Religious Violence in 5th Century Alexandria: The Controversy between Bishop Cyril and Governor Orestes and the Murder of Hypatia

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Abstract

This communication will deal with phenomena of religious violence that appears in Egypt during Late Antiquity. As religious violence is considered, always in the context of that time, actions such as murders, torture and persecution of heathens, destruction or confiscation of sacred buildings and religious objects, as well as the prohibition of worship. However, they also include the threat of violence. Violence was exercised both by the state and by individuals and groups of individuals. Due to the wide scope of the specific research object, we will deal with the religious violence in Egypt at the beginning of the 5th century, which led to the assassination of the Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician of Alexandria Hypatia. A special mention will be made to the relationship of bishop Cyril with the Christian and Jewish population of Alexandria, as well as with the governor of the city Orestes.

Keywords: Religious Violence, Byzantine Egypt, Hypatia, Bishop Cyril, Alexandria.

1. The election of Cyril as Patriarch of Alexandria

In 412, the bishop of Alexandria Theophilos died and there were two candidates for the episcopal see, his nephew, Cyril1 and the archdeacon Timotheos.2 Due to the confrontation of the supporters of the two sides, a standoff3 was caused. Then, according to the sources, the Count of Egypt, Haas, C., Alexandria in Late Antiquity. Topography and Social, Baltimore 1997, 298.

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2 Socrates Scholasticus, 352. 24-26 (7.7.2): « Ἐπιμάχου δὲ γενομένης καὶ ἐνταῦθα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς οἱ μὲν ἐξήτων ἐνθρονισθήναι Τιμόθεων ἀρχιδιάκονον, οἱ δὲ Κύριλλον, δὲ δὲν ἀδέλφους Θεοφίλου».
3 Socrates mentions that there was a standoff among the people. See, Socrates Scholasticus, 352.26-353.1 (7.7.3): «στάσεως δὲ διατούτῳ μεταξὺ τοῦ λαοῦ κηρύχεσθαι». Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 21-22. According to some scholars, violent riots ensued between supporters of the two candidates, resulting in bloodshed.
Abundatios, intervened in the dispute.\textsuperscript{4} On the third day, after Theophilos' death, Cyril was finally proclaimed bishop.\textsuperscript{5} Immediately after his enthronement, Cyril closed the churches of the schismatic Nabataeans or Novatians,\textsuperscript{6} appropriated all their cult objects and the possessions of their bishop.\textsuperscript{7}

2. Cyril's confrontation with the Jews

Then, in 414, Cyril came into sharp conflict with the Jews of Alexandria, which, it has been argued, had deeper religious, political and economic causes, and involved the Christians and Jews of Alexandria in general.\textsuperscript{8} The reason for the confrontation between Cyril and the Jews was the riots in the theater of Alexandria, where the Jews, according to the church historian Socrates Scholasticus, preferred to spend Saturdays.

\textsuperscript{4} The sources are not in agreement as to the candidate with whom Abundatius was drafted. See, Socrates Scholasticus, 353.1-2 (7.7.1): «συνελαμβάνετο τῷ μέρει Κυρίλλου ὁ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ τάγματος ἤγουν Ἀβουνδάντιος». – On the contrary, Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, 1100C: «τῷ μέρει Τιμοθέου οὗ μικρὰν ἐδόθων ῥοπὴν Ἀβουνδάντιος ὁ τηνικαὶ τῶν στρατιωτικῶν σαμάτων ἤγουν» Haas, Alexandria, 296-298. According to some scholars, the proclamation of Cyril as a bishop would also require the support and election of certain bishops and part of the people. Cf. Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 22.

\textsuperscript{5} Socrates Scholasticus, 353.2-3 (7.7.4): «διὰ τρίτη ἡμέρα μετὰ τὴν ταλαιπθήν Θεοφίλου ἐν Κύριλλως ἐνθρονισθενείς ἐπὶ τὴν ἑπετειαν ἄρχοκεφαλον Θεοφίλου παρῆλθεν». See, Socrates Scholasticus, 353.6-7 (7.7.5): «Ἐνθάδε οὖν Κύριλλος τὰς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ Ἀναστασίας ἀκελασίας ἀποκλείσας πάντα μὴ αὐτῶν τὰ ἱερὰ κειμήλια ἔλαβεν, τὸ δὲ ἐπάθησον αὐτῶν πάντων ἄχρι τοῦ ἔχειν ἀφελέτον». Haas, Alexandria, 298; Watts, E. J., City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2006, 197, 208. A reason for the persecution of the Novatians may have been that they might have supported Timothy. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 299. Indeed, his first speeches speak of the need for unity of the Church. Cf. Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 31.

\textsuperscript{6} The Nabataeans or Novatians were schismatics who refused to accept into the bosom of the Church those Christians who had sacrificed to idols during the persecution of Diocletian.

\textsuperscript{7} Socrates Scholasticus, 353.6-7 (7.7.5): «Ἐνθάδε οὖν Κύριλλος τὰς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ Ἀναστασίας ἀκελασίας ἀποκλείσας πάντα μὴ αὐτῶν τὰ ἱερὰ κειμήλια ἔλαβεν, τὸ δὲ ἐπάθησον αὐτῶν πάντων ἄχρι τοῦ ἔχειν ἀφελέτον». Haas, Alexandria, 298; Watts, E. J., City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2006, 197, 208. A reason for the persecution of the Novatians may have been that they might have supported Timothy. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 299. Another reason could be that Cyril wanted to ensure the unity of the Church of Egypt, i.e., that there would be no schismatic churches. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 299; Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 20. Indeed, his first speeches speak of the need for unity of the Church. Cf. Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 31.

\textsuperscript{8} According to Socrates Scholasticus, the Jews of the city always and in every case, were hostile to the Christians. See, Socrates Scholasticus, 358.1-2 (7.13.5): «δεῖ μὴν πολέμοι παντοχῦ τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς καθοστῆται». Cyril’s opposition to the Jews has been argued to be due to the Christianity-Judaism religious rivalry and especially because Cyril had been concerned with matters of interpretation of the Old Testament and the attitude of the Jews after the birth of Jesus. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 300, 308. By contrasting one religion with another in his speeches, Cyril attempted to ensure that his flock would avoid adopting Jewish liturgical formalities and Jewish theological interpretations of the Scriptures. Cf. Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 41.
in the theaters watching spectacles with dancers. The presence of the crowd led to riots. In fact, the confrontation between the Jews and the Christians became more intense, because the two religious communities supported different actors in the theater. The prefect of Alexandria, Orestes, had tried and succeeded to some extent in stopping the unrest, but the Jews opposed his restrictive measures. So, when Orestes was about to announce some new measures in the theater, some people close to Cyril were there in order to be informed about the content of the measures. Among them there was a certain Hierax, a philologist and a very ardent supporter of Cyril. The Jews protested to Orestes that Hierax should be arrested and publicly tortured if he did not cease his enmity towards the Christians. Orestes ordered the immediate arrest and public torture of Hierax, which led to riots.

Cyril, enraged by the fact that the Jews had denounced Hierax to Orestes, summoned the leaders of the Jewish community and threatened them with punishment if they did not cease their enmity towards the

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9 Socrates Scholasticus, 357.27-29 (7.13.4): «ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σαββάτου ὁ ὑπάρχων υἱὸς πάλιν ὁ Ἰουδαίους ἀργούντας ἐν αὐτῇ μὴ τῇ ἀκρόασι τοῦ νόμου, ἀλλὰ τοῖς θεάτροις σχολάζειν». Haas, Alexandria, 302-303.

10 Socrates Scholasticus, 57.26-27 (7.13.4) καὶ 358.2 (7.13.5): «τὸ σπουδάζειν περὶ τοῖς ὀρχηστάς [...] ἐπὶ διὰ τοὺς ὀρχηστάς». Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 34.

11 Socrates Scholasticus, 358.1-3 (7.13.5): «ἐτεὶ δὲ πλέον διὰ τοὺς ὀρχηστάς ἔκπεπλολόμου κατ’αὐτῶν [Χριστιανῶν]».


13 Socrates Scholasticus, 357.30-358.1 (7.13.5): «καὶ τοῦτον τρόπον τινι ὧδε τοῦ ὑπάρχου τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρείας ἐν τάξει καταστάντος οὐδὲν ἦτο τῶν ἔκπεπλολόμον τοῖς τοῦ ἐπάρχου μέροις ἀντιπαθοῦντες».

14 Socrates Scholasticus, 358.3-6 (7.13.6): «καὶ δὴ πότε Ὁρέστου τοῦ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρείας ἐπάρχου πολιτεύειν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ ποιοῦντος (οὗτος δὲ ὀνομαζότας εἰδὼτας τὰς θρησκευτικὰς διατυπώσεις) παρῆσαν καὶ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ Κυρίλλῳ τῷ σπουδασταῖ τάς γνωσμένας παρὰ τοῦ ἐπάρχου διατυπώσεις γνώσαν βουλόμενοι».

15 Socrates Scholasticus, 358.7-12 (7.13.7-8): «ἡ δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς τα καὶ ὑπόνομα Ἰέρας, ὡς γραμμάτων μὲν τῶν παράκολον διδάσκαλος ἦν, διάπερος δὲ ἀκροτις τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Κυρίλλου καταστάς καὶ περὶ τὸ κρότους ἐν ταῖς διατυπώσεις αὐτοῦ ἐγέρατεν ἡ σπουδαστάς, τούτων τούν τοῦτο τὸν Ἰέρας τοῦ πλήθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ θεάσαμεν κατεβόντα εὐθὺς, ὡς δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο παραβάλλει τῷ θεάτρῳ ἢ ἦν σταῦρος τῷ ὦμῳ ἐμβάλλον». The plausibility of the description must be great, as in the theater of Alexandria, already during the Roman era, the various ethnoreligious groups (Greeks and Jews) accused each other of treason. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 65-66.

Christians. However, the Jews did not heed the warnings but intensified the confrontation, when they set a trap for the Christians of Alexandria, and shouted in the night that a church was on fire. Those unsuspecting Christians who came out of their homes to put out the fire were murdered by armed Jews who had ambushed them in the dark. The Coptic bishop and historian John of Nikiu attributes this action to the fact that they enjoyed the support of Orestes, while Socrates to their reaction to Cyril’s threats. The next day, and while the plan of the Jews became known, the Christians advanced under the leadership of Cyril against the synagogues, which they captured. They expelled the Jews who had participated in the murders and looted their property. From then on, the Jews of Alexandria were no longer a significant political factor, due to the loss of their property, while some were baptized Christians. Of course, in Alexandria it is witnessed that Jews continued to live throughout the following centuries, and therefore their expulsion was not complete as Socrates claims.

17 Socrates, Scholasticus, 358.17-359.1 (7.13.10-14): [...] To δὲ πλήθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῆς ἀπελευθερωμένης φιλονεικότερον γέγονε, καὶ μηχανάς ἐπεννόην ἐπὶ βιβλάθη τῶν Χριστιανῶν. [...] Σύνθημα δέντες ἐκ τούτων νομοτραχείαν κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐπενθέθη. Καὶ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν κηρύσσεν κατὰ τὰ κλίματα τῆς πόλεως τινὰς παρασκεύαζαν βωόντας, ὡς ἢ ἐπαύωνος Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐκκλησία πᾶσα πυρὶ καῖτο. Τούτο αὐτοῦ συνενεχόμενον ἄλλοι ἀλλαχότεν συνέτρεχον ὡς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν περισσότερον. Οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι εὐθὺς ἐπετίθεντο καὶ ἀπεσφανοῦν <***>, ἄλλης μὲν ἀποχόμενοι δεικτῶν τοὺς δακτυλίως, τούς δὲ προσπάταντας τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀναφέροντες». Haas, Alexandria, 303; Wessel, Cyril of Alexandria, 35.


20 Haas, Alexandria, 304.


22 There are testimonies about the living of Jews in Alexandria from the middle of the 5th and during the 6th century. In the middle of the 5th c. Jews of Alexandria request
Orestes sent a report of the above events to Constantinople. Cyril did the same, presenting his own version of events. 23 Constantinople’s response was that Jewish and Christian disputes should be addressed to the governor of the province. 24 At the same time, Cyril, at the urging of the Alexandrians, sent his men to Orestes to mediate in order for the two men to reconcile, but Orestes refused. 25 The prefect did the same when Cyril, probably during the Divine Liturgy, held out the Gospel to him to kiss it. 26 According to the scholars, this action was perhaps taken by Orestes as an act of submission of political power to the bishop and not a plea for reconciliation. In this way, however, and because the denial was made public, it created suspicions among some Christians about the religious identity of Orestes, specifically that he was a crypto-pagan. 27

3. The sharpening of Cyril’s confrontation with Orestes.

Perhaps because of these suspicions against Orestes, five hundred monks from the monasteries of Nitria went to Alexandria to fight on the side of the bishop against Orestes. 28 The monks met Orestes in the city, the rebuilding of the city’s synagogues, while in the 6th c. Jewish teachers are mentioned. Cf. C. Haas, Alexandria, 127.

23 Socrates Scholasticus 359.12-17 (7.13.18-19): «Ο τοιὸν τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπαρχος Ὅρεστὴς σφόδρα ἐπὶ τὸ γενομένῳ ἐχάλεσαν, καὶ πέθους μέγα ἐτύθετο τηλικαίην πάλιν οὗτος ἄρδην τοσοῦτον ἐκκενοθῆναι ἀνθρώπων· διὸ καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ἀνέφερε βασιλεῖ. Κύριλλος δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ Ἰουδαίων πλημμελείας γνωρίμως καθιστῶν βασιλεῖ».

24 Haas, Alexandria, 304.


28 Socrates Scholasticus 359.23-27 (7.14.1-2): «Τῶν ἐν τούς ἄρσει τῆς Νιτρίας μοναχῶν τινῶν ἐνθαμμὸν ἔχοντες φρόνημα ἀπὸ Θεοφίλου ἀρχάγελον […] ἐζήλων τε τὸν κτησμὸν προθήκως καὶ ἑπάρ Κυριλλοῦ μάχεσθαι προηροῦτο, ἀφεμένοι οὖν τῶν μοναστηρίων ἄνδρες περὶ τοῦ πεντακοσίου καὶ καταλαβόντες τὴν πάλιν […]» Haas, Alexandria, 305. Socrates does not mention that the monks were invited by Cyril. According to some scholars, Cyril was aware of the uncontrollable violence of the monks as well as their indiscipline towards Theophilus, and therefore he probably would not have invited them to Alexandria himself. On the contrary, cf. Watts, E. J., Hypatia, The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher, New York, 2017, 110, who thinks that the monks were invited by Cyril.
on his chariot. They began to insult him and call him a Paganist.\textsuperscript{29}

Orestes suspected that the accusation was a trick of Cyril and answered that he was baptized, but the monks did not accept the answer.\textsuperscript{30} Finally, one of them named Ammonios threw a stone at him, which hit him on the head. Almost all of Orestes' guards scattered in terror into the crowd.\textsuperscript{31}

However, the Alexandrians ran to help Orestes and they expelled the monks.\textsuperscript{32} Ammonios was arrested, interrogated by the prefect and tortured to death for the attack on him. Orestes sent a new report to the emperor. Cyril did the same, who declared Ammonios a martyr of the Christian faith. However, the Christians of the city did not share the energy of Cyril, who eventually let the memory of the events fade.\textsuperscript{33}

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\item[29] Socrates Scholasticus, 359.27-29 (7.14.2-3): «ἐπιτηροῦσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀχήματος προϊόντα τὸν ἔπαρχον, καὶ προσελθόντες ἀπεκάλουν βότην καὶ Ἐλλήνα καὶ ἄλλα πολλά περισσύκουσιν».  

\item[30] Socrates Scholasticus, 359.29-32 (7.14.4-5): «Ὁ δὲ ὑποτεθέντας σκυωρίαν αὐτῷ παρὰ Κυρίλλου γενέσθαι ἐβρύα Χριστιανός τε εἶναι καὶ ὧδε Ἀττικοῦ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἐν τῇ Κονσταντινουπόλει βεβαπτίσθαι. Τις δὲ οὗ προσεξέχον τοῖς λογομνοῖς οἱ μοναχοὶ [...]».  

\item[31] Socrates Scholasticus, 359.32-360.2 (7.14.5-6): «ἐς εἰς αὐτών Ἀμμύνων ὕθελο λήθω βάλλει τὸν ὘ράστην κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς. Καὶ πληροῦται μὲν αἴματι ὅλος ἐκ τοῦ τραύματος, ὑποχωροῦσιν δὲ οἱ ταξεῖται πλῆθος ὀλίγων, ἄλλος ἄλλοις ἐν τῷ πλῆθε διαδίδοντες, τὸν ἐκ τῆς βολῆς τῶν λίθων θάνατον φυλαττόμενον» Haas, Alexandria, 305. The reason the monks did not accept Orestes' answer that he had been baptized was that they knew that some former monks were only baptized to secure a good career in government office. Therefore, the monks believed that Orestes was also baptized out of political interest. Orestes' response that he was baptized by a bishop from Constantinople would further irritate the monks of a city that was in conflict (politically, etc.) with Constantinople. Cf. Ronchey, S., “Hypatia the Intellectual” in: A. Fraschetti (ed.), Roman Women, Chicago 2001, 165.


\item[33] Socrates Scholasticus, 360.4-16 (7.14.7-11): «Τὸν Ἀμμύνων δὲ συλλαβόντες παρὰ τὸν ἔπαρχον ἤγουσιν· ἕς δῆμοςι κατὰ τοῖς νόμοις ἔζησασι αὐτὸν ὑποβολόν ἐπὶ τοιούτοις ἤθεσαν, ὡς ἀποκτεῖναι. Ὁι εἰς μακρὰν δὲ καὶ τὰ γενόμενα γνώριμα τοῖς κρατεῶν καταστήσαν. Οὐ μὴ ἄλλα καὶ Κύριλλος τὰ ἐναντία ἐγγορίζεις βασιλεύ, τοῦ δὲ Ἀμμύνων τὸ σῶμα ἀναλαβόν καὶ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἐκκλησίων ἀποδέχετος, ὄνομαν ἔτερον αὐτῷ ἐπιτιθεῖς Θεομάσιον ἐπέκαλέσει καὶ μάρτυρα χρηματίζεις ἐκεῖσθαι, ἐγκομιάζει οὗτος ἐπὶ ἐκκλησίας τὸ φρόνημα ὡς ἀγώνια ὑπὲρ εὐσέβειας ἀνελμένου. Ἀλλ’ οἱ εἰς φρονοῦντες, κατάπληκτοι Χριστιανοὶ ὄντες, οὐκ ἀπέδεχότοι τὴν περὶ τοῦτον Κυρίλλου συμοῦν ἠπάταντο γὰρ προπετεία δίκην διδοκεότα τὸν Αμμύνων, οὐ μὴ ἀνάκηρτον ἀρνήσεως Χριστὸν ἐνεποθανεῖν ταῖς βασιλείαις. Λίκα καὶ Κύριλλος κατὰ βραχιόνο τῷ ἰστόχειειν λήθην τοῦ γενόμενον ἐφάγαστο». Haas, Alexandria, 306-307. According to some scholars, Ammonios was tortured in order to confess that Cyril
4. Hypatia's involvement in the conflict and her murder

The rivalry between Cyril and Orestes, however, did not stop, and at the center of it was the philosopher Hypatia. The opinion spread among Christians that the reason for Orestes’ reluctance to reconcile with Cyril was Hypatia. According to the sources, Hypatia had frequent contacts both with Orestes and with the members of the ruling class. A later source considers the alleged magical abilities as the reason why Hypatia negatively influenced Orestes over Cyril. Various scholars have hypothesized that Hypatia was Orestes’ link to the Alexandrian ruling class, which gave him the necessary social power to oppose Cyril. Other scholars considered that those who spread the rumor could neither denounce the monks as the cause of the non-reconciliation, nor the attitude of the Prefect, so Hypatia remained. Finally, some consider that Hypatia frequently visiting the prefect did not help Orestes in his confrontation with Cyril, but using her influence she asked him for favors for the benefit of her various students. In related letters to her, Synesios asks for her mediation to the rulers of the city in favor of his classmates.

ordered him to attack the Prefect. Cf. Tahopoulos, Οψεις θησαυρουτικῆς βίας, 202, f. 1192.

34 Socrates Scholasticus, 360-28-361.1 (7.15.4): «ἐπεὶ γὰρ συνετύχανεν συγνόταρον τῷ Ὁρέστῃ, διαβολὴν τούτ’ ἐκίνησε καὶ αὐτῆς παρὰ τῷ τῆς ἐκκλησίας λαῷ, ὡς ἄρα εἴη ἢ μὴ συγχωροῦσα τὸν Ὁρέστην εἰς φιλίαν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ συμβῆναι». Socrates uses the word διαβολὴ that Socrates uses does not only mean slander but also, in general, an accusation without expressing an opinion about the justice or injustice of this accusation. According to Lampe’s Lexicon, 344, διαβολή: 1. censure 2. blameworthiness. Socrates neither rejects the accusations against Hypatia nor agrees with them. In two other cases (78.17 and 293.21) he uses the verb κατηγορήσει, in the first in the sense of slander and in the second in the sense of an accusation that is true. Furthermore, Damascius mentions that the rulers of the city valued and sought her opinion.

35 Socrates Scholasticus 360.28-29 (7.15.4): «συνετύχανεν συγνόταρον τῷ Ὁρέστῃ».


37 John of Nikiu, 344 : “Le préfet de la province l’honorait particulièrement, car elle l’avait séduit par son art magique : il cessait de fréquenter l’église, comme il en avait l’habitude; il y venait à peine une fois par hasard”.

38 Haas, Alexandria, 313.

39 Watts, Hypatia, 113-114.

40 Synesios, Letters 147.7-11 (Letter 81): «Σὺ μὲν οὖν ἄφαι καὶ δύναι καὶ δύσμως κάλλιστα χρωμένη τῷ δύνασθαι, Νίκαιος δὲ καὶ Φιλόλαος οἱ καλὸι κἀγαθοὶ νεανίαι καὶ συγγνόντες, διὸς ἐπανέλθουν τὸν ἰδίων γενόμενον κύριον, πάσι μελέτην τοῖς τά σά τιμόσι καὶ ἰδιόσις σὲ μετὰ τῆς ἄρετης καὶ ἄρχοντο».
In any case, in March 415, a mob of ferocious Christians who counted on nothing and no one, led by a reader or ruler named Peter, attacked Hypatia.\(^{41}\) They then took her to Caesareum, where, after stripping her,\(^{42}\) they murdered her with fragments of vessels and dismembered her body\(^{43}\) or, according to other sources, dragged her through the streets of the city until she died.\(^{44}\) According to other sources, while Hypatia was cooling off, her eyes were gouged out.\(^{45}\) Then they carried her body outside the city to a place called Kinnaron, where they burned it.\(^{46}\)

Hypatia's murder was reported to the emperor, who seems to have been outraged by the events. Despite this, there was bribery of those responsible for solving the murder, and the case was closed without punishment of the guilty. As for Orestes, there is no other information about him from the sources. Some scholars have speculated that he resigned or was recalled or simply his term of office expired,\(^{47}\) although there is no evidence of this in the sources.

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\(^{41}\) The sources give different location and time of the attack. Socrates, 361.2-3 (7.15.5), states that the attack took place when Hypatia was returning home: «ἐπιτηροῦσιν τὴν ἁνθρώπαν ἔπαινωσαν ἐπὶ οἰκίαν ποθέν».\(^{42}\) Socrates, 361.4-5 (7.15.5): «ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἦ ἐπάνων Καισάριον, συνέκκουσιν, ἀποδίασαντας τε τὴν ἐσθήτα».\(^{43}\) Socrates, 361.5 (7.15.5): «ὄστρακοις ἀνεῖλον, καὶ μεληδὸν διασάσαντες».\(^{44}\) John of Nikiou, 346.\(^{45}\) Damascius, 81.5-6: «καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῆς μικρὸν ὑποσταραύωσης ἔτι ἐκκόστυσαν».\(^{46}\) Socrates, 361.5-6 (7.15.5): «ἔπι τὸν καλοίμενον Κιναίρωνα τὰ μέλη συνάραντας πυρὶ κατανάλωσαν». John of Nikiou, 346. Burning the corpses of people considered criminals who had been brutally killed was a practice known in Alexandria as early as the Ptolemaic era. The location of Kinnaron is unknown.\(^{47}\) The length of the term of office of the governors of Egypt on average term was less than two years. Watts, Hypatia, 112, 121.
Conclusions

Regarding the identity of the murderers, Socrates Scholasticus writes that they were Christians, «Δόρες τὸ φρόνημα Ἑθερμοί».48 No source mentions the parabalani. A law of 416, which removes the authority over the parabalani from the bishop and assigns it to the Prefect, specifies as the reason for this decision the terror caused by the parabalani in the meetings of the municipal council of Alexandria, and their interference in the matters of its competence, while it does not mention the commission of murders on their behalf.49 It has been suggested by modern scholars either that the murderers were generally residents of Alexandria,50 or that they belonged to the parabalani corps,51 or that possibly the parabalani collaborated with the Christian mob, because the others would-be killers, the monks, had fled into the desert earlier, after the attack on Orestes.52 Finally, according to an interesting case by E. J. Watts, at the time of the assassination, in March, there was a crowd of periodically unemployed internal migrants from Egypt who roamed Alexandria and depended – during their idleness – on the bishop's charity. This crowd may have followed Peter the reader, and had the conditions (natural muscularity, fanaticism) for such an act.53

Regarding the motives of the perpetrators and whether the murder was an expression of Christian-Pagan rivalry, some sources ascribe political motives to the murder and claim that the killers saw Hypatia as an obstacle to the reconciliation of the Bishop with the Prefect.54 Others cite

48 Socrates, 361.1-2 (7.15.5)
49 C. Th. 16.2.42: “[…] quod quidem terrore eorum, qui parabalani nuncupantur, legatione insertum est…ut nihil commune clericorum publicis actibus vel ad curiam pertinentibus habeant. […] Quibus neque ad quodlibet publicum spectaculum neque ad curiae locum neque ad iudicium adcedendum”. The above law prohibits the presence of parabalani in theaters, courts, and parliament, while Hypatia was not allegedly murdered or abducted in any of these places, so it does not appear that the law was enacted because of her murder. As mentions Haas, Alexandría, 314 observes, the involvement of the parabalani in the murder would not only cause the “disgrace”, but the accusation of homicide against the bishop by Cyril’s enemies in Alexandria to Theodosius II.
52 Dzielska, Υπατία, 180-181.
53 Watts, Hypatia, 114-115.
54 Socrates Scholasticus, 360.30-361.1 (7.15.4): «αὕτη ἡ μή συγκρούσα τὸν Ὀρέστην εἰς φιλίαν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ συμβήναν» Theodore the Lector, 92.17-18: «ὑπονοησάντες ὡς αὕτη πεθαίνῃ Ὀρέστην τὸν ὄφαρχον Ἀλεξανδρείας <μή> ἔνοικῆσαι πρὸς ἀγάπην Κυρίλλῳ» Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, 1105CD: «ὀναβολήν κατ’ αὕτης ἐκίνητε
envy of Hypatia’s fame and prestige as a motive. Some sources cite the Alexandrians’ innate tendency to riot as a cause. Finally, there are sources that state that the perpetrators were motivated by the use of magic (which they associate with Paganism) on the part of Hypatia. Thus, the opinions of the researchers, respectively, vary.

On the issue of Cyril’s responsibility regarding Hypatia’s murder, the sources give conflicting information, and they can be divided into the following groups. In the first group are placed those who associate Cyril with the murder, either directly or indirectly. To this group belong Socrates, Damascius, John of Nikiu and John Malalas. The second group includes those who express ignorance about the moral author of the murder or attribute it to others, except of Cyril, the responsibility for planning and ordering the murder of Hypatia. Corresponding to the sources, modern scholars either more or less incriminate Cyril, or acquit him due to doubts and consider that he did not order the murder. Regarding Cyril’s participation in spreading the rumors against Hypatia as a witch, also the opinions of scholars differ.

Based on the above, Cyril’s moral authorship is not proven, without at the same time being ruled out. Those who assembled the mob that committed the assassination could have been Cyril’s advisers having come to a pre-consultation with him, but they could also have been simply his enthusiastic followers who took the initiative entirely on their own.

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55 According to Damascius, Cyril, learning of Hypatia’s honors and fame, envied her and decided to kill her.

56 Suidae, IV 644: “ός δὲ τινες διὰ τὸ ἔμφυτον τῶν Ἀλεξανδρίων θράσος καὶ στασιάδες”.

57 John of Nikiu, 346: “se mit à la recherche de cette femme païenne qui, par ses artifices de magie, avait séduit les gens de la ville et le préfet”.

58 For the opinion that the murder was politically motivated and that the fact that Hypatia was a Hellene only increased her inability to defend herself, cf. Dzielska, Υπαηία, 167-168, 170, 194. On the contrary, cf Haas, Alexandria, 308, who believes that the assassination was also religiously motivated.

59 Cf. Tahopoulos, Ὀρας θρησκευτικῆς βίας, 208, f. 1238.


61 According to Dzielska, Υπαηία, 182, Cyril was the main instigator of the related smear campaign against Hypatia.
own from their own motives. Socrates' charge of μὴ ἔχων is general enough to constitute a charge of moral sleight of hand. Given the relative our ignorance of the existence and degree of moral authorship of the bishop, and based on the data so far, moral authorship can be traced with certainty at most to the reader Peter, who led the crowd against Hypatia, and according to one version he was a local lord.62 Our ignorance of the existence and degree of moral authorship of the bishop, and based on the data so far, moral authorship can be traced with certainty at most to the reader Peter, who led the crowd against Hypatia, and according to one version he was a local lord. It is also certain that the murderers were friendly with Cyril and his peers. It is not provable to attribute everything that the Christian community did to Cyril.

Regarding Cyril's attitude towards the Jews, and especially his raid on the synagogues and the expulsion of some Jews, according to some scholars, the laws provided for exile and the death penalty for those involved in the attempt to burn or damage foreign property, and churches. However, these laws did not give the bishop the right to apply the penalties against the guilty. Consequently, Cyril usurped the powers of the prefect and acted irregularly. Cyril probably felt that he had no choice but to defend his community himself from, once again, a recurrence of anti-Christian actions in Alexandria, and to enforce the laws himself, even though he knew full well that he had no jurisdiction to do so.63

As for Orestes, Cyril's first actions seem to have been merely the occasion for the proconsul's later prejudiced reaction to the matter of Hierax.64 By his inaction where his action as the highest local authority was required, Orestes strengthened the situation to which he opposed from the beginning, namely the taking of arbitrary political initiatives. It is true that because of the short tenure of the proconsuls, Orestes actually

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62 Even Caesars, such as Julian, had received the office of reader. In fact, many bishops of Alexandria in the early stages of their careers were readers. Cf. Haas, Alexandria, 223.

63 Cyril's reasoning must have been that since in the past (339, 374) the Jews had unnecessarily attacked Orthodox churches and participated with impunity in killing Christians, the bishop of Alexandria could not wait if and when the prefect would decide to implement the law, which was mobilized directly only in cases against Cyril.

64 Orestes in general and before Cyril's episcopate was resentful of the fact that the political power of the bishops of Alexandria was increasing. Cf. Socrates Scholasticus, 358.12-14 (7.13.9): «Ὅροστης δὲ καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἐμήσθη τὴν δυναστείαν τῶν ἐπισκόπων <Ἀλεξανδρείων>, ὅτι παρηροῖντο πολὺ τὴς ἐξουσίας τῶν ἑκ βασιλέως ἄρχειν τεταμένων». 
had little potential for legal intervention. However, he either did not consider this reality or was not informed about it.\textsuperscript{65}

Finally, as far as Hypatia is concerned, some scholars argue that she really did not suggest to Orestes the reconciliation between Cyril and Orestes, guiding the latter in a negative way.\textsuperscript{66} It is unknown; however, what degree of involvement she had in shaping Orestes’ attitude towards the bishop, mainly because Orestes resented the growing influence of the Alexandrian bishops anyway. Hypatia may have considered it harmless and legitimate to socialize herself with Orestes just as she socialized with previous political rulers, for political favors and advice, while neither Cyril nor Orestes had concepts and politics similar to those of their predecessors. Without the support of the ancient religions, Hypatia chose to get involved or let herself – possibly without realizing it – be publicly seen to be involved, as a consultant of Orestes\textsuperscript{67} in a conflict whose vehemence was beyond her strength. It is very likely that if the political dispute between the prefect and the bishop had not arisen, Hypatia would have lived undisturbed as under bishop Theophilos. Her murder, according to researchers, caused the creation of a pagan identity among the national philosophers of the city.\textsuperscript{68}

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\textsuperscript{65} Orestes did not legally prosecute the arsonists. Thus, he allowed a power vacuum to be created or grow under irregular conditions in the city, which anyone could exploit to the detriment of social peace and the applicable legislation. On the contrary, if it implemented the law in the first place, it could tame the propensity for violence of various religious communities. The law ordered the prefect to act immediately and without the bishop’s request in cases of attacks on church buildings, and provided for the dismissal of judges (the prefect was also a judge) who did not sentence to death those who had committed them.
\textsuperscript{66} Haas, Alexandria, 469 (f. 73) who argues that no it is unlikely that Hypatia advised Orestes in favor of a pro-Jewish policy in order to counter Christianity.
\textsuperscript{67} Watts, City and School, 198.
\textsuperscript{68} While until then the association of Gentiles with Christians was blameless, then, after the murder of Hypatia, Gentiles such as Damascius accused those who had deals or collaborated with Christian clergy as impostors.
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