



Linear, Cyclical, and Spiral? History in Fourth-Century Greek Catechists

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Abstract: This article delves into the previously underexplored conceptualizations of history articulated in the initiatory homilies of late fourth-century Greek catechists Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom. Grounded in their interpretation of the (Judeo-)Christian tradition, both authors conceive history as a divine narrative, constituting a coherent “history of salvation”. Metaphorically, their historical understanding can be illustrated as a spatial entity characterized through geometric imagery. A systematic analysis of their catecheses reveals that, fundamentally, both authors maintain a linear perspective on history, emphasizing divine beginning in creation and continuing through the present toward an eschatological consummation. Nonetheless, Cyril introduces more nuanced models, including cyclical depictions, notably a four-staged vision of paradise intertwined with a spiral-like conception of history. Owing seemingly to their primary objective of guiding audiences toward robust engagement with the Christian tradition and ecclesial participation, both authors refrain from addressing themes that might provoke unwarranted speculation. By presenting these insights, this article offers a novel contribution to the scholarship on late fourth-century theology of history, concurrently paving the way for historiographical exploration in modern scholarship of late antique Christian sources.

Keywords: Theology of history; catechetical rhetoric; Patristic; Cyril of Jerusalem; John Chrysostom

A plethora of studies has been conducted to document the intricacies of fourth-century ecclesiastical instruction. However, it is uncommon to observe Patristic scholars elevating their analytical lens, so to speak, from a ground-level examination to a panoramic perspective, aimed at discerning the late ancient authors’ comprehension of the nature and significance of history. In instances where such a broad viewpoint is embraced, its application to the scrutiny of catechetical sources from the era has been limited².

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² For studies of early Christian notions of history in general, see E.C. Rust, *The Christian Understanding of History*, London – Redhill 1947; H. Butterfield, *Christianity*

One plausible explanation for this limitation can be traced to the scarcity of comprehensive expositions on history or elucidations of its significance within these sources. Nevertheless, considering the abundance of allusions to the theology of history dispersed throughout the initiatory instructions of late ancient homilists³, further discussion on these matters is warranted.

The present article seeks to address this lacuna by undertaking a comparative analysis of the conceptualizations of history apparent in two late fourth-century Greek catechists, Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-387) and John Chrysostom (c. 345-407). A particular focus on the initiatory discourses delivered by these notable homilists is expected to provide significant insight into the fundamental concepts that authoritative Christian writers of the era held regarding not only history itself but also new

and History, London 1949; J. Daniélou, *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, tr. N. Abercrombie, London – Chicago 1958; *God, History, and Historians: An Anthology of Modern Christian Views of History*, ed. C.T. McIntire, New York 1977. For historical approaches in individual early Christian authors, see L.G. Patterson, *God and History in Early Christian Thought: A Study of Themes from Justin Martyr to Gregory the Great*, London 1967; G.W. Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography: Narratives of Retribution*, London – Oakville 2000; R. Zager, *Das Geschichtsdenken Augustins: Zur Rezeption des Alten Testaments in De ciuitate dei XV-XVIII*, Tübingen 2023. For discussion on Chrysostom's notion of *historia* and his treatment of Biblical narratives as histories, see R.G.T. Edwards, *Providence and Narrative in the Theology of John Chrysostom*, Cambridge 2022, p. 38-50. Despite its merits, the study pays rather limited attention to Chrysostom's catechetical sources or his overarching views of historical processes concerning humanity and the world at large. Lastly, B. Leyerle's forthcoming monograph appears to provide evidence on linear and cyclical views of history in Chrysostom and his audiences, respectively. See B. Leyerle, *Christians at Home: John Chrysostom and Domestic Rituals in Fourth-Century Antioch*, University Park 2024. However, at the time of this writing, this work was not yet available.

³ For Florovsky, the theology of history deals with “the Meaning of History, taken as an all-inclusive whole, that is, in its entirety and universality. In [this] case, indeed, we are speaking actually of the ultimate meaning of human existence, of its ultimate destiny”. See G. Florovsky, *The Predicament of the Christian Historian*, in: *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings*, ed. B. Gallaher – P. Ladouceur, London – New York 2020, p. 209. Cf. C.T. McIntire's description of the theology of history: “The main themes are the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the cross and resurrection, Christianity in history, the goal of history and Christian hope, the transcendent meaning of time, the interplay of redemption and sin in history, God's work in history, the relation between salvation history and history as we ordinarily know it, the uniqueness of a Christian view of history”. See *Introduction: The Renewal of Christian Views of History in an Age of Catastrophe*, in: *God, History, and Historians: An Anthology of Modern Christian Views of History*, ed. C.T. McIntire, New York 1977, p. 21.

converts' potential relationship to it. Instead of attempting an exhaustive analysis of the authors' pertinent views in relation to the broader context of late ancient philosophy or theology, the present article will primarily focus on the following research question: *How do Cyril and Chrysostom conceptualize the nature of history within the context of their catechetical homilies?*⁴. The inquiry initiates with preliminary observations, followed by an examination of the authors' perspectives on history through the interconnected perspectives of linear, cyclical, and spiral-like representations. Subsequently, the study delves into historical themes that one might have anticipated the authors to address, yet find absent in their extant catechetical discourses. In conclusion, final remarks will be proffered.

1. Preliminary Observations

Prior to engaging with the principal research query, it is imperative to outline three preliminary observations. First, the conceptualizations of history by both Cyril and Chrysostom predominantly derive from Scriptural revelation and, consequently, are rooted in the (Judeo-)Christian understanding of faith. The catechists perceive this faith as inherently historical, construing its discrete events as constituting a narrative identified as the "history of salvation". Although neither author provides a chronological exposition of Biblical history⁵, both accord equal significance to the individual episodes within this narrative.

Secondly, the authors' utilization of history-related vocabulary, while bearing some relevance to the present inquiry, falls short of fully encapsulating their perspectives on the nature of history. Within the Cyrilline

⁴ Obviously, relevant evidence could be found in his other texts as well, relevant evidence could be found in his other works as well. For instance, his views on creation, i.e., the commencement of history, are discussed in works such as *In Genesim homiliae* 2-10, 12-13, 15, PG 53; *Homiliae de statuis* 7.1-2, 8.1, 9.2-4, PG 49, 93, 97-98, 105-108. That said, the view of the nature of history represented in these works largely aligns with that in the catechetical homilies. For this reason, as well as for the sake of brevity, the present article mainly focuses on the authors' catecheses, leaving an exhaustive listing of possible evidence to larger studies. Of course, in Cyril's case, such an approach would be expected, given that his catechetical homilies constitute the chief portion of his extant works, thereby containing much of the relevant evidence.

⁵ Cf. Augustine, who presupposes that catechetical instruction commences from the exposition of creation, see Augustinus, *De catechizandis rudibus* 3.5, 6.10, PL 40, 313, 317.

catechetical corpus, only five relevant passages emerge, collectively featuring six instances of *ιστορ*-words:

Passage	Text
<i>Catecheses ad Illuminandos</i> 4, 35	Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ιστορικῶν βιβλίων (...) Καὶ τὰ μὲν ιστορικὰ ταῦτα.
<i>Catecheses ad Illuminandos</i> 15, 4	οὐ γὰρ ιστορία παρελθόντων ἐστὶ πραγμάτων, ἀλλὰ προφητεία μελλόντων καὶ πάντως ἡζόντων (...).
<i>Catecheses ad Illuminandos</i> 18, 8	τοῦτο, ὡς γράφει Κλήμης καὶ ιστοροῦσι πλείονες, μονογενὲς ὑπάρχον
<i>Mystagogica catechesis</i> 1, 2	Χρὴ δὲ τοῦτο ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι, ὅτι ἐν παλαιᾷ ιστορίᾳ οὗτος κεῖται ὁ τύπος.
<i>Mystagogica catechesis</i> 1, 8	Οὐκ ἤκουσας παλαιᾶς ιστορίας τὰ περὶ τοῦ Λῶτ (...).

While indeed “*historia* is an unquestionably important term for Chrysostom”⁶, it is hardly prevalent in his catechetical homilies, which include only one instance of pertinent vocabulary, employed in reference to the Lukan account of Cornelius (ἄκουε τῆς **ιστορίας** αὐτῆς)⁷. Some of the aforementioned passages could be viewed as related to the use of *ιστορ*-vocabulary primarily in reference to “story” or “narrative” rather than an account of factual events. However, nothing in the catechists’ discourses opposes the interpretation that they are discussing what they regard as actual circumstances⁸. In this way, both authors appear to employ *ιστορ*-words in a manner consistent with several Hellenic and earlier Christian authors,

⁶ Edwards, *Providence and Narrative*, p. 38.

⁷ Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 7.28, SCh 50, 244. Of course, elsewhere in the Chrysostomian corpus, the term *οικονομία* is used “to describe the salvific providence of God throughout the course of human history”, see B. Nassif, *John Chrysostom on the Nature of Revelation and Task of Exegesis*, in: *What Is the Bible? The Patristic Doctrine of Scripture*, ed. M. Baker – M. Mourachian, Minneapolis 2016, p. 50-51. However, in the five instances evident in Chrysostom’s catechetical homilies, the *οικον*-vocabulary is hardly employed for such purposes, see Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 5.9, 8.18 (2 instances), SCh 50, 204, 257; Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 1.23, SCh 366, 160, 162; Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 1, SCh 366, 214.

⁸ For discussion on both of these approaches in Chrysostom, see Edwards, *Providence and Narrative*, p. 39-42.

referencing past events and their accounts⁹. Solely relying on such vocabulary might indeed suggest a retrospective orientation in their historical endeavor. Accordingly, the subjects of historical contemplation could be perceived as “events which have finished happening, and conditions no longer in existence”¹⁰, seemingly disconnected from the present or the future.

However, a mere examination of individual terminological choices provides a rather limited perspective on the catechists’ historical concepts. A comprehensive understanding of these notions necessitates an extensive exploration of their numerous references to Scriptural narratives. Such an approach reveals that their understanding of history extends beyond the past; instead, the entirety of history is perceived “from the perspective of the end”¹¹. Furthermore, within this framework, the present and the future are construed as “a continuation of the same story”¹².

Thirdly, akin to abstract subjects in general, concepts of history lend themselves readily to metaphorical elucidation¹³. Consequently, Cyril and Chrysostom can be construed as envisioning history as a spatial entity describable in geometric terms. As noted above, their individual conceptions of history manifest through metaphors of straight lines, a cycle, and a spiral, respectively. Notably, these metaphorical depictions primarily function as overarching conceptualizations of the authors’ historical perspectives, and should not be regarded as systematic or exhaustive formulations thereof¹⁴. Nevertheless, a comparative analysis of these three models facilitates a nuanced comprehension of their collective significance.

⁹ Similarly Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae de statuis* 7.1, 21.4, PG 49, 93, 220-221. See also Origenes, *Homiliae in Iosuaam* 9.7, SCh 71, 256; Origenes, *Homiliae in Numeros* 21.2.1, SCh 461, 66; Origenes, *De principiis* 4.2.6, 9. 4.3.4, SCh 268, 324, 334, 356. On the Greco-Roman and early Christian authors’ understanding of the concept of “*historia*” and their emphasis on past (and, in some instances, contemporary) events, see discussion in Patterson, *God and History*, p. 1-3, 15-27, 77; W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, Hampshire – New York 2007, p. 2-17.

¹⁰ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, New York 1946, p. 233.

¹¹ McIntire, *Introduction*, p. 13.

¹² Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, p. 2.

¹³ Cf. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, p. 108: “When we are concerned with that kind of history-making which goes on over our heads (...), it is remarkable how often we do our thinking in symbols, or by means of patterns”. Of course, the human conceptual system as a whole is in fact largely metaphorical, see G. Lakoff – M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago – London 2003, p. 1.

¹⁴ Cf. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, p. 108: “Such symbols or patterns (...) have reference only to selected parcels of historical events, isolated from the rest of the

2. The Linear View of History

A systematic examination of the Cyrilline and Chrysostomian catecheses reveals that both authors subscribe to a foundational comprehension of history that can be characterized as linear. For the sake of clarity, this perspective will be scrutinized from two interconnected vantage points: firstly, by accentuating the divine aspect of history, and secondly, by delving into the human dimension¹⁵.

2.1. The Divine Aspect of History

Cyril and Chrysostom jointly view the Triune God as eternal and pre-existent before all creation, attributing Him as the ultimate cause of the world and its historical unfolding. In their theological framework, the universe, all ages, humanity, and the entirety of creation, were created at the divine command of the Father by His only-begotten Son, deemed consubstantial with the Father. Cyril further elucidates that this creative act unfolded across a span of six days¹⁶. Both authors articulate the blissful existence of primordial humans, followed by their subsequent fall and expulsion from paradise. Chrysostom expands upon this narrative by delving into the history of the Hebrews, emphasizing its typological significance for Christian initiation and life. In contrast, Cyril provides explicit delineations of the history of salvation, categorizing it into two epochs: the era of the law and prophets, and the era of faith, corresponding to the Old and New Testaments, respectively.

Both catechists exhibit a distinct fascination with the redemptive significance of Jesus's life. Chrysostom covers its fundamental themes, addressing the incarnation, kenotic life, passion, salvific sacrifice, burial, and resurrection. Although Chrysostom's catecheses lack explicit

complex fabric of historical happening. (...) [N]one of them is sufficiently flexible, and history as a whole must be very subtle in pattern – for it must be subtle enough to include and combine all these other partial patterns”.

¹⁵ The distinction between the divine and human aspects of history is made by several Patristic scholars, see e.g. Edwards, *Providence and Narrative*, p. 47-49; Daniélou, *The Lord of History*, p. 183, 203; P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100*, Grand Rapids 1950, p. 2.

¹⁶ That said, in his catechetical instruction, Cyril is not concerned with further suggestions as to possible interpretations of these six days.

references to Christ's ascension, they presuppose His session. In contrast, Cyril addresses all these facets explicitly and in more extensive detail, with a particular focus on the historical differentiation between the Son's eternal generation from the Father and His temporal birth from the Virgin.

A logical progression in this historical narrative is discernible in the catechists' discussions concerning the divine activity manifested in the church and its initiatory rites. Subsequently, the authors redirect their historical focus towards the "final events". Once again, Cyril's exposition proves to be more comprehensive: The eschatological consummation, though unpredictable for humans, initiates with the second coming of Christ, followed by the general resurrection, judgment, the recapitulation of the created order, and the establishment of Christ's eternal dominion. Chrysostom, on the other hand, remains more reserved regarding his apocalyptic views. He briefly references the eschatological transformation of created nature, the day of judgment, and posits two potential outcomes for humans post-judgment: either the fire of Gehenna or eternal life in the heavenly kingdom. The catechists' perspectives on these historical occurrences can be enumerated as follows:

The History of Salvation in Cyril	Passages (<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos</i>)
The eternal, Triune God	4.4-5; 7.2, 5, 10; 16.4, 24. See also 17.2, 5, 34.
The eternal generation of the Son from the Father	E.g. 4.7-8, 10.6, 14; 11.4-5, 7-15, 18-22, 24; 12.1, 4.
Creation	7.4, 6; 9.4-5; 11.21-24; 12.5.
Human disobedience and expulsion from divine presence	2.4.
The era of the law and prophets (OT)	3.6; 4.33.
The era of faith (NT)	4.33.
The temporal birth of Christ from the Virgin	E.g. 4.9; 6.11; 10.6, 10, 12; 11.5, 15, 20, 24; 12.1-6, 8-9, 13, 17-34.
The passion of Christ	4.10; 13.4-9, 12-33, 38-39; 14.1.
The burial of Christ	4.11; 14.1, 3, 5, 9, 11-12, 14, 20, 22.
The resurrection of Christ	4.12, 14; 14.1-24.
The ascension and session of Christ	4.13, 14; 14.24-30.
The life and spiritual influence of the church in the world	<i>Passim</i> , see e.g. 4.13; 15.8; 16.2-4, 11-12, 14, 16-24, 26; 17.4, 11-19, 21-38; 18.23-24, 26-27, 32-35.
The second coming of Christ	4.15; 5.13; 13.41; 15.1-4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 19-22, 24.

General resurrection	2.5; 14.30; 15.19; 18.1, 3, 5-10, 12-22, 28.
Judgment	5.4; 15.22-26, 33; 16.1; 18.4, 11, 13-14. See also 18.19-20.
The renewal of the created order	15.3-4.
The eternal dominion of Christ	4.15; 15.27-33.

The History of Salvation in Chrysostom	Passages (<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos</i> [Sch 50], unless otherwise indicated)
God the Father as the Creator and the first cause	1.20.
Creation through the only-begotten Son	1.21, 22, 37; 2.3; 3.17; 4.12; 7.1; 8.23.
The three Persons of God, equal in power	1.22-23.
The primordial freedom and enjoyment in Paradise	2.3.
The envy and deceit of the devil	2.7; 3.10.
The Fall	2.3; 3.10.
Expulsion of humans from Paradise	2.4, 6, 7.
The history of Israelites in Egypt	3.12-15, 23-26; 8.7-10.
The Incarnation and human life of Christ	1.21; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 1, 2, 3.
The crucifixion of Christ, its redeeming and sanctifying effects	1.16-18, 21; 3.16-17, 21-22; 6.20; 10.12; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 2; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 19, 22.
The burial and resurrection of Christ	1.21; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 2.5.
The session of Christ (presupposed)	7.12.
The life and spiritual influence of the church in the world	<i>Passim.</i>
The eschatological transformation of created nature	3.3.
The Day of Judgment	9.47; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 19.
Two eschatological goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fire of Gehenna eternal life in the heavenly Kingdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9.35, 47. 1.44; 4.12; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 1.1; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 2.6; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 10; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 1, 3.

In summary, Cyril and Chrysostom conceptualize divine activity as manifested in successive historical events, forming a continuous line from creation to the eschaton. Evidently, these expressions of divine activity are inseparable from human history, inherently intertwined with it. This leads us to our next topic.

2.2. The Human Aspect of History

In their catechetical homilies, Cyril and Chrysostom meticulously document what Schaff refers to as “the biography of the human race, and the gradual development, both normal and abnormal, of all the physical, intellectual, and moral forces to the final consummation at the general judgment, with its eternal rewards and punishments”¹⁷. The fundamental perspectives of both catechists regarding the linear progression of humanity towards this consummation can be characterized as twofold. While neither author explicitly embraces the traditional rhetoric of the “two ways”, famously employed in earlier sources such as *Didache*¹⁸, they appear to be influenced by a similar conceptual framework.

On the one hand, Cyril delineates what may be construed as a regressive trajectory of humanity – a theme prevalent in late antique ascetical authors¹⁹ and with roots in Hellenic writers²⁰. According to Cyril, humans were initially created as good and for virtuous deeds, but, exercising their free will, they chose the path of evil instead²¹. Subsequently, during the time of Noah, giants engaged in sinful actions, resulting in the proliferation of vice within the broader population²². Following

¹⁷ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Didache* 1-5, 2, SCh 248 bis.

¹⁹ See *Apophthegmata* 2, 10.33, SCh 474, 34; *Apophthegmata* 3, 18.9, 10, SCh 498, 50, 52; Benedictus de Nursia, *Regula* 18.24-25, SCh 182, 534. A similar view is evident in modern ascetical authors as well, see e.g. Paisios the Athonite, Ἁγίου Παΐσιου τοῦ Ἀγιορείτου Ἀγιορεῖται Πατέρες καὶ Ἀγιορεῖτικά, Σουρωτὴ Θεσσαλονίκης 2020, p. 7-8, 63-64, 161, 164. Cf. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia, in whose works such a view is not entirely nonexistent, but less pronounced, see ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΟΡΦΥΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΥΣΟΚΑΛΥΒΙΤΟΥ ΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΟΓΟΙ, ΧΑΝΙΑ 2018, p. 622.

²⁰ Hesiodus, *The Poems of Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, and The Shield of Herakles*, tr. B.B. Powell, Oakland 2017, p. 114-116.

²¹ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2.1, RR 1, 38, 40.

²² Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2.8, RR 1, 48.

this, the chosen people as a whole succumbed to idolatry²³. Ultimately, the catechist perceives his own time as an eschaton marred by violence, intra-ecclesial strife, a surge in lawlessness, and outright apostasy²⁴.

In Chrysostom's catecheses, the regressive development is not as prominently articulated. Concerning the negative aspect of human history, the Antiochian confines himself to depicting the prior lifestyle of his hearers in their pre-Christian state²⁵.

On the other hand, both catechists endeavor to guide their listeners onto an alternative route, directing them towards integration into the history of salvation through a process characterized by Cyril as "a good and most glorious path, run with reverence the race of godliness"²⁶, along which they "may walk straight onward to eternal life"²⁷. Clearly, such rhetoric indicates the homilist's linear perspective on history. In a parallel vein, Chrysostom underscores that participation in the Divine presupposes the exercise of free will and a complete renunciation of past lifestyles. Concurrently, baptismal candidates are expected to align themselves with sincere faith and corresponding confession, virtuous deeds, and a robust devotional life. The stages on this path, as elucidated by Chrysostom, can be enumerated as follows:

Prerequisites of Divine Participation in Chrysostom	Passages (<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos</i> [SCh 50], unless otherwise indicated)
Progress of the soul towards piety	1.4, 8.
Renewal of the soul based upon free will	1.10, 25.
Renouncing of one's previous life(style)	1.18; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 8.
Forgetting one's past	1.7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15; 4.16.
Avoiding evil and doing good	1.15, 26, 32-33, 39, 41-43; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 7, 8.
Earnest faith and steadfast confession	1.19.
Virtuous deeds	1.36; 4.29.
Imitation of Christ: meekness and humbleness	1.29-32.

²³ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2.10, RR 1, 50.

²⁴ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 15.6, 7, 9, RR 2, 160, 162, 164.

²⁵ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.3, 5-6, SCh 50, 110, 111, 112.

²⁶ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.1, RR 1, 28.

²⁷ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 3.2, RR 1, 64.

Scorning worldly glory and focusing on the beautification of one's soul	1.31, 34, 36, 38, 47.
Cleansing one's mind of impurities	1.40.
Devotional life	1.46.

Having embraced a pious disposition, the candidates are granted participation in the ecclesiastical initiation process with the hope that they will renounce all worldly things. In the transitional phase between the extra-ecclesial "world" and full engagement in the church, candidates undergo purification through repentance, confession of sins, reception of ecclesiastical instruction, and exorcisms. Subsequently, they take part in the baptismal rites, encompassing renunciation of the devil, explicit allegiance to Christ, confession of faith, pre-baptismal anointing, the actual ablution rite, and post-baptismal Chrismation. Through these procedures, individuals gain access to the sacred realm of the church and its Eucharistic fullness. The catechists' perspectives on this linear progression can be outlined as follows:

The Ecclesiastical Means of Renewal in Cyril	Passages (<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos</i> , unless otherwise indicated)
Catechumenate	<i>Procatech.</i> 12.
Baptismal candidacy	<i>Procatech.</i> 1, 12, 13.
Purification and renewal	
• repentance and confession of sins	1.2; 2.5-16, 18-20; 3.2, 7.
• instruction and exorcisms	1.4; <i>Procatech.</i> 4, 9, 15.
Baptismal rites	
• renunciation of the devil	<i>Myst. catech.</i> 1.2, 4-9.
• confession of faith	<i>Myst. catech.</i> 1.9; 2.4.
• pre-baptismal anointing	<i>Myst. catech.</i> 2.3.
• ablution	1.2; 3.3-4, 8, 10-12, 15-16; 4.14, 16; 11.9; <i>Procatech.</i> 11, 15; <i>Myst. catech.</i> 1.1, 10; 2.1, 4-8; 3.1.
• chrismation	<i>Myst. catech.</i> 3.1-7.
Participation in the church in its Eucharistic fullness	4.37; <i>Procatech.</i> 1, 16; <i>Myst. catech.</i> 1.1, 11; 4.1-9; 5.15, 19-23.

The Ecclesiastical Means of Renewal in Chrysostom	Passages (<i>Catecheses ad illuminandos</i> [Sch 50], unless otherwise indicated)
Instruction	2.12.
Exorcisms	2.12; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 1.7; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 2.6-7.
Renunciation of the devil	2.18, 20; 3.20; 4.32; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 6, 7; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 18, 19, 23.
Verbal attachment to Christ	2.21-22; 3.20; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 3, 4, 6, 7.
Pre-baptismal anointing	2.22-24; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 7.
Baptism	1.17; 2.11, 25-27, 29; 3.4, 6; 4.4; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 1, <i>passim</i> ; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 2.4, 5, 10; <i>Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos</i> 2, 3, 8, 9; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 5, 7, 8, 13.
"The sign" (Chrismation?)	<i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 23
The Eucharist	2.27; 3.12; <i>Ad illuminandos catechesis</i> 2.1; <i>Catechesis de iuramento</i> 5, 6.

Through this initiation process, candidates are offered comprehensive transformation and the opportunity for participation in the Divine²⁸. By virtue of their initiation, they are considered true citizens of the heavenly kingdom. However, the ultimate entry into this kingdom lies ahead²⁹. In their journey toward this culmination, Christians encounter challenges such as personal desires³⁰, demonic temptations³¹, or misleading instructions from false teachers³². Therefore, they must refrain from fixating on earthly and transient matters and redirect their focus to heavenly

²⁸ See e.g. Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.12. 3.23. 4.14-16, 22; 5.24, Sch 50, 114-115, 164-165. 190-191, 193-194, 212.

²⁹ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 10, Sch 366, 242.

³⁰ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 2, RR 1, 4; Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2.2-3. 4.6, 18, RR 1, 40, 42, 94, 96, 110.

³¹ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 16.15. RR 2, 222, 224; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.40, 46. 4.5, 32, Sch 50, 129, 132, 185, 198-199; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis de iuramento* 21, FC 6/1, 146.

³² Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 15.5, 9, 11-18, RR 2, 160, 164-180. Cf. Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 16.6-10, RR 2, 210-216; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.22, 24, Sch 50, 119, 120-121.

realities³³. While the initiatory process does not eliminate the spiritual threats posed by opposing forces³⁴, it establishes conditions for resisting these malevolent influences, serving as a pathway toward eternal life in the Kingdom of God³⁵. Apart from this, there exists only one possible destiny³⁶, described by Cyril in several passages as a burning, eternal fire or damnation³⁷. In contrast, Chrysostom briefly mentions this unfortunate destiny³⁸ and directs his attention towards encouraging neophytes to maintain their baptismal purity³⁹, expecting them to progress in post-baptismal sanctity⁴⁰.

In summary, the catechists' perspectives on history consistently incorporate a linear dimension. The straight line of history commences in the past, traverses the present, and extends towards the future culmination of both divine and human history in the eschatological consummation and subsequent eternity. Within these historical stages, the authors emphasize the significance of the present, wherein the choices made determine the path humans take toward their eternal goal.

However, a closer analysis of Cyril's catecheses reveals that oversimplifying his notion of history to a purely linear perspective would be inadequate. In fact, his views on history encompass aspects that can also be described in cyclical terms.

³³ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 7.12-23, SCh 50, 234-241. See also Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 8.6, 11-16, 18-20. 9.1, 3, SCh 50, 250-251, 253-256, 257-258.

³⁴ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 10, RR 1, 14; Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 3.13, RR 1, 80.

³⁵ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 12, 16, RR 1, 16, 22, 24; Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4.31, RR 1, 122; 18.28-31, RR 2, 330-334.

³⁶ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 6, 7, RR 1, 8, 10.

³⁷ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1.4. 3.7. 4.5, 21, 31. 8.3, RR 1, 32, 74, 94, 112, 122; 13.38. 15.21, 26, RR 2, 100, 182, 184, 192, 194.

³⁸ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 1.18, 23, SCh 366, 150, 162.

³⁹ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4. 5.20, 26-27. 6.21, 23-24, SCh 50, 182-199, 210, 213-214, 225-227; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 1.15, SCh 366, 142; 2.10, SCh 366, 206, 208; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 10, SCh 366, 242; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis de iuramento* 4, 7, 8, FC 6/1, 116, 122, 124.

⁴⁰ Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4.11, 33. 6.25. 7.32-33, SCh 50, 188, 199, 227-228, 245-246; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis de iuramento* 1, 3, FC 6/1, 110, 112, 114.

3. Cyclical Aspects of History

For Cyril, history is characterized by recurring circumstances that can be envisioned as successive revolutions of varying lengths. On a shorter scale, this cyclical approach is apparent in the author's discussions on the movement of astronomical objects and the corresponding hours of the day⁴¹. Due apparently to the catechetical context, his exposition is less concerned with detailed examinations of cosmology and, instead, assigns liturgical significance to celestial movements. In the Hagiopolite church, for instance, baptismal rites are specifically scheduled for the night preceding Easter⁴².

On a broader scale, the cyclical approach is discernible in the progression of natural seasons⁴³. This also finds a spiritual equivalent in the liturgical life of the church. Cyril suggests that just as nature readies itself for the perennial emergence of new life in spring, candidates similarly undergo a period of Lenten preparation for their spiritual spring – Easter, the season of their baptismal rebirth⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 9.6-8. 10.19, RR 1, 244, 246, 248, 284, 286; 13.24-25. 14.22, RR 2, 136.

⁴² Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 15, RR 1, 20, 22; Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Mystagogica catechesis* 1.1, SCh 126 bis, 84. On the timing of Cyril's Lenten catechetical homilies, see A.J. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of Mystagogic Catecheses*, Washington 2001, p. 44. Cf. Chrysostom, who associates pre-baptismal entrance into church to the ninth hour of Holy Friday. This timing is chosen due to its symbolic connection with the crucified criminal's entrance into Paradise, apparently highlighting the paradisiacal nature of the church. See Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 4, SCh 366, 226, 228. In like manner, baptism is conferred at Easter vigil, see Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 6.1, SCh 50, 216; Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 1.7, SCh 366, 124, 126; Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 5, SCh 366, 230; Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Ad illuminandos catechesis* 2.3, SCh 366, 174, 176. Furthermore, Chrysostom encourages his hearers to engage in prayer in the morning and in the night, and to sobriety at all hours. See Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 7.32. 8.17-18, 25, SCh 50, 245-246, 257, 260.

⁴³ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4.30. 9.6-9, RR 1, 120, 122, 244-250; 14.2, 10. 15.20. 18.6-7, RR 2, 108, 116, 118, 180, 182, 304, 306.

⁴⁴ For Cyril, this period lasts 40-days, see Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 4, RR 1, 6. On differences in the duration of fourth-century catechetical instruction, see P. de Roten, *Baptême et mystagogie: Enquête sur l'initiation chrétienne selon s. Jean Chrysostome*, Münster 2005, p. 155-156, n. 21, 23. Cf. Schmemann's modern Orthodox view of the entire Lententide as "the blessed season of the 'lenten spring'". See A. Schme-

An even broader cyclical view is evident in Cyril's discussion of human history. In this context, he justifies the possibility of resurrection by employing metaphors borrowed from nature, such as the growth of grain from "dead" seeds and the rejuvenation of trees in spring after the "lifelessness" of winter dormancy. In light of these depictions, temporal life, and perhaps especially death, appear as a kind of winter. Conversely, the eschatological return of Christ, along with the associated resurrection, is characterized as spring, during which the bodies of Christians burst into heavenly bloom. Through such a simile, then, human life can be envisioned as an all-encompassing cycle that finds completion in the resurrection⁴⁵.

To sum up, Cyril's perspectives on what could be described as a cyclical "movement" of temporal occurrences are primarily rooted in natural phenomena applied to the Christian tradition. Despite some semblance, associating his views with the Greek model of the perpetual recurrence of similar events, which depicts reality as motionless, unchanging, and ultimately meaningless, would be challenging⁴⁶. However, akin to the linear model, the cyclical model falls short of fully capturing Cyril's notion of history in its entirety. To that end, we must consider an even more nuanced view apparent in his works.

4. History as a Spiral Progression

In his initiatory rhetoric, Cyril employs the image of paradise to illustrate distinct stages of history⁴⁷, envisioning a fourfold view of para-

mann, *Great Lent*, Crestwood 1974, p. 9. The same author also likens the "lenten effort" of Christians as "a 'spiritual spring'". See Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, p. 15. In Chrysostom, too, the seasonal cycles of nature are employed as metaphorical depictions for fluctuations of spiritual wellbeing, see Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae de statuis* 4.1, 3, 9.3, 18.1, PG 49, 60-61, 63, 106-107, 179-180.

⁴⁵ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4.30-31, RR 1, 120, 122; 18.6-7, RR 2, 304, 306. For discussion on Hebrew-Christian one-cycle views, see G.E. Cairns, *Philosophies of History: Meeting of East and West in Cycle – Pattern Theories of History*, Westport 1971, p. 244-250.

⁴⁶ Rust, *The Christian Understanding of History*, p. 18, 41-42; Daniélou, *The Lord of History*, p. 1. For discussion on the cyclical patterning of history in ancient Greco-Roman sources, see Cairns, *Philosophies of History*, p. 196-230.

⁴⁷ A similar approach is evident in his use of the imagery of breathing, see H. Huovinen, *Divine Breath and the Process of Creation: The Allusions to Gen 2:7 in the Catechetical Rhetoric of Cyril of Jerusalem*, VoxP 89 (2024) p. 69-84.

disiacal existence⁴⁸. The relevant passages collectively form a historical narrative whose progression, in geometric terms, can be characterized as spiral-shaped. This vision can be briefly outlined as follows.

4.1. The Primordial Paradise

First, referencing the beginning of Genesis, Cyril portrays the primordial paradise as a divinely instituted, historical, concrete, and local reality⁴⁹. As discussed earlier, in this paradisiacal setting, the first humans experienced a joyful and sinless existence⁵⁰ but eventually erred, succumbing to sin and falling under the dominion of death⁵¹. As a consequence of their transgression, humans were divinely expelled from their dwelling place but settled within visual distance from it, enabling them to perceive their paradisiacal origin. This visibility was intended to prompt salvific repentance⁵². However, the groundwork for this salvation was to be established in the next stage of paradise.

4.2. The Gardens of Gethsemane and Golgotha

Gethsemane and Golgotha, the sacred locations in Jerusalem, constitute the second historical stage of paradise. Although Cyril specifically refers to these places as gardens, the parallel use of “garden” and “paradise” in previous traditions, as well as in the catechist’s own rhetoric⁵³, justifies interpreting his statements as testimonies of his

⁴⁸ A detailed examination of this theme has been provided in a recent Finnish research article, see H. Huovinen, *Paratiisin neljä tasoa Kyrillos Jerusalemilaisen katekeetisessä retoriikassa*, in: *Varhaiskirkon Jerusalem*, ed. S. Seppälä, Studia Patristica Fennica 19, Helsinki 2023, p. 169-199.

⁴⁹ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 6.10, RR 1, 168.

⁵⁰ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2, 5. 9.15, RR 1, 44, 256; 12, 5, RR 2, 8.

⁵¹ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 15.31, RR 2, 198, 200.

⁵² Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 2.4, 7, RR 1, 44, 48.

⁵³ The term “Paradise” originates from the ancient Persian word referring to a garden. In both Scriptural and Christian discourse, παράδεισος is the Greek translation of the Hebrew גַּן used in the Genesis creation narratives (Gen 2:8-10, 15-16 MT and LXX) to denote a garden.

notion of paradise. In this context, his vision encompasses several dimensions of meaning.

First, Cyril regards Golgotha and Gethsemane as gardens in the literal sense. While such an interpretation might be anticipated in the case of Gethsemane (cf. Mt 26:36; Jn 18:1), the catechist-bishop, intimately acquainted with his city⁵⁴, also suggests that Golgotha was a genuine garden during the time of Christ's passion⁵⁵.

Secondly, as the primordial Paradise was considered a place of divine presence, Cyril contends that God was also present in His Son at Golgotha and the gardens of Gethsemane⁵⁶. References to Jesus's execution "on the tree" (ἐν ξύλῳ) further imply the catechist's conception of the paradisiacal nature of the place of His suffering⁵⁷. He explicitly elaborates on the typological connection between the tree of the primordial paradise and that on Golgotha: "And since we have touched on things connected with Paradise, I am truly astonished at the truth of the types. In Paradise was the Fall, and in a Garden was our Salvation. From the Tree came sin, and until the Tree sin lasted"⁵⁸. Thus, just as the fall marred human life in paradise, the solution to the problem of sin was also prepared in the garden; if sin originated from disobedience related to the fruit of the tree, all of this was reconciled specifically through the tree⁵⁹. The connection between the original Paradise and the site of passion also becomes evident in Cyril's view of Golgotha as the center of the Earth⁶⁰. As is known, according to Jewish belief, the original Paradise was located at the center of the Earth, like the later city of Jerusalem was thought to be⁶¹. From this perspective, Cyril may be taken as alluding not only to

⁵⁴ Discussion: J.M. Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*, Leiden – Boston 2004.

⁵⁵ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.8, RR 2, 60: "ἐν κήπῳ ἐσταυρώθη".

⁵⁶ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.19, RR 2, 74.

⁵⁷ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 5.6, 7.9, RR 1, 140, 218.

⁵⁸ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.19, RR 2, 74. Tr. NPNF 7, p. 87.

⁵⁹ See also Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.31, RR 2, 90. The typological relationship between the tree of life and the cross is evident already in Justin, see Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone judaeo* 86, PG 6, 680.

⁶⁰ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.28, RR 2, 86.

⁶¹ See e.g. Hes 38:12; Flavius Josephus, *De Bello Judaico* 3.3.5, *Der jüdische Krieg*, v. 1, ed. O. Michel – O. Bauernfeind, München 1962, p. 322.

Jesus's execution having occurred in a garden-like place reminiscent of the original paradise but specifically at its historical location⁶².

Thirdly, Cyril envisions the garden of Golgotha as a connection between the earlier and subsequent stages of paradise. Although humans were expelled from the original paradise, the suffering endured in the garden of Golgotha opened the way to a spiritual one. The catechist harmonizes the Genesis account of postlapsarian events with the Lukan narrative of the crucified criminal, explaining: "*In the evening, when the Lord walked in the Garden, they hid themselves; and in the evening the robber is brought by the Lord into Paradise*"⁶³.

Cyril also alludes to the garden-like nature of Gethsemane. In His burial, the Christ-vine was planted in the earth to eradicate the curse laid upon the land. Thus, from the soil where thorns and thistles grew, a genuine vine would sprout⁶⁴. According to Cyril, this event holds universal implications. He likens the richness of the new and paradisiacal life that unfolded in the garden of Gethsemane to the act of creation. Just as the world, its verdant plants, and humanity were created in spring, the rectification of the consequences of human fall also occurred in spring. "Our Salvation then took place at the same season as the Fall: when the flowers appeared, and the pruning had come"⁶⁵. Besides indicating the timing of the salvific acts, the imagery also conveys the significance of salvation: salvation is a return to paradise⁶⁶, as it were, and a spiritual blossoming. In practice, all this becomes possible in the next stage of paradise.

4.3. The Church as Paradise

If Cyril considers the first and second stages of paradise as past realities, he associates the third level with his own time, depicting the church

⁶² For the relationship between the historical paradise and Golgotha in Jewish and early Christian literature, see J.J. Ryan, *Golgotha and the burial of Adam between Jewish and Christian tradition: Text and monument*, "Nordisk judaistik: Scandinavian Jewish Studies" 32/1 (2021) p. 3-29, in: <https://doi.org/10.30752/nj.100583> (accessed: 13.02.2024).

⁶³ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 13.19, RR 2, 74. Tr. *NPNF* 7, p. 87.

⁶⁴ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 14.11, RR 2, 118.

⁶⁵ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 14.10, RR 2, 116, 118. The Gifford translation revised by the present author, *NPNF* 7, p. 96.

⁶⁶ Similarly Gregorius Nyssenus, *De baptismo*, PG 46, 417.

as a paradise⁶⁷. This metaphor can be interpreted from two interrelated perspectives.

On the one hand, the paradise-like nature of the church is linked with the topography of Jerusalem. Cyril delivered his instructional homilies, some or all of them⁶⁸, in the *Martyrium* (μαρτύριον), the church built around the crucifixion site and the tomb of Jesus in 335⁶⁹. During his 351 Lenten catecheses, the locations of Golgotha and Gethsemane were within this church building, identifying it with the historical “paradises” of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, catechetical synaxes at these historical sites provided participants with a connection to paradise in the ecclesiological sense. Addressing his baptismal candidates, Cyril declares:

Already there is an odour of blessedness upon you, O you who are soon to be enlightened: already you are gathering the spiritual flowers, to weave heavenly crowns: already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has breathed upon you: already you have gathered round the vestibule of the King’s palace; may you be led in also by the King! For blossoms now have appeared upon the trees; may the fruit also be found perfect!⁷⁰

Here, Cyril unequivocally associates divine presence and activity with a pleasant fragrance⁷¹. Thus, for him, the Spirit is present and active among

⁶⁷ For agricultural and paradisiacal depictions of the church in other Patristic authors, see discussion in F. Clancy, *Christ the Gardener – Christus hortulanus*, in: *The Mystery of Christ in the Fathers of the Church, Essays in Honour of D. Vincent Twomey SVD*, ed. J.E. Rutherford – D. Woods, Dublin 2012, p. 27-32.

⁶⁸ P.W.L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford 1990, p. 254. Delacroix, on the other hand, is confident that all instructional speeches were delivered at the aforementioned location, see G. Delacroix, *Saint Cyrille de Jerusalem: Sa vie et ses œuvres*, Paris 1865, p. 102.

⁶⁹ Vrt. Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 4.10, 14, 5.10, 10.19, RR 1, 100, 104, 146, 286; 13.23, 26, 28, 39, 14.6, RR 2, 80, 86, 102, 112, 114. Discussion on the history, topography and structure of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, see C. Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: The Schweich Lectures of The British Academy, 1972*, tr. J.-P.B. Ross – Claude Ross, London 1974; J.L. Kelley, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Text and Archaeology: A Survey and Analysis of Past Excavations and Recent Archaeological Research with a Collection of Principal Historical Sources*, Oxford 2019.

⁷⁰ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 1, RR 1, 2. The Gifford translation revised by the present author, *NPNF* 7, p. 1.

⁷¹ For discussion on this theme in early Christian theology, see S.A. Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2015.

the hearers “already” (ἤδη) at the beginning of their candidacy⁷², integrating them into a life in His presence, as if in a fragrant church-paradise.

This divine paradise will be more fully revealed to the candidates in the concluding rites of initiation. During renunciation, candidates physically turn from west to east, symbolizing their renunciation of vice and anticipating initiatory entry into the ecclesial paradise⁷³. Paradisiacal associations are further evoked during the pre-baptismal removal of clothes that mirrors the original shameless state of the primordial humans⁷⁴, and at ablution itself, viewed as the opening of the gate into what is depicted as “the brighter and more fragrant meadow of paradise”⁷⁵.

Significantly, Christian initiation extends beyond a mere return to past paradisiacal life⁷⁶. For Cyril, the church, permeated with the fragrance of the Holy Spirit, is akin to an entirely new paradise⁷⁷ that, while intelligible and spiritual⁷⁸, also manifests itself in time and place, specifically in Jerusalem. Simultaneously, the church serves as an antitype of the ultimate stage of paradise.

⁷² For an exploration of Cyrilline perspectives on pneumatic activity throughout the Christian initiation process, see H. Huovinen, *Familial Terminology and the Progressive Nature of Church Membership in Cyril of Jerusalem*, “Review of Ecumenical Studies” 13/3 (2021) p. 411-414.

⁷³ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Mystagogica catechesis* 1.9, SC 126 bis, 98. Here, Cyril refers to Gen 2:8, according to which the Paradise was planted to the East. Discussion: A. Paulin, *Saint Cyrille de Jérusalem: Catéchète*, Paris 1959, p. 214-215.

⁷⁴ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Mystagogica catechesis* 2.2, SC 126 bis, 106. A similar theme is evident in Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 8, SC 366, 236, 238.

⁷⁵ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Procatechesis* 15, RR 1, 20, tr. by the present author; Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Mystagogica catechesis* 1.1, SC 126 bis, 84. Tr. *NPNF* 7, p. 144.

⁷⁶ This is the way Paulin interprets the function of baptism discussed in Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 17.14-15, RR 2, 268-270. See Paulin, *Saint Cyrille de Jérusalem*, p. 92: “La baptême ouvre de nouveau la porte du paradis perdu par le péché d’Adam”. Similarly also Cairns, *Philosophies of History*, p. 251.

⁷⁷ See K. Akselberg, *Greeks, Jews, Heretics, and the Church of God: Ecclesiology in the catechetical lectures of St Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, University of Oxford 2017, p. 33, ora.ox.ac.uk/ (accessed: 13.02.2024) (PhD Diss).

⁷⁸ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 1.4, RR 1, 32: “Καταφυτεύη λοιπὸν εἰς τὸν νοητὸν παράδεισον (...). Μεταφυτεύη λοιπὸν εἰς τὰς ἐλαίας τὰς νοητὰς, ἐξ ἀργιελαίου εἰς καλλιέλαιον ἐγκεντριζόμενος· ἐξ ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς δικαιοσύνην, ἐκ μολυσμῶν εἰς καθαρότητα. Γίνῃ κοινωνὸς τῆς ἁγίας ἀμπέλου (...). Ἀλλ’ εἴη πάντας ἐκείνῳ λέγειν· Ἐγὼ δὲ ὥσει ἐλαία κατάκαρπος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ (...) ἐλαία οὐκ αἰσθητὴ, ἀλλὰ νοητὴ, φωτοφόρος”.

4.4. Celestial Paradise

All that was depicted in and anticipated by the previous stages of paradise will be fully manifested once and for all in the fourth stage – the eschatological, superhistorical, and heavenly Jerusalem⁷⁹. Cyril envisions this heavenly kingdom as the “paradise of luxury”, the dwelling place of angels, and the ultimate destination to which the members of the church will be led⁸⁰. From Cyril’s portrayal of eschatological Parousia and resurrection as spring, it can be inferred that he anticipates the new human life revealed in the resurrection to be as flourishing as the eternal paradise itself. In this sublime state, their everlasting participation in divine life will be fully realized.

In summary, the four consecutive stages of history share similar features. Their central intersection and significance lie in the grace-centered and restoring work of God, warranting their depiction as manifestations of paradisiacal existence that are simultaneously intra-historical and trans-historical. Because of their thematic similarity, these periods can be envisioned as consecutive cycles of significant occurrences that constitute the Christian *Heilsgeschichte*.

Notably, these periods are not identical but involve variation according to the individual stages of this history. Each period is centered upon a set of historical events which, in Daniélou’s words, “has (...) effected a qualitative change at a given moment in time, so that things can never be the same again”⁸¹. Therefore, while Cyril’s conception of history cannot be reduced to a linear progression of consecutive yet unrelated events, it also cannot be depicted as a monotonous repetition of similar, “closed” periods⁸². Rather, it involves features of both models and combines them into an even more complex system.

In Cyril, the past, present, and future are mutually interconnected through a typological relationship between their individual events, al-

⁷⁹ For the church as the image of the heavenly Jerusalem, see Eusebius Caesariensis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10.4.69-70, SC 55, 103; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 20.17, PL 41, 682-683.

⁸⁰ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catecheses ad Illuminandos* 18.26, RR 2, 328, 330.

⁸¹ Daniélou, *The Lord of History*, p. 2.

⁸² Cf. Latourette’s statement: “The Christian understanding of history is not exclusively cyclical. It recognizes eras and ages, but it holds that novelty enters, new things happen.” See K.S. Latourette, *The Christian Understanding of History*, in: *God, History, and Historians: An Anthology of Modern Christian Views of History*, ed. C.T. McIntire, New York 1977, p. 55.

luding both backward to former ones and forward to subsequent ones⁸³. In this way, each event of divine economy is viewed as both new and unique, symbolically representative of something yet to be revealed⁸⁴. Such a view of history is best envisaged as an unbroken cyclical chain of similar yet ever-evolving events, constituting an upward spiral movement. This progression does not continue *ad infinitum*, however, but only until it reaches its τέλος in the superhistorical realm of the heavenly kingdom⁸⁵.

5. What Was Left Unsaid?

In addition to the above, the sources elicit related themes that Cyril and Chrysostom could be expected to touch upon but do not. Of course, at least in theory, the omission of such themes could be explained by their coverage in other catechetical homilies possibly delivered by the authors themselves or their clerical colleagues, which do not survive⁸⁶. However, given the paucity of evidence on such material, the present inquiry is decidedly focused on the catechetical corpora in their extant and generally recognized form.

The first observation concerns Cyril and Chrysostom's approach to prehistorical realities. Expectedly, in keeping with their adherence to the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, the catechists embrace the view of the eternal generation and preincarnate existence of the Son. Other than that, however, they state little about themes evident in earlier Christian

⁸³ For discussion on the historical character of typology, see Daniélou, *The Lord of History*, p. 139-142. Cf. discussion on the significance of typology in Alexandrian and Antiochian exegesis, see M. Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, tr. J.A. Hughes, Edinburgh 2001, p. 46-48, 69-75.

⁸⁴ Cf. J. Chrysavgis, *The Way of the Fathers: Exploring the Patristic Mind*, Minneapolis 1998, p. 6.

⁸⁵ For a brief discussion on the spiral view of history that "recognizes both similarity and difference" of individual events "between various moments in time", see H. Boersma, *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition*, Grand Rapids 2018, p. 7. In the same vein, the repetitive but nonetheless evolutive emergence of civilizations has been depicted as a spiral movement, which involves "each new one beginning its cycle a little higher up than the previous one", see Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, p. 108.

⁸⁶ See e.g. Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos* 4, SCh 366, p. 226, where the author refers to the existence of another teacher (or other teachers?) in the Antiochian congregation.

sources, such as the pre-existence of the church⁸⁷. Instead, they consistently emphasize temporal, and therefore, historical, events.

The second observation concerns the authors' views on the end of history. Since the sources reveal them to be rather well versed in – if not always explicit about – various currents of earlier and contemporary theology, one might expect them to accompany their expositions on the “last things” with some reference to chiliastic eschatology, endorsed by earlier writers such as Papias⁸⁸, the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*⁸⁹, Justin⁹⁰, and Irenaeus⁹¹. However, the catechists remain utterly silent about this theme. The following reasons may be suggested.

The authors' reticence about chiliastic views may be partly due to an awareness, prevalent in many early Christian authors, “that eschatology cannot be explained within temporal categories but only symbolically sketched and hinted at”⁹². Furthermore, their hesitance can be understood from the catechetical nature of their homilies. At the initial stage of their hearers' Christian journey, the catechists chiefly focus on guiding them towards their baptismal participation in the ecclesial body and consequent ascetical struggle as fully initiated believers. Discussion on what may be expected to concern their later life is postponed to another occasion. In the same vein, the authors demonstrate a relative lack of interest in connections between the sacred and secular aspects of history involving themes like the earthly reign of Christians⁹³. Ultimately, the authors' silence on chiliastic eschatology can also be explained as an attempt to safeguard the neophytes from speculative approaches to their

⁸⁷ Clemens Romanus (?), *Epistola II ad Corinthios* 14.1-4, ed. T.W. Crafer, London 1921, p. 18.

⁸⁸ See e.g. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5.33.4, SCh 153, 416-420; Eusebius Caesariensis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.39.11-13, SCh 31, 156. For further Eusebian evidence on early Christian chiliastic views, see Eusebius Caesariensis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.24.1-9, SCh 41, 201-204.

⁸⁹ *Epistula Barnabae* 15.1-9, SCh 172, 184-188.

⁹⁰ Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone judaeo* 80, PG 6, 664-665, 668.

⁹¹ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5.32.1, 5.33.3-4, 5.35.2, SCh 153, 396-398, 410-416, 442-452.

⁹² J.A. McGuckin, *Eschatological Horizons in the Cappadocian Fathers*, in: *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity*, ed. R.J. Daly, Grand Rapids 2009, p. 197.

⁹³ To be sure, in their other works, both authors reveal aspects of their relationship with the empire and its administration. See e.g. Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Epistola ad Constantium, passim*, RR 2, 434-441; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia dicta praesente imperatore*, PG 63, 473-378.

newly acquired faith and to encourage them to be rooted in the firm soil of the Christian tradition instead⁹⁴. The message is implicit but nonetheless clear: history ends with the Parousia of Christ and the final judgment.

Thirdly, and somewhat surprisingly, Cyril and Chrysostom's catechetical homilies are quite unconcerned with church history in the strict sense. They also provide no overviews of the structure of the liturgical year. Of course, such an approach does not necessarily arise out of ignorance. Rather than providing their baptismal candidates and neophytes with elaborate expositions or analytically evaluable definitions of these issues, the authors seek to encourage personal participation in the history of the ecclesial mystery⁹⁵, manifested in the yearly liturgical cycle. To this end, their catechetical orations focus on more fundamental issues such as Scriptural history and the significance of sacraments. At any rate, a larger study would be required to map out possible connections between the views on history held by the two catechists and those presented by early church historians such as Eusebius.

6. Concluding Remarks

This article aimed to provide unprecedented elucidation on the conceptualization of history in the catechetical homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom. Rooted in their interpretation of the (Judeo-) Christian tradition, both authors were shown to perceive history from the perspective of the divine activity manifested in thematically interrelated events, collectively forming a coherent "history of salvation". Metaphorically, their understanding of history could be depicted as a spatial entity, further characterized using geometric imagery.

Cyril and Chrysostom maintain a fundamentally linear view of history. For them, this history is divinely initiated in creation and guided

⁹⁴ For discussion on the nature and background of the adaptability of Chrysostom's homiletical pedagogy, see D. Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching*, Oxford 2014, 75-99; I. Sandwell, *A Milky Text Suitable for Children: The Significance of John Chrysostom's Preaching on Genesis 1:1 for Fourth-century Audiences*, in: *Delivering the Word: Preaching and Exegesis in the Western Christian Tradition*, ed. W.J. Lyons – I. Sandwell, Abingdon 2012, p. 83-92.

⁹⁵ Cf. A. Dulles: "We cannot fully objectify the Church because we are involved in it; we know it through a kind of intersubjectivity". See A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York 2002, p. 10.

through the present, towards the eschatological consummation and subsequent eternity. From a human perspective, the authors' linear concept involves two lines: one representing a postlapsarian regressive trajectory leading to an unfortunate destiny, and the other symbolizing progression towards eternal life.

In addition to this foundational view, Cyril's conception introduced nuanced models. He was shown to employ cyclical depictions using astronomical objects and the rhythm of nature to measure liturgical time. Seasonal imagery further illustrates the human course through life, death, and resurrection. Moreover, the analysis of Cyril's recurring rhetoric of paradise revealed a four-staged progression of history. In this view, individual occurrences are typologically related, forming an unbroken cyclical chain of evolving events akin to an upward spiral movement.

Significantly, in their extant catechetical homilies, the authors remain silent on themes such as prehistorical realities, chiliastic eschatology and detailed church history. Instead, they aim to guide their audience towards robust engagement with the Christian tradition and full participation in the church.

While the present study deliberately employed well-known methods, their application to the Cyrilline and Chrysostomian catechetical corpora provided a novel contribution, however small, to the study of late fourth-century theology of history. Future scholarship would benefit from applying a similar approach to a broader set of homiletical sources from the Patristic era, as well as conducting a more thorough analysis of the possible philosophical underpinnings of their pertinent views. This, in turn, would provide a substantial basis for the investigation of yet another insufficiently explored area, namely, historiographical study on modern scholarship of late antique Christian sources.

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