the Son is described as firstborn.

> The firstborn word, it is said, was necessary, but when and under what circumstances (πότε καὶ ἐν τίσι γεγονὼς), that's what I thought I needed to realize before anything else. Thus, one could now reorient the impulses of his heart towards the most righteous thoughts, the most appropriate to the mysteries.[28]

Second, Cyril uses a modified tripartite rule to depict two different ways of speaking about the Son. He notes the importance of the καιροί and the differences of persons (προσώπων διαφοραί) that can be observed, and also argues readers must differentiate between the single Son *before* and *after* he possesses the flesh.[29]

[28] *dial. Trin.* 4, 514e–15a (SC 237:170).

[29] In part of his response to Theodosius, Cyril offers a two-fold distinction to speak about the single Son. And, he notes the name "Jesus" and "firstborn" are names given to the Son at the incarnation. "There are times when the Holy Scriptures speak of him as wholly a man while saying nothing about the divinity (because of the plan of salvation), and there are also times when it speaks of him as God while saying nothing about the humanity. There is nothing misguided about this because the two have been conjoined into a unity" (*Thds.* 29). After Cyril provides several Scriptures to display this idea, he notes how both lines of discourse are needed because the Son is "the Word made flesh." After quoting Luke 1:30, he concludes: "I would argue that this name that the Father bestowed

> The moments (καιροί) and the differences of persons (προσώπων διαφοραί) would be very easily decipherable indications on the straight pathway, free from error and corruption, which follows the language of the Holy Scriptures. Or is what I say not true? Is there no need to consider the seasons (καιρούς) and the times (χρόνους) when the Word was still without the flesh and when he was already with it? That no one from now on be allowed to be defeated if one speaks of him without making this distinction. Let it be that one is rendered dead according to truth.[30]

By using two terms from the tripartite rule, Cyril distinguishes between the persons—namely the Father and Son—and the seasons—namely the seasons before and after the Son is with the flesh. And he focuses upon the Son's relationship to the flesh to differentiate between two of these seasons. The "moments" (καιροί) and then the "differences of persons" (προσώπων διαφοραί) provide the ordered categories to describe what is proper of the Son.

Cyril applies a modified version of the tripartite rule to three Scriptures (Matt 17:25–26; Gen 1:26; and Phil 2:6–8) ultimately to conclude that the Son receives the title of firstborn during his incarnation. To substantiate his exegetical conclusions, he begins with a rhetorical thought experiment: what happens if readers neglect to distinguish the times or the persons?[31]

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upon the Word via this message from the angel was a new one, as that is just what the prophetic oracle had predicted. . . . So, when the Only-Begotten Son, co-eternal with the Father before all ages, became man in these later stages of world history, was born a woman, was established as the Son, and was given the name of 'firstborn' by becoming one among many brothers, at that time he who is by nature the Father bestowed his name upon him on the basis, one might say, of a father's rights" (*Thds.* 29). Cyril's theological and scriptural exegesis use the two distinct seasonal differences to speak about the single Son. He is both the eternal God, begotten of the Father, and he is given the name Jesus and firstborn when he became flesh. In one more set of comments, Cyril affirms both qualities of the Son as proper because of both seasons of the Son. While the Son is human, he is always the immutable divine Son. "So then, the same individual is at once both the Only-Begotten and the firstborn. He is the former insofar as he is God, and he is the firstborn insofar as he is one of us in the way the saving union requires it, one among many brothers, a man" (*Thds.* 30). In *Heb.*, Cyril likewise explains a bit further: "When the only begotten Son, who is older than the ages themselves, became human by the good pleasure of God the Father, he took the title Christ Jesus. This was a new name for him, you see, and it coincided with the time of the *oikonomia*" (*Heb.* 2:17–3:6).

[30] *dial. Trin.* 4, 515a (SC 237:170).

[31] To provide one contemporary example, Cyril writes the following in *hom. pasch.* 8.6. I assume the date of this homily to be AD 420. While he refrains from noting the different uses of καιρός, as is more common in the *dial. Trin.*, Cyril still makes an epochal distinction: "Knowing, that is, that Christ is one and the same, even if he is presented sometimes as Word and sometimes as human being because of the *economy with the flesh* . . ." He then quotes Col 1:14–18 and interprets this text epochally. "You can see again how, after combining what is proper to humanity with the dignities suited to God, he tells us that he is one and the same, and the image of the invisible Father. For he is the radiance and stamp of his subsistence. He also calls him the firstborn of creation, and acknowledges him to be the Artificer of Thrones and Dominions and, in a word, of all things. . . . And further, before

Cyril's first example is from Matthew 17:25–26, but he also alludes to the Philippian hymn. Here, he states that the Son is free and transcends the limits of a slave; this freedom describes the eternal condition of the Son unencumbered by the limits of human nature. As Jesus discusses taxes (Matt 17:25–26), Cyril suggests that the Son still transcends the limits of a slave. Is the Son placed under the yoke of slavery, like other humans? Or does he freely assume the yoke of slavery even though it is said that he lowered himself to the form of a slave?[32] Next, Cyril alludes to the Philippian hymn to describe the Son's freedoms.

> He was in the form of a slave, yes, but before having this form, he lived in the absolute freedom of an unhindered nature. No being can become what he was. If he was what he was previously, it would be normal to make the transition to something else. So, the Son came for us, not from the midst of servitude to a servant's place, but from a free nature to the form of a servant.[33]

Cyril's allusion centers upon the incarnation and the free-slave dichotomy. Before the incarnation, the Son is free and in the form of God. During the incarnation, the Son is enslaved and in the form of a servant. The Son is unique in that he did not previously share the enslaved nature of humanity but descended from a freed nature to humanity as enslaved. So, Matthew 17 and the Philippian hymn are used to distinguish two ways of observing the Son's condition: (1) eternal, free, and before the flesh; (2) finite, enslaved, and occupying the flesh.[34]

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he has become a human being, what reason is there to apply to him the words, 'he is the firstborn of all creation, and the firstborn from the dead'? For in the same way as it is not thought suitable to a human being to create, which does suit God, so also is it foreign to God to die. But apparently Paul applies both to the same one." In reading Col 1:14–18 epochally, Cyril notes what phrases apply to the single Son according to the proper seasonal position. After quoting Col 1, he comments, "You can see again how, after combining what is proper to humanity with the dignities suited to God, he tells us that he is one and the same, and the image of the invisible Father" (*hom. pasch.* 8.6). For, it is not proper to apply "firstborn of creation" and "firstborn from the dead" to the Son before he was made flesh.

[32] In McGuckin's observation, Cyril's "flagship" set of arguments correspond to how the human nature is assumed within the divine life of the Son: "The human nature is, therefore, not conceived as an independently acting dynamic (a distinct human person who self-activates) but as the manner of action of an independent and omnipotent power—that of the Logos; and to the Logos alone can be attributed the authorship of, and responsibility for, all its actions." McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 186.

[33] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516ab (SC 237:174).

[34] Cf. *hom. pasch.* 13.3.

Cyril considers what would happen if no distinctions of χρόνος are considered. While χρόνος is used instead of καιρός, a similar seasonal distinction is assumed:

> But if there is no interval, if time is nothing (εἰ μηδὲν ὁ χρόνος), if a search for the persons (εἰ προσώπων ἔρευνα) brings nothing useful, even while considering the Word apart from the flesh and again without the flesh. He is not free but let him be rendered a servant and counted among those who are under a yoke.[35]

If no temporal space exists between the two states, the Son is perpetually a servant. Cyril insists on epochal distinctions (καιρός or χρόνος) for identifying the person (πρόσωπον) rightly. Cyril accuses his enemies of not considering the season or person, and comments on their confusion of Christological categories: "Why do you confuse what cannot be mixed, without considering the season (καιροῦ), the persons (προσώπων), the reasonings (λογισμῶν), through which the contemplation (ἡ θεωρία) would be much clearer and easier to elucidate what is spoken about the Son?"[36]

He then reads Genesis 1:26 to display the Trinitarian persons present while creating humanity. He initially highlights the eternal relationship of the Son with the Father: all that befits God the Father belongs to the eternal Son. And, as Cyril continues, the economy of the Son in his eternal state brings forth creation. The Father and the Son inseparably create:

> For, where the Word is God come in the flesh, having been begotten of the Father, there contemplate without mixing the dignity befitting God, pure glory without confusion, the supreme freedom, equality of strength with the Father. For by this, he was brought to being what formerly did not exist. The community of design, the equality of operation, the similarity in every order of things have been described by Moses. He has presented God speaking to us, things that are clear, with the Word from him and coexistent in him.[37]

By quoting Genesis 1:26, Cyril affirms that the Son is an agent in creating humanity. "The phrase

[35] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516b (SC 237:174).

[36] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516c (SC 237:174).

[37] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516cd (SC 237:174–76).

'let us make' cannot be suitable for one, but rather when one is more than one or two."[38] With Cyril's prior Christological assumptions and the καιρός-πρόσωπον order of reading, the "us" in the creation account assumes the co-equal and inseparable activity of the Father and the Son together. Cyril develops a similar argument in *dial. Trin.* 3, suggesting that it is "the holy and consubstantial Trinity" that says, "come, let us create humanity."[39]

Cyril finally quotes Philippians 2:6–8 and answers the initial concern of *when* the firstborn title applies to the Son. To quote part of the Philippian hymn, Cyril highlights how the Son transitioned from the eternal Monogenes to assume the title of firstborn when he was incarnated.

> For it was then (τότε) that the Monogenes was firstborn, that he was counted among many brothers, he the one and only, as the Son from the Father. He lowered himself to a humiliated situation and he showed himself as us. Not that he has suffered the things customary of unrighteousness, nor that he has rejected his quality of God and of true Son.[40]

From this passage, I simply want to highlight two reoccurring themes in Cyril's dogmatic exegesis. The firstborn title applies to the Son when the Monogenes empties himself and takes on a human form to be counted among his brothers and sisters. While the temporal epoch shifts to the time of his humiliation, Cyril still avoids any concern about the Son's immutability and how the Son possesses the quality and identity of God and Son.

HEBREWS 1:6 AND THE FIRSTBORN ENTERING THE WORLD

For Hermias, the titles Monogenes and Firstborn cancel out the other because they

[38] *dial. Trin.* 4, 516e (SC 237:176).

[39] *dial. Trin.* 3, 472d (SC 237:42). In *dogm.* 4, Cyril reflects further that "let us" implies three persons. Also see *Jo*. 1:1 and 17:6–8. As he reflects on Gen 1:26, he interprets the word "our" from "in our image and likeness" as follows: "The word 'our,' though, does not mean one person, because the fullness of the divine and ineffable nature exists in three hypostases." In *Juln.* 8.23, Cyril interprets "let us" to include the Son and Spirit.

[40] *dial. Trin.* 4, 517a (SC 237:176).

contradict. In opposition, Cyril provides an epochal reading of Hebrews 1:6 in *dial. Trin.* 4 that designates the firstborn title to correspond to the season of the flesh.[41] By situating the proper season, Cyril underscores two additional items. When engaging Christological discourse, one must begin with what is eternal of the Son. And, the titles themselves—Monogenes and firstborn—correspond to their respective seasons.[42]

Cyril begins by criticizing his interlocutors for not properly situating the Son in his eternal position and confusing how to describe the Son as firstborn. According to them, if the Son is firstborn, he must be registered among the creatures. And additionally, they neglect to affirm the immutable qualities and title of Monogenes during the incarnation. "They neglect to recognize and to consider that he is also always Monogenes when they say the name of 'firstborn' foolishly, when they position against the simple ones."[43] To be the "firstborn" requires the Son to be considered among the rank of other creatures. But nothing can be compared with the Monogenes, and thus, there is no rank or division.

> If the firstborn name inscribes the Son at the same time with creation, as one among many brothers and because of this firstborn, it will also display that the Monogenes is not of the same order and unnatural completely [as God]. For, as there are no other beings in comparison to him according to nature that can be the Monogenes.[44]

As Cyril continues, the two names are necessary:

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[41] Also see *2 Cor*. 1:18–20 where Cyril quotes Heb 1:6 and interprets it as follows: "But since he came down into our condition, he came to have many brothers, and at that point he was established as having first place. In addition to the fact that he is Only Begotten as God, he is also called firstborn according to his human nature." In *schol. inc.* 34, Cyril explores the meaning of both "firstborn" and "only begotten." Of the meaning of "firstborn" in Heb 1:6, he notes: "And if we investigate the manner of this 'bringing in' more closely then we will discover the mystery of the economy in the flesh."

[42] This theological logic is displayed once more in *hom. pasch.* 11.8. For what was seen is a human, "but in a truer sense he was God." Cyril continues to describe the Son with the two categories of eternal Son and firstborn, without opting for a two-son Christology: "When accordingly we think rightly, we do not speak of two Sons, nor of two Christs or Lords, but of one Son and Lord, both before the Incarnation and when he had the covering of the flesh. . . . he is Only-Begotten, since he alone was begotten from God the Father, and also, the same one, firstborn, when he came to be among many brothers."

[43] *dial. Trin.* 4, 518e (SC 237:182).

[44] *dial. Trin.* 4, 518e (SC 237:182).

> If now he must not be firstborn because Monogenes, or reciprocally Monogenes because firstborn, here is probably the moment to think that in sum the Son does not exist. There is reciprocal opposition and simultaneous destruction by mutual shock and contradiction in the semantic value between firstborn and Monogenes.[45]

While a semantic distinction exists between the two titles, Hermias rightly interprets the season of the flesh to overlap with the *oikonomia*, stating, "there is no other way than to bring the economy into the flesh at the same time."[46] Without the *oikonomia*, there is no Son because the two realities tied to the titles cancel out the other.[47]

Finally coming to his reading of Hebrews 1:6, Cyril alludes to John 1 to convey the Monogenes as the eternal Son and uses καιρός to situate the "firstborn" when the Word is with the flesh. Cyril notes how John describes the Monogenes as having no antecedent time. Then, Paul—filled with Christ, overflowing with the Spirit, and the best of *mystagogy*—assigns the "firstborn" title to the Son during the καιρός of the flesh in Hebrews 1:6.

> Well, do you know that the reflection you have just made does not differ from the opinion of the saints and theologians, who have transmitted and explained the doctrine in these matters? The divine John called Monogenes and God the Word from God, and at the same time, he testified that he had no beginning in time as God. Paul, filled with Christ, overflowing with the Holy Spirit and the best of initiators (ἐν μυσταγωγοῖς), "When," it says, "he led the firstborn into the world, he says, 'And let all the angels of God worship him'" (Heb 1:6). By what the Apostle assigns, I think, to the term "firstborn" as that which suits the season (καιρόν) when the Word is with the

[45] *dial. Trin.* 4, 518e–19a (SC 237:182).

[46] *dial. Trin.* 4, 519a (SC 237:182).

[47] Cyril offers a similar argument in his exposition of the Creed. In *ep.* 55.13, he notes that it is not simply enough to confess the Son as consubstantial with the Father, but also one must confess the emptying of the Son. "Accordingly, after they had pointed out that the Son is consubstantial, equal in honor, and equal in operation to the Father, they fittingly speak of his incarnation and declare the mystery of the *oikonomia with the flesh* judging quite rightly that the tradition of the faith will be most perfect and because of this self-sufficient. It is not enough for those who believe in him just to be convinced and to think that God was begotten of God the Father being consubstantial with him and the 'image of his substance' (Heb 1:3). It was necessary to know in addition to these that for the sake of the salvation and the life of all having lowered himself to an emptying he took the 'form of a slave' (Phil 2:7) and came forth as man begotten according to the flesh from a woman" (*ep.* 55.18). Cyril, as he explains this Christological vision, simply reflects upon article two of the Creed. He notes that this is why the Creed says, "who for us and for our salvation came down, was incarnate, was made man." For Cyril to confess the sum of the Son's realities is predicated upon his exposition of the Creed.

flesh.[48]

Cyril's self-reflection of his Christological vision simply accords with the divine authors. He sees himself simply rehearsing what he sees in the text. Cyril mentions John (cf. John 1:1) to affirm the Word as God from God and having no antecedent of beginning. And then, he quotes Hebrews 1:6 and describe Paul as assigning the title "firstborn" title to the season of the incarnation. The firstborn language suits the proper season of the Son in the incarnation.

Cyril concludes with two distinct sets of theological topics. First, the Son is *X of X* and the mediator between God and man. Cyril explains that this process is how the Son was brought into the world. While the Son is Monogenes because he is God from God (*X of X*) and eternally begotten, he comes into the world as firstborn.

> Because this is how he is brought into the world, while being there for a long time and always, even if they do not know him. In this way, on the other hand, he is now designated as a mediator between God and man, while having his own and unique properties as being Monogenes. For, he was God from God, only one of the only one (μόνος ἐκ μόνου), and ineffably begotten. But when he became like us, then, yes, he was ranked among brothers because he is called firstborn.[49]

Second, Cyril provides a seasonal ordering of the movements of the Son. To receive the title firstborn, the Son is first and always the Monogenes.

> When is the emptying, indeed, if not in becoming firstborn after being Monogenes, and among the creatures with us as a man, when one is above all creation? When, in fact, did he "become poor while being rich," if not by letting him see that he assumed a foreign element and that made him a beggar? But if only once the emptying is acquired and at the time (χρόνῳ) of the creation that there is room for a submission to become and reduced to the rank of creature, would it not be suitable if a creature empties themselves as subject to becoming?[50]

This proper ordering of the seasons and the temporal shifts in the career of the Son situates how

[48] *dial. Trin.* 4, 519bc (SC 237:182–84).

[49] *dial. Trin.* 4, 519c (SC 237:184).

[50] *dial. Trin.* 4, 519d (SC 237:184).

the *X of X* eternal relationship precedes the emptying and serves as the initial premise to describe the movements of his emptying.

In *dial. Trin.* 6, Hebrews 1:6 once more enters the discussion. While the tripartite rule is not mentioned, its premises are certainly in the background: attend to the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before attending to the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον. Cyril uses καιρός twice to situate the Son in both the season of the *kenosis* and the season *before* the incarnation. After Hermias quotes Hebrews 1:6, Cyril offers a reading that situates the Son in relation to the flesh. He poses two questions:

> But will they deny that by adding the title of firstborn to that of Monogenes, according to the manifestation of humanity, one has at the same time necessarily introduced the impression that his glory was something acquired from the outside? For, tell me, when did he become firstborn, if not in the midst of a multitude of brothers?[51]

Cyril, of course, argues that the firstborn title is added to the Son according to his humanity while at the same time having glory. Cyril then raises two more additional questions that reveal his enemies' indiscriminate application of the titles Monogenes and firstborn to the Son.

> If the Word was of the same character as us and our brothers according to nature, even before the flesh, why does he not say that he existed like this from the beginning but in the last seasons (ἐν ἐσχάτοις καιροῖς)? On the other hand, how can one who has taken rank among creatures be considered as Monogenes?[52]

Even if the Son is considered human, why must one say that he existed as such from the beginning? To his second question, Cyril directly addresses the immutability of the Son. If the Son is ranked among the creatures, how can the Son truly be Monogenes? That is, if the Son possesses "firstborn" as his origin, the Son is unable to be Monogenes. To solve these problems, Cyril argues that the seasons of the Son govern the language used to describe his distinctive properties.

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[51] *dial. Trin.* 6, 625e–26a (SC 246:124).

[52] *dial. Trin.* 6, 626a (SC 246:126).

> Since it is not doubtful, but more having truth and firmly certain, as in the last seasons of the ages (ἐν ἐσκάτοις του αἰῶνος καιροῖς), he appeared as a man, because of this as firstborn, he has acquired glory and afterwards being worshipped. If they consider that it is not so, the constraints of their idea will make them pour out dishonorable stupidity and absurd reasoning. Since, because he appeared as a man and because of this the firstborn, it is the season (καιρός) for him to be worshiped, when it certainly was said that he emptied himself. The season (καιρός) is for the renown of his true emptying, but older than the incarnation is the pettiness without glory, and when existing in the form and likeness to the Father, as it is written, he rushed into a humble nature, I mean the human nature.[53]

During the last ages, the Son has appeared as a human and, as a result, is the firstborn. Before the incarnation, the Son is in the καιρός of being equal to and in the condition of the Father. After distinguishing the Son's two seasons, Hermias rightly identifies the proper season of firstborn. And finally, Hermias derives the correct moment *when* the Son is recognized as firstborn: "When he is clearly manifested (ὅτε δηλαδὴ) as the firstborn."[54]

ΚΑΙΡΟΣ AND THE ECONOMIC SEASON OF THE INCARNATION

In the following section, I explore how, in *dial. Trin.* 5 and 6, Cyril uses καιρός to signify what is proper to the Son in the single season of the incarnation. Thus, he raises the concerns of existing in the form of a slave, submission, death, and movement towards exaltation to be situated in the "brief season" of the incarnation. And during this season, the Son is still considered immutable, though he experiences the changes of humanity; impassible, even though experiencing suffering and death; and *X of X* with God, even though he assumes what accompanies the properties of the flesh. Although the season of the incarnation has been previously mentioned, I focus further on the use of καιρός in specific relation to the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

Cyril uses καιρός seven times in *dial. Trin.* 5, 582–86 to signify how the submission of

[53] *dial. Trin.* 6, 626bc (SC 246:126).

[54] *dial. Trin.* 6, 627a (SC 246:128).

the Son corresponds to a single season—the *oikonomia with the flesh*. The guiding question that weaves throughout this exchange between Cyril and Hermias is: how are we to understand the submission of the Son to the Father? For Cyril, submission is a matter of the *will* and not proper to *substance*.

Quoting 1 Corinthians 15:28, Hermias raises a concern about the Son being subjected to the Father. Cyril retorts immediately with concerns about the equality of the Son to the Father.[55] By quoting 1 Corinthians 14:32, Cyril notes how Abraham and Isaac relate to one another not out of submission but honor. Cyril then likens this example to the Son and the Father. It is at this point that Cyril missteps.

> Wherever this reality of submission is present, either it always and everywhere reveals an otherness of substance and excludes the framework of a nature; then, let this be fixed squarely and let the proposition also hold and be true in the case of the Son. Or does it not disturb the features of the substance to honor and obey in such a way as a son to his father nor to be inclined to politeness, determined to pay tribute to propriety and to morality? Indeed, even in our case, this is without power over the notion of our nature.[56]

If submission corresponds to a different substance, then the analogous relationship of Abraham and Isaac does not stand. But, Abraham and Isaac are of the same nature, and Isaac submits out of reverence. Cyril's premise that a shared substance corresponds to mutual submission weakens when the analogy refers to the Father and the Son. Because from this argument, Cyril notes how the Son, in his incarnate birth, submits to the Father and to Joseph and Mary. If true, Cyril does not seem to be aware of his inconsistency. The Son by virtue of his humanity would then be different than the Father in terms of substance, but the Son's human nature is not different than Joseph and Mary—Cyril's inconsistent misstep.

Whereas Hermias rightly notes the troublesome Christological vision here, he too assumes the Son remains in an inferior position. Cyril responds in two ways: virtue is required

[55] *dial. Trin.* 5, 582ab (SC 237:372).

[56] *dial. Trin.* 5, 582cd (SC 237:374).

to read rightly, and the Son's submission is to be restricted to the right season—*oikonomia with the flesh*.

> So then, equipped with the weapons of truth, they overthrow all haughty power of foolish sophistries, they appeal to those quotes that already passed more or less to infidelity and re-orient them valiantly towards obedience to Christ, that is, towards the *economy with the flesh*. For the name of obedience and also the season (καιρόν) of slavery convey to us, when though being God he was begotten as a human, having the dominion over all things not as something added but as God from God, he was rendered as a slave, though being in the form and likeness of the Father, he humbled himself, descending without being forced to a voluntary emptying.[57]

Cyril situates the obedience of Christ to the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Virtuous readers perceive the season as the proper way to describe what the Son is in the incarnate season. He continues to define what is of the Son eternally and of the Son as incarnate. While being "God from God"—*X of X* and eternally generated, having dominion over all things, and being in the likeness of the Father, the Son humbled himself voluntarily, descended from above, and assumes the form of a slave.

Cyril further argues that because of his human nature, the Son submits to the Father as an act of the will.

> This is why it is right only to believe that he has become what we are, he has received the nature common to all, with its inferiorities. For having acquired what is an inferiority of nature, it was necessary for him to be subject to God. However, it is not in the fact of being submissive to the natures, as these people think indiscriminately and say it out of carelessness. But while existing and subsisting according to their own notion and according to whether theirs in each case grants them their nature, these beings voluntarily welcome submission. There is in this case a fruit of their decision.[58]

The Son has become what we are and all that describes the human condition. By receiving what is common to humanity, the Son is subject to the Father. However, Cyril offers one additional

[57] *dial. Trin.* 5, 583de (SC 237:376).

[58] *dial. Trin.* 5, 583e–84a (SC 237:376–78).

caveat that he has yet to explain. Submission is not proper to being but to the voluntary will.

Next, Cyril uses καιρός three times to situate the season of the Son's submission within the current season of the incarnation. Because Cyril moves on from the substance-will distinction, this seasonal distinction seems to be more of a pressing concern. He begins with the following statement: "Submission, therefore, as its inverse, will be, in our opinion, solely in the voluntary propensities, instead of characterizing the concept of substance."[59] Submission is a matter of the will rather than what is proper to substance. However, Cyril does not unlink submission from substance because he tethers this activity to the season of the flesh. Instead, submission is anchored to the will of said person in the flesh—hence it remains voluntary. He quotes Hebrews 2:8 to situate the Son's submission to the Father. The seasonal category, for Cyril, places a boundary which prohibits the submission of the Son being seen as constant.

> The sacred Paul writes concerning Christ, "We do not see now all things having been subjected to him" (Heb 2:8). Since, he will not be subject according to each season (κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ) to the Father when all things are subject to him, that is a season (καιρὸς ἔσται τις), as I perceive it, the things appearing in reality. The Son is not formerly subject until this current time, even being placed for a season (ἐνεστηκότος οὔπω τοῦ καιροῦ), in accordance with whom also he will be subject.[60]

When he mentions κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ, Cyril references his previous three-fold division. And thus, the submission of the Son merely resides within the will of the incarnate Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

Without explicitly stating it, Cyril then considers the logical inconsistency that would obtain if the submission of the Son were proper to his eternal nature. How could what is immutable become mutable without attributing submission to the eternal nature? Cyril states: "In my opinion, it will be plain to say that one day the Son will, according to all appearances, be unequal to himself as to the nature, that he will be susceptible of a change from what he is now

[59] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584a (SC 237:378).

[60] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584bc (SC 237:378).

and what he is believed to be."[61] If the Son internally changes, then the Son will be unequal to himself because of submission. Furthermore, Cyril affirms the inverse: if submission constitutes the nature of the Son, then insubordination is part of the Son's substance as well.[62] Thus, if the Son is subordinate during his eternal condition, then the Son undergoes a change in the nature itself so that the human Son submits to the eternal Son.[63]

Cyril begins a thought-experiment with his use of καιρός. What happens if the season of the Son's submission is indiscriminately attributed to the Son's eternal nature?

> Let someone now have the idea of saying that now he is not subject to God the Father, that it will happen to him according to the seasons and that what determines the inequality of his substance is his submission (πείσεσθαι δὲ τοῦτο κατὰ καιρούς, καὶ καθοριεῖ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ τὸ ἄνισον διὰ τὴν ὑποταγήν). In my opinion, it will be plain to say that one day the Son will, according to all appearances, be unequal to himself as to the nature, that he will be susceptible of a change from what he is now and what he is believed to be. In fact, O most excellent, as I say to the adversaries, let us put submission among the concepts of substance. Then surely the opposite, that is to say, the insubordination, will also include value of substance. And if we say that now he is not submissive and that it is his nature, by submitting to the Father, he will certainly pass to another nature, completely separate, since it is contrary. So, the Son, for us, is committed to change, he is no longer immutable.[64]

Submissive qualities in the Son display mutability, whereas the eternal nature remains immutable.

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[61] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584d (SC 237:378).

[62] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584c (SC 237:378): "In fact, O most excellent, as I say to the adversaries, let us put submission among the concepts of substance. Then surely the opposite, that is to say, the insubordination, will also include a value of substance. And if we say that now he is not submissive and that it is his nature, by submitting to the Father."

[63] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584de (SC 237:380): "And if we say that now he is not submissive and that it is his nature, by submitting to the Father, he will certainly pass to another nature, completely separate, since it is contrary. So, the Son, for us, is committed to change, he is no longer immutable. And the divine David will have lied about him, who attributes to the Son this insignificant privilege, stability in a state always the same, 'For the heavens,' he said, 'will perish, but you will remain. And all as a garment they will grow old and like a habit you will roll them, and they will be changed. But You are the same and your years will not fade' (Ps 102:26 [cf. Heb 1:11]). Paul will also have departed from the truth by writing, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13:8). How did he stay the same, indeed, if he changed in substance?"

[64] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584b–d (SC 237:378–80).

Cyril uses the final καιρός in this section seemingly to describe the exalted Son. Philippians 2:6, once more, assumes a clarifying role for Cyril. If the Son's nature contains a submissive quality, then the Son's glory as savior, redeemer, and the future advent of the king will prove to be of no value.

> If it is for the worse, because of the obligation to submit, then there will be no profit for the glory of the Savior and Redeemer of all in the season (ὁ τῆς ἐσομένης αὐτοῦ βασιλείας καιρός) of his coming kingship, that is to say in the last times (ὁ ἐν ἐσχάτοις) he will also be subject to the Father. Certainly, he is in a better situation now, when it is said that he emptied and humbled himself. If then they dismiss this solution as foolish, to pretend that it will be a change to what is better, why this bias to rally against submission and to attribute to it the inferior status of the Son? It is he who actually raises and exalts him, the one who is now in the likeness of the Father, "For he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped," according to what has been written, "but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:6).[65]

By quoting Philippians 2:6, Cyril links the submission of the Son to a single season. This season of the flesh culminates when the Father raises him and exalts him, the one who is with the Father. By anchoring submission to will and not substance. Because submission is tied to will, the Son and Father share the same will and are seen in the conformity of the will.[66] As Cyril uses καιρός a total of seven times in such a brief space, he demonstrates the exegetical necessity of describing the Son according to his proper season.

Necessary Epochal Distinctions and the *Oikonomia with the Flesh*

To respond directly to the concerns of the Son receiving glory and lordship from the Father, Cyril notes the importance of perceiving the proper seasons of the Son. While the Son is in the season of the incarnation, Cyril comments on the active role of the Son in his own

[65] *dial. Trin.* 5, 584d–85a (SC 237:380).

[66] *dial. Trin.* 5, 585e–86a (SC 237:382–84): "Therefore, he who from now on is more in conformity of thought and will with the one who begot him. Who is the council and the will of the Father, how will he submit, and this according to the seasons (κατὰ καιρούς), as if one considered that there is not yet conformity of will, in other words, submission? For I will also use Paul's term. He bears no harm to the idea of the substance of the Monogenes."

incarnation and *when* the Father restores the former glory of the Son (cf. John 17:1–8).[67] He situates the Son in the *oikonomia with the flesh* as the season of the flesh and the movements of the Son back to glory. For Cyril's exegesis, he regards that it is "necessary to know the epochs" of the Son to determine *when* the privation of glory appears and *when* the Son returns to a position of glory that he previously possessed as God. Part of Cyril's Christological exegesis observes how properties of the human nature do not transcend to the other epochs of the Son. On the other hand, Hermias neglects to distinguish any temporal divisions in the economy of the Son and the properties pertaining to each season.

Hermias raises a concern about the inferiority of the Son when he receives glory and lordship from the Father. He does not deny that the Son is "also God by nature" (Θεὸς κατὰ φύσιν).[68] The Son lacks in his nature, glory, royalty, and lordship.[69] If the Son is God by nature lacking nothing, why is he in need of receiving glory and lordship from the Father? Hermias quotes John 17:1–8 to note the restoring of glory to the Son and Acts 2:26 to note the Father has made the Son Lord and God. For Hermias, the Father gives glory and lordship to the Son, who receives it with a good heart. These two proof-texts, for Hermias, signify the inferior status of the Son. He observes the following and attempts to consider what is right: "You see, therefore,

[67] Cyril's epochal and partitive exegesis occurs with some regularity in *Jo.* 17 more at large. For example, in *Jo.* 17:3, Cyril comments on the need to keep the "*oikonomia* in mind" when reading passages that correspond to humanity: "The Lord's statement is especially appropriate for the form that he assumed, I mean the form of his humiliation and the limitations of human nature." In *Jo.* 17:6–8, he makes a distinction of how the Son speaks. He either speaks as "God from God" or as a human: "Knowing this (since he is God from God by nature), he addresses his Father openly in a God-befitting way. But he immediately joins the more human statement, 'whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me' (John 17:6)." And, in the same section (*Jo.* 17:6–8), Cyril notes once more: "The Savior, therefore, is speaking in a divine and human way at the same time, since he was God and a human being in the same person." In *Jo.* 17:11, his partitive commentary comes to the fore as Cyril seeks to explain how the Son can request items that appear humanly: "He always maintains the combination of the two facts into one. I am referring to the human nature, which possesses lowliness like ours, and the divine nature, which is pregnant with the highest glory of all. His statement is a combination of both." In *Jo.* 17:12–13, Cyril comments that the Son "maintains a double sense in the statements about himself because of his *oikonomia with the flesh*." And again, in the second part of *Jo.* 17:12–13, the Son maintains a "juxtaposition of the two aspects of his person, demonstrating the magnificent divine honor in himself and, because of the *oikonomia*, not rejecting the appropriate limits of the human nature."

[68] *dial. Trin.* 6, 599a (SC 246:46).

[69] *dial. Trin.* 6, 599a (SC 246:46).

everywhere the Father gives glory and lordship and the Son receives exceedingly with gladness. Well, if they are bold enough to attack us with remarks of this kind, probably adding something else, how can we escape and avoid evil, if we have decided to think rightly?"[70] Because the Son gladly receives glory and lordship from the Father, Hermias points out what was previously lacking in the Son by nature.

In response, Cyril offers two lines of reasoning. First, he notes how they have strayed from piety. Second, Cyril points to the seasonal position of the Son as the proper way to read these two Scripture texts. For the sake of the argument, Cyril entertains a univocal reading and nullifies the seasonal distinctives of the Son to see what will happen.

> It is, in my opinion, that they leave aside as useful for knowledge the proper seasons (καιρούς) for each action and therefore pay no attention to observe the words. If indeed the Word has not become flesh, if he has not dwelt among us, let the observations of the seasons (καιρῶν) be neglected as a worthless idea, and once the accuracy of these matters has been removed, let every word be indifferent regarding the Monogenes.[71]

To consider no seasonal distinctions, Cyril explores how one would perceive the Son. As the radiance of the Father, the Son suffered in his own nature including death.[72] As a quick retort, Hermias rightly responds how these experiences refer to the Son in his humanity. But Cyril shows how Hermias neglects to assume the proper epochs that accompany each activity and thereby ignores the words of Scripture. The incarnation necessitates an epochal division in Cyril's Christological exegesis. If the Son did not acquire humanity and dwell among humanity,

[70] *dial. Trin.* 6, 599d (SC 246:48).

[71] *dial. Trin.* 6, 599e–600a (SC 246:48–50).

[72] Cyril, later, moves his language away from suffering according to the nature of humanity but suffering according to the flesh. While the distinction is subtle, this move attempts to uphold the single Son and the person who suffers. For, if one can denote an action to a single nature, what would prohibit them from describing two sons? Cyril's argument upholds, so to speak, the "single nature" of the incarnate Word so that the two natures of the incarnate Son remain inseparable. "Since the divinely inspired Scripture says that he suffered in his flesh, it is better that we also speak thus, rather than to say in the nature of his humanity, even though, if this was not said by some perversely, in no way at all would they do injury to the statement of the mystery. . . . Hence, they speak with undue precision of him suffering in the nature of the humanity, as if they separate it from the Word and set it apart by itself, so that they mean two and not one, the Word of God the Father still incarnate and made man" (*ep.* 46.13).

then we may forgo any epochal divisions of the Son. And then, all Christological texts may require interpreters to make no distinction and apply all Christological Scriptures to the Monogenes. But, as Cyril further elucidates, the Son did in fact undergo suffering in his own nature, the crucifixion, and even experiences death itself.[73]

> And then he, the radiance of the Father, through whom all things have been made, the Word seated and coeternal with the begetter, the intangible and the invisible, let it be said that he suffers in his own nature both the blows on his back and the piercing of his hands and feet by the nails, both the wound on the side and the summit of all evils, I mean death.[74]

Cyril points to the simultaneous qualities of the Son with the Father, having been begotten of the Father, and shares the eternal rule of the Father, all the while he experienced the blows on the back, piercing of nails, and even death in his own nature. These Christological antitheses require non-univocal readings. One way to distinguish is to place the Son in one of the seasons to situate what is proper of the Son respective of that season. Thus, Cyril calls for a necessary distinction between the epochal placement of the Son to categorize how and when we highlight several eternal and economic activities of the Son.[75]

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[73] This Christological paradox highlights how Cyril envisions the unity of the Son and how he can be both passible and impassible. In one of his letters to John of Antioch (*ep.* 39.6), Cyril again revisits something similar. McGuckin rightly notes that when Cyril applies the features of suffering to the Word, he does so with qualifications: "it applies to the Word made flesh, and it happens economically (for a salvific purpose of transfiguring mankind) not absolutely." Cyril regards the following: "Everyone of us confesses that the Word of God is, moreover, impassible, even though he himself is seen arranging the all-wise *oikonomia* of the mystery by assigning to himself the sufferings that happened to his own body. And in this way, also, the all-wise Peter speaks, 'since Christ has suffered in the flesh' (1 Pet 4:1) and not in the nature of his ineffable divinity. For in order that he might be believed to be the Savior of all, according to the incarnational appropriation, he assumes, as I said, the sufferings of his own flesh." McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 203.

[74] *dial. Trin.* 6, 600a (SC 246:48–50).

[75] Cyril characterizes the actions of the Son as proper to the "time of the advent." In *glaph. Dt.* 13.1 (FC 138, 225), he denotes the season of the incarnation as the "latter times" of the world. And after describing the cleansing that takes place outside the camp, Cyril comments: "This happened at the time of the advent of Christ, which was as though it were in the evening, as it came towards the close of the present age." While referring to the bishops of the East, Cyril recalls this two-fold distinction, similar to the quotation provided from *glaph. Dt.* "They add, signifying who he might be, that he is perfect as God and perfect as man, who was begotten before ages from the Father according to divinity and 'in recent days' for us and for our salvation was begotten of Mary, the Holy Virgin, according to his humanity, that the same one is consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity and consubstantial with us according to his humanity" (*ep.* 40.10). To distinguish these two origins of the Son, Cyril

The themes of death and resurrection enter the discussion as the primary concern. Cyril notes that the Son resurrected his own temple and asks Hermias if the Son resurrected himself "like us as a human us or as God of God, though appearing with flesh?"[76] Hermias responds with "as God from God." For Cyril, to regard the Son raising his own temple as God from God should satisfy Hermias's concerns. However, Hermias still stumbles over the idea of the Father giving glory to the Son. After a brief exchange between the two about the incarnation, Hermias contends, "But it is said that the Son received this glory from the Father!"[77] Hermias observes a sense of inferiority in the Son because the Father bestows glory upon him.

To correct this premise, Cyril comments upon what is proper to the Son during the incarnation. The Son, in his incarnation, presents all the wisdom and power of the Father and triumphs over death because of the source of his *hypostasis* with the Father.[78]

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situates both according to the proper temporal framework: (1) begotten before the ages with the Father and (2) begotten of Mary "in recent days."

[76] *dial. Trin.* 6, 600c (SC 246:50).

[77] *dial. Trin.* 6, 600d (SC 246:50).

[78] *Hypostasis*, as McGuckin regards, is used by Cyril "to connote individual reality." Cyril offers a distinction between substance and ὑπόστασις, so that an individual ὑπόστασις subsist with a "common reality" (κατὰ κοινοῦ . . . πράγματος). This example would compare πράγματος with οὐσία. In *dial. Trin.* 422cd (SC 231:238), Cyril mentions the Holy Trinity subsisting with the single divine substance and the need to distinguish between the appropriate person: "It would be to say the common features of the whole divinity, if I may so express myself, as to speak of that which belongs by nature to the supreme substance; and to name the divine nature is to designate for us as a single indication the entirety of the Holy Trinity as conceived in a single divinity, but not yet distinctly the person of each in particular. While saying Father, Son, and Spirit, it is no longer from what indivisibly the entire nature of divinity is given an indication, it is from what allows, in the identity of substance of the Holy Trinity, to discern the proper hypostases." As he comments on "the imprint of his hypostasis" (*dial. Trin.* 5, 558de [SC 237:302]), Cyril understands ὑπόστασις to refer to what is proper of personhood, self-subsistence, and distinct from another ὑπόστασις. "If, therefore, he is called an imprint of the hypostasis of the Father, understand that he inseparably and intimately exists in the form of the one who generated him. When the radiance all but sends forth light and also shining forth, have in mind the items deriving from the Father, as if from the outside, not from all the things from hence comes the hypostasis nor being limited from all the things. And he was issued forth so as to exist as a substance according to himself and as a separate existence. For the Son indeed dwells in the nature of the Father, having him as a source and unable to be totally cut off. Nevertheless, he subsists on his own, and he is truly a Son, not an independent subsistence of an impress, nor predicated unfeignedly, nor coming together, as the appearance for a body." In one more example from *Juln.*, Cyril comments on the eternal origin of the Son and the consubstantial nature of the Spirit. Of hypostases, he notes: "For in fact the one nature of the divine is understood in three *hypostases*—in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit" (*Juln.* 8.18). Van Loon considers ὑπόστασις in the *dial. Trin.* and its nuanced use in *thes.* He concludes that the distinction between substance and ὑπόστασις is clearer in the *dial. Trin.* than in *thes.* The term, ὑπόστασις, is a technical term that depicts that the thing "exists by itself—to be distinguished from accidents and inherent attributes." Furthermore, the concept may very well denote an individual being as self-existent and individual beings belonging to the same substance. As van Loon concludes

> When he manifested himself as a man, while also being the wisdom and power of the Father, and rendering death to naught through himself and being full of life from his own body, he referred to the things being gifted as if a source of his own hypostasis. For no other being, nor any of those who have been brought into existence, is able to give life and manifest the superiority of his flesh over a corruption coming from the earth, even if one considers Christ as it says according to the flesh, because there is only the divine nature. Now, that the Son has been active in the resurrection of his own temple, even if it is said that it was given to him by the Father, we could perceive it quite easily [79]

Even in the incarnation, the Son possesses all that he is in the eternal condition. Although he assumes the nature of the flesh and the corruption that accompanies it, no other being could triumph over death and give life except the one possessing the divine nature. Cyril alludes to the inseparable activity of the Father who raises the Son and the Son who participates in his own resurrection.[80]

While appearing as a human, the Son still possesses all power and wisdom of the Father, and then Cyril attributes the ability to defeat death to the Son. Only God can give life and be life itself. As a human, the Son dies; but as God, he is life himself. Cyril points to two proof-texts. Wrongly attributing it to Paul, Cyril quotes 1 Peter 1:21 to comment how the Father raised the Son and gave glory to him. He then quotes John 2:19 which highlights Jesus's own affirmation of self-resurrection. So, for Cyril, he uses these two texts to convey that the Father raises the Son, and the Son raises himself. He highlights how the Son is "God from God" and

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his look at ὑπόστασις in all of Cyril's literature, a few observations are worth noting: (1) in Cyril's oldest work, *On the Incarnation*, ὑπόστασις is not used for the incarnate Word but to refer to the Son before the incarnation; (2) during the Nestorian controversies, Cyril uses ὑπόστασις to denote individual existence of the divine persons and the "union"/"united according to hypostasis" to the incarnate Son; (3) Cyril is more clear in the *dial. Trin.* to distinguish between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. That is, οὐσία indicates what is common and ὑπόστασις indicates what refers to distinct existences of the Father, Son, and Spirit. For more on how Cyril uses this term and how Cyril reintroduces ὑπόστασις into Trinitarian vocabulary, see Marcel Richard, "L'introduction du mot 'hypostase' dans la theologie de l'incarnation," *MScRel* 2 (1945): 5–32, 243–70; McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 212; Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, VCSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 140–43 and 507–9.

[79] *dial. Trin.* 6, 600de (SC 246:50–52).

[80] See *Rom.* 6:3–4. Cyril comments on the inseparable activity in relation to the resurrection of the Son: "Now when he maintains that Christ was raised 'by the glory of the Father,' that does not mean Christ lacked strength. . . . Therefore, even if God the Father may be said to raise him, we do not exclude the Son from any of the Father's actions. . . . In fact, the Son showed himself to be active in the resurrection."

what the Son can accomplish through his two natures.

> For, he died in the manner of a human according to the flesh, even though he is life by nature existing as God. But he came to life again uttered with ineffable power and unspeakable energies, although he existed like us as a human, it says. So, he is glorified by the Father, not as having a need for glory when he is without the flesh and he is believed to be God from God, but since he is a man, who does not possess the fruit of his own nature the power to operate [as God].[81]

The Son is all that befits God in his own divine nature and thus in his incarnation, he died as a human according to the flesh. The additional description "according to the flesh" secures the personal appropriation of the single subject. As God from God, the Son suffers "according to the flesh" not to minimize the experiences of the Son but to appropriate how the Son indeed suffers. By his divine nature, the Son possesses life within himself. Therefore, the glory that comes from the Father is not because the Son derives any deficiency, for he is *X of X* and possesses all the properties of the Father. Rather, the Father glorifies the Son in his humanity because as a human, the Son does not possess all the properties that befit God.

The Son died as a human but is life in himself as God.[82] The Son was resurrected because of his ineffable power. As Cyril returns to John 17, the Son receives glory from the Father on account of what is of the Son's human nature. He is God from God and receives glory because the Son is conceived in the flesh. Interpreting John 17:4, Cyril notes the following: "And he also glorifies the Father. For, the Father is recognized as God, all-mighty in strength, and also

[81] *dial. Trin.* 6, 601ab (SC 246:52).

[82] In *Jo.* 17:19, Cyril comments that the Son is life by nature and that he came to destroy death through his death. But his death is linked with the soteriological necessity of the incarnation. To become human is to become sons of God and partakers of the divine nature. "That is why, even though he was life by nature, he came to be among the dead, so that by destroying our death in us, he may refashion us into his own life." And, Cyril's two nature Christology comes to bear on his exegesis of John 14:20. The Son is the radiance of the Father, and the Son has the likeness of humanity, including his death. But, the necessity of the incarnation thus enables humans to become divine partakers. "He bore our nature and thus fashioned it in conformity with his life. And he himself is in us, since we have all become partakers in him, and we have him in ourselves through the Spirit. Therefore, we have become partakers in the divine nature, and we are called children, since we have the Father himself in us through the Son." Later in his *Third Letter to Nestorius*, he writes: "For, being life according to nature as God, when he was made on with his own flesh, he proclaims it life-giving" (*ep.* 17.12).

manifested in the flesh with an earthly body dwelling with those in the world."[83] By anchoring the human experiences of the Son to an already divine Son, the glory received now has a different component for Cyril. He receives not as God from God but as the human Son from the divine Father. Cyril then moves into a first-person account of John 17. He interprets the text as if Jesus himself were speaking. This performative mode of exegesis highlights the exegetical creativity of Cyril to make sense of John 17 and expand the text of Scripture.[84]

> You have wished, O Father, he said, to reduce to nothing the insolent and fatal power of death. But to do this, to have the strength to accomplish it, it does not belong to blood and flesh, but to your divine, life-giving and immutable, nature. Since I came from this nature, I carried out the task which pleased you, without my human being weakening anything that contributed to our equality of operation. On the contrary, although I was endowed with flesh and blood because of the equality of our strength, it must be believed that I come from your substance. Glorify me and yourself, the one who is without glory as a man, in union with me is your power and life-giving power, and uniting mysteriously for me to receive the superiority over death, the temple.[85]

Cyril speaks through the person of the Son and notes the two different experiences of the two natures. While existing as the divine Son, the Son carried out the activities proper to the nature and without limitation of weakened humanity. And, the Son requests glory as to what befits his weakness in the human nature.

Cyril finally comes full circle to situate a proper reading of John 17. To consider the Son's request, one must distinguish how the Son resides within the multiple epochs, and how the Son exists in the *oikonomia with the flesh*. This Trinitarian activity and the description of the

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[83] *dial. Trin.* 6, 601b (SC 246:52).

[84] Also see *Jo.* 10:37–38; 15:9–10; 16:25 for an example of Cyril's performative exegesis. While I mention Kevin Vanhoozer here, I certainly do not suggest that these works represent what I perceive to be occurring in Cyril. Rather, Cyril's performative exegesis focuses upon the interpreter "performing" the scriptural dialogue to an audience. Vanhoozer has given considerable energy to highlight the role of the "reader" in post-modern scriptural interpretation. More attention could be given to Cyril's performative exegesis in other portions of his literature. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 148–95; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 165–85; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014).

[85] *dial. Trin.* 6, 601b–d (SC 246:52–54).

Son occupies the economy of the Son and what is proper to the epochs of the Son. The seasonal three-fold epochs of the Son provide Cyril the Christological grammar to appropriate Scripture about the Son. After quoting John 17:4 and 5, Cyril regards the following about the Son:

> The Lord always and in the origins of glory, having been deprived of glory in the meantime by descending to the human level, he returned to the glory from above which was in him and existed by nature, bestowing these suitable words to the emptying when he suffers in the *economy with the flesh*. Is it not necessary therefore most of all to know the seasons (τὸ εἰδέναι καιρούς) for him, those when he was of the flesh and those of the benefit of glory and those before when he dwells among those, being the Lord of glory, not receiving glory, but he is found having his own as God?[86]

The Son, who contains a permanent original glory, was deprived of this glory during his emptying. He then returns to the glory that belongs to him before the flesh. This economic activity of the Son describes the proper seasonal category regarding the Son. As a result, Cyril calls for the *necessity* of epochal distinctions to attribute properly all that befits the Son. To know the epochal distinctions is necessary and enables interpreters to speak of all that belongs to the Son accordingly. This process situates the limitations of his humanity. Furthermore, it permits the language of glory and *X of X* to describe the Son and the Father in an eternal and constant relationship. The Son is both permanent glory and limits his deprived glory only for a season. And these requests of the Son must be perceived according to the καιρός of the *oikonomia with the flesh*. For, some words about the Son simply suit what is proper to the time of his emptying and must not refer to who he is in his eternal, immutable nature. Epochal distinctions properly appropriate the Christological grammar in Cyril's exegesis to uphold the two natures of the Son and the properties befitting each season.

The "Brief Season" of the *Oikonomia with the Flesh*

In *dial. Trin*. 6, 606, Cyril ascribes καιρός to be but a brief season that coheres with

[86] *dial. Trin.* 6, 601de (SC 246:54).

the *oikonomia with the flesh*. He more so provides a Christological structure to the three seasons. During this theological discourse, he moves through the three epochs of the Son to describe what is proper to him. Cyril provides a Christological framework to specify the specific seasons. Even though the subject of inquiry is the incarnation, Cyril often anchors his comments to what is always present or common to the Son—the eternal and immutable qualities.

Cyril begins in this argument by highlighting how the eternal Son relates to what is human. To distinguish between what is eternal and what is finite for the Son requires two modes of discourse. Before the incarnation, the Son is already endowed with his own superior nature. Beginning to answer the *when* of the Son receiving lordship, Cyril mentions both the Son as eternal with the Father and the Son incarnate who was crucified. This two-fold distinction warrants, for Cyril, how the Son is given lordship. Before the time with the flesh, the Son was already endowed with lordship. Before the incarnation, the Son did not possess the qualities of a servant but a superior nature and magnitude (ἐν κυριότητι φυσικῇ, καὶ ἐν ἰδίοις ὑψώμασιν). "It is necessary to think that, before the coming together with the flesh, the Word manifested from God was not in the form of a servant, but in lordship by nature and in his own exaltation."[87] To consider the Son, one must perceive who the Son is eternally before denoting the qualities of his *kenosis*. Both lordship and exaltation mark the nature of Son before his incarnation. And during the incarnation, the divine nature did not descend to a form of baseness but rather the baseness of the flesh has risen to divine beauty. This order of theological discourse assumes the immutability of divine qualities and observes the upward movement of the human nature. "He descended to the emptying, not in the emptying being given over to defeat what is natural and also a genuine glory, but in order [to defeat] what is inferior and lower, that is us, we prevail by ascending to the heights through him."[88] Therefore, the human nature ascends, and the divine nature remains unaffected during the Son's *kenosis*. Cyril then

[87] *dial. Trin.* 6, 605e (SC 246:66).

[88] *dial. Trin.* 6, 605e–6a (SC 246:66).

situates how the experiences of humanity are proper to the *oikonomia* and not to what is proper of God.

> It is wise and true, on the other hand, to think and speak about the things of his divinity and to return the humble to ineffable beauty, being conquered by the loftiest glory. For whom it was the manner to suffer death according to the flesh as what was united to him because the flesh is subject to death. But being life by nature, he restored it relative to his own, not to his own permanent nature, but that which shakes the power of death. Thus, we affirm that he suffered the servitude, but it came by virtue of the economy.[89]

Humanity, by virtue of being joined to the Son, ascends to true, ineffable beauty. To suffer and die is proper to the flesh. In the economic activities, the Son restores humanity back to its original state.[90] The Son—to suffer, die, and be in the form of a slave—remains impassible according to who the Son is by nature. Yet, to suffer, die, and be in the form of a slave is proper of the Son by virtue of the *oikonomia*.

Cyril presents a hypothetical Christological observation and assigns the *oikonomia with the flesh* to be but a brief καιρός. If the Son would have remained dead according to the flesh, he would still be considered among the slaves. But, if the Son under impulse returned to his original state, he returns to what is natural. The brief season of his *oikonomia with the flesh* precedes his victory over death and exaltation. Cyril explains both the season of the flesh and exaltation.

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[89] *dial. Trin.* 6, 606ab (SC 246:66).

[90] Cyril's soteriological structure assumes how the divine Son, in the *oikonomia*, restores humanity to its original condition and participation in the divine life. In *Nest.* 2.8, Cyril distinguishes what the Son is by nature and how the human nature relates to the Son by nature. And, belonging to the Son, the human nature becomes divine: "Therefore confess that he is one, not dividing the natures, and at the same time you should know and hold that the principle of the flesh is one thing and that of the Godhead, which belongs appropriately to it alone, is another. For we deny that the flesh of the Word became the Godhead, but we do say that it became divine in virtue of its being his own." For more on Cyril's soteriological thought, see Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 63–132; J. J. Doherty, "Scripture and Soteriology in the Christological System of St. Cyril of Alexandria" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 1992); Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, Studia Dotrinae Christianae Upsaliensia 31 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991); Jonathan S. Morgan, "Circumcision of the Spirit in the Soteriology of Cyril of Alexandria" (PhD thesis, Marquette University, 2013).

> Therefore, if he has remained among the dead according to the flesh, he also remains among the slaves. But if he springs forth and returns to the what he was from the beginning, I mean life, appearing to be defeated being given over to death by virtue of the economy, he will also return, of course, to the rest, that is, to say to the brilliance of his lordship by nature being given in the *economy with the flesh* that is in force briefly for a season (τὸ ἐν καιρῷ . . . βραχύ), according to the manner of slavery. That is why, being equal in glory and sharing the same throne, being the Son with the Father and God with God, it seems that he is brought back to the origins of his glory so brilliant and transcendent, since God the Father declares to him, "Sit at my right hand, until I place your enemies as a footstool under your feet" (Ps 109:1 LXX).[91]

The Son is with the Father and described as "God with God." Then, in his exaltation, Cyril offers a prosoponic reading of Psalm 109:1 LXX that displays intra-Trinitarian dialogue with the Father and the Son.[92] By quoting Psalm 109:1 LXX as a proof-text to describe the co-ruling of the Son after the season with the flesh, Cyril notes how the Son is brought back to the original state of glory to rule along with the Father. On the throne of divinity, the Son rules with the Father in cooperation and unity. The Son, in his exaltation, is described as "God from God" and with the Father.

As Cyril concludes this argument, he comments on the exaltation of the Son. By virtue of the divine nature, the Father and Son will make all things prostrate. The Son did not ascend, rule, and bring things under his feet as a human. But even with the flesh, he rules on the seat of divinity.

> For, what makes it rest in himself, making prostrate to submission, that the divine and ineffable nature, that is all things will be carried under the feet of our Savior. He did not work in a human fashion, neither when he became flesh, because of this he had the strength to dominate the rebellious. But it is because he has elevated the smallness

[91] *dial. Trin.* 6, 606cd (SC 246:66–68). Cf. *Jo*. 16:7: "And again, at *the time* that was appropriate and suitable for the fulfillment of every event in his *oikonomia*, he ascended to the Father."

[92] For recent work on prosoponic readings of Scripture, see Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scripture Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012); Kyle R. Hughes, *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit: Prosopological Exegesis and the Development of Pre-Nicene Pneumatology*, VCSup 147 (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, SNTSMS 178 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

> of humanity to the dignity of the highest and supreme nature. And, he has established himself on the seat on divinity, even though the Monogenes of God with the flesh, the Word, rules over all things not without the Father. For whatever he performs with the Father, this is always the work of the Son. And whatever can be said to be carried out by the Son, this is always the achievements of the Father. For all things are accomplished by the two in the same likeness; as the Father works, he has the energy and the will of those certainly being accomplished through the Son and the one Spirit with him.[93]

The exaltation of the Son includes a description of the inseparable activity of the Trinity. As the Son and Father rule, the Spirit provides the unity. The rule of the Son is accomplished in the shared divinity with the Father.[94] He did not perform such activities in his incarnation. Because the Son is elevated back to original glory, God the Trinity co-operates and coordinates with a single activity and will. As the Father acts, he does so with the activities of the Son. And so, everything is accomplished by the two in the same likeness. The Father, Son, and Spirit co-rule because of the same nature and same will. For our present purposes, this brief section occupies the attention of καιρός as an exclusive temporal season in the economy of the Son.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Having observed Cyril's prescribed guidance of reading in an epochal manner, we are now better positioned to register what theological topics emerge as part of his concern for the seasons of the Son.[95] While Cyril's epochal exegesis attends loosely to the *tripartite* set of

[93] *dial. Trin.* 6, 606d–7a (SC 246:68).

[94] A clearer example of inseparable activities occurs in *Nest.* 4.2: "Therefore, when the Holy Trinity acts, it surely brings to pass precisely one and the same action: whatever the Father should do or wish to accomplish, the Son also does things to the same degree, and similarly also the Spirit."

[95] In Cyril's theological books after his Trinitarian volumes, he still displays a similar epochal manner of reading. While not using this tripartite rule, Cyril still follows the *spirit* of the rule when he distinguishes what is proper of the Son as predicated of his seasonal positions. This process possibly follows the logical progression of the Nicene Creed (i.e., the eternal Son becomes human). To read partitively in this manner attends to the temporal or spatial distinctions of the eternal Son and Son become flesh, and he refrains from advocating a two-Son Christology. His exposition of the Creed displays this very premise. "Because of this they say, 'who for us men and for our salvation descended, and was incarnate, and was made man.' Behold, how the statement progresses for them in the proper order and in the most fitting arrangement" (*ep.* 55.19). To display this premise and movement of the eternal Son becoming incarnate, he quotes John 16:28; 8:23, 42; 3:31; and Phil 2:6–7. And in *ep* 55.24–25, Cyril's

terms and more so privileges the use of καιρός, several clusters of καιρός emerge in the *dial. Trin.*—most notably in books 5 and 6. And as a result, Cyril explores the full career of the Son, the titles of Monogenes and firstborn, and theological themes related to the *oikonomia with the flesh*. And, more prominent to this epochal reading strategy, Cyril distinguishes what is proper of the single Son *before* and *after* the incarnation.[96]

Cyril, while using the tripartite rule or iterations of the rule, situates καιρός in his interpretive structure to highlight what is proper for each season in a non-univocal manner. While Cyril displays the Son in each of the three seasons, seasons one and two receive

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theological exegesis of Phil 2 comes to the fore: "For, as I said, Christ did not become God from man, but the Word, being God, became flesh, that is, man. And he is said to have 'emptied' himself, since before the 'emptying' he had the fullness in his own nature, as he is known to be God." After this reading of Scripture texts, Cyril then conveys how Scriptures either speak of the Son as God in the pre-incarnate state or as a human in the incarnation (*ep.* 55.27–39). In his *ep.* 45, Cyril describes the single Son, what is observed in the Scriptures and previous traditions, and how the Son moves across the epochs. This example underscores how the Son is the eternal begotten Son and what is proper of this position, and how the Son is the finite incarnate Son and what is proper of this position. This distinction, for Cyril, is simply observed by following the Scriptures: "But we are not disposed to hold these as true, but we were taught according to the divine Scripture and the holy Fathers and we confess that one Son and Christ and Lord, that is, the Word of God the Father, was begotten of him before ages in a divinely fitting and ineffable manner and that in recent ages of time the same Son was begotten for us according to the flesh from the Holy Virgin, and since she gave birth to God made man and made flesh, for this reason we also call her the Mother of God. Therefore, there is one Son, 'one Lord Jesus Christ' both before his incarnation and after his incarnation. For there was not one Son, the Word of God the Father, and again one of the Holy Virgin, but our belief is that he is the same who was before ages and was begotten according to the flesh of a woman, not that his divinity received a beginning unto existence or that his existence was summoned unto a beginning through the Holy Virgin, but rather, as I said, that the Word, who was before ages, is said to have been begotten from her according to the flesh" (*ep.* 45.4). The very last response by Cyril in *Chr. un.* intersects the virtuous traveler on the "royal road" with this kind of partitive reading pattern for the single Son. "This is why we believe that there is only one Son of God the Father. This is why we must understand our Lord Jesus Christ in one person. As the Word he is born divinely before all ages and times, but in these last times of this age the same one was born of a woman according to the flesh. To the same one we attribute both the divine and human characteristics, and we also say that to the same one belongs the birth and the suffering on the cross since he appropriated everything that belonged to his own flesh, while ever remaining impassible in the nature of the Godhead" (*Chr. un.*, PPS 13, 133). Of his reading of John 1:29–31, Cyril does not distinguish the difference of two persons when the Evangelist mentions "lamb," coming "before me," and the one "who takes away the sin of the world." Rather, these distinctions point to the two natures and the two origins of the Son: "He also says that he came before and prior to himself, even though he was born after him; I mean in terms of the date of his birth in the flesh. And so, both the recent characteristics of humanity, and the eternal characteristics of deity apply to him" (*Chr. un.*, PPS 13, 94).

[96] Here is one brief example in Cyril's other literature that displays a similar premise: single subjectivity and a concern for *before* and *after* the incarnation. While not using καιρός in *expl. xii cap.* 8, he notes: "One and the same is called Son: *before* the incarnation while he is without flesh he is the Word, and *after* the incarnation he is the self-same in the body. This is why we say that the same one is at once God and man, but do not split our conception of him into a man separate and distinct, and the Word of God equally distinct, in case we should conceive of two sons. No, we confess that there is one and the same who is Christ, and Son, and Lord."

considerably more focus. This model of epochal exegesis continues to underscore the following premise for the tripartite rule and has already been mentioned in previous chapters: attend to the καιρός of the πρόσωπον before the πρᾶγμα of the πρόσωπον. Καιρός, for Cyril's epochal reading strategy, functions as a hermeneutical first principle that serves his *diachronic* concerns of the Son across the multiple epochs. By using this reading strategy, he maneuvers through a host of theological concepts, such as eternal generation, the *kenosis*, the soteriological necessity of the incarnation, inseparable operations, divine immutability and passibility, and titles for the Son that register divine realities. As a result, Cyril's scriptural exegesis is also a display of his theological commitments and dogmatic exegesis.

By assigning what is proper of the Son *before* (i.e., season one) and *after* (i.e., seasons two and three) the incarnation, Cyril describes what is proper to the Son in terms of nature and activities. As a result, his use of the Philippian hymn identifies the three seasons of the Son to distinguish what is proper of the Son within each of the seasons. As Cyril comments on the Son entering the world as "firstborn," the submission of the Son, and the Father giving glory to the Son, each of these theological arguments are governed by a reading strategy that situates the Son in epoch two. His use of καιρός in the *dial. Trin.* situates *when* the titles of Monogenes and "firstborn" are attributed to the Son and what realities occupy the season of the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

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Partitive Scriptural Exegesis

With the assumptions of the tri-seasonal framework from the previous two chapters, we now can sharpen our focus to explore Cyril's partitive exegesis, which discerns appropriately the two natures of the Son during the season of the flesh. In this chapter, I focus upon three broad movements that correspond to partitive exegesis. First, I offer a brief background to Cyril by looking at selected examples of Christian exegesis and theological features related to partitive exegesis. As will be shown, these early theologians make use of the *communicatio idiomatum* as partitive discourse and something akin to a θεολογία and οἰκονομία distinction. Once we begin exploring Cyril in more focus, I limit my comments to *dial. Trin.* and one example each from *thes*. and *Jo*. One of Cyril's earliest examples of partitive exegesis joins together terms from the *tripartite* framework in relation to θεολογία and οἰκονομία. Cyril modifies, as has already been mentioned, οἰκονομία with μετὰ σαρκός. And, he includes the *communicatio idiomatum* as partitive theological discourse to match his concerns with partitive exegesis. In the final example, Cyril provides the clearest statement about partitive exegesis. As this mode of reading is framed within his epochal categories, Cyril denotes that that are two ways of reading after the Son has been joined to the flesh.

THE ORIGINS AND TRAJECTORIES OF PARTITIVE READINGS

I aim in this brief section to show that Cyril's partitive exegesis drew on an exegetical tradition beginning in the second century. Early Christians display partitive theological

reasoning and exegesis. This mode of reasoning is to make sense of the *communicatio idiomatum* and explain seemingly problematic Scriptures about the Son during the incarnation. As Christian Trinitarian and Christological reflection matured, so too did partitive exegesis develop and become more complex. And, as we will observe, Cyril simply continues and builds from a long tradition of complex Christological reflection.

In Ignatius of Antioch—*c.* AD early to mid-second century,[1] antitheses appear in a semi-creedal form (see Ign. *Smyrn*. 1.1–2). Rather than reflecting his exegesis per se, this creedal idea lists out antitheses to make sense of what belongs to God and Christ and what belongs to the spirit and the flesh. "There is one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ign. *Eph*. 7.2). The incarnation compels Ignatius to speak in a two-fold manner about the Son with antithetical language.[2] Melito of Sardis attests to antithetical Christological realities to describe this mystery of the Son. He is both immeasurable and measured; both impassible and suffers; both immortal and dies; both from heaven and is buried.[3] And again, Melito regards how the Son is both incorporeal and yet possesses a human body, seen as a lamb and remains a shepherd, regarded as a servant and retains the rank of Son, treads upon the earth and fills heaven, possesses a body and by no means restricts the simplicity of divine nature, and puts on the likeness of a servant while not changing his likeness with the

[1] For more on the dating schema regarding Ignatius and the critical issues involved, see Paul Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch," in *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Paul Foster, T&T Clark Biblical Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 84–89; T. D. Barnes, "The Date of Ignatius," *ExpTim* 120 (2008): 119–30; William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 1–7.

[2] Ignatius has several antithetical creedal statements that contribute to nascent Christian Christological theology. Jesus is recognized as both God and conceived by Mary, "both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit" (Ign. *Eph*. 18.2). The eternal and invisible One also "became visible"; the intangible and impassible also suffered and endured (Ign. *Pol.* 3.2). These creedal formulae attempt to make sense of the polarized realities that describe the Son in the incarnation.

[3] *fr.* 13. For translations used, see Stuart George Hall, trans., *Melito of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments*, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Father.[4] These two fragments ascribed to Melito, even if textual stability remains a bit uncertain, reflect seemingly antithetical ontological realities or activities that describe the Son. Both Ignatius and Melito do not provide scriptural exegesis, per se, but they seek to make sense of the incarnation events related to the divine Son. While their Christological nuance still lacks the maturity of subsequent centuries, they communicate through partitive theological reasoning—i.e., *communicatio idiomatum*—to describe the eternal divine Son and his finite realities as a human.[5]

I will now consider Origen of Alexandria and draw out three examples that display an early application of *theologia* and *oikonomia* as a theological and exegetical framework.[6] A principle that is presented several times as a *theologia-oikonomia* framework may also be

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[4] *fr.* 14.

[5] Irenaeus ties the *communicatio* to his idea of the recapitulation of all things. "There is, therefore, as we have shown, one God the Father and one Christ Jesus our Lord, who comes through every economy and *recapitulates in Himself all things*. Now man too, God's handiwork, is contained in this 'all.' So, He also recapitulated in Himself humanity; the invisible becoming visible; the incomprehensible, comprehensible; the impassible, passible; the Word, man" (*Haer*. 3.16.2). Tertullian begins to blend both partitive theological discourse with scriptural exegesis. In both *Carn. Chr.* 5.7 and *Prax.* 27, Tertullian mentions early Gnostics—Marcion and Valentinus respectively. As he comments, Tertullian notes the problems of the Son's two natures. "Thus, the nature of the two substances displayed Him as man and God, in one respect born, in the other unborn; in one respect fleshly, in the other spiritual; in one sense weak, in the other exceedingly strong; in one sense dying, in the other living. This property of the two states—the divine and the human—is distinctly asserted with equal truth of both natures alike, with the same belief in respect of the Spirit and the flesh. The powers of the Spirit proved him to be God, his sufferings attested the flesh of man" (*Carn. Chr*. 5.7). Tertullian continues these antithetical Christological realities in the incarnate Son. In *Prax.* 27, Tertullian ascribes proper activities from the Gospels to the incarnate Son. While the incarnate Son is not a third being (i.e., a composite of both divine and human natures) but is a single substance of the two natures—using John 3:6 as a prooftext for the two natures. The Son displayed the passions of the flesh, including hungering with the devil (Matt 4:2), thirsting with the Samaritan woman (John 4:7), weeping for Lazarus (John 11:35), troubled unto death (Matt 26:38), and even dying.

[6] While the connections between Cyril and Origen of Alexandria are unclear, the following does remain true: to consider Patristic exegesis *in total* or *in part*, one cannot escape the exegetical creativity of Origen of Alexandria. To consider the relationship between Cyril and Origen, see the following: Dimitrios Zaganas, "Against Origen and/or Origenists? Cyril of Alexandria's Rejection of John the Baptist's Angelic Nature in His *Commentary on John* 1:6," StPatr 68 (2013): 101–6; Joseph W. Trigg, "Origen and Cyril of Alexandria: Continuities and Discontinuities in Their Approach to the Gospel of John," in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, ed. L. Perrone, P. Bernardino, and D. Marchini (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 955–65; John J. O'Keefe, "Incorruption, Anti-Origenism, and Incarnation: Eschatology in the Thought of Cyril of Alexandria," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 187–204; Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Cyrille est-il un témoin de la controverse origéniste sur l'identité du corps mortel et du corps ressuscite?," in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, ed. L. Perrone, P. Bernardino, and D. Marchini, vol. 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003); Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), 419–27.

discerned in a distinction between speech about God apart from the creation and God's interaction with creation in Christ. While Origen does not use this pairing in each case, this first example displays that a *theologia-oikonomia* pairing is evident in his Christological framework.[7] Beginning in 1.2.1, Origen distinguishes between the eternal nature of the Son predicated upon his divine names and the *oikonomia* of the Son (*pro dispensatione*). "In the first place, we must know that in Christ the nature of his divinity (*deitatis eius natura*), as he is the Only-Begotten Son of God, is one thing, and another is the human nature, which in the last times he took an account of the economy (*pro dispensatione*)."[8] Origen describes the Son as "Wisdom" from Proverbs 8:22–25, "firstborn" from Colossians 1:15, and the "Power of God" and "Wisdom of God" from 1 Corinthians 1:24. And now, when he comments upon the *oikonomia* in Book 2, it is a marked shift from the divine substance alone to the life of the Son in the incarnation.

> It is time, now that these points have been discussed, for us to return to the incarnation of our Lord and Savior, how he became human and dwelt among human beings. The divine nature having been considered, to the best of our feeble ability, by the contemplation of his own works rather than from our own understanding, and his visible creation having been observed while the invisible was contemplated by faith, since human frailty can neither see everything by the eye nor comprehend everything by reason, as we human beings are weaker and frailer than all other rational beings (for those held to be in heaven or above the heavens are superior), it remains that we should seek the medium between all these things and God, that is "the Mediator" (1 Tim 2:5), whom the Apostle Paul calls "the firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15).[9]

In this brief example, Origen displays a tripartite ontological ordering of beings to make sense of the *mediatorial* title. And in doing so, Origen distinguishes between the divine nature and

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[7] While the structure of *princ.* remains debated, the sectional divisions between Books 1 and 2 also suit our purposes. Peter Martens describes the complex portrayal of Origen's *princ.* (Peter W. Martens, "The Modern Editions of *Peri Archon*," *JECS* 28, no. 2 [2020]: 303–31). Behr provides some of this history in his introduction. My argument above simply rehearses Behr's observations about the cycles and larger literary divisions of Origen's work. He notes, "The correlation between the two chapters could not be clearer, and the most appropriate terms to describe the respective treatments in the two cycles are 'theology' (a term not actually used here, but certainly implied by his reference to his previous consideration of the divine nature) and 'economy'." John Behr, ed., *Origen: On First Principles*, 2 vols., OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xv–lvi (quote from xxxix).

[8] *princ.* 1.2.1.

[9] *princ.* 2.6.1.

what applies to the realm of humanity. This theological and economic paradigm then governs his scriptural exegesis, assigning Colossians 1:15–17, 1 Corinthians 11:3, and Matthew 11:27 to refer to the divine Son and the titles "Mediator" (1 Tim 2:5) and "firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15) to the *oikonomia*.

The third reference comes from 2.6.3. Origen struggles to speak solely about the human features of the incarnate Son in 2.6.2, tying the Son's divinity to his discussion. The struggle consists of discerning the proper way to speak about the Son and observing troublesome texts. Origen notes how the Scriptures speak of the Son with divine titles performing human actions and the Son with human titles performing divine actions. The incarnate Son is the θεάνθρωπος (*Deus-homo*) who is wholly God and man. Using Matthew 19:5–6 as a proof-text, Origen notes the difficulty of speaking about the Son who has two natures married in an inseparable union in the flesh.

> With this substance of the soul mediating between God and the flesh (for it was not possible for the nature of God to be mingled with a body without a mediator) there is born, as we said, the God-man, the medium being that substance for which it was certainly not contrary to nature to assume a body. Yet neither, on the other hand, was it contrary to nature for that soul, as a rational substance, to receive God, into whom, as we said above, as into the Word and the Wisdom and the Truth, it had already wholly passed. And therefore, either because it was wholly in the Son of God or because it received the Son of God wholly into itself, deservedly it is called, along with the flesh which it had assumed, the Son of God and the Power of God, the Christ and Wisdom of God; and, on the other hand, the Son of God, through whom all things were created, is named Jesus Christ and the Son of Man. And, moreover, the Son of God is said to have died, that is, in virtue of that nature which could accept death; and he, who is proclaimed as coming in the glory of God the Father with the holy angels, is called the Son of Man. And for this reason, throughout the whole of Scripture, the divine nature is spoken of in human terms as much as human nature is adorned with marks indicative of the divine. For of this, more than anything else, can that which is written be said, that "They shall both be in one flesh, and they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt 19:5–6; Gen 2:24). For the Word of God is thought to be more *in one flesh* with the soul than a man with his wife. And, moreover, to whom is it more fitting

> to be one spirit with God than to this soul, which has so joined itself to God through love that it may deservedly be said to be one spirit with him?[10]

The Scriptures speak of the divine nature with human language and the human nature with divine language.[11] While not using the terms in each example, something like a *theologia-oikonomia* principle serves to distinguish categories of theological discourse, including the *communicatio idiomatum* and scriptural exegesis. The interpreter is to make sense of the language about the Son of God dying and the Son of Man coming in glory—opposite titles not matching their respective activities.

After the Nicene Synod, pro-Nicene theologians utilize partitive exegesis to distinguish ways of speaking about the Son to uphold the eternal *theologia* and the *economic* realities of the Son as a human. For Athanasius, a partitive reading is a framework for attending to the whole of Scripture. This dual reading pattern distinguishes between the Son as being the eternal radiance of God—quoting or alluding to John 1:1–3, Hebrews 1:3, and Genesis 1—and the Son taking on flesh—quoting or alluding to John 1:14, Philippians 2:6–8, and Matthew 1:23.

> Now the scope and character of Holy Scripture, as we have often said, is this: it contains a double account of the Savior; that He was ever God, and is the Son, being the Father's Word and Radiance and Wisdom; and that afterwards for us He took the flesh of a Virgin, Mary Bearer of God, and was made man. And this scope is to be found through inspired Scripture, as the Lord Himself has said, "search the Scriptures, for it is they that testify about me" (John 5:39).[12]

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[10] *princ.* 2.6.3.

[11] In *Jo.*, Origen distinguishes a two-fold way of speaking about the Son: "The Savior speaks of himself, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a divine nature united to the ungenerous nature of the Father" (*Jo.* XIX, II, 6 [SC 290:49]). Maurice Wiles describes the tension of Origen's reading of John 7:28 and 8:19. These two Scriptures are "to be explained in the light of the general principle that the Savior sometimes speaks of himself as man, and sometimes as a more divine nature and united to the uncreated nature of the Father." Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 113.

[12] *Ar.* III, 29. He also notes the following: "Anyone, beginning with these passages and going through the whole of the Scripture upon the interpretation which they suggest, will perceive how in the beginning the Father said to Him, 'Let there be light and let there be a firmament' (Gen 1:14), and 'Let us make man' (Gen 1:26); but in the fullness of the ages, 'he sent Him into the world, not that He might judge the world, but that the world by Him might be

This partitive reading can and should be mapped across the σκοπός of the Scriptures for Athanasius.[13] This partitive distinction, moreover, conflates both substance and activities of the Son according to what is in the beginning and according to the fullness of the ages—a distinction between the eternal Son and the incarnate Son.[14] Per Athanasius, an interpreter ought to distinguish what is divinely said or performed as referring to the Son as God and what is humanly said or performed as referring to the Son becoming human.[15] And Athanasius goes so far as to say that to arrive at a "right interpretation," interpreters apply partitive readings

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saved' (John 3:17), and 'how it is written behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us' (Matt 1:23)."

[13] In his *ep. mon.* (§ 3–4; *ep.* 1.3–4), Cyril quotes this exact line from *Ar.* While this section of the letter is more about affirming the *Theotokos*, Cyril may have learned his partitive reading strategy from said source. He quotes Athanasius as follows in § 4: "His orthodoxy and godliness in teaching are confessed by all, and he composed a book for us concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity where, through the third discourse, he calls the Holy Virgin the Mother of God. I will make use of his own sayings and the exact words are these: 'This, then, is the purpose and essential meaning of the divine Scripture, as we have said many times, that it contains a two-fold statement about the Savior; firstly that he is eternally God, and that he is the Son being the Word, the Radiance, and the Wisdom of the Father, and secondly that later for our sake he took flesh from the Virgin Mary the Mother of God and so became man.' . . . This man is trustworthy, and we ought to rely upon him as someone who would never say anything that was not in accordance with the sacred text. For how could such a brilliant and famous man, held in such reverence by everybody at the holy and great Synod itself (I mean that which formerly gathered together in Nicaea), be mistaken as to the truth?" We may surmise that not only has Cyril become familiar with Athanasius's writings, but he claims to follow them closely and invites others to do likewise. It would not be unreasonable to conclude that Cyril is influenced by his writings and exegetical creativity.

[14] See *Ar.* III, 35: "These points we have found it necessary first to examine that, when we see him doing or saying anything divinely through the instrument of His own body, we may know that He so works, being God, and also, if we see Him speaking or suffering humanly, we may not be ignorant that He bore flesh and became man, and hence He so acts and so speaks. For if we recognize what is proper to each and see and understand that both these things and those are done by one, we are right in our faith and never stray." Interpreters must discern between what is stated or performed divinely and humanly. This *qua* divine and *qua* human distinction registers what is proper to each nature to secure a right reading. And in these two options, interpreters must not deny the presence or reality of the other nature.

[15] While I do not comment on Athanasius's reading of Proverbs 8 in this chapter (see chapter 2 on Cyril's epochal reading strategy), I do want to point out that Athanasius may have learned to speak of the Son in this two-fold manner from Origen or Marcellus, as Ayres suggests (Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 106). Behr insightfully notes the following about Athanasius's partitive exegesis: "The twofold account of Scripture, and its partitive exegesis, reflects the principle that Christ is God become man, and this Athanasius calls the 'scope' of Scripture, a term which seems to function for him as the 'rule of truth' did for Irenaeus and, prior to that, the 'pattern of sound words' to which Paul exhorted Timothy to hold (2 Tim 1:13). Athanasius certainly introduces a new facet into the scriptural contemplation of Christ; that he cannot demonstrate, but only assert, the legitimacy of this partitive exegesis is only to be expected, for first principles cannot themselves be demonstrated." John Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, vol. 1 of *Formation of Christian Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 214–15.

throughout the Scriptures.[16]

I now look at Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus because they display the combined use of partitive exegesis and the *theologia-oikonomia* distinction. According to Basil, Eunomius applies the names of God to the Son irrespective of his state, even calling the Son "something made" from Acts 2:36. To remedy such concerns, Basil appeals to two different scriptural texts. John 1:2 conveys the substance of the Only-Begotten before the ages, whereas Philippians 2:7, 3:21, and 2 Corinthians 13:4 convey something different from the eternal substance. "Everyone who has paid even marginal attention to the intent of the Apostle's text recognizes that he does not teach us in the mode of theology (θεολογίας), but hints at the reason of the economy (τοὺς τῆς οἰκονομίας λόγους)."[17] An interpreter ought to recognize, as Basil insinuates, what seems to be quite plain from the scriptural text. From this distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, he then applies this scriptural rule to Acts 2:36.

> By using the demonstrative pronoun (i.e., *this* Jesus), he makes a clear reference to his humanity and to what all saw. But Eunomius transfers the expression "he made" to the original begetting of the Only-Begotten. In addition, it causes him no shame that the term "Lord" does not name a substance but rather is a name of authority. Hence, he who said, "God made him Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) is speaking of his rule and power over all, which the Father entrusted to him. He is not describing his arrival at being. We will demonstrate these points a little later when we refute him for adducing testimonies drawn from the Scripture in a way contrary to the intention of the Spirit.[18]

The "mode of theology" refers to the eternal substance of the Son as in the divine life. The reasons for the *oikonomia* consist of the Son becoming human and performing actions for

[16] In his *ep. Serap.*, Athanasius comments on his perceived practice of partitive readings: from the apostles through the Fathers. "This is the character of the faith which we have received from the Apostles through the Fathers. Anyone who reads the Scripture must examine and judge where it speaks of the divinity of the Word and where it speaks of his human acts, so that we do not fall prey to the same delirium that has befallen the Arians by understanding the one when the other is meant" (*ep. Serap.* 2.8.1). For Athanasius, this reading strategy corresponds to how one understands "created" in Prov 8:22.

[17] *Eun.* 2.3.

[18] *Eun.* 2.3.

salvation.[19] This *theologia-oikonomia* distinction serves as a partitive mode of reasoning whereby the eternal metaphysical realities are distinct from the Son's activities for salvation.

In *Orations* 29, Nazianzen utilizes vertical imagery; the interpreter must discern what is above and transcends humanity and what is lowly. This vertical imagery also corresponds to corporeality and what can correspond to what is visible and spiritual. This two-fold partitive distinction, for Nazianzen, relates to the spiritual ascent of the interpreter.

> In sum: you must predicate the more sublime expressions of the Godhead, of the nature which transcends bodily experiences, and the lowlier ones of the compound, of him who because of you was emptied, became incarnate and (to use equally valid language) was "made man." Then next he was exalted, in order that you might have done with the earthbound carnality of your opinions and might learn to be nobler, to ascend with the Godhead and not linger on in things visible but rise up to spiritual realities, and that you might know what belongs to his nature and what to God's plan of salvation.[20]

Embedded in this lengthier quote are the three-fold movements of the Son as observed in Philippians 2 and a possible reference to a Nicene phrase ("made man").[21] Nazianzen's partitive readings stem from his exegetical creativity and the grammar already supplied from Philippians with a pro-Nicene set of theological commitments. And in being drawn upwards, interpreters can perceive what is of God's nature and part of his plan of salvation.

From these examples, we can observe a few trends related to partitive readings. At

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[19] Ayres cautions how to perceive the language of *theologia* and *oikonomia* in the Cappadocian literature, and especially, in Basil's example in *Eun*. 2.3. Whereas Basil rarely pairs these two terms together, this example serves as a clear pairing. *Theologia*, as generally used by Basil, is a term to mean "a mode of insight into the nature of God that comes as a result of an ability to see beyond material reality, or beyond the material-sounding phraseology of some scriptural passages." *Oikonomia*, on the other hand, is a term to describe "a wide range of acts of ordering of events and behaviour." Concerning *Eun.* 2.3, *oikonomia* most likely refers to the work of redemption accomplished by the Son in the incarnation. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 220.

[20] *or.* 29.18.

[21] John Behr designates this line by Nazianzen as the clearest example of partitive readings in the fourth century: "This is the clearest statement of the principle of partitive exegesis from the fourth century: some things said of Christ pertain to his divine nature, while other things express what he has done for us in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation." John Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, vol. 2 of *Formation of Christian Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 349.

least three features overlap with the practice of partitive exegesis: Christological anti-theses, a general *theologia-oikonomia* framework,[22] and reading strategies to discern these theological premises. Partitive readings are thus intrinsic to Nicene theology. Whereas Athanasius distinguishes between the two natures, Basil and Nazianzen distinguish between the *theologia* and *oikonomia*. As will be shown in the examples from Cyril, he further modifies this framework by amending *oikonomia* to include the phrase *with the flesh*. Cyril's partitive reading strategy developed Athanasian and Basilian pro-Nicene Christology. He fits within a particular historical trajectory as noted both by the triadic formula and the contrasting features of θεολογία and οἰκονομία; and yet, Cyril displays his particular version of partitive exegesis by amending *oikonomia* with the phrase *with the flesh*. In other words, not all partitive pro-Nicene readings look the same and follow similar paradigms. And yet, each partitive pro-Nicene reading listed above attends to the antitheses of the Son's realities and the *communicatio idiomatum*.

CYRIL'S PARTITIVE READING STRATEGY

In the following survey of Cyril's Trinitarian literature, I consider several different examples where Cyril discusses his partitive reading rule predominantly in the *dial. Trin*. and one example from *thes.* and *Jo*.[23] Against the previous historical background, Cyril's partitive

[22] By "general," I imply that figures can assume the framework without using the two terms. And in the examples listed above, this premise holds true. Basil (*Eun.* 2.3) displays the two terms in relation to the other, but Origen, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nazianzus do not use the two terms even though the framework can be observed.

[23] Cyril's *Anathema* 4 and its repeating appearances in Cyril's later Christological literature serves as a quick example to show how partitive reasoning and single-Son Christology relate. Readers discern statements of Scripture *qua* divine and *qua* human, and each reading must uphold the *single prosopon* (*expl. xii cap.* 12–14). In one example, after quoting Phil 2:6 and commenting on the Son in the form of God, he comments on what is proper of the Son: "So all things pertain to him: those befitting God, and those of man" (*expl. xii cap.* 13). He then presents his partitive exegetical comments: "For this reason we apply all the sayings in the Gospels, the human ones as well as those befitting God, to one prosopon. We believe that Jesus Christ, that is the Word of God made man and made flesh, is but One Son" (*expl. xii cap.* 14). He limits the human expressions of the Son to the human nature, and he situates the divinely expressions to what is divine: "And so, even if he should speak in a human fashion, we relate these human things to the limitations of his manhood because, once again, that very human condition is his own. Yet, if he should discourse as God, believing him to be God made man, once again we attribute these sayings which are beyond the nature of man to one Christ and Son. But those who divide the single *prosopon* into two *prosopa*, must of absolute necessity posit two sons" (*expl. xii cap.* 14). He then situates how the Son has the two natures. The

framework overlaps with several of those previous themes. I unfold Cyril's partitive framework in the subsequent two sections. In one of the earliest examples in Cyril's Trinitarian literature, he combines the tripartite rule with θεολογία and οἰκονομία to provide a partitive reading. In this first section, I explore Cyril's use of θεολογία and οἰκονομία in relation to one another and then his peculiar use of *oikonomia with the flesh* to speak of the Son during a single season. Without repeating material from previous chapters, I highlight Cyril's use of a modified use of the *tripartite* rule to situate the Son in the proper season before considering the two-natured Son in the incarnation. In the second section, I highlight Cyril's clearest example of partitive exegesis from *dial. Trin.* in that there are two additional modes of speech about the Son "after he's been joined to the flesh." As a result, Cyril's theological discourse and scriptural exegesis display a marked nuance of οἰκονομία with the modifying terms μετὰ σαρκός that become a necessary way to describe the second season of the tri-seasonal framework. Before addressing the realities of the Son, Cyril first clarifies the epochal placement of the Son to discern what is proper for the *oikonomia with the flesh.* As will be seen in the examples below, especially from Cyril's *dial. Trin.*, a *hermeneutical taxis* emerges that considers the theological realities proper to the Son in his full career (three epochs) to situate the Son within the *oikonomia with the flesh* as a proper category to consider the metaphysical and activities of the Son.

A *Theologia-Oikonomia* Framework Overlapping with the Tripartite Rule

Cyril uses οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός to describe the single season of the incarnation. Cyril

Son possesses what is of God because of his generation from the Father, and he possesses all the human characteristics on account of the *oikonomia with the flesh* (*expl. xii cap.* 14). I too mention the *formula of reunion* in *ep.* 36.5: "As for the terms used about the Lord in the Gospels and apostolic writings, we recognize that theologians treat some as shared because they refer to one person, some they refer separately to two natures, traditionally teaching the application of the divine terms to Christ's Godhead, the lowly to his manhood." Later in Cyril's Christological literature, he displays a similar way to discuss this two-fold reading habit. "There are times when the Holy Scriptures speak of him as wholly a man while saying nothing about the divinity (because of the plan of salvation), and then there are also times when it speaks of him as God while saying nothing about the humanity. There is nothing misguided about this because the two have been conjoined into a unity" (*apol. Thds.* 29).

rarely uses θεολογία and οἰκονομία in relation to one another.[24] In *thes.* X, Cyril brings together θεολογία and οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός in relation to two of the tripartite terms (καιρός and πρᾶγμα). In *Jo.* 1:11, Cyril uses θεολογία and οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός once more near one another and more specifically to discern the true theology of the eternal Son and the *oikonomia* of the Son during the incarnation. I conclude this section by briefly considering *dial. Trin.* 5 where Cyril instructs how to assign what is divine and human to the proper actions during the *oikonomia.* In the two occasions where Cyril uses θεολογία and οἰκονομία, I continue the suggestion that it comprises some form of an exegetical rule.[25] That is, Cyril's brief use of θεολογία in relation to οἰκονομία

[24] Cyril uses the θεολογ- word group rather sparingly, and when used, it remains quite consistent across his literature. However, the phrase οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός is not only a favorite of Cyril's, but he uses the term with such frequency that he appears to develop a unique set of ideas within his Christological vision. This phrase certainly constitutes a favorite, and he uses the term far more than any other theologian in antiquity. A similar expression, οἰκονομία κατὰ σαρκός, occurs in Athanasius's *Ar.* II, 22 (PG 26:305). Athanasius uses this phrase to distinguish the proper reading of Prov 8:22 and uses the following three phrases a total of nine times: οἰκονομία ἐν τῇ σαρκί (*Ar.* II, 20 [PG 26:260]), οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός (*exp. Ps.* [PG 27:373, 377]), and οἰκονομία κατὰ σαρκός (*In illud* [PG 25:209]; *Ar.* II, 22 [PG 26:305]; *tom.* [PG 26:804]; *exp. Ps.* [PG 27:128, 245]). However, the authenticity of *exp. Ps.* is uncertain and may contain Cyrilline passages. And, Cyril's use of the phrase οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός is quite extensive, well beyond any other person in antiquity. John Chrysostom is the second figure to use an iteration of this phrase (11x). Reflecting more on the *theologia* and *oikonomia* distinction, Crawford is right when he distinguishes Cyril from different renditions of this framework. "It is not quite right to say that for Cyril 'theology' refers to 'reflection on God in his own being,' while 'economy' speaks of 'reflection on God's activity in the world.' This is to put the distinction much too abstractly and generically." Even if these terms are used in modern Trinitarian discussions, Cyril does not use *theologia* and *oikonomia* to map the distinctions between the "immanent" and "economic" Trinity. As Crawford continues, "Whereas in modern discussion, the terms 'theology' and 'economy' are distinguished on the basis of varying perspectives on Trinitarian reality, whether as God in Godself or as God in relation to the created realm, for Cyril the incarnation remains the fundamental point of reference. As a result, he is not concerned with how to relate the 'economic Trinity' to the 'immanent Trinity,' which is not surprising given that anxiety over these issues seems to be a peculiarly modern phenomenon." Ayres denotes how readers of early Christian literature *ought to be wary* of treating *theologia* and *oikonomia* as a synonymous way of describing the "immanent" and "economic" Trinity. As he says within a section on Basil's use of the term, he observes the post-Hegelian language: "This latter, modern and post-Hegelian language is frequently used to contrast modes of divine existence in ways alien to Basil's thought." See Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15, 15n18; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 220n102; Frances M. Young, "The 'Mind' of Scripture: Theological Readings of the Bible in the Fathers," *IJST* 7 (2005): 126–41.

[25] This idea counters Liébaert and is already noted by Boulnois. In *2 Cor.* 4:4, Cyril uses *theologia* and *oikonomia* as a way to interpret this text: "Paul speaks of the *theologia*, and he also clearly articulates the mystery of the *oikonomia* of the Only Begotten in the flesh." In *thes.* X (PG 75:121), and according to Crawford, Cyril distinguishes between *theologia* and *oikonomia* in a way that "functions primarily as a sort of exegetical rule, providing a way of distinguishing those passages which speak of Christ as God and those that refer to him only by virtue of his assumption of flesh." Boulnois suggest the following too: "Cyril thus distinguishes different moments in the discourse of Christ, who sometimes speaks of himself as of a man, according to the economy of the flesh, sometimes openly proclaims himself God." Jacques Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951), 161; Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection de Études

μετὰ σαρκός in the following examples constitutes as a scriptural rule to govern his partitive exegesis and serves to frame his theological concerns. He distinguishes how certain scriptural passages refer to the divine discourse and other features refer to the Son in the *oikonomia with the flesh*. These few examples display Cyril's partitive readings in a way to distinguish among Scripture texts that speak of Christ *qua* divine and eternally begotten of the Father, and Christ *qua* human as ascribed to the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Boulnois has already commented upon Cyril's use of *theologia* and *oikonomia*, and her observations are quite accurate.

> The opposition between economy and theology therefore covers the distinction between the words spoken by Christ as a man and those which are spoken as God; it does not aim to oppose on the one hand the plan of salvation in which God reveals himself to humanity, and on the other the field of intra-Trinitarian life where God is conceived in himself and for himself.[26]

I will build from her to connect these two examples to a more specific application of Cyril's partitive reading strategy and his use of οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός.

In the first example, Cyril comments upon the small phrase "Why do you call me good" from Mark 10:18 (cf. Luke 18:19). Cyril displays a few items in this example from *thes.* X. It is fitting for interpreters to consider the proper season (καιρός) and the reality (πρᾶγμα) appropriate for each season. While Cyril does not define these two terms just yet, we can observe the tripartite rule in relation to the use of θεολογία and οἰκονομία.[27] He distinguishes between what befits the Son because of his eternal origin to the Father and what befits his humanity because of the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

> Therefore, at each time (καιρῷ) and for each reality (πράγματι) let that which is fitting be maintained. On the one hand, let the discourse of theology (τῆς θεολογίας ὁ λόγος)

Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1994), 501–4; Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 14.

[26] Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 503.

[27] See chapters 2 and 3, where I explore the tripartite rule in more detail. Jacques Liébaert, "Saint-Cyrille d'Alexandrie et l'Arianisme: Les sources et la doctrine christologique du *Thesaurus* et des *Dialogues sur la Trinité*" (PhD thesis, Université catholique de Lille, 1948), 117.

> be meditated upon, not all as having to do with those [passages] in which he appears speaking as a man, but as having to do with the fact that he is from the Father, as Son and as God. On the other hand, it is to be ascribed to the economy with the flesh (τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τῇ μετὰ σαρκός) when he now and then says something that is not fitting to the bare divinity considered in itself. Therefore, when he, as a man, says that he is not good in the way that the Father is good, this should be referred rather to the economy with the flesh, and should have nothing to do with the substance of God the Son.[28]

When interpreters encounter Scripture texts, they are encouraged to discern between the *theologia* and *oikonomia with the flesh*. While Cyril often does not use the term *theologia* in his earlier three Trinitarian works, this general principle is present in his Trinitarian and exegetical framework. As he recalls the words of Jesus, "there is no one good but God," Cyril interprets this statement as not referring to the ontological divinity of the Son but as part of his encounter with humanity. It is worth noting that Cyril remains fixated upon the divine essence in this rule: (1) what befits divine substance and (2) what does not befit the divine substance. Cyril's use of *oikonomia with the flesh* assumes the Son during his incarnation, including his unifying two natures and activities of redemption. Part of Cyril's interpretive rule considers the portrayal of the Son and highlights how his actions, speech, and substance refer to either the *theologia* of divine substance or the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

In Cyril's second example, he uses the two terms to explain what the Evangelist appears to be doing in writing his Gospel.[29] The Evangelist enters a discussion about the Son in the *oikonomia with the flesh* and descends from a discussion of pure *theologia*.[30] "Very

[28] *thes.* X (PG 75:121); translation from Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 13.

[29] *Jo.* 1:11.

[30] In reading Cyril's comment in *Jo.* 1:11, Frances Young comments: "Here, then, Cyril attributes the classic distinction between θεολογία (reflection on God in his own Being) and οἰκονομία (reflection on God's activity in the world) to the Evangelist." This comment is not quite right. The use of οἰκονομία is not a reflection on "God's activity in the world" but οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός is an idiolectic phrase by Cyril to convey what is proper of the Son during the season of the flesh. These terms have frequently been mapped upon the modern Trinitarian categories of "immanent" and "economic" Trinity. And as should be obvious, Cyril certainly does not use these terms in how others in modern Trinitarian discourse have used iterations of these terms. For Cyril, the incarnation of the Son becomes a distinctive feature of the οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός. Whereas, as alluded to by Young, οἰκονομία is not a general way of describing God's activity in the world, but for Cyril, is a way to describe the realities proper of the Son during the season of the incarnation. Young, "The 'Mind' of Scripture," 132; Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 15n18.

appropriately he [the Evangelist] enters in a discussion of the incarnation, and little by little he comes down from sheer theology to an explanation of the *oikonomia with the flesh* which the Son accomplished for us."[31] Crawford rightly comments on this phrase to refer to a "major turning point" in the beginning part of Cyril's commentary.[32] After commenting on the eternal nature and relationship between Father and Son, Cyril discusses what is proper of the *oikonomia with the flesh*.[33] While the example from *thes*. X is a specific scriptural reading strategy, I suggest that Cyril's use of *theologia* and *oikonomia with the flesh* in *Jo.* 1:11 is both a reading strategy as well as a theological framework. This proper distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia* is a way to speak about the Son *qua* divine and *qua* human, while still upholding divine discourse of God *ad intra* and the plan of salvation in the Son's incarnation. The use of *theologia*, or pure theology, serves as a framework to refer to the eternal substance of God and is a marked contrast from speaking about the Son exclusively in the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

Cyril's partitive patterns occupy a few modes of reasoning. First, his two-nature exegesis is predicated upon looking at the proper "epoch" of the Son during the incarnation. To specify the metaphysical realities of the Son in this season, Cyril uses the phrase *oikonomia with the flesh*. For example, he will ensure that these comments about the Son are essentially fixed to the season of the incarnation. Second, while Cyril refrains from using *theologia* with any sense of regularity, he repeatedly appeals to the *oikonomia with the flesh* as a more proper category. However, Cyril certainly abides within a Trinitarian framework that assumes something akin to *theologia* as addressing the inner divine life of God. *Oikonomia with the flesh*, as a phrase, depicts the proper season of the incarnation and the realities of the Son during this

[31] *Jo.* 1:11.

[32] Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 15.

[33] Boulnois comments, "Cyril offers here a reflection on the order of sentences of the prologue to the Gospel of John by showing that he passes from an exposition of the Word as eternal and not yet mingled with the flesh to mention that he came to earth 'to his own'." The movement from eternal discourse about the Son eternal comprises the *theologia*, and then the discourse about his incarnation consists of the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 503.

season. It is a complex set of metaphysical realities and activities assumed in this term.[34] And third, Cyril's Christological vision highlights the immutability of the Son's divine nature and the human experiences proper to the Son's human nature. More specifically, Cyril provides his theological vision of the *communicatio idiomatum* as a theological precursor to make sense of his partitive readings.[35] While the single unitive Son occupies much of his vision, Cyril sharply distinguishes in his Trinitarian works what activities correspond to one of the two natures without creating a second *prosopon* (two natures and the single-subject Son).

Because the season of the incarnation is quite central to his partitive vision, Cyril uses the phrase *oikonomia with the flesh* with some regularity to describe the complexities of this season.[36] Per Cyril, *oikonomia with the flesh* is understood as a shorthand for a set of

[34] One such example will suffice. In *Jo*. 17:12–13, Cyril explores the two natures of the Son in relation to the Son ascending back to heaven. The two natures of the incarnate Son govern their respective activities. He comments on how the Son speaks of his two natures as proper for the *oikonomia with the flesh*: "After all, he could not do acts that are proper to God without being in his essence what we understand God to be. But again, he maintains a double sense in the statements about himself because of his *oikonomia with the flesh*."

[35] Boulnois regards the *communicatio idiomatum* to increase in Cyril's literature as he sees more clearly the threat of Arianism and sharpens his language. However, and with the case of the *dial. Trin.*, a concern for the temporal seasons (καιροί) serves the single-Son trope more specifically. According to Boulnois, the Arian use of the *communicatio* increased Cyril's more implicit concern for temporal divisions of the Son. "This attitude is probably explained by the desire to refute the argument of the Arians who were just supporting the 'communication of idioms' to prove that if the Word 'has progressed' (according to Lk 2, 52), it means that the Word is imperfect and not consubstantial with the Father. It is therefore in response to this use of the communication of idioms by Arians that Cyril increases the distinction of words as a function of time." If this premise is so, then it does provide a hypothesis as to why the tripartite rule falls out of extended use by Cyril after *Jo*. and yet he still provides partitive readings of Scripture texts. The audience and intended recipients provide boundaries for Cyril and his use of language. While I refrain from exploring the origins of Cyril's *communicatio*, I mention Siddals, who suggests Porphyry, *Isogogue* as a possible influence. See Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 92–94; Ruth Siddals, "Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria," *JTS* 38 (1987): 360.

[36] In the *dial. Trin.*, Cyril uses the phrase οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός 11 times: prol, 384; 4, 517; 4, 541 [2x]; 5, 583; title for *dial. Trin.* 6; 6, 601, 602, 606, 624 [2x]. This idiolectic phrase refers to the eternal Son who entered our condition (4, 517). The season of the Son's emptying displays the inferior condition of the Son (5, 583; 6, 602). Interpreters are to consider the *oikonomia with the flesh* to make sense of the Son as eternal and the properties that accompany the season of the flesh (4, 541; 6, 601, 606). Because the eternal Son becomes incarnate, interpreters may discern the properties that are not suitable to the divine nature to be applied to the Son by virtue of the *oikonomia with the flesh* (title for *dial. Trin.* 6; 6, 624). The properties of the Son during the mystery of the *oikonomia with the flesh* must be upheld to discern how the Son is conceived in an inferior manner and like humanity (6, 624). This phrase occurs with quite a bit of regularity in his *Jo*. To simply categorize Cyril's use of οἰκονομία and οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός, I summarize a few examples. The Son remains the same in this season even though he became human (*Jo.* 4:22). *Oikonomia with the flesh* is a way to describe what befits a human (*Jo.* 4:22) and to attribute the Son performing or being perceived as a human (*Jo.* 4:33–34; 11:41–42; 14:10). During this *oikonomia with the flesh*, the incarnate Son may speak and perform in ways befitting both for God and man (*Jo*. 5:19; 5:37–38; 6:11; 10:18; 13:10–11; 14:16–17). As the

assumptions to: (1) situate the eternal Son in the season of the incarnation, (2) convey the metaphysical realities proper for the Son in the season of the incarnation, (3) affirm the eternal immutability of the divine nature and the finite passible nature of humanity in a single subject proper for a delineated season,[37] (4) describe how the incarnate visible Son still relates to an eternal and invisible Father and Spirit, and (5) distinguish the incarnate Son's inferior nature and actions from what is suitable for God.[38] The phrase *oikonomia with the flesh* is most clearly matched to the season of the incarnation in the following example from *dial. Trin.* 6.

> The Lord always and in the origins of glory, having been deprived of glory in the meantime by descending to the human level, he returned to the glory from above which was in him and existed by nature, bestowing these suitable words to the emptying when he suffers in the *economy with the flesh* (τῇ μετὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομίᾳ). Is it not necessary therefore most of all to know the seasons (καιρούς) for him, those when he was of the flesh and those of the benefit of glory and those before when he dwells among those, being the Lord of glory, not receiving glory, but he is found having his own as God?[39]

He attributes certain language to what is proper to the Son for the *oikonomia with the flesh*, the season of this emptying, and to situate the *when* of the Son embodying the "passion of this flesh." If the *oikonomia with the flesh* is a prominent category to highlight "humanly things," then we can expect human experiences to accompany the time/season of the flesh. The inverse of this premise is likewise true. If the Son's *substance* is the same as the Father's *substance*, then when

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eternal Son becomes human, the mystery of the union between humanity and divinity comes together (*Jo.* 6:27; 10:18) and is not divided into two Sons (*Jo.* 8:12; 9:37).

[37] I highlight the passible qualities of the Son in relation to immutability based on Cyril's comment in *thes.* XXIV (PG 75:396): "And again if you hear that he wept and mourned and was terrified and began to be in affliction, consider that he was man while he was God, and you are to refer to manhood what belongs to it. For since he assumed a mortal and corruptible body, he was subject to such sufferings . . . together with the flesh he also appropriates sufferings." Cyril links together the themes of incarnation and *telos* of humanity as suffering. So, while being God during the incarnation, he was still susceptible to suffering.

[38] Cyril evokes this principle the clearest in *Heb.* 2:17–3:6: "You can see how he exalts the Word of God, who has come to be in the flesh and is seen to be in the form of a slave in the *oikonomia*, placing him above the level of humanity and the limits of our servile condition. . . . Therefore, even though Christ is a human being like one of us, we must separate out those attributes that he has only from the time of his birth in the flesh."

[39] *dial. Trin.* 6, 601de (SC 246:54).

the Son performs "divinely things," Cyril makes no total distinction because it is expected. The phrase, *oikonomia with the flesh*, serves Cyril's single-subject πρόσωπον. Cyril's partitive exegesis will assume how he perceives the *oikonomia with the flesh* and its temporal limits.

In a section from *dial. Trin.* 5, Cyril reads Scripture in a way to assign properties of divinity and humanity to the Son. During the *oikonomia with the flesh*, there are two modes of discourse to register how the two natures are proper to the Son. And, he describes how the eternal nature of the Son intersects with the *oikonomia* to discern why the Son is seen as inferior to the Father. For Cyril, the wise person perceives the proper way to travel and stays fixated upon the royal road. He describes for readers how to assign what is divine and human to the Son. By responding to Hermias's inquiry about John 20:17, Cyril envisions a virtuous wayfarer who travels upon the royal road discerning the properties of the Son appropriately.[40]

> When, therefore, there is something mentioned about the Son which is below the glory of God and does not surpass a nature subject to becoming, do not put it immediately in relation to the ineffable nature which comes from correspondence to the Father's own nature. But if it is through contemplation (ἴοι τῶν θεωρημάτων), then let the aim (ὁ σκοπός) be according to the current [of the road]. Do not assign the properties of divinity to humanity, nor attribute the pettiness of humanity to a nature which is above all, as if it had come to the strongest sense to be added to it. On the contrary, it is a good idea to draw a judicious and marked separation between the two. Like this and not otherwise you will be able to have a perfectly error-free view.[41]

If the Scriptures mention something about the Son that is below the glory of God and reflects one who is subject to becoming, then such ideas must not be applied to the ineffable nature of God. Furthermore, Cyril wards off an indiscriminate mixing of the nature-activity relationship. So, human qualities ought not to be applied to divine activities. If the properties of the Son's deity arise in a text, do not attribute the glory to the pettiness of humanity.

To display this pattern of speaking, Cyril quickly narrates the full career of the Son

[40] *dial. Trin.* 5, 570e (SC 237:338). Cyril asks the following question after quoting John 20:17: "What is it that makes him call God His Father?"

[41] *dial. Trin.* 5, 571bc (SC 237:340).

and how the two natures correspond to the economic activity of the Son in the flesh. "In the days of the flesh" (Heb 5:7–8) signals the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Alluding to Hebrews 1:3, Cyril describes the Son's divine, ineffable nature:

> The blessed Paul said of the Monogenes that he is the radiance of the glory and the imprint of the hypostasis of God the Father (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρός). Let your mind go on this point, allow him to go beyond all beings subjected to becoming to contemplate the divine beauty itself and to consider the ineffable generation, seeing as a mirror this mode of coming into existence, and bursts into praise.[42]

While the term θεολογία is not used, this concept is present. The Son is the radiance of the Father, and anything applicable to the divine nature is ascribed to the Son.[43] Then Cyril quotes Hebrews 5:7–8 to speak about the Son "in the days of his flesh" and considers the dimensions of his humanity.[44]

> And now he writes about him, "In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although being the Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:7–8). Then go down a little bit and put it in relation to the dimensions of humanity. The Father's imprint would not be dead, indeed. But since this supplication took place in the days of the flesh, it is to the flesh that fear will belong, to mankind, who will return to shiver before death.[45]

As the Son is described during the days of the flesh, Cyril seeks to uphold the Son's ineffable nature with the Father. What is spoken about regarding the divine qualities of the Son during the incarnation, it too depicts the Father's nature. But prayers, fear, and death correspond to

[42] *dial. Trin.* 5, 571c (SC 237:340).

[43] Regarding Heb 1:3, Cyril comments as follows: "Just as the Father is unchangeable and always remains what he is (namely, the Father and not the Son), so also the Son stays in his own position, always remaining the Son and never being changed into the Father, so that even in this respect he is shown to be the 'imprint' of the Father's hypostasis" (*Heb.* 1:3). Cyril then follows this comment by mentioning the two phrases from the Nicene Creed ("true God from true God" and "light from light") to signify that the Father is the source of the Son as God from God.

[44] *dial. Trin.* 5, 571c (SC 237:340).

[45] *dial. Trin.* 5, 571de (SC 237:340–42).

what is human by nature. So, it is proper to identify what activities can be ascribed to the proper nature of the Son during this season.

The *communicatio idiomatum* serves as a way for Cyril to present his Christological vision of the incarnate Son. As the Son is brought low in the incarnation, he does not divest what belongs to the divine nature.[46] Even as the Son is manifested as a human and having emptied himself, the Son neither loses what he was nor diminishes the nature of humanity.[47] While the Son was poor, he still was God. While the Son experienced death, he is still God by nature. In his incarnation, the Son lowered himself spatially and dwelled with humanity but without divesting what he was nor disdaining the dimensions of humanity.[48] He became poor, being reckoned under the law, and suffered death "according to the flesh" and not the divine nature.[49] In this way, the Son hears both Psalm 2:7 (cf. Heb 1:5) and Psalm 109:1 LXX (110:1) concerning his natures: "So he hears as a human, all the while being God by nature and the Son, 'I have begotten you this day,' and 'Sit at my right until I place your enemies as a footstool for

[46] Cyril raises a similar question in *schol. inc.* 5: "Why God the Word is said to have been emptied out." If the Son is the eternal God and "full" in his own nature, what does it mean to have "emptied himself"? The Son is just like the Father, his Begetter, in that his nature is "unalterable and immutable, and was never capable of any passibility." If the eternal Son is all that the Father is in his nature, what happened to the Son during the *oikonomia*? Cyril notes that the Son appropriated the "poverty of humanity" to himself. Cyril offers a list of antitheses that correspond to the *communicatio idiomatum*: though he became man, he remained God; though he took the form of a servant, he was still free in his nature; though received glory, he is himself the Lord of glory; though he was brought back to life, he is life himself; though he received dominion, he is King of all; though he endured suffering on the cross, he is equal to the Father. And Cyril concludes by affirming the *oikonomia* of the Son and his divine immutability: "Because all these things were part and parcel of the human condition, he adopted them as being implied along with the flesh, and so he fulfilled the economy, though always remaining what he was." And in *hom. pasch.* 17.2 (also see 27.4), he claims the Son does not cease to be what he is as God when he becomes human: "For the Only-Begotten Word of God did not become a human being in order to cease being God, but rather in order that, even in assuming flesh, he might preserve the glory of his own pre-eminence."

[47] *dial. Trin.* 5, 572a (SC 237:342): "But when he manifested himself as a man, lowering himself to the emptying and the form of being a slave, he was with us and below God, without losing what he was, but without disdaining the dimensions of humanity. He became poor with us, rich because he was as God. That is why he was reckoned under the law, even among slaves and outlaws, and even suffered death according to the flesh. But necessarily being the true God by nature, who did not possess this glory as something added to him, was not to linger within the limits of the emptying, he had to return with the form he had assumed to the honors from above, having been present in him from the beginning as his property."

[48] *dial. Trin.* 5, 572a (SC 237:342).

[49] *dial. Trin.* 5, 572a (SC 237:342).

your feet.'"[50] According to Cyril's rule, he refrains from ascribing human activities to the eternal divine nature, and the Son hears these two comments from the Father in the season of the incarnation as a human. It is this mystery that Cyril labels as the *oikonomia*.[51]

Two Ways of Speaking
"after he's been united to the flesh"

Cyril's clearest partitive exegetical rule appears in *dial. Trin.* 1, 396–98. "The one whom we regard as truly venerable and very wise, Paul, or rather the entire choir of saints, has known and introduced to us two ways of speaking about the Son after he has been united to the flesh, that is to say, that he became like us all, except only sin."[52] For Cyril, this partitive reading strategy is already patterned after the scriptural authors and the "choir of saints," essentially minimizing claims to exegetical creativity. After the Son has become incarnate, Cyril describes this two-fold pattern of speaking about the Son. As the description unfolds, the two ways of reading correspond to the Son as seen in the flesh: the Monogenes without the limits of creation and the Monogenes in the form of a servant.

This reading rule arises as Cyril responds to Hermias's Christological vision. Hermias displays a three-tiered model in which the Son is inferior to God the Father and still superior to creation. As Hermias initially contends, the Son is not consubstantial with the

[50] *dial. Trin.* 5, 572b (SC 237:342). In *hom. pasch.* 17.2, Cyril interprets "this day I have begotten you" to refer to the human generation of the Son in the *oikonomia*. Even though the Son is eternally generated, "this day" corresponds to when he was brought forth of a human: "And the one who before every age and time possesses that birth which is from God who is also Father, the birth that is beyond all mind and understanding: when he became flesh and endured human generation in the economy—he, the Maker and Artisan of all time, as though he had been brought to a beginning of existence when he became as we are—he heard the Father saying, 'This day I have begotten you' (Ps 2:7; Luke 3:22; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5)." Then Cyril notes that the Son hears the Father say, "sit at my right hand" (Ps 110:1) "when he was with the flesh."

[51] *dial. Trin.* 5, 572d (SC 237:344): "Let us suppose, however, that they do not act in this way, but cling to each other and continue to say that the Father is really the God of the Son, even without intervening the economy, by virtue of which he has called the Father his God. How can we not feel obliged to tell them that we would not accept them absolutely as legislators and arbitrators, to think or speak as they please, that it is better to attribute to us the truthfulness of the words of the Savior?"

[52] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396e–97a (SC 231:162).

Father but is below his ineffable nature.

> They say that he is not consubstantial with God the Father, and he makes him descend, I do not know how, below the ineffable nature, but while retaining some superiority over his creation. He is not, they say, of the same nature as the beings that have been made, he occupies a kind of average situation, in other words, he goes beyond the frame of nature, but he is also not in absolute continuity and by virtue of nature with the one who begot him, while neither going all the way down, that is, among the creatures.[53]

Cyril criticizes Hermias's three-tier Christological model. Hermias affirms that the Son is not consubstantial with God but is still superior to creation. As his retort unfolds, Cyril regards the Son as either subject to becoming or according to the nature of God. For Cyril, the Son cannot be in this middle category whereby he is inferior to the Father but not subject to becoming.

> Thus, if they decided to speak clearly and openly of the nature of the Son, they would doubtless say, though blushing, that he is neither God by nature, nor is he subject to becoming. If, in fact, he is excluded from the substance of God the Father, while superior by nature to beings subject to becoming, he is certainly deprived of the true divinity and I do not see how he will avoid being counted among the creatures.[54]

Suppose the Son is not subject to becoming like creation and not consubstantial with the Father; in that case, another problem certainly arises: the Son is deprived of true deity and is a second deity.

Cyril responds to Hermias by detailing an exegetical rule about how to speak of the Son. Especially in this example, Cyril combines two kinds of rules: speak about the Son in his proper season and speak about the Son in two ways during his incarnation. This two-fold Christological vision anchors Cyril's partitive vision.

> The one whom we regard as truly venerable and very wise, Paul, or rather the entire choir of saints, has known and introduced to us two ways of speaking about the Son after he has been united to the flesh, that is to say, that he became like us all, except

[53] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396bc (SC 231:160–62).

[54] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396d (SC 231:162).

> only sin. That is why they have woven for us an initiation with multiple facets. Sometimes they present the Monogenes still naked (ἔτι γυμνόν), apart from the limits of the creation, not implied in the nature which is ours, sometimes on the contrary almost concealed in the shadow of the form of a slave, possessing nevertheless and firmly attaching the goods which suit his own nature, authentically adorned with the honors of divinity.[55]

The scriptural vision supplies the partitive rule for Cyril so that partitive exegesis may be considered less of exegetical creativity and more of following a two-tiered Christological model from the Scriptures and the model provided by the "choir." Even though a similar idea appeared in chapter 1, Cyril's use of "choir of saints" is a component of Cyril's exegesis as a commitment to the Nicene Creed. Especially in this example, to read like Paul and then in accordance with the "choir of saints" situates Cyril's self-perceived reading habits. He downplays creativity and ties himself to several predecessors. Earlier in *dial. Trin.* 1, Cyril situates himself as advocating the Nicene vision by stating that he aims "to have no other ideas than these, not to express verbally, rather to follow the verdict and the words which the Spirit has revealed."[56] The relationship between Scripture and creedal confessions in Cyril's thought life remains quite close. Given his commitments to the divine Synod and Athanasius, the "entire choir of saints" could very well refer to the divinely led people who formulated the Nicene expression.[57]

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[55] *dial. Trin.* 1, 396e–97a (SC 231:162).

[56] *dial. Trin.* 1, 390b (SC 231:144).

[57] Cyril's self-perception of his theological project centers upon the Nicene *formula*. He aims not to deviate from it and to follow it "in every way." In *ep.* 17.7, Cyril quotes the Nicene Creed and then follows it with this immediate confession: "following in every way the confessions of the holy Fathers, which they made by the Holy Spirit speaking in them, and following meaning of the thoughts in them, and, as it were, going along a royal road." Furthermore, Cyril perceives the work of the Spirit to be involved in the formation of the theological confession. This divine sentiment is similar to what Cyril claims to do in *dial. Trin.* 1, 390b (SC 231:144) regarding Nicaea (also see *ep.* 55). In *ep.* 1.5–10, Cyril comments on the value of Athanasius and the accuracy of his teachings. Of him, he says: "Athanasius, therefore is a man worthy of trust and deserving of confidence, since he did not say anything which is not in agreement with the Holy Scripture. For how would so brilliant and celebrated a man stray from the truth, one who was so admired by all even in that holy and great council, I mean the one at Nicaea, which was assembled in critical times" (*ep.* 1.9). Regarding the *Theotokos*, he reveals the combined set of sources for his theological formulation: Scripture and the Council: "Since it is likely that some think it necessary for us to confirm our statement concerning this matter from the holy and divinely inspired Scripture itself and assert besides that the holy and great council mentioned above. . . . Come now, let us show as far as possible in what way the mystery of the economy of salvation devised by Christ has been announced to us by Holy Scripture. Then, also, what the Fathers themselves have spoken who set forth the standard of blameless faith, since the Holy Spirit taught them

Now, the reader must discern the two ways in which the incarnate Son is described. Either the Son is displayed as the Monogenes without the limitations of humanity, or the Son is veiled in the shadow of a servant. But in either case, Cyril ensures a consistent Christological vision of the divine Son across the multiple epochs. So, in the incarnation, there are two ways to speak of the Son; but for the full career of the Son, there are three temporal divisions. And these temporal divisions do not affect the Son's consubstantial divine nature. "He is indeed always the same as himself and he does not know what it is to suffer the shadow of a change or an alteration. The inspired revealer says, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever' (Heb 13:8)."[58] To quote Hebrews 13:8, Cyril anchors the immutable divine nature across all three epochs of the Son.[59]

Virtuous readers ought to discern in the Scriptures this two-fold way of reading. The partitive reading *habitus* envisioned by Cyril includes the virtuous life to be able to see this

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the truth" (*ep.* 1.10). Cyril, once more, joins together Nicaea and the voice of Athanasius in *ep.* 39.7. He even goes so far to say of the creedal formulation that no one should change the Creed: "Nor, indeed, do we allow, either by us or by others, either a word to be changed in it or a single syllable to be omitted . . . for they were not speaking, but the very Spirit of God the Father which proceeds from him and is not someone else's than the Son's by reason of his substance." In *ep.* 40.3 to Acacius of Melitene, Cyril perceives his theological exposition to cohere with the Nicene faith: "perverting absolutely nothing of the things determined there, for everything in it is correct and untouchable, and, after the definition, it was not safe to meddle still." A little further into the same letter, Cyril reflects on the relationship between Scripture and the Nicene formula: "For the divinely inspired Scripture and the vigilance of our holy Fathers and the Creed formulated by those where are in every way orthodox are sufficient for us" (*ep.* 40.7). To provide one example of this two-fold commitment to Athanasius and a Nicene vision, I refer to *appendix 2* in FC 77 (*ACO* 1.1.7, pg. 146): "We abide by the faith of the holy Fathers who assembled at Nicaea, which has the evangelical and apostolic teaching and does not need addition. The most holy and most blessed Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria and confessor . . . [in letter to Epictetus] . . . makes its thought clear." In *appendix 3* in FC 77 (*ACO* 1.1.7, pg. 151–52), Cyril claims that Athanasius's material can solve all controversies because his literature is correct, trustworthy, and a proper interpreter of the faith set forth at Nicaea.

[58] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397b (SC 231:164).

[59] In *Heb.*, Cyril displays a more focused reading of Heb 13:8. He presents divine immutability along with a few comments about the Son's relation to time. But first, he begins with partitive distinctions: "Some passages are fitting for God, such as, 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me' (John 14:10). Others are fitting for a man, such as 'But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth' (John 8:40). Others are in the middle, and this is one of them. It says that Christ is 'yesterday and today and forever'." From this passage, the Son "has an unchangeable and unalterable nature," because "he alone is by nature what the Father is, save only that he is not the Father." Then, Cyril offers two different interpretations for the temporal adverbs. First, as is the case in *dial. Trin.*, the three temporal adverbs refer to past, present, and future time. And, second, Cyril raises a question that enquires about the Son assuming "yesterday and today" while being eternal (i.e., "forever"). And again, Cyril offers a partitive reading of these temporal categories: "Clearly, Jesus Christ is 'yesterday and today' in a bodily way, and he is 'forever' in a spiritual way."

partitive distinction.

> Consider with what lack of common sense they let themselves be guided by their good pleasure, without weighing or examining what passages of Scripture are to relate to the Word naked (γυμνῷ τῷ Λόγῳ)—that is to say, in his real and ideal state before the incarnation—and what others relate to him when he has already taken on our likeness. But perhaps they do not think it is necessary to take any account of it and to welcome everything into the Scriptures at random and without scrutinizing it.[60]

Some texts address the Son as is and in his ideal state before the incarnation. Other texts display the Son in the likeness of humanity. And, while during the incarnation, the Son displays both the eternal properties of God and the finite properties of humanity.

> Let them tell us, please, what prevents them, even if it is said that he was eating, or was sleeping, or could not advance without difficulty—because he was tired by walking—or, better than all that, when one speaks of his death, of confessing that the Word of God needs food, is accessible to pain and weakness, and even that he has fallen prey to death. Is the distinction between these texts, therefore, quite necessary for us, in our opinion, the one which separates and discerns what is appropriate for each season (τὸ ἑχάστῳ πρέπον καιρῷ)?[61]

Some Scripture texts describe the Son in ways that depict his human frailty. To eat, sleep, and experience fatigue and even death influence how one perceives the Son.[62] For Cyril, these experiences all convey the Son's human experiences while not nullifying the Son's eternal consubstantial nature. But for Cyril, epochal categories properly situate his partitive exegetical strategy. One must discern the proper season of the Son to situate interpretative grammar about the Son—partitive readings require the Son to be in the incarnate season.

To display this epochal and partitive reading strategy, Cyril uses Hebrews 1:3, 4:12–

[60] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397cd (SC 231:164).

[61] *dial. Trin.* 1, 397de (SC 231:164).

[62] Cyril situates the hunger, thirst, fatigue, and death in relation to the *oikonomia*, even though the Son is God by nature: "For example, he is said to hunger and thirst and grow weary and indeed die according to the *oikonomia*. However, he 'lives by the power of God.' And he did not receive the power to do all things from someone else, but he had it on his own and it was in him essentially. For he who suffered in the flesh for us is God by nature" (*2 Cor.* 13:3–4).

13, and 5:7–8. Both Hebrews 1:3 and 4:12–13 correspond to the eternal nature of the Son. Since "in the days of his flesh" occurs in 5:7–8, readers must determine the proper season of the incarnation to address the two natures of the Son. Accordingly, there are two ways of speaking about the Son "in the days of his flesh."

> To consider only the signified in the two cases, is there not decidedly internal conflict in the nature of the facts? The resplendent glory of God the Father, the imprint for us of the divine hypostasis (ὁ τῆς θείας ὑμῖν ὑποστάσεως χαρακτήρ), the one who supports the universe by his powerful word, the living Word, effective and very incisive, we are told that he has resigned himself to imploring and supplicating, all in tears, to be removed from the assaults of death. But, he says, "in the days of his flesh," that is when the Word was God, he became flesh, according to the Scriptures, but did not come into a man, as in the case of the saints in whom he lives by participation, as what the Holy Spirit says. There are therefore two ways of speaking about the Son.[63]

Cyril's vision of the *communicatio idiomatum* attends to the dual-antithetical expressions of the Son in the incarnation, not simply as forms of speech but actual realities of the Son during the *oikonomia with the flesh*.[64] In this specific example, the two modes of discourse about the Son describe the dual-antithetical realities of the Son "in the days of his flesh," that is, the *oikonomia*. If the *communicatio* is a way to discern the two properties, how do the two properties relate to

[63] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398b–d (SC 231:166).

[64] The *communicatio idiomatum* is a Christological category that seeks to discern how the two properties of divinity and humanity are predicated to the person of Christ. This category of Christological thought intersects with the following question: how is it that God the Son subsists as a human being, with a human nature, and retains all the divine prerogatives of his eternal nature? I take my first two cues from Oliver Crisp, who defines the *communicatio*, and then Timothy Pawl who nudges the clarity of the definition one further step. Crisp defines the *communicatio* as follows: "the attribution of the properties of each of the natures of Christ to the person of Christ, such that the theanthropic *person* of Christ is treated as having divine and human attributes at one and the same time, yet without predicating attributes of one nature that properly belong to the other nature in the hypostatic union, without transference of properties between the natures and without confusing or commingling the two natures of Christ or the generation of a *tertium quid*." Timothy Pawl presses the categories of how the properties related to the natures or to the person. "The human nature (that hylomorphic compound) bears accidents, and in virtue of bearing those accidents, Christ (the Second Person of the Trinity) is aptly characterized by the predicates relevant to those things playing the property role, provided that person would be so characterized were the instance of nature possession of a typical instance of nature possession." See Oliver D. Crisp, *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 7–8; Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 63; Petr Gallus, *The Perspective of Resurrection: A Trinitarian Christology*, Religion in Philosophy and Theology 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 89–99 (esp. 96).

one another in the single subject? And additionally, if the description of the two properties is predicated to the person, is the *communicatio* conceived only *verbaliter*, or is this mode of predication *realiter*? In other words, are the seemingly opposite and antithetical properties and activities of the incarnate Son an *actual reality* proper for the ontology of the person of the Son or a *mode of speech* to describe the antithetical properties and activities? For our present study, it is more proper to comment upon how Cyril perceives the *communicatio idiomatum*. To these categories and questions briefly raised, I *perceive* Cyril to describe the two properties of the Son as *actual reality* and proper to the πρᾶγμα of the single-subject Son. The divine nature remains immutable, impassible, and all the divine properties that describe the Son even in the incarnation can still describe the properties of the eternal Father. The human nature, moreover, comes into relationship with the divine nature and is affected by, redeemed through, and restored in the divine nature.[65]

[65] Simply observed, there is no work yet produced on the full Christological vision of Cyril's *communicatio idiomatum*, and these few examples are aimed to describe a cursory vision. In *ep.* 17.6–7, Cyril reflects upon the Nicene *formula* and then provides a reading of its contents. Of the Son, he writes: "That is, taking flesh from the Holy Virgin and making it his very own from his mother, he underwent a human birth and came forth as man from a woman. This did not mean he abandoned what he was, for even when he came as man in the assumption of flesh and blood even so he remained what he was, that is God in nature and in truth. We do not say that the flesh was changed into the nature of Godhead, nor indeed that the ineffable nature of God the Word was converted into the nature of flesh, for he is entirely unchangeable and immutable, and in accordance with the Scriptures he abides ever the same. Even when he is seen as a baby in swaddling bands still at the breast of the Virgin who bore him, even so as God he filled the whole creation and was enthroned with the Father, because deity is without quantity or size and accepts no limitations." Cyril further discusses these concepts in *Anathema* 4, 5, and 12 (see the end of *ep.* 17 for the 12 anathema propositions). And in his further explanation of his *Anathema* 4 to Theodoret, he writes: "Without a moment's hesitation I would say that all human characteristics are of little worth next to the Word that was begotten of God. . . . For God the Word, who has no knowledge or experience of change, to empty himself means precisely to do and to say something characteristically human, on account of his saving convergence with flesh. Of course, even though he became a man, the logic of this mysterious process absolutely does not imply that any damage would have been done to his own nature. He both remained what he was and also came down into humanity for the salvation and life of the world. . . . Neither do we allow his human characteristics to belittle his divine nature and glory, nor do we disown the plan of salvation. Rather, we believe that the incarnation that was for our sakes is to be predicated of the Word himself" (*apol. Thdt.* 4). For more on the *communicatio* and Cyril's Christology, see Andrew M. McGinnis, *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh: A Historical and Theological Study of the Extra Calvinisticum*, T&T Studies in Systematic Theology 29 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 15–45; Vasilije Vranic, *The Constancy and Development in the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrhus*, VCSup 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 144–45, 196–201; Thomas G. Weinandy, "Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 46–53; Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology*, VCSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 218–24; Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Scotland: T&T Clark, 2000), 182–206;

If readers do not first discern the epochal station of the Son, then there is a conflict. But to ward off error-ridden readings, readers have two ways of speaking about the Son during the days of the incarnation. These two ways are to describe what is proper to the two natures of the incarnate Son.

> We must therefore attribute to him what is of God, as to God, and as to him who has become as we are, what is what we are, that is, what is human. As for the unorganized and indiscriminate mixture of realities, it is necessary to refuse it altogether, it eludes the exact and thoughtful comprehension of notions, and more than half undermines the beauty of truth.[66]

When texts address the incarnate Son, readers must demonstrate considerable effort to distinguish what activities are the product of his divine nature and what activities are the product of his human nature. Yet, even in doing so, Cyril still upholds the unity of the Son in that there is "an indiscriminate mixture of realities" (τὴν δὲ ἄρρυθμόν τε καὶ οὐκ εὐκρινῆ τῶν πραγμάτων). For Cyril, not to discriminate this process creates a confused mixture of ideas in the Son. To discriminate between the two natures of the Son in the incarnation helps to discern the scriptural language of the single-subject Son.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

By looking predominantly at his Trinitarian volumes, I consider how Cyril's partitive vision is situated within his theological and exegetical framework: θεολογία and οἰκονομία with

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Georges Jouassard, "Saint Cyrille d'Alexendrie aux prises avec la 'communications des idioms' avant 428 dans ses ouvrages Anti-arien," StPatr 6 (1962): 112–21.

[66] *dial. Trin.* 1, 398d (SC 231:166). While Cyril's idea here will be further refined (see *Letter to Monks of Egypt*, *ep.* 1.21), he addresses how the properties of the Son mix together and not as a mixed nature. As McGuckin notes, "The Antiochenes accused Cyril on this point—of mixing up the natures indiscriminately. When he does use the word, in this instance, note how he refers to the propria: he is not teaching a mixed nature but rather shared characteristics: the doctrine of the 'communicatio idiomatum' or exchange of properties." In *ep.* 1, which was part of initiating the Nestorian controversy, Cyril comments as follows: "For a living being is born, as I said, skillfully composed of unlike principles, from two, indeed, but one man results, each principle remaining that which it is, both brought together as if into one natural unity and so joined with each other that each communicates to the other what is proper to itself." John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, VCSup 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 252n3.

μετὰ σαρκός, and the tri-seasonal epochal structure. Cyril's partitive exegesis is specifically sensitive to the season of the incarnation and offers two additional ways of reading Christological texts *qua* divine and *qua* human during the season of the incarnation. While this partitive exegesis occupies much of early Christian theological discourse, a few summary items will prove to be helpful. First, Cyril is situated within the currents of partitive exegesis. From the inception of Christian theology, the *communicatio idiomatum*, as partitive theological reasoning, coincides with partitive exegesis as a reading strategy. Also, while the terms are not mentioned each time, many early Christian theologians use something akin to a *theologia-oikonomia* framework to support their partitive exegesis.

Second, when we consult examples from Cyril's literature, we observe that Cyril utilizes a two-fold framework to situate his partitive exegesis. Whereas Cyril minimally uses θεολογία, the phrase οἰκονομία μετὰ σαρκός permeates his early Trinitarian literature to situate the temporal moments within the season of the incarnation of the Son during not just the *oikonomia* in general but the specific season of the incarnation. Third, Cyril's partitive exegesis provides a way to read Christological texts about the Son during his incarnation. He notes that there are two ways of reading Christological texts within an epochal framework after the single Son has been united with the flesh: *qua* divine and *qua* human.

5

Trinitarian Discourse and Partitive Exegesis

Of all the chapters thus far, in this chapter I discuss Cyril's Trinitarian theology the most as it relates to his partitive exegesis. This reading strategy is used by Cyril to focus upon the Son's two natures and how the single Son subsists with his two natures during the incarnation. What theological items are upheld by and prompt his partitive reading *habitus*? This question considers how Cyril's theology informs this reading strategy and what theological ideas result from his reading habits. Christ is the subject of Cyril's exegetical reasoning, and yet, as he reads, he envisions the full Trinitarian divine life. In this way, partitive exegesis, for Cyril, is Christological in focus and considers how the Son is situated in the divine life and the complexities related to his incarnation.

While Cyril's partitive readings focus quite obviously upon the two-natured Christ, he situates his readings of Scripture and theological reasoning of the Son also in relation to the Father and the Spirit. As the Son relates to the Father, Cyril underscores the divine immutability of the divine nature, eternal activities proper for the Father, and even though, during the incarnation, the divine Son's nature is still all that is proper to the Father because of the Son's eternal begottenness. As the Son relates to the Spirit, Cyril underscores both natures of the Son incarnate in relation to the Spirit's activities. As Cyril observes, the Spirit, who proceeds from the eternal divine nature from the Father and the Son, falls upon the Son, sanctifies the Son, and vivifies the Son. The Spirit performs such actions with the Son *qua* human, even though the Son eternally shares the divine properties with the Spirit.

Cyril uses partitive exegesis to depict all that is proper to the Son's human

experiences: being created, needing the Spirit, being sanctified, worshipping the Father, and being given life to resurrect from the dead. As a result, properly navigating Cyril's *communicatio idiomatum* is essential for his exegetical discourse.[1] While the Son is the eternal divine Son, he too is the human Son. And, while being the finitely created Son, he too is the eternal divine Son. These antitheses are not meant to diminish the Son *qua* divine or overshadow the experiences of the Son *qua* human; and, the dual antitheses are true realities during the *oikonomia with the flesh* and not simply forms of speech. The entire assumption of the flesh in this season is for the salvation and transformation of what constitutes humanity. Cyril, thusly, pairs his partitive reading strategy with his theological vision of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

THE TRINITARIAN DIVINE LIFE AND THE SON'S INCARNATION

Cyril's exegesis is a way to discern how he uses the Scriptures to convey his pro-Nicene Trinitarian vision. His exegesis reveals, more so, the theological vision that is served by this reading strategy. The consubstantial and immutable relationship between the Father and

[1] Cyril's *communicatio idiomatum* is displayed quite clearly in *ep*. 4.5: "Thus, we say that he also suffered and rose again, not that the Word of God suffered in his own nature, or received blows, or was pierced, or received the other wounds, for the divine cannot suffer since it is incorporeal. But since his own body, which had been born, suffered these things, he himself is said to have suffered them for our sake. For he was the one, incapable of suffering, in the body which suffered. In the same fashion, we also think of his death. For the Word of God is immortal by nature and incorruptible, being both life and life-giving. But because by the grace of God his own body tasted death for all, as Paul says (see Heb 2:9), he himself is said to have suffered death for our sake. As far as the nature of the Word was concerned, he did not experience death, for it would be madness to say or think that, but, as I said, his flesh tasted death." In this single example, Cyril's theological reasoning is met with a partitive reading of Heb 2:9 to ensure that the impassible Son suffered death only and exclusively *qua* human. The Word of God is impassible, and yet, the Word of God tasted death *qua* human during the incarnation. Cyril's defense in *Anathema* 12 links together both partitive readings of Scripture and a defense of the *impassible* Word: "For he made the passible body his very own, the result of which is that one can say that he suffered by means of something naturally passible, even while he himself remains impassible in respect of his own nature; and since he willingly suffered in the flesh, for this very reason he is called, and actually is, the Savior of all. It is just as Paul says, 'By the grace of God he tasted death on behalf of all' (Heb 2:9). The divinely inspired Peter will testify to the same thing, rightly saying, 'since Christ suffered for us' (1 Pet 4:1), not in his divine nature, but in his flesh. . . . Surely it was because he took personal ownership of the sufferings that pertained to his own flesh. . . . Therefore, let them predicate all these things of him and confess that God the Word is the Savior who remains impassible in his divine nature while also suffering in the flesh, just as Peter said" (*apol. Thdt.* 12). In these two examples from Cyril, the *communicatio* and partitive reading techniques merge. God the Son suffers death; but as Cyril further clarifies his theological reasoning, death is *qua* human. And, his scriptural reasoning reflects this *qua* divine and *qua* human distinction.

Son come to the fore. And by assuming a pro-Nicene vision of eternal generation, Cyril's reading habits underscore his pattern of commitment to the Father-Son eternal relationship. As part of upholding the divine eternal relation of the Son, Cyril comments upon the eternal Fatherhood of God. If the Son is of the Father, then what the Father is by nature, so is the Son. And yet, Cyril inverts this line of reasoning. If the Son is of the Father, then what the Son is by nature, so is the Father.

The "Head of" to Convey Origin and *X of X* Relations

How can the Son be the head of Adam and have the Father as his head without having some sense of subordination? More so, how can the Son be considered the head of man and still be God, true God, and have an identity of nature with God the Father? Cyril uses 1 Corinthians 11:3 as a proof-text to support a union of substance between the Son and Father and the topic of origins.

> So, a sacred text once again recommends us to safeguard a union as to the substance between the Son and the Father. Here is what he says, "For every man," it says, "Christ is the head, man is head of the woman, God is the head of Christ" (1 Cor 11:3). By which he indicates, I think, the authenticity of the substance and the fact that the Son has truly sprung from it.[2]

The Son is generated by the Father and assumes all that he is. The Son in his humanity serves as the archetype for humanity. However, Hermias observes something quite different. The Son is head of man and therefore is counted among creatures and thus it becomes problematic for the Son to be of the same nature with the Father. Cyril's interpretation of "head of" corresponds to generation and conveys the natures of the Son as both of God and of humanity. The phrase "head of" communicates an *X of X* relationship and the source of the derived object. As the Father is "head of" the Son, this formula conveys the eternal origins and derived nature from

[2] *dial. Trin.* 3, 499cd (SC 237:122).

the head. As the Son is "head of" humanity, the origins of humanity have the Son as the archetype.[3] So, when the Scriptures mention the Son, readers must discern one of the two natures depicted in the Son as he relates to the "head of" phrase.

Hermias, who offers a first attempt at interpreting 1 Corinthians 11:3, fails to discern a two-nature Christology. Essentially, he begins with human relations and affirms the similarity of nature and substance between men and women.[4] To have Christ as the head of humanity, explains Hermias, the Son is now among the nature of humanity.

> Christ is called the head of man. It is evident that a relation of nature puts him in relation with the creatures, just as in the case of the man with the woman. How can one still say that he is God, and true God, or how could he have an identity of nature with God the Father, who is cataloged among creatures, even if he is attributed to the role of head?[5]

This line of reasoning poses a rather troubling problem. For, how is the Son also in relation to the Father if he is of the same kind as humanity?

Cyril begins his argument by criticizing the blasphemy of Hermias. He highlights the position of his interlocutors: the Son as a creature derives his generation from the Father. Cyril affirms part of this premise in that the Son is considered human but not generated from the Father as a creature.

> Christ has been called "the head of man" because he is conjoined to him by a relation of nature, I will not deny, certainly, this perfectly correct statement. But it is God who

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[3] As Cyril comments on this passage in *1 Cor.*, he conveys similar theological reasoning. The "head of" category serves as the archetype model for the intended object: "By 'head' he means here the archetypal beauty. Each of the aforementioned people, enriched by that image, may rightly be understood to share in that essential nobility, or to put it another way, they share in the same nature." As he comments about the Son, he maintains the two-fold nature of *as of God* and *as of humanity*: "As God, he is the archetype, but by the law of our nature, he is also the same as us since he became a human being, even though the Word is God and has an ineffable birth from God the Father" (*1 Cor.* 11:3).

[4] *dial. Trin.* 3, 499e (SC 237:124). According to Hermias, "the man is the head of the woman, they say, because of his similarity in nature and his identity of substance with her, although one can doubtless think that his part is better, since a head is a precious thing and valuable in glory for the body."

[5] *dial. Trin.* 3, 499e–500a (SC 237:124).

> is given for the sake of Christ. Then, brave people, could we tell them, what is the obstacle that prevents us from thinking this: the Son is of the same race as the creatures, since he is called "head of man"?[6]

Cyril affirms with complete confidence that Christ is head of man because of his relation to humanity as a human. However, if the Son is a human, and the Son is of God, then must we affirm the Father as subject to becoming? In relation to God, the Son's humanity is not of God, otherwise one must affirm the Father's nature is also subject to becoming. To be "head of" corresponds to a relation of nature. First Corinthians 11 is a means to describe the full *essence* of the Son who originates from the Father (*X of X*) and who serves as the head of humanity (*X of X*).[7]

That the man is head of the woman corresponds to her origin—she originally came from man, referring to Genesis 2. Furthermore, that Christ is head of man highlights the Son as the second Adam and first fruits of humanity.[8]

> We call the head man of the woman, because she came from him originally and that she was modeled in the image of the man, who had God as the archetype—for that is how she was made according to the Scriptures. On the other hand, we define Christ as the head of man as the second root of the race and the first fruits of humanity reintegrated into immortality through sanctification in the Spirit. For, a second name

[6] *dial. Trin.* 3, 500b (SC 237:126).

[7] The Son as *from the Father* is not a foreign concept in Cyril's *Jo.* I provide one example simply to display how his dogmatic concerns are part of his dogmatic exegesis, and how *X of X* is a way to convey how the Son is consubstantial with the Father: "There we will glorify the Only Begotten along with God the Father not in a different way but in equality of honor and glory as *God from God*, *light from light*, and *life from life*" (*Jo.* 5:23). And again, Cyril confesses the Son be the exact nature of the Father, "that is, *true God from God* in truth, almighty, creator, glorified, good, to be worshipped, and whatever else may be added to these things that is fitting for God" (*Jo.* 5:23).

[8] For more on the theme of Adamic typology, see the following: Robert L. Wilken, "Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria," *CH* 35, no. 2 (1966): 139–56; Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 93–142; Gregory K. Hillis, "New Birth through the Second Adam: The Holy Spirit and the Miraculous Conception in Cyril of Alexandria," StPatr 48 (2010): 47–51; Ashish J. Naidu, "The First Adam-Second Adam Typology in John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria," *Perichoresis: The Theological Journal of Emanuel University* 12, no. 2 (2014): 153–62; Lawrence J. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (San Francisco, CA: International Scholars Press, 1994), 61–103.

> for Christ is Adam, and not for another reason.[9]

By starting with the man-woman *X of X* formula, Cyril centers upon exclusive human relationships and nature. Cyril then proceeds to discuss the Christ-humanity relationship before considering the Father-Son relationship. That Christ is head of humanity corresponds to Christ being a middle ground between God and humanity by virtue of his two natures. This relation of origins presents the Son as the primary archetype of humanity, for he is also called the second Adam. That the Father is the head of the Son secures the consubstantial nature of the Son with the Father.

> Then we will affirm and believe that the Father is the head of Christ as the latter is consubstantial and conjoined by nature accordingly as he is God for thought and in reality, even if he has appeared in the flesh and become like us. Christ is in a sort of middle ground between divinity and humanity, having in him as the union of the two and a contest in the identity of that which is separated by nature that by virtue of a union in conformity with the economy, impervious and inaccessible to the mind, unknown to the language and its discourses.[10]

For the Father to be head of the Son, the shared nature is secured even if the Son in his incarnation appears as a human. That the Son appears twice—"the Father is the head of the Son" and "Christ is the head of man"—situates the two natures of the Son and his role as both God and a human. Thus, Christ derives his consubstantial origin from the Father and the Son is the second Adam over humanity. The Son stands in the middle between the Father and humanity because he himself in the economy possesses the ineffable union of the two natures.[11] The Son is at once both God and human in the *oikonomia with the flesh*.

As Cyril furthers his argument, the two natures of the Son are further highlighted. In

[9] *dial. Trin.* 3, 500de (SC 237:126).

[10] *dial. Trin.* 3, 500e–1a (SC 237:126).

[11] Cyril speaks to the "single nature" of the incarnate Son to display the ineffable union of the divine and human qualities in the single Son. And, if one is to consider the incarnate Son, yes one considers two distinct natures. But the two are united so that Cyril can say, "there is one nature of the Word" (see *ep.* 40.15).

relation to the Father, the Son has the Father as his source, which signifies the consubstantial relationship. In relation to humanity, the Son is in a different position and serves as the head. But for the Son to be "head of" humanity, he too needs to be human.

> For Christ is at once God and man, having the Father who is in heaven as his source and root of his own hypostasis, who is without beginning and co-eternal, and nothing proceeding according to time, since it is necessary that this head, about what we speak of, coexists with his head. And on the other hand, this Christ is also attached to us by a participation of nature according to the flesh. From then on, when God is regarded as the head of Christ and is authentically so, how could this Christ not be true God, whose root is the true divinity and who is substantially attached as the begotten one?[12]

Readers discern how the Son stands in relation to the other object. If in relation to the Father, "head of" corresponds to the eternal generation of the Son. In relation to humanity, "head of" corresponds to what he is by nature according to the flesh.

Cyril introduces one more argument that centralizes upon the concept of source. If the text highlights the "head," how might we understand the "body" which is connected to the head? By quoting Matthew 12:33, Cyril alludes to the tree and fruit metaphor to support the head and body metaphor, both pointing towards generation and source.

> It is indeed necessary to think that there is a community of any kind between the head and the rest of the body. They now believe themselves perhaps constrained to consider that the Word from the Father has fallen from the realm of divinity and reduced to the limitations of creatures. They will then be told, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad" (Matt 12:33).[13]

This *X of X* understanding corresponds to the head/tree as the source for the body/fruit. Thus, what the head is, so is the body by virtue of its source. And in this metaphor, the Son is both head and tree, and body and fruit as it corresponds to the proper nature. The Son is of God when

[12] *dial. Trin.* 3, 501ab (SC 237:126–28).

[13] *dial. Trin.* 3, 501bc (SC 237:128).

the Father is head of Christ. And the Son is human when the Son is head of humanity. Christ, who is the true God begotten of the Father, serves as the interpretive control to read "head of." A community of *kind* exists between the head and the rest of the body.

Appropriation of Life and the Divine Son

What constitutes the Son's divine nature? That the Father is life and generates the Son corresponds to the Son being the substance of the One who bore him. Moreover, that the Son is the same substance as the Father, his activities are also accomplished with the Father.[14] By anchoring the shared activities to the shared nature, Cyril observes how the Son is always the divine Son.

> [The Son] shows that the operation supposed to come from the Father is also his own and of the equality of energy in all respects. He makes for those who want to learn a clear indication of his consubstantiality. "If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe in me," it says, "but if I do them, even though you do not believe in me, believe in the works" (John 10:37). Then again, "The Father, the one who dwells in me, does these works" (John 14:10). He certainly thought that works done in the way that befits God that would not be suitable for humanity taken to its limits. So, he attributed them to the nature that passes the speech and the thought, which made him say, "Even though you do not believe in me, believe in the works" (John 10:38).[15]

Cyril's use of John 10:37–38 and 14:10 situates the expression of activities as derived from a specific nature. While Father and Son perform the same activities, the activity is derivative of the shared nature. Cyril's partitive exegesis and then partitive reasoning considers how the Son is God from God even during the incarnation.

Cyril then quotes Romans 8:11 and comments on how the Trinitarian persons are the source of life. The Son is resurrected, and through the Spirit, the gift of life comes from the Father to be enacted in the Son. "It is therefore through the Spirit that the Father gives life, not

[14] *dial. Trin.* 5, 563e–64a (SC 237:316–18).

[15] *dial. Trin.* 5, 563e–64a (SC 237:316–18).

that he uses it as a creature to engender life in creation, but through a participation in his own nature, he re-creates his life for him that does not have life in his own nature (ἐν ἰδίᾳ φύσει)."[16] The Spirit, possessing the nature of the Father, revivifies the Son who has life in his own nature. And, the Spirit is given by the Son. Life then is proper to the divine nature, and we observe the gift of life as from the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit. These prepositions delineate where life is derived from, present in, and gifted through. Thus, even in the incarnation, the Son is life himself who gives the Spirit, who in turn vivifies the Son in his death. Cyril's pneumatological vision remains intricately tethered to his Christology. To describe the properties of the Spirit, for Cyril, requires one to discern the properties of the Son.[17]

To render the activity of giving and receiving life, Cyril situates this activity to the inner divine life and thus shared by each Trinitarian person.

> Therefore, when one says of the Son that he participates in life, or that he receives the life of the Father, immediately calculates that it is the totality of the divine nature as conceived in the Father, and in him is the Son and the vivifying Spirit, the latter producing the life of those who receive it as a weed, not that it is the instrument of ineffable nature, but, so to speak, he gives the whole content by himself to creation.

[16] *dial. Trin.* 5, 564c (SC 237:320).

[17] The aim of this thesis is not to pursue Cyril's pneumatology, though such a venture is certainly needed in Cyrilline studies. The use of John 20:22 is used often by Cyril because we observe the Son breathing out the Spirit. I provide a lengthier portion from *Jo.* 14:16–17 as one example: "So he calls the Spirit 'another Paraclete,' willing him to be conceived of in his own hypostasis but having such likeness to the Son and having such power to do exactly the same things as the Son himself might do, that he seems to be none other than the Son. The Spirit is the Son's Spirit, after all. . . . And how, if the Son is of a different substance, does he give the Spirit of the Father as his own? It is written, 'He breathed on his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.' So would not someone be quite right in thinking, or rather in being firmly convinced, that since the Son ontologically shares the natural attributes of God the Father, he has the Spirit in the same way that the Father is understood to have him not as something imported from the outside (it would be silly, or rather crazy to think this), but just as all of us possess our own spirit in ourselves and pour it forth from the inmost parts of our body? That is why Christ physically breathes on them. He is showing that just as the physical breath proceeds from the human mouth, so also his Spirit pours forth in a God-befitting way from his divine nature." This exposition of John 20:22 in relation to John 14:16–17 points to the intra-Trinitarian relations. And, more so, when speaking of the Spirit, Cyril joins the Spirit's identity to the Son. While Cyril notes that breath *proceeds* from the human mouth, one would expect Cyril to say the Spirit proceeds from the Son. But he refrains from saying as much. Instead, the procession of breath from the Son displays that the Spirit pours forth from the divine nature because he is both the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. The breathing out of the Spirit displays both the nature of the Spirit from the divine nature and the eternal relations with the Father and the Son. While Cyril offers a more focused pneumatological vision in *dial. Trin.* 7, he regards the Spirit as both divine and from God: "the Spirit is God and from God according to nature" (*dial. Trin.* 7, 637d [SC 246:160]).

> He transforms what is perishable, and makes it pass to life all through the ages. Once the wisdom is gained with such thoughts, you will discover that the vivification operated in Christ is only to the human element.[18]

The giving, receiving, and relationship to life derive from the divine nature of God. As one says the Son participates in life, one must discern that the Son is life himself through virtue of being from the Father. The Son, as divine, transforms the human nature that he possesses in the incarnation, even in his death. And so, the vivifying work of the Spirit in Christ is solely restricted to whom the Son is by nature, a human. The Son is life in himself as God, and the Son requires the vivifying Spirit to be made alive after death as a human. If the Son is divine, eternally preceding all creation, and immutable, then of course, the Son is life in himself.[19] Cyril distinguishes the use of "life" to the different natures of the Son. *Qua* divine, the Son is life in himself. *Qua* human, the Son receives life from the Spirit.

The Sanctification of the Son and Partitive Theological Reasoning

How a person relates to sanctification, one's nature is placed on display. That is, if a person *sanctifies*, then said person is divine. If a person *is sanctified*, then said person is human or part of creation. Cyril's partitive theological reasoning navigates what is proper of the Son as he relates to sanctification. As Cyril and Hermias begin to dialogue about this topic, they both allude to Hebrews 2 to describe the sanctification of the Son. Cyril relates sanctification to the nature of God. Whereas Hermias begins with the economy of God but moves to the Son being subject to becoming.[20]

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[18] *dial. Trin.* 5, 565ab (SC 237:320–22).

[19] *dial. Trin.* 5, 565de (SC 237:322–24).

[20] *dial. Trin.* 6, 597a (SC 246:40): "Yes, they say, it would not be a lie on his part to say that he was sanctified by the Father, even if he disregarded the economy that made him such as we are. Indeed, in the last age of the world, he manifested himself as a man, but he was even before that of the same kind as those who had been called to be and the brother of created beings, so far as he too is not without having been subjected to becoming as to his nature, that he was on the contrary made by the Father."

Cyril sternly disavows the subjection of the Son as a result of his nature, using Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:20 as prooftexts. Central to Cyril's Christology is a clear division in kind between the Son and humanity. The mystery of Christ in the two natures may be discerned through the spiritual guidance of others. He uses the term *mystagogy* (μυσταγωγία), which conveys one leading a person into the realities of the two natures: "The Son is not subject to becoming, it is not to your oracle that we must pay attention, but rather to the holy and divine initiators (Θείοις μυσταγωγοῖς) who have received this command of Christ himself."[21] Cyril assumes Hermias's argument to draw out the theological problem. By using the term μυσταγωγία, Cyril joins together the reader and reading practices as part of his theological reflection of Christ.[22] If they suppose that the Son participates in sanctification without the flesh, nothing will prevent us from asserting that the Father is likewise sanctified. Eternal generation also corresponds to divine Fatherhood.[23] If the Son is created or subject to becoming, then the *X of X* relationship necessitates that interpreters say likewise about the Father. Eternal

[21] *dial. Trin.* 6, 597b (SC 246:40).

[22] *Mystagogy* is often related to the sacraments. Yet, with Cyril's idiolectic use of the term—both in meaning and amount of usage—the term conveys something of a different image. According to van Loon's findings, "mystagogy" is often in settings and terms like "to teach" (διδάσκειν, μαθητεύειν, μανθάνειν), "to educate" (παιδαγωγεῖν, παιδεύειν), and "to guide" (καθηγεῖσθαι, χορηγία). The term corresponds to Christology and a person being led or guided more deeply into the mystery of Christ. Van Loon comments upon the aim of mystagogy: "The aim of mystagogy is our salvation, our transformation to newness of life, our obedience to Christ. The sacraments have a role to play, but they are by no means singled out by Cyril, neither as means nor as contents of mystagogy. If on anything, the emphasis is on proclamation and education. Ultimately, the triune God is the mystagogue, especially the incarnate Word of God. But through the Spirit he makes people, both men and women, into mystagogues as well." I add to this description also a proper Christological reflection and scriptural reading habits, illuminated by the Spirit, for persons to contemplate the divine realities more fully. Hans van Loon, "The Meaning of 'Mystagogy' in Cyril of Alexandria," in *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, ed. Paul van Geest, Late Antique History and Religion 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 37–53; Hans van Loon, *Living in the Light of Christ: Mystagogy in Cyril of Alexandria's Festal Letters*, Late Antique History and Religion 15 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 23–27; Aaron Riches, "Mystagogy and Cyrillian Orthodoxy: Christology as Fidelity to a Carnal Presence," *Modern Theology* 36, no. 3 (2020): 606–28; Crawford, *Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 94–103.

[23] A line of reasoning will be as follows: if God is a Father, God is also a Son. If the Son was not eternally begotten, God *becomes* Father when the Son is brought forth. So, eternal generation speaks to Paterology just as it does to Christology. I provide one such example from *Juln.*: "Therefore, someone who says God is a Father indicates along with him also his own Son who is from him and in him according to nature. For if it is accurate to say that he did not become a Father at some point in time (for he has no contingent attributes at all, but is perfect in himself), then one absolutely must conclude that what is proper to him, that to which he is a Father, coexists with him" (*Juln.* 8.18; also see a similar line of reasoning in Athanasius, *Ar.* II, 2).

generation conveys all the divine properties that the Father has, so too does the Son. But eternal generation also conveys all the divine properties that the Son has, so too does the Father. Thus, to say the Son is sanctified in the eternal life of the Son, then readers must suggest the Father too is subject to becoming.

> Suppose, then, in accordance with their opinion so ill-advised, that the Word has become a participant in sanctification, all true God that he is, and that even if he was conceived separately and without flesh. . . . Or else to be truly sanctified is a gift from the Son, when it is not true, there is no doubt that there is nothing to prevent us from making a frivolous supposition: why should not the Father, from whom this Son is born, be sanctified—even if he is believed to be the true God?[24]

For if the Father generates the Son, the single nature subsists in both persons. And if the Son is sanctified apart from the flesh in the divine nature, then the Father too is subject to becoming.

Rather than detailed partitive exegesis, Cyril presents a line of hypothetical reasoning that could qualify, in this case, as partitive theological reasoning to disprove Hermias's argument. In discussing the nature of the Son's humanity, Cyril generally limits his concerns to the divine life of the Son.

> Let us admit, while existing among the numbers of creation, according to their dishonest and loathsome words, does the Son accomplish what is proper and natural according to the nature of divinity, then he makes the glory from his own nature; for, it says, that he sanctified himself. These, it seems, are the properties of the transcendent substance lowered to the level of the creature. Without improbability either, I think we will dare to say that we too can sanctify ourselves, in a way similar to the Son.[25]

If, indeed, the Son says he sanctifies himself (cf. Heb 2) as an activity derived from human nature, what would prohibit us from saying that humans can sanctify themselves? Cyril provides a two-fold rebuttal if sanctification is proper to the nature of God. Either God the Father can be sanctified, or humanity can sanctify themselves.

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[24] *dial. Trin.* 6, 597cd (SC 246:40–42).

[25] *dial. Trin.* 6, 597e–98a (SC 246:42).

Next, Cyril conveys that what is sanctified is inferior to those who sanctify. So, as Cyril argues, sanctification only applies to those subject to becoming: "What is sanctified is not owed to what is beyond it, to that which is superior to it in kind, and not at all to that which is worse? They would admit it, I think, since sanctification must be among the elements that contribute to progress."[26] And yet, it is true that the Spirit sanctifies the Son. By offering this premise, Cyril too affirms the Son's inferiority to another being. "If it be true, as they say, that the Son has been sanctified by the Spirit, it is without doubt that he has been anointed, as by some superior, having a different nature from his. For no being can participate of himself, but one is involved in the other in relation to his essential being."[27] So, as the Spirit sanctifies the Son, an inferior being participates with another being.

Cyril's theological partitive reasoning solely situates sanctification to what is proper for humans. Even though Hermias does not object to Cyril's doctrine of the Spirit in this section, Cyril subtly introduces the economic activity of the Spirit, who sanctifies the Son. After the incarnation, the Son then transcends back to a place with the Father. The Spirit sanctifies the Son *qua* human and to sanctify is to correspond to what is divine.

> Since he has been exalted to the Father with the resurrection from the dead, he with us through the Spirit. For his Spirit is his own and has not been added to him from the outside, just like the things belonging to humanity are not neglected from a person. But then the Son appropriated what was immeasurably far from his divine and transcendent substance, I mean the flesh; and then, yes, it is also said that he is sanctified, the term "sanctified" applying in all wisdom and convenience to the human element. With regard to accomplishing, in other words, of doing sanctification, in the person of the Father it is to the nature of the divinity that Christ has attributed it; to this nature alone, in fact, it is to sanctify.[28]

To sanctify or be sanctified corresponds to the specific nature that a person possesses. For, if a being is subject to becoming, then said being will receive sanctification. However, if a being

[26] *dial. Trin.* 6, 598b (SC 246:44).

[27] *dial. Trin.* 6, 598c (SC 246:44).

[28] *dial. Trin.* 6, 598de (SC 246:44–46).

transcends and is not subject to becoming, then they will sanctify. Cyril, though, does not go into great detail about the activity of sanctification itself. Rather, he centers his argument upon the divine nature of God and the Son and how they relate to the activity of sanctification. Even though Cyril generally alludes to Hebrews 2 and quotes 1 John 5 and Matthew 28 to demonstrate the divine quality of the Son, Cyril more so engages in partitive theological reasoning.

The Co-Equal and Co-Operative Activities of the Son and Father During the Incarnation

Cyril begins a constructive theological argument about the Father's generation and the co-likeness with the Son. This line of reasoning commences with a brief description of the Father, and then what he begets will resemble his entire likeness. The eternal begetting of the Son secures two items for Cyril: (1) individual personhood of the Father, and (2) what is generated possesses all the properties of the begetter.

> For, the Father is always Father, neither changing properties nor modifying into another when one calls concerning this, and indeed also considering God in the same way. Without doubt, therefore, that which is from Him must be like Him without beginning and eternal, must accompany in existence that which gives birth to it.[29]

The Father cannot change and possesses all the immeasurable qualities of the divine nature. That which the Father generates will be like him without beginning, eternal, and has all the qualities of the Father. Cyril then begins a line of reasoning to enquire if the divine attributes are only proper to the Father and whether one person might surpass another.

> It will make us discern whether the attributes of divinity are only appropriate to the Father and not at all to the Son, or whether they are to him exactly as to the Father. But above all, answer this question: if the Father excels and is beyond the Son, what is the necessary consequence? Will it not be that such a superior being must surpass the

[29] *dial. Trin.* 5, 576a (SC 237:354).

other not in one domain, but in all the possible properties of divinity?[30]

Thus, Cyril's initial premise points to the co-equality of the Son. And if they are not co-equal, what is the necessary consequence if they claim to be of the same likeness, but one is superior to the other?

To uphold his argument, Cyril reads the Psalms, a passing reference to the Gospel of Matthew, and the Gospel of John to tether the co-equal divine nature of God the Son to the Father. How do we know what kind of substance subsists in the Father? Cyril appeals to John 14:9 ("Whoever sees me has seen the Father. I and my Father are one") to liken the visible expression of the Son to the qualities of the Father. If we see the generated one, we know the exact likeness of both the generator and the begotten one. Cyril uses this Johannine text as the premise of his following arguments: to see one, you have seen the full qualities of both.

Cyril quotes three passages from the Psalms as a precursor to his partitive readings of the divine Son from Gospel texts. Quoting Psalm 101:25–28 LXX, 94:6–7 LXX, and 102:20–22 LXX, Cyril seemingly follows the logic of Hebrews 1:10–14 that highlights the creative activities of the Son before the servitude of the angels. Moreover, Cyril provides a three-fold argument with these texts that point to the eternal creative activity of God, human creation as sheep bowing before the creative Lord, and the angels blessing God because of all his works. After this string of texts, Cyril concludes, "You see, then, how he encloses all things under the yoke of servitude. The beings of the earth, he calls them sheep of the hand of God, the angels, he presents them as His ministers."[31] The reading of these three texts displays how God is the Creator. Creation is viewed as sheep and the angelic realm that worships and blesses God.

Cyril then considers John 10 about the sheep and Matthew 4 about the angels to display what applies to the Father also applies to the Son. By quoting John 10:27–30, Cyril links the language of sheep to Psalm 94: "Look now how the sheep in the hand of God the Father, the

[30] *dial. Trin.* 5, 576b (SC 237:354).

[31] *dial. Trin.* 5, 577c (SC 237:358).

Son says that they are his and how he puts us under the yoke of servitude. . . . Thus we, the sheep of God the Father, we are just as well the sheep of the Son."[32] By linking the "sheep" trope, Cyril then can display how the activities of God are similar activities of the Son. So, the hand of God the Father refers to the hand of God the Son. Second, Cyril quotes Matthew 4:11 to link together the angelic trope.

> The wise Matthew said when Satan fled already without having reached anything by trying to tempt Christ who had just fasted, "Behold angels came and they ministered to him" (Matt 4:11). In addition, the Seraphim encircle around his supreme throne in the heights, and they celebrate his glory by calling him Holy and Lord of Powers and saying that heaven and earth are filled with his glory.[33]

The activities of the angelic realm encircle God and bless him. So, as the angels come to the Son in the wilderness, Cyril links the divine qualities of the Son to God upon the heavenly throne.

Next, Cyril partitively reads John 10:29–30 and John 17:10 to uphold the co-equal divine nature of the Son with the Father.

> How would he possess a brightness equal to that of the Father and with the latter the perfectly exact resemblance that unity gives? "For I," it says, "and my Father are one" (John 10:30). He indeed said, having testified, however, of the supreme heights in which this Father arrives, "For my Father," he was asserting, "is greater than all" (John 10:29).[34]

There is a particular shared likeness, in Cyril's reading, between the Son and the Father. Whatever is attributed to the Father, for Cyril, also needs to be attributed to the Son. Even in the inferior reference (John 10:29), the Son speaks from his spatial distinction as a human. As Cyril concludes this co-equal set of arguments, Cyril quotes John 17:10 to denote the co-equal properties between the Father and the Son.

> So, he would not accompany the Father, without diminution, in any of his privileges.

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[32] *dial. Trin.* 5, 577cd (SC 237:358).

[33] *dial. Trin.* 5, 577e–78a (SC 237:358–60).

[34] *dial. Trin.* 5, 578c (SC 237:360).

> Not possessing an equal status, he would not say, I think, to the Father and that with a sovereign freedom, because, "All of my things are yours and your belongings [are] mine" (John 17:10). Come, if you will, we will attribute preeminence to the Father and say that the Son is inferior. But then, what artifice will present itself to allow us to give to the Son all that is to the Father and vice versa to the Father what is to the Son, while conceiving that among the attributes declared inherent in the Father, there is precisely the preeminence and superiority?[35]

Cyril's partitive readings of these Gospel texts assume a few premises. If the Father generates a person, then said person possesses all the properties of the Father. Furthermore, Cyril's partitive readings point to the co-equal divine nature and the co-operation of the Father and the Son. Third, all that the Son gives from his being is the extension of the Father's nature. And, last, even with the proof-texts displaying an inferior Son, Cyril points to the spatial differences between the Father and the Son during the incarnation and not to the inferior differences fully subsisting between the two persons.

THE SPIRIT'S *OIKONOMIA* TO CONVEY THE TWO NATURES OF THE SON

Furthermore, how the Spirit relates to the Son corresponds to what the Son is by nature. In other words, Cyril's Pneumatological vision is intrinsically Christological.[36] If the Spirit appears to proceed from the Son and because the Son is what the Father is by nature, then the Spirit is of the eternal, immutable nature. As the life is in himself, the Spirit shares himself as the "Gift" to give life. And yet, the Son receives the Spirit and is resurrected by the Spirit. The Spirit sanctifies, gives life, and resurrects the Son *qua* human—even though the Son needs no sanctification and is life himself *qua* divine.

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[35] *dial. Trin.* 5, 578de (SC 237:362).

[36] Few scholars have explored Cyril's Pneumatology in the *dial. Trin.* See Timothy J. Becker, "The Holy Spirit in Cyril of Alexandria's 'Dialogues on the Trinity'" (PhD diss., New York, Union Theological Seminary, 2012); Matthew J. Pereira, "The Internal Coherence of Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology: Interpreting the 7th Dialogue of the *Dialogues on the Trinity*," *USQR* 62 (2010): 70–98.

The Spirit Descends upon the Human Son to Sanctify His Nature

Cyril's exegetical reasoning once more intersects with the sanctification of the Son. How can the Son be holy by nature and in need of the Spirit to be sanctified? The Son, for Cyril, is both sanctifier and sanctified. These two categories distinguish the two natures of the Son. As a result, Cyril's partitive readings of Scripture are in the background of a Christological question about the Son's sanctification. The Son's active or passive relation to sanctification correlates to the Son's two natures. As the Son *sanctifies*, it derives from what is proper to the divine nature. What the Father is by nature, so is the Son—to sanctify corresponds to what is proper to the divine life. As the Son *is sanctified*, it is from what is proper to the human nature.[37] With wisdom, readers attribute *to be sanctified* to the human element.

In *dial. Trin.* 6, Cyril shows how the Spirit relates to the Son. He enquires how the Son does not possess the gift—displaying his humanity—and the Spirit comes upon the Son.[38]

[37] I mention one concern from Cyril that occurs much later in his Christological vision. Cyril's partitive exegesis certainly assumes his single-Son Christological vision. In *ep.* 40.17–19, Cyril counters Nestorian scriptural exegesis, and he affirms a single Son while still speaking of the Son's two natures. While commenting on a partitive vision of scriptural exegesis, he specifies three ways the Scriptures describe the Son: sayings of Scripture that are proper (1) to his divinity, (2) to his humanity, and (3) to a middle position that describes both. "What I am saying is the same as this. On the one hand some of the sayings are very especially proper to his divinity. Others again are proper to his humanity. But others very specially pertain to a certain middle position, because they reveal the Son as God and man, both at the same time and in him" (*ep.* 40.18). And in either case, interpreters of Scripture can highlight one of these natures and still speak about the single Son: "Yet we say that those proper to his divinity and those proper to his humanity are the sayings of the one Son" (*ep.* 40.18). He speaks to what is proper of the Son and his two natures, especially related to his partitive vision. To speak of two natures individually is not the same as affirming a dyo-propic Christology. "Do not, therefore, divide in these instances the expressions about the Lord, for they have in the same person what is proper to God and what is proper to his humanity; but rather apply them to the one Son, that is, to God the Word made flesh. Accordingly, it is one thing to separate the natures and this after the union, and to say that man is conjoined to God only according to equality of honor, and likewise, it is another thing to know the difference between the expressions" (*ep.* 40.20). And again, criticizing the former positions of the bishops of the east and Nestorius, Cyril observes how they may rightly discern the epochs of the Son: begotten of the Father and born of a Virgin. But, they seem to confess a version of two Sons. Of a partitive reading strategy, he notes: "Because of this, the bishops of the East, fearing that the glory and the nature of God the Word might be belittled on account of the things said about him humanly through the incarnation, separate the sayings, not cutting into two persons, as I said, the one Son and Lord, but applying some sayings to his divinity and again others to his humanity; yet entirely all to one" (*ep.* 40.22). Thus, readers of Scripture, in their partitive exegesis, are encouraged to uphold one Son and divide the sayings of the Scriptures to refer to one of the two natures.

[38] While refraining from discerning *where* or *from whom* Cyril may have derived the language of gift for the Spirit, I do want to note that this language is not altogether new. In the Latin tradition, Augustine quite repeatedly refers to the Spirit as a gift. If, as Ayres regards, these Augustinian traditions reflect AD 420, and awareness of Hilary,

> Of course, anyone, I think, as long as he has any sense, would be astonished if, after determining that the Spirit belongs to the Son, there was talk of participation about the latter, if it were said that the holiness coming from the Father and caused by the Spirit was introduced into him one fine day as a gift that he did not possess.[39]

This double-speak of the Spirit does seem to be difficult, even as Cyril admits. If the Spirit belongs to the Son, why would there be a time that the Son did not possess this gift? Cyril then makes an important distinction of how to qualify the characteristics of the Son. "And if we reason in a wise and rigorous way, we will not attribute to what belongs naturally to a being the quality of addition or count it among the traits of foreign beings."[40] So, if something belongs by nature to the person, we need not describe an outside feature coming in. The divinity of the Spirit and the participation with the Son is now brought to the fore. How can we say that the Son is sanctified by the Spirit when the Spirit proclaims all that comes from the Son, quoting John 16:14? The Spirit is not in the Son through means of participation but because they share the same nature.[41] The Son is perfect in his divinity, and he lacks nothing in his nature. The Spirit

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it raises a few questions for our present concerns. Augustine is contemporary to Cyril, yet Cyril does not show literary or theological influence from Augustine. Cyril's use of "gift" displays a second concurrent tradition to the language of "gift." More work could be done to show Cyril's pneumatological paradigms here, but I simply want to note a few other places where Cyril, in fact, titles the Holy Spirit as *Gift.* In *dogm.* 2, Cyril quotes John 20:22 and links together "gift" with the giving of the Spirit: "But seeing that God the Father was pleased to 'sum up all things in Christ' (Eph 1:10) (meaning breaking them back to the primal state by re-establishing in us the Holy Spirit who had taken flight and quitted us) he breathed it into the holy apostles with the words 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22). Christ's act was a renewal of that primal gift (τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐκείνης δωρεᾶς) and of the in-breathing bestowed on us, bring us back to the form of initial hallowing and carrying man's nature up, as a kind of first fruits tsamongst the holy apostles, into the hallowing bestowed on us initially at the first creation." In *dial. Trin.* 7, 639c (SC 246:166), Cyril titles the Spirit as *Gift* so that we can be conformed to the image of Christ: "It is, then, that the Spirit is God who conforms us to God, not by a grace of which he is the minister, but as a gift to those who are worthy of participation in the divine nature." And in a dual meaning of Jas 1:17 ("every good gift comes from above"), Cyril reads this Scripture to denote Christ as the gift coming from heaven and giving the gift of the Spirit (*dial. Trin.* 3, 494c [SC 237:106–8]). In *dial. Trin.* 5, 564b (SC 237:318), the Spirit comes to provide the gift of participating in the divine life. And quite similar to the *dial. Trin.*, Cyril uses gift and gift-related language to refer both to the Son (*Jo.* 1:9) and the Spirit (*thes.* XXXIV [PG 75:601D]; *Jo.* 14:22; 20:21–23). On Augustine's use of "gift," see Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 251–56.

[39] *dial. Trin.* 6, 594b (SC 246:30).

[40] *dial. Trin.* 6, 594c (SC 246:32).

[41] *dial. Trin.* 6, 594d (SC 246:32): "And we say this not believing some to be sharers of the things in the Holy Spirit—for he is perfect and in need of nothing according to his nature and existence. He, moreover, signifying the substance of God the Father and the things from according to nature and also bringing to light the Word in him

is consubstantial with the Father and Son, and by his very nature, he is all that belongs to divinity.

From this discussion of the Spirit's divinity, Cyril turns to comment upon the sanctification of humanity by the Spirit and how the Son can be sanctified. The author of all is holy and humans need to be sanctified to participate in the Son and Spirit.[42] After humanity fell into transgression, the image is disfigured and restored through participating in the divine life.[43] So, sanctified humanity may participate in the divine life as Christ is formed in humanity. The Spirit and Son are external to the nature of humanity, which is why Christ needs to be formed in humanity. If sanctification operates in such a way, then how can the Son be sanctified together with creation? Cyril's dilemma is the tension of the two natures.[44] If the Son is sanctified, it is proper to refer to the time *when* he is weak in his nature. However, if we say as much about the nature of the Son, Cyril raises additional questions. How can the Son be sanctified if he is in the image of the Father and the radiance of his hypostasis? If we press this theological reasoning, is not the nature of the Father also in need of being sanctified?

While Cyril does not use the term *oikonomia with the flesh*, it certainly is assumed. Hermias considers disregarding the *oikonomia* of the Son. And to which, Cyril ventures towards a second discussion about sanctification and the distinction of the Son's two natures. If the Son

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while existing as the Spirit, since he brings upon himself all his properties that are divine according to nature. This divinity he has as a source, poured out that he is, so to speak, from the Father through the Son to sanctify creation."

[42] *dial. Trin.* 6, 595a (SC 246:34).

[43] *dial. Trin.* 6, 595b (SC 246:34): "By the Spirit we were reshaped to the image of the Creator, that is, of the Son, through whom everything comes from the Father. So, the very wise Paul, he says, 'My children, whom I am again suffering greatly until which Christ is formed in you' (Gal 4:19). And the type of formation of which this text speaks to us, it is by the Holy Spirit that it is printed in our souls."

[44] *dial. Trin.* 6, 595e–96a (SC 246:36): "Therefore, if they thought to think and say that the Son is sanctified together with the creatures, we would have no trouble finding a time when he was still weak in his nature, where he had not yet taken advantage of his natural disposition to sin. But so also, having and perceiving, how was he the image of God the Father? And also, how is he the radiance and imprint of his hypostasis? For he did not become his imprint in time, but he was this according to nature and from the beginning. Then, how could he not be holy, the perfect one of the Father, the one of unmixed beauty, and he being the imprint of his substance? Inevitably, would our reasoning not place us at the end, whether we like it or not, with the obligation to say that the Father himself is not always holy?"

is true God and receives sanctification, how is he not in diminutive form and the Father too in need of sanctification? To remedy this concern, to be sanctified is to be in an inferior state as a human.[45] It is permissible to admit the Son is inferior to the Spirit solely because of the difference of nature.

> But then the Son appropriated what was immeasurably far from his divine and transcendent substance, I mean the flesh. And then, yes, it is also said that he is sanctified, the term "sanctified" applying in all wisdom and convenience to the human element. With regard to accomplishing, in other words, of doing sanctification, in the person of the Father it is to the nature of the divinity that Christ has attributed it; to this nature alone, in fact, it is to sanctify.[46]

The *oikonomia with the flesh* is assumed to depict the Spirit having a superior nature than the Son without affecting the immutable nature of God.

If the Son is eternal and possesses the nature of God, then why do some texts highlight that the Spirit sanctified the Son? Hermias raises three Scripture texts (Heb 2:11–12; John 1:32; 10:34–36) to demonstrate that the Father sanctified the Son and the Spirit descended upon the Son. For the Son to be sanctified, Hermias concludes that the Son is unlike the Father. Cyril's response to these concerns focuses upon the proper seasonal position of the Son, and then the sanctification is proper for the Son's human nature to ensure the redemption of humanity.[47]

Cyril observes how some Scriptures display several examples of sanctification. For instance, Romans 8:29–30 combines divine foreknowledge and participation in the Spirit. Jeremiah 1:5 displays God's sanctifying act before Jeremiah's birth. Isaiah 13:3 depicts God

[45] *dial. Trin.* 6, 598c (SC 246:44): "Therefore, if it be true, as they say, that the Son has been sanctified by the Spirit, it is without doubt that he has been anointed, as by some superior, having a different nature from his. For no being can participate of himself, but one is involved in the other in relation to his essential being."

[46] *dial. Trin.* 6, 598de (SC 246:44–46).

[47] Also see *Heb*. 1:9: "We further maintain that he was sanctified according to the flesh when he is said to have emptied himself by bearing the title of a man, in whom the sanctification dwells by participation from God and not by its own nature. And it is no surprise if the Word, who is God, lovingly appropriates the attributes of the human nature in the *oikonomia*."

consecrating Cyrus and the Medes to seize Babylon. Haggai 2:12 addresses the blameless sacrifice if a person consumes sanctified meat. And, without supplying a Scripture text, Cyril affirms that saints are those truly sanctified by the Spirit and thus participants in the divine nature.[48] If the Scriptures display examples of sanctification, how can the Son be sanctified and sent into the world without conflating what is proper to the eternal nature?

> How, then, will they assume that the Son has been sanctified, since there is a necessary connection between being sanctified and being sent into this world? Christ, in fact, expressed himself thus, "Whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world" (John 10:36). That the bringing together of these two factors is not without contributing certainly to allow just reasoning is very well discernible. It is at the moment when he sends the Son that the Father is said to sanctify him, and not before.[49]

Cyril uses John 10:36 as a proof-text to combine the Son's sanctification with his *missio*.[50] The Son's sanctification is *when* the Son is sent and not before his entrance into the world.

So, then, what is the role of the Spirit in the Son's sanctification? The Son is not and cannot be sanctified by the Spirit before coming in the flesh.[51] Cyril provides an epochal and then partitive reading of John 1:32 ("I beheld the Spirit descending from heaven as a dove, and it remained upon him"). Cyril first details *when* the Spirit descends upon the Son. If the Spirit and Son dwelled together before the incarnation, why does the Spirit need to descend upon him once more?

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[48] *dial. Trin.* 6, 589e (SC 246:18).

[49] *dial. Trin.* 6, 589e–90a (SC 246:18).

[50] Cyril provides an additional example of the *when* of the Son's sanctification to correlate to his *missio*. See *dial. Trin.* 6, 590cd (SC 246:20): "When He appeared as we were and was sent with flesh into this world, would he have acquired the riches of the Spirit, having the benefit of something and the radiant grace? Where did he empty himself? Can he come into an inferior condition and in lowliness, and become in a better position? Unless, like these people, one does not avoid the most extreme and the worst consequences. It would have been a deterioration to receive the Spirit. He who is made by nature to sanctify would precipitate in a worse state those in whom he would come."

[51] *dial. Trin.* 6, 590b (SC 246:18): "If, as they suppose, before the incarnation and sending in this world the Word was a participant of the Spirit, why once endowed with the flesh, would he receive it again? It would be superfluous and vain. But no sensible person will ever esteem, I think, that the ineffable nature of God can be reduced to this situation."

> Calculate the time when he was sanctified. It was not before his appearing since the Word was God. But when he became according to us, which is not the fruit of his own nature, but his sanctification came from outside and was acquired. Do you not know that the nature of humanity has been enriched from the beginning by partaking with the divine Spirit and the imaging with God through sanctification? For, in this respect, he was also made in the image of the Creator. But when he had veiled the divine command, for having traded the gift, he was condemned to death and put himself under the yoke of sin.[52]

When discerns the seasonal moment, and "in our condition" depicts the nature of the Son. Epochal ordering precedes a partitive reading. Once the Son is in human form, he is sanctified by the Spirit. To become human, for Cyril, is the means to restore humanity to its original state. John McGuckin rightly summarizes how Cyril perceives the soteriological benefit of the incarnation: "The incarnation was a restorative act entirely designed for the ontological reconstruction of a human nature that had fallen into existential decay as a result of its alienation from God."[53] In his birth, the Son is born of a Virgin and does not possess a human father, to restore humanity. Thus, the Son had to be human to receive the Spirit.[54]

Now, Cyril conveys the proper partitive readings of the Scriptures initially raised by Hermias. The Spirit descended upon the human Son because he is free from transgression; and

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[52] *dial. Trin.* 6, 590e–91a (SC 246:20–22).

[53] In McGuckin's argument and summary, the premise of the above quote is also a summary of Athanasius's *C. Gent.* and *Inc.* That the Son acquires a human nature, Christ's redemptive works began at his birth to redeem all that is human. This premise is similar to Gregory Nazianzen "what he has not assumed, he has not healed" (*ep.* 101 to Cledonius). John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, VCSup 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 184.

[54] *dial. Trin.* 6, 591a–d (SC 246:22): "As is necessary, therefore, since its essential clemency had made God decide to restore the fallen race to its original state, Christ was to be born as a second origin of the race and to support the birth by the Blessed Virgin, but without accepting at the same time to take a father according to the flesh. In this way we would all have God with him as well as through him, and in him we would go back to the original glory. As is necessary, he had become a man to receive the Spirit. As he knew nothing, nor knew anything about sin, the Spirit would henceforth dwell in him, as on the first fruits of the race and his second root. It is this, I think, that the divine Baptist made it very clear by crying out about the Spirit that he saw him coming down from heaven in the form of a dove. And to say also that he dwelt on Christ, he did not abide in us because of the transgression, but he remained in Christ. For he was of a nature that could not bear the defilement of sin. While he is perpetually king and shares the throne of God the Father, it is said of Christ that he was made king when he became, like us, a man for whom kingship is a gift from above. Likewise, while he coexists perpetually with the Father, he is established as Son by the Spirit because he assimilated according to the flesh to the sons by adoption."

even though the Son is eternally the king, he is made king by the Father *when* the Son is in our condition. The dual nature of the Son prompts a particular reason why the Spirit descends upon the Son. While he is the king and shares the coequal reign with the Father, the Son also appears in the flesh and receives the Spirit. The Spirit descends, and the Father inaugurates the Son not *qua* divine but *qua* human. The Spirit descends upon the Son according to the flesh. Cyril's partitive Christological reading of John 1:32 requires him to place the Son in a particular temporal position and then attribute the Spirit's descent upon the Son to be because of his humanity.

> Having become, so to speak, in conformity with us, the subjects of God, he called the Father his God, although he himself was God. In the same way, he is said to be sanctified, whereas sanctification takes place in humanity; in other words, it concerns the flesh because human nature can not inherently possess holiness. It is an exclusive property of truly divine nature, which transcends everything and, since it is the fruit of this nature, the Word will undoubtedly also possess in itself, as its own good, the holiness of the nature which engenders it.[55]

While human, the Son is divine. While being sanctified as a human, he possesses sanctification in himself. But as a human and according to human nature, the Son is sanctified because human nature cannot inherently possess sanctification. For the Son to be sanctified is not a diminutive activity but is the way to redeem humanity. In his incarnation and deriving from his human nature, the Son calls God his Father while being God. And the Son is sanctified while already possessing the divine nature, which needs no sanctifying. The human nature of the Son in his incarnation is necessary because humanity does not inherently have a divine quality of holiness. Cyril's two-fold Christological exegesis is central to this reading of John 1. Cyril discerns sanctification to be *when* the Son is incarnate (epochal position) and then attributes sanctification exclusively to the Son's human nature (partitive distinctions).

[55] *dial. Trin.* 6, 591de (SC 246:22–24).

"Receive the Spirit" and the Likeness of the Son and the Spirit

Cyril describes the eternal, divine nature of the Son as he details the Son's relationship to the Spirit. While appearing in human form, the Son breathes forth the Spirit upon the disciples to convey what belongs to the Son by nature. These arguments are supported by Genesis 2:7 and John 20:22 as proof-texts to explain how the Son, in the incarnation, is still distinct from creation and shares the nature with the Spirit.[56] Even as an activity performed during his incarnation, the Son breathes forth the Spirit *qua* divine because the Son and Spirit share the same eternal nature.[57]

In *dial. Trin.* 4, 532, Cyril asks Hermias what is the nature of the Son? Cyril wards off two false descriptions: (1) there is a God and a God, alluding to a divisible nature and person, and (2) the Son is counted among creation. Whereas the Son is still divine, the created order is subject to becoming (distinct nature) and spatially distinct from the Son (from below).

> Well then, what is this nature of the Son? Let us examine him, but by thinking carefully about this: if he is not God according to nature, if on the contrary he was made and brought to be like us, as the delusional and drunken word from these people, how did the world fall lower than him, how did the created become distinct from him? Would it be measurable by spatial distances? . . . Where and how is the intangible going to be

[56] Also see *Jo.* 16:14 and 20:22. Boulnois has surveyed a Patristic reading of Gen 2:7 in relation to John 20:22 from Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, and more. She concludes the following about Cyril's use, although not mentioning *dial. Trin.* 4. Cyril's exegesis of Gen 2:7 and John 20:22 displayed that the original gift of the Spirit was not simply restored, per se, but that the second gift was altogether greater. She offers three reasons for such a conclusion: (1) the Spirit that rests upon the Son at baptism remains with the Son by virtue of his humanity; (2) by being two natures, the Son in his humanity draws what is human to the Creator; and (3) while being incarnate, the Son communicates to humanity the Spirit of adoption, who enables one to cry out "Abba, Father." Marie-Odile Boulnois, "Le souffle et l'Esprit: Exégèses patristiques de l'insufflation originelle de Gn 2, 7 en lien avec celle de Jn 20, 22," *RechAug* 24 (1989): 3–37.

[57] Of the Spirit and procession, Cyril joins together the sameness of nature among those in the Trinity and the breathing out of Jesus in John 20:22: "The Holy Spirit is inseparably in both because of the identity of essence. But he came to creation from the Father through the Son. Jesus breathed on the holy apostles and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22), and we too have been sealed in the divine and spiritual image though him and in him" (*2 Cor.* 1:21).

> at a distance and what will be the space that will circumscribe it?[58]

After this brief list of questions, Cyril supplies John 1:10 as a proof-text ("And he was in the world and the world was made through him and the world did not know him") to offer a Creator-creature distinction. This two-fold distinction upholds the two-nature distinction during the Son's incarnation. And, as the Son became incarnate, the world did not recognize the Son because of evil. The world, for Cyril, remains ignorant of their Creator, even if they saw him.

Cyril centers upon this dual role of the Son: how is he Creator of and in the world? Quoting Genesis 2:17, Cyril focuses upon the Creator's ineffable decrees in bringing forth humanity and giving the Spirit to humanity. God sanctifies creation only through participation with the Spirit. The Creator by the Spirit brings humanity into existence, and only creatures can receive the sanctifying work of the Spirit. And yet, the Monogenes in the incarnation likewise sanctifies humanity through his breath, thereby linking together the Monogenes and Creator. To breathe forth the Spirit situates the Son as the source of the Spirit coming forth.

> This is also why the Monogenes, once a man and finding the nature of man stripped of his ancient and original good, undertook to restore it by rendering it, so to speak, the source of his own fullness with these words, "Receive the Spirit" (John 20:22), by a very apparent bodily breath, he was indeed the nature of the Spirit. There will therefore be equality between the original accession to being and the restoration of this state of origin.[59]

As the Creator brought life to humanity by the Spirit in Genesis 2, so too does the Son breathe life through the Spirit to his disciples. This use of John 20:22 depicts the Son acting as the Monogenes, even though he appears as a man. The Son, in his human nature, has not been afflicted by the sins that inflict humanity.

> If, therefore, as these people want it, the Son is still one of the beings sent to become, how did creation become detached from him and be distant? There is always

[58] *dial. Trin.* 4, 532ab (SC 237:222).

[59] *dial. Trin.* 4, 532de (SC 237:222–24).

> friendship when there is kinship, and a being subjected to becoming cannot move away from another, at least in so far as they are both subject to it. Becoming a stranger is always more or less the act of being different in kind or at least species; it is not in beings whose nature is framed by a single and identical definition that this is customary.[60]

If the Son is not different by nature to humanity, then why does the Son dwell with humanity by the Spirit. To be different is not to be kindred. For the Son, as a human, to breathe forth his Spirit conveys how the Son acts according to what is divine even though appearing as a human.

To receive the very breath of the Son is indeed to receive the Spirit, who is the same nature as the Son. By the restorative activity of the Spirit in the Son, creation undergoes spiritual renewal. Cyril returns to the initial set of questions and raises a few more.

> How, then, does the Son dwell in the creature by the Spirit? What does he add to it, what gift does he make to it, to what spiritual height does he bring it back, what improvement does he impress upon him? He himself is not in a better situation, because he was created like us, at least what they say. How can one affirm then that he has emptied himself, or what condescension he has needed to descend to heights above the creature, to join the world and become a part of it, if he is not above the world and the creature?[61]

To have the Son breathe out the creative activities of the Spirit, Cyril seems to affirm that the Spirit proceeds from the Son to recreate humanity. The scope of this thesis refrains from stepping towards the *filioque* discussions, partly due to the anachronistic features of the debate to insert Cyril and partly to the admonition of Jaroslav Pelikan.[62] Cyril, in his earlier Trinitarian

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[60] *dial. Trin.* 4, 533a (SC 237:224).

[61] *dial. Trin.* 4, 533b (SC 237:224).

[62] Jaroslav Pelikan describes a rather humorous way to perceive one who studies the *filioque*: "If there is a special circle of the inferno described by Dante reserved for historians of theology, the principal homework assigned to that subdivision of hell for at least the first several eons of eternity may well be the thorough study of all the treatises . . . devoted to the inquiry: Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father only, as Eastern Christendom contends, or from both the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque*), as the Latin Church teaches?" Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 90.

work, describes the following about the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son: "Since the Holy Spirit who comes to us makes us conformed to God, and since *he proceeds from the Father and the Son* (πρόεισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ), it is manifest that he is of God's substance, proceeding by nature in it and from it."[63] Cyril uses the vocabulary of procession quite broadly, as already documented by Marie-Odile Boulnois.[64] The language of procession or at least insinuating the origin of the Spirit from the Father and through the Son appears in the *dial. Trin.* and *Jo.*[65] To continue Cyril's previous argument, the Son dwells in humanity by the Spirit who restores. And if the Son is not distinct from humanity, then the restorative activity of the Son is unable to renew creation.

> We should be absolutely mad and spoiled, dear friend, to place the Son from God according to nature and co-eternal to God the Father among the sons according to

[63] *thes.* XXXIV (PG 75:585A). Sergius Bulgakov regards the *filioque* debate to be non-existent for Cyril: "all that one can say with any definiteness is that the problem of the procession of the Holy Spirit as such did not exist for him." For Bulgakov, the concern for Cyril's pneumatology is situated against the Pneumatomachians and Nestorianism. While leaving more to be desired, I would not speak as definitively as Bulgakov because many expressions from Cyril do convey the Spirit's origin to be *from* and *through* the Son. But, if Bulgakov refers to the debates over the *filioque* as the proper debate, then indeed the debate of the *filioque* is a much later concern than for Cyril. For a small sampling of Cyril and his doctrine of the Spirit in relation to the Son, see as follows. Marie-Odile Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection de Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 143 (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1994), 492–529; Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity," 106–8; Gregory K. Hillis, "'The Natural Likeness of the Son': Cyril of Alexandria's Pneumatology" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2008), 31–49; George C. Berthold, "Cyril of Alexandria and the Filioque," StPatr 19 (1989): 143–47; A. de Halleux, "Cyrille, Théodoret et Le 'Filioque,'" *RHE* 74 (1979): 597–625.

[64] As Boulnois observes in Cyril, the Spirit comes from: the substance of God (*thes.* XXXIV [PG 75:585A]; *Jo.* IX, 1 [930ab]); from the substance of the Father (*Jo.* X, 2 [910e]); from the substance of the Monogenes (*Jo.* X, 2 [925c]); from God (*thes.* XXXIII [PG 75:565C]; *Jo.* XI, 1 [784b]); from the Father (*dial. Trin.* 6, 629a [SC 246:134]; *Jo.* IX, 1 [824b]; XI, 2 [931c]); from the Father and the Son (*thes.* XXXIV [585A]); from the Father through the Son (*Jo.* XII, 1 [1095b]; *Nest.* 4.3 [105d]); through the Son (*Jo.* X [910b; 926a; 929e]; XI, I [930b]); and through both the Father and the Son (*R.F. ad Pulch. et Eud.* 172c). See Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire*, 524–25.

[65] For example, Cyril offers the following in *dial. Trin.* 2, 423ab (SC 231:238–40): "Finally, you will describe as Holy Spirit the one who by nature flows from the Father through the Son, who under the image of the breath coming out of the mouth, manifests his own existence." And again, from *dial. Trin.* 7, 640e (SC 246:168): "As for the Spirit, he comes from God the Father and is also proper to the Son, in the manner of a spirit like ours, human, even if it is conceived endowed with a hypostasis and truly subsistent: that is what is indicated by its name." In *Jo.* 20:21–23, Cyril regards: "He [the Son] immediately sanctifies them by his own Spirit, whom he bestows by emphatically breathing into them so that we too may firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is not alien to the Son but is of the same substance with him and proceeds through him from the Father." And again, from *Jo.* 20:21–23: "After all, the Spirit could not come to us from the Father in any other way than through the Son."

> grace. Where will our archetype be, and what will it be again, if the one from which we are modeled be lowered with us to a condition of adoption and imitation?[66]

By making this distinction, Cyril situates the Son as an archetype of creation but not according to the rank of the "sons of grace." Instead, he is the archetype of creation in the rank of "Son of God." To conclude, Cyril offers a partitive reading of the breathing out of the Spirit to demonstrate the divine nature of the Son and the co-operating activity of the Son and Spirit.

The *Missio* of the Spirit and the Divine Son

Cyril focuses upon the Spirit in *dial. Trin.* 6, 592 and ends up providing a partitive reading of John 16 that focuses on the divine nature of the Son essentially to prove the divine nature of the Spirit. As Cyril asks, "To whom shall we say that the Holy Spirit belongs? Does he only belong to God the Father, or to the Son, or separately to both and to the two together, as the unique Spirit from the Father through the Son, because of the identity of substance?"[67] What is the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son? And to describe the Spirit properly, Cyril ends up describing the relationships of the Trinitarian persons.

Cyril first mentions the individual hypostases of the Son and the Father and their subsisting with a single nature. The eternal relations of the Father and Son convey their separate hypostasis, though subsisting in the same nature.

> In fact, God the Father is conceived as endowed with a subsistence by himself. For his part, the Son has his own existence, but, although each of them has a specific hypostasis, he does not consent to total separation. For the Son cannot be separated from the Father as an angel from another angel, and among the things for us as such a one from another, as whole from another whole.[68]

The Father is subsistent within himself, and the Son too has his own hypostasis. For, as Cyril

[66] *dial. Trin.* 4, 533c (SC 237:224).

[67] *dial. Trin.* 6, 592b (SC 246:24).

[68] *dial. Trin.* 6, 592bc (SC 246:24–26).

continues, there is only a single divine nature. The Father and the Son are unique yet inseparable hypostases that occupy the same nature, a distinction of personhood but not nature. The Spirit, moreover, is a unique hypostasis and proceeds from the Father as his source.[69] If the Father is the source of the Spirit, and the Son and Father share the same nature,

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[69] Throughout this thesis, there has yet to be any need to define Cyril's vocabulary with any clarity or sharpness that distinguishes how he perceives substance, personhood, and the names of God that unify and distinguish. It is relatively known how often Cyril appeals to or refers to the Nicene Creed as a divinely given authoritative guide for his theological vision (*dial. Trin.* 1, 389e–90a [SC 231:142]; *ep.* 4.3; 17.6–7; 39.10; 55; 85). As he works out this Nicene vision, his vocabulary displays how he envisions the one eternal nature and the three individual persons. As de Durand has noted, ὑπόστασις regards the "center of existence" *ad intra* within the πρόσωπα, which refers to "the interlocutor that we face." Cyril presents a variety of terms as part of his Trinitarian language in *dial. Trin.* 2, 422c–23a (SC 231:238): "In my opinion, what was the least convenient for us to manifest the Holy Trinity, with extreme foresight, he put it aside, while he chose and preferred to others the names that could most clearly present to us the existence of each of those they designated. It would be to say the common features of the whole divinity (τῆς ὅλης θεότητος), if I may so express myself, as to speak of that which belongs by nature to the supreme substance (οὐσᾷ); and to name the divine nature (φύσιν) is to designate for us as a single indication the entirety of the Holy Trinity (Τριάδα) as conceived in a single divinity (ἐν μιᾷ θεότητι), but not yet distinctly (διεσταλμένως) the person of each in particular (τὸ ἑνὸς πρόσωπον ἰδικῶς). While saying Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον), it is no longer from what indivisibly (ἀδιακρίτως) the entire nature of divinity is given an indication, it is from what allows, in the identity of substance (ταὐτὸν εἰς οὐσίαν) of the Holy Trinity, to discern (διαγιγνώσκεται) the proper hypostases (ἐν ὑποστάσεσιν ἰδικαῖς). Language then distributes to each (ἑκάστῳ) of the conceived beings the name (ὄνομα) which suits them and establishes in their own hypostasis those who are united (ἡνωμένα) by the substance. The last root, beyond which there is absolutely nothing, considers that it is the Father; the one who is born by nature and begotten of this last root, admit that he is the Son—a Son who has not, as well as created beings, the lot of becoming in time, which is not in a situation inferior to the Father as to the radiance in the beauty of his own nature, which coexists with him eternally, which is on the same plane as him in every respect, except only the fact of giving birth, which would be suitable only for to God the Father alone. Finally, you will describe as Holy Spirit the one who by nature flows from the Father through the Son, who under the image of the breath coming out of the mouth, manifests his own existence. In doing so, you will preserve clearly and without confusion the property of the three hypostases in their own existences, while worshiping the unique and consubstantial nature, the one ruling over all others." From this passage, Boulnois offers the following two columns of terms that correlate to *substance* on the one hand and *hypostasis* on the other:

Substance:	*Hypostase:*
1. οὐσία, φύσις	1. ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον
2. μία	2. τρεῖς
3. θεότης, τριάς	3. ὄνομα, Πατήρ, Υἱός, Πνεῦμα
4. κοινόν, κοινότης	4. ἴδιον, ἰδικός, τὸ καθ᾽ἕκαστον
5. ὅλος	5. ἕκαστος
6. ταὐτὸν εἰς οὐσίαν	6. ἐν ἰδικῇ ὑπάρξει
7. ταὐτότης (409c)	7. ἑτερότης (409c)
8. συναφῶς, ἀδιακρίτως	8. διωρισμένως (409c), διεσταλμένως
9. συνάπτω (409c), ἡνωμένα	9. διαγιγνώσκω, ἀποκρίνω

then the Spirit is not foreign to the nature and person of the Son.

> The Spirit is therefore also unique and if he pours forth from the Father as a source, he is not for that reason foreign to the Son. The latter has been engendered, in fact, with all the properties of the Father in him, and since he is the fruit of the transcendent divinity. How can he conceive of him without the goods of this divinity? Now the characteristic of divinity is holiness, of which the Spirit is indicative, for he is holy in his nature and sanctifier of all creation.[70]

Cyril affirms the same divine likeness of the Spirit because the Father serves as the source of the Spirit. If the Spirit originates in the Father, then the Son and Spirit have the same origin in the Father. Instead, Cyril speaks to the divine properties of God and *oikonomia* of the Spirit as holiness and the sanctifier of creation, respectively.

Cyril quotes John 16:12–15 as the Son in the flesh speaks about the divine Spirit. He offers a partitive reading of John 16 to highlight the divine qualities of the Son to uphold the properties of the Spirit. Cyril interprets the Johannine text as follows:

> Are not these words enough to give assurance to the wise, as it describes the Paraclete as his property? For, he has called him Spirit of truth and the truth is none other than himself. Then adding, "because he will take my things," he clearly indicated the kinship of substance and nature by virtue of which his Spirit is one with him. He does not say, in fact, that his Spirit will be wise by participation in him, nor that it will be in

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Second, I list this lengthy description earlier from the *dial. Trin.* to round out the discussion of *hypostasis*: "By confessing, therefore, that the Son is consubstantial with God the Father, but exists in his own hypostasis, we say that they are united in a way that conjoins and separates them at the same time. By the binding links of identity, we perfectly join the distinction of the characters, in other words, the names, and the otherness of the hypostases, otherness like that of a Father and a Son, but in this only so that the similitude of the substance in all things, the identity, the unequal equality that exists between the Father and the Son, level, if I may say, the difference and render in a virtually indistinguishable sense what is proper and particular to each. For one is Father and not Son, the other is Son and is not Father" (*dial. Trin.* 2, 409c [SC 231:198]). I list these two examples from Cyril not to provide the full vision of Cyril's Trinitarian vocabulary but to display Cyril's complex language of Trinitarian vocabulary. He certainly affirms what has been introduced to pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology that the Triune God is one eternal substance in three hypostases (*Jo.* 15:1). Cyril discerns what is proper and uniting and what is distinct and incommunicable. So, to reflect upon Cyril and depend upon Boulnois, ὑπόστασις refers to the incommunicable properties proper for the existence of each person. In this way, a Father is not a Son, and a Son is not a Father. And, while incommunicable, each ὑπόστασις is equally and indivisibly united by the shared divine substance. G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Dialogues sur la Trinité*, SC 231 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 83; Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity," 88 (see 84–93 for a fuller discussion).

[70] *dial. Trin.* 6, 592d (SC 246:26).

> the capacity of a subordinate that he will bring to the saints the words of the Son.[71]

The Son, in his incarnation, declares that the Spirit is of the same property as himself. This sameness is not a result of a divine person that now participates in the Son. Rather, the Spirit is of the same nature and quality of the Son and not in a position of subordination to the Son. Now incorporating John 15:26, Cyril confirms the same divine quality of all three persons.

> And we do not say at all that the Spirit is holy and wise by virtue of some relationship and participation. He is so rather substantially and as a natural quality, so to speak, of the holy and wise divinity, that which one conceives as Father, Son and also Spirit. That the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit of the Son, it is a mystery whose Son in person will teach you by saying, "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify concerning me?" (John 15:26).[72]

The Spirit possesses the same qualities as that of the Father and Son. They each possess the same substantial nature, and the Spirit's divine nature is not a result of participation but because of a shared substance. Cyril continues this Trinitarian discourse by upholding the shared nature of the Triune persons: "That by performing by the hands of the saints the operations of God, the Spirit has made a striking witness of the true divinity of the Son, that Son of whom he is the Spirit exactly as he is of the Father."[73] The three persons subsist with the same essence in a way to affirm the singleness of nature and distinction of personhood. The Spirit is not perceived as a separate substance but as sharing the co-equal substance and the inseparable activities of the divine life.[74] Cyril's reading of these Johannine texts appeals to the divine nature of the Son, even displayed in the incarnation, to uphold the divine nature of the Spirit.

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[71] *dial. Trin.* 6, 593ab (SC 246:28).

[72] *dial. Trin.* 6, 593cd (SC 246:28–30).

[73] *dial. Trin.* 6, 593e–94a (SC 246:30).

[74] Cyril displays a similar idea in the beginning of *Nest*. 4: one nature, subsisting in the three persons, and then followed by comments about inseparable activities. In *Nest.* 4.1, he notes: "For, on the one hand, the nature of divinity is one, and on the other hand, the Father subsists individually, and surely also the Son, and similarly also the Spirit. Indeed, everything is accomplished *from* the Father and *through* the Son *in* the Spirit. That is to say, when the Father has moved to act towards some given end, the Son certainly acts in the Spirit, and even if the Son or the Spirit is said to fulfill something, this certainly is from the Father, since the acting and the willing toward

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Whereas partitive exegesis registers what is proper of the Son *qua* divine and *qua* human, Cyril certainly corelates this mode of reading with his Trinitarian theology. Cyril's use of partitive reading practices directly corresponds to the Son's two natures during the incarnation, and how the Father and Spirit relate to the Son during this season. As a result, Cyril's Trinitarian theology comes to the fore far more here than in previous chapters. A few points of summary are in order. First, Cyril situates his partitive readings within a seasonal framework. To render partitive readings rightly, one must first discern the three epochs of the Son to speak more poignantly about the Son during the season of the incarnation—the *oikonomia with the flesh*. Cyril's partitive exegesis discerns the Son within a designated season and registers what is proper of the Son *qua* human and *qua* divine.

Second, the Son's relation to the Father influences interpretive grammar about the Son. For example, the Son is *X of X* with the Father to highlight a unique *hypostasis* and a union of nature, the eternal act of begetting, and the co-operative activities between Father and Son. Third, the Spirit's activities in relation to the Son correspond to the Son's two natures. Cyril's Pneumatology is Christological. How the Spirit is described in relation to the Son will help describe what is proper of the Son. While the Son is eternal, he too is a human in need of the Spirit. While the Son performs *qua* divine, he too receives the Spirit, is vivified by the Spirit, resurrected by the Spirit, and sanctified by the Spirit *qua* human. And, fourth, Cyril's Trinitarian theology certainly informs this reading strategy. To consider the two natures of the Son during the incarnation will eventually require interpreters of Scriptures to consider the full divine life.

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any and everything goes through the entire holy and consubstantial Trinity." And again, in *Nest*. 4.2, he comments on the inseparable activity of the three persons and the one nature of divinity in the Trinity: "Therefore, when the holy Trinity acts, it surely brings to pass precisely one and the same action: whatever the Father should do or wish to accomplish, the Son also does these things to the same degree, and similarly also the Spirit. . . . For surely the principle of the natural unity in the case of the holy Trinity proves that there is one motion with respect to everything that is done. . . . For it is understood that there is one nature of divinity in the holy and consubstantial Trinity."

Epilogue

My principal aim in this thesis has been to present one feature of Cyril's Christological exegetical framework, primarily from the *dial. Trin*. and other relevant examples. By focusing on his framework, several items emerge as part of this reading structure: (1) the profile of *who* reads partitively, (2) *how* to read partitively, and (3) *what* Trinitarian and Christological premises are informed and upheld by his Christological exegesis. Partitive exegesis is a reading strategy whereby interpreters identify some texts as speaking of the Son *qua* divine and others as *qua* human. Whereas this method of reading does not speak of there being two Sons, nor does it intend to divide the unity of the single incarnate Word, I contend that Cyril operates with at least two patterns of Christological exegesis.[1] First, *epochal exegesis* attends to the Son in a designated season to discern what is proper to him among the three stages of the Son's economy.[2] Second, *partitive exegesis* is a way to register what is proper to the Son *after he has been united to the flesh*.[3] Thus, Cyril subsequently identifies whether texts speak about the Son *qua* divine Word, or Son as incarnate Word during His *oikonomia with the flesh*.

I began this thesis by situating partitive exegesis in the broader context of Late Antique and pro-Nicene reading culture, and thus want to make a few additional comments.

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[1] While I mentioned *glaph. Gen.* 6.4 in chapter 5, I highlight another example of Cyril's partitive exegesis. Yet, I would still affirm it fitting within this two-fold framework. Cyril predicates the two natures of the Son (a partitive argument) upon Joseph and his age. Joseph is "ten seven" (i.e., 17; Gen 37:2 LXX). This "ten seven" idea signifies for Cyril that the single Son consists of two perfections: both deity and humanity.

[2] See *dial. Trin.* 1, 397e (SC 231:164). See the chapter entitled "Introduction" where I provide the scriptural framework from the Philippian hymn and provide a definition of *epochal exegesis*.

[3] See *dial. Trin.* 1, 396e–97a (SC 231:162). See the chapter entitled "Introduction" where I tie Cyril's phrase of *oikonomia with the flesh* to his partitive exegesis and provide a definition of *partitive exegesis.*

Simply attending to the reading strategies of early Christians does not satisfy the concerns of reading habits in antiquity. A pro-Nicene *exegetical culture* attends to *who* is reading, *how* one reads, and *what* is presumed as they read—among the concerns of social settings and ecclesial concerns. I highlight the role of virtue in the ideal reader and the presence of *a priori* theological and philosophical commitments that shape the contours of scriptural exegesis.[4] Therefore, I described the *ideal* reader in chapter 1 as a virtuous reader, traveling along a royal road that leads to Nicene commitments and partitive readings. And I described Cyril's *epochal* reading strategy in chapters 2 and 3, and his *partitive* reading strategy in chapters 4 and 5.

Within the past couple of decades, deductive analyses of early Christian exegesis more broadly have displayed robust methodologies and commentary to display the complex structures of Patristic exegesis. Evaluating the Father's exegetical practices based on modern historical and literary approaches will certainly fail to grasp the exegetical culture of antiquity. For example, Manlio Simonetti will serve as an older critic of Cyril, and R. P. C. Hanson will serve as a critic of early Christian exegesis. For Simonetti, Cyril's exegesis in *Jo*. "displays something desultory and casual" that lacks wholeness and compactness.[5] Hanson regards the reading abilities of early Christians as "incompetent and ill-prepared" and summarizes much of fourth-century exegesis as "perverse" and "positively grotesque."[6] Rather than letting the voices of early Christian scriptural exegesis be read within their world as a legitimate reading option, Hanson's vision of readings uses a historical-critical frame of reference to judge the legitimacy

[4] Consider the set of observations provided in Lewis Ayres, "The Word Answering the Word: Opening the Space of Catholic Biblical Interpretation," in *Theological Theology: Essays in Honour of John Webster*, ed. R. David Nelson, Darren Sarisky, and Justin Stratis, T&T Clark Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 39: "The rise of that set of Christian scriptural texts we call the 'New Testament' did not only involve the gradual distinction of those texts from others, it involved the rise to prominence of certain hermeneutical assumptions about how to read those texts. In other terms, the Christian community's acceptance of the canon of Scripture involved it also in accepting that a canonical text was most appropriately interrogated with a particular set of reading practices."

[5] Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 83.

[6] R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Scotland: T&T Clark, 1988), 826, 848. He further elaborates on and praises non-allegorists in antiquity: "Had all ancient interpreters of the Bible followed this advice, subsequent generations would have been saved the necessity of reading a great deal of nonsense" (see page 829).

of early Christian scriptural exegesis.[7]

Patristic scholarship has moved well beyond evaluating exegetical quality and given more detailed attention to Patristic exegesis on its own terms. Instead of evaluating early Christian exegetes by modern interpretative standards, more sensitivity is given to the inner matrix of early Christian thought.[8] I hope to contribute to these growing trends of evaluating early Christians and the patterns of their exegesis. Thus, part of my aim here is to situate Cyril in his setting and observe his interpretative framework's inner coherence and development. And as a result, we are better positioned to conclude that his exegesis is anything but "desultory" or "casual," but instead deeply complex.

Patristic exegesis still remains for many an odd, remote, or unnecessary enterprise. As Michael Legaspi reflects on Adolf von Harnack—who regarded early Christian writings as boring and insipid—he rightly links together the concern of critical study and the *ressourcement* experiment. "To study the fathers is not merely to 'come to the bottom' but to decide what it means to bear a culture, a faith, of someone else's making."[9] To discern whether Cyril's interpretive framework displays any significance for contemporary exegesis and modern theology depends a great deal upon how convincing they find his exegesis to be. Especially for those generally convinced of the pro-Nicene heritage, Andrew Louth marries theological commitments with exegetical techniques.[10] That is, one must not simply lay claim to a pro-

[7] Rowan Williams provides a vision for how to situate historical-critical readings while offering theological readings of scripture. Rowan Williams, "Historical Criticism and Sacred Text," in *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom*, ed. David F. Ford and Graham Stanton (London: SCM Press, 2003), 217–28.

[8] Paul Blowers and Peter Martens say, "There is at present a thriving scholarship on Scripture and its interpretation in early Christianity." Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1. For two non-Cyrilline examples, see Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, OSHT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Stephen O. Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1–3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[9] Michael C. Legaspi, "Modern Biblical Criticism and the Legacy of Pre-Modern Interpretation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 720.

[10] Andrew Louth compares the limitations of historical-critical readings and favors use of Patristic theology and exegesis. To affirm Patristic theology, must not one also assume the pathways to such conclusions? "If the results that the historical-critical method yields when applied to Scripture are too meagre, maybe we shall do

Nicene theological vision without also attending to the exegetical and philosophical moves of this pro-Nicene culture. This premise permits us to end where we began: a pro-Nicene exegetical culture considers *who* is reading, *how* they read, and *what* theological and philosophical commitments are assumed. As I pivot towards the concerns of *ressourcement*, to claim pro-Nicene thought for modern theological concerns but ignore the exegesis of pro-Nicene theologians "disrupts the internal coherence of pro-Nicene thought."[11] Hans Boersma discerns the exegetical concerns of the *nouvelle théologie* and *ressourcement* project: recovery of Patristic hermeneutics, sensitivity to historical-critical exegesis, and discerning the spiritual and historical levels of interpretation as sacramental in character.[12]

To highlight the implications of the aforementioned arguments of this thesis, I hope to draw out four additional lines of inquiry that build from the preceding investigation. Whereas I have refrained from defending his view of or approach to scriptural exegesis, I have certainly aimed to render Cyril's Trinitarian exegesis in a clearer manner. And these four areas are aimed to connect the previous arguments to other areas within Cyril's literature, situate him deeper within the pro-Nicene setting, and venture towards the *ressourcement* project. First, if Cyril's epochal and partitive exegesis is displayed throughout his literature, then more work can consider the developing and maturing exegetical vision in Cyril's writings. Whereas I predominately focused on Cyril's Trinitarian volumes, I simply alluded to or briefly highlighted other epochal and partitive examples in Cyril's other works. But more can explore Cyril's Trinitarian exegesis in his Christological works and Nestorian controversy, namely the assumptions laid forth in *ep.* 17.13 and *anathema* 4. Whereas Cyril's Trinitarian literature

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better if we include the creeds, the Councils, and the Fathers. But it is not clear that the ground is then all that much more secure: for the Fathers, and creeds, and Councils claim to be interpreting Scripture. How can one accept their results if one does not accept their methods?" Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 100.

[11] Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 234.

[12] Hans Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie *and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 291; also see Jean Daniélou, "Les Orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse," *Études* 249 (1946): 9.

displays an anti-"Arian" or anti-Eunomian concern, the Nestorian controversies and subsequent Christological literature display different theological anxieties. Second, while his epochal and partitive exegesis is simply one kind of inter-related reading strategy, we can consider Cyril's other modes of Christological exegesis. In other words, how does this exegetical framework relate to his other approaches to Trinitarian exegesis? I briefly highlighted his prosopology and performative exegesis in earlier chapters, and more research can explore how he perceives Christ as the *skopos* of the Scriptures and his Pneumatological exegesis. As I noted in the introduction, many works have examined Cyril's Trinitarian and Christological theology, and others have explored Cyril's exegetical patterns more broadly, but more work can continue to explore the complex set of paradigms and construct *how* these two features intersect: Cyril's Trinitarian and Christological exegesis.

Building from the previous two additional areas of research, I hope this study reaches beyond Cyril and Cyrilline studies. The onus of responsibility is still upon Patristic scholarship to unearth the socio-historical, a reading *habitus*, and the theological vision of a pro-Nicene culture. And so, a third additional line of inquiry can continue to explore how individual pro-Nicene theologians relate and contribute to pro-Nicene thought. While pro-Nicene theologians share a unique theological vision, enough is present to display shared commitments between one another. In a similar way, what are the shared *exegetical* commitments among pro-Nicene figures, and how does Cyril fit within these set of premises?

Now, I turn to offer a fourth and quite possibly the more difficult of these final additional areas for further research. Scholars of early Christianity and Patristics can address the first three. But this final one links with other spheres of Christian scholarship: *ressourcement* of Cyril's exegesis. To discern if Cyril's Trinitarian exegesis displays any significance requires many of those interested in Christian scholarship to discern its value for modern theology. To *ressource* Cyril's paradigm is not simply to *rehearse* his scriptural exegesis. Cyril's social and polemical setting cannot and must not be mapped upon the current landscape of modern theology. Instead, Cyril becomes a voice to teach, instruct, and influence those involved in

Trinitarian discourse. Retrieval looks to modern theological needs and then uses and models the voices of the past—theological reasoning, scriptural exegesis, and conclusions—to reshape the future of Christian thought. Thus, the Fathers, in general, and Cyril provide historical evidence for more official Church dogma. But they possess their distinct historical placement in the history and development of theology. Their approach to metaphysical realities, dogmatics, and scriptural exegesis permits them to be invaluable dialogue partners.

For Cyril, Trinitarian exegesis was first modeled by Paul and the scriptural authors, is how one upholds a Nicene vision of God, and ought to be passed along in the life of the Church. Thus, this exegetical model simply rehearses the resources before him. Trinitarian exegesis explores how the metaphysical divine mysteries might be explained by the patterns of scriptural language and finitude of human speech. Cyril's Trinitarian dogma explores the mystery of Christ. Epochal and partitive exegesis is a necessary mode of reading precisely because it is a way to understand the subject matter of the Scriptures—Jesus Christ, the eternal Son become flesh. And since Christ is the subject matter before Cyril, Christological scriptural exegesis and Trinitarian theology intricately join together to invite readers into the mystery of Christ.

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