

# Ancient Sources for *Agora* (2009)

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### A. Palladas of Alexandria (late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> c.), Epigram addressed to Hypatia.

Palladas was a grammarian (teacher of language and literature), and a pagan. The Epigram is preserved in the *Anthologia Graeca* 9.400. Translation: Loeb edition, W.R. Paton, *The Greek Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916–18), vol. 3, p. 223.

Revered Hypatia, ornament of learning, stainless star of wise teaching, when I see thee and thy discourse I worship thee, looking on the starry house of the Virgin;<sup>1</sup> for thy business is in heaven.

### B. Rufinus of Aquileia (late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century), *Church History* 11.22–33, on the destruction of the Temple of Serapis in Alexandria in AD 391.

Rufinus (345–411) was a monk, historian, and theologian. Originally from Aquileia in northern Italy, he studied in Alexandria in the 370s and was influenced by Egyptian desert ascetics. Later he lived in Jerusalem and Rome, where translated many Greek theological works into Latin. One of these was Eusebius' *Church History*, which he supplemented and brought up to his own day. Books 10 and 11 are Rufinus' own work, and cover the period 325–395. His account of the fall of the Serapeum in 391 draws on first-hand knowledge of the site and the cult of Serapis. Translation: Philip R. Amidon, *Rufinus of Aquileia: History of the Church. Series The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 113 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), pp. 462–469.

### The bishop of Alexandria parades pagan sacred equipment, provoking a riot

11.22. In Alexandria meanwhile fresh disturbances broke out against the church contrary to the faith of the times. The occasion was as follows. There was a basilica built for official use which was age-worn and quite untended, and which the emperor Constantius [[Constantius II](#), r. 324–337] was said to have donated to the bishops who preached his perfidy [i.e., his non-orthodox

<sup>1</sup> Palladas compares her to the constellation Virgo.

brand of Christianity]; long neglect had so reduced it that only the walls were still sound. The bishop who had charge of the church at that time decided to ask the emperor for it so that the growth of the houses of prayer might keep pace with the growing number of the faithful. He received it and was setting about restoring it when some hidden grottoes and underground chambers were discovered on the site, which smacked more of lawlessness and crimes than of religious services.<sup>2</sup> The pagans, therefore, when they saw the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses being uncovered, could not bear to have these evils exposed, which long ages had covered and darkness had concealed, but began, all of them, as though they had drunk the serpents' cup, to rave and rage openly. Nor was it just their usual noisy demonstrations; they wielded weapons, battling up and down the streets so that the two peoples were at open war. Our side far outweighed the other in numbers and strength, but was rendered less violent by religious restraint.

### **Pagans barricade themselves in the temple of Serapis, taking Christian hostages**

As a result, when many of ours had been wounded repeatedly, and some even killed, [the pagans] took refuge in a temple [the temple of Serapis] as a sort of stronghold, taking with them many Christians whom they had captured. These they forced to offer sacrifice on the altars which were kindled; those who refused they put to death with new and refined tortures, fastening some to gibbets<sup>3</sup> and breaking the legs of others and pitching them into the caverns which a careworn antiquity had built to receive the blood of sacrifices and the other impurities of the temple. They carried on in this way day after day, first fearfully and then with boldness and desperation, living shut up within the temple on plunder and booty. Finally, while they were spilling the blood of the city folk, they chose one Olympus, a philosopher in name and raiment only, as leader in their criminal and reckless enterprise, so that with him in the forefront they might defend their stronghold and maintain the usurpation.

### **Roman authorities attempt to negotiate, then appeal to the Emperor**

But when those charged with maintaining the laws of Rome and administering justice<sup>4</sup> learned what had happened, they rushed to the temple in terrified agitation and asked the reasons for this rash behavior and the meaning of the riot in which the blood of citizens had been so wickedly shed before the altars. But [the pagans] barricaded the entrance and with confused and discordant voices replied with outcries rather than explanations of what they had done. Messages, however, were sent to them to remind them of the power of the Roman government, of the legal penalties, and of the normal consequences of behavior of the sort,

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<sup>2</sup> Underground meeting-places for worshippers of [Mithras](#).

<sup>3</sup> The *patibulum*, a fork-shaped yoke, placed on the necks of criminals, and to which their hands were tied.

<sup>4</sup> The government officials involved in the episode remain anonymous in Rufinus's account, but we learn from Eunapius, *Vit. Philosoph.* 472, and Sozomen, 7.15.5, that Evagrius was prefect of Egypt at the time; Romanus was *comes Aegypti*. It was they to whom C.Th. 16.10.11 was addressed. (Amidon)

and since the place was so fortified that nothing could be done except by drastic action against those attempting such madness, the matter was reported to the emperor.<sup>5</sup>

Being more inclined to correct than to destroy the errant because of his great clemency, he wrote back that satisfaction was not to be sought for those whom their blood shed before the altars had made martyrs and the glory of whose merits had overcome the pain of their death [i.e., no punishment for the torture and murder of the Christian hostages]; that being said, however, the cause of the evils and the roots of the discord which had risen up in defense of the idols should be extirpated completely, so that once these were eliminated, the reason for the conflict might also disappear. Now when this letter arrived and both peoples met together at the temple following a sort of short-term truce, no sooner had the first page been read out, the introduction to which censured the vain superstition of the pagans, than a great shout was raised by our people, while shock and fear assailed the pagans, each of whom sought to hide somewhere, to find alleys through which to flee, or to melt unnoticed into our crowds. Thus all who were there realized that God's presence lending boldness to his people had put to flight the demon's fury which had earlier raged among the others.

### Description of the Temple of Serapis<sup>6</sup>

11.23. I suppose that everyone has heard of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, and that many are also familiar with it. The site was elevated, not naturally but artificially, to a height of a hundred or more steps, its enormous rectangular premises extending in every direction. All of [the rooms], mounting to the ceilings on the highest level, were vaulted, and with the lamps fitted up above and the concealed sanctuaries divided each from the other, showed how they were used for various services and secret functions. On the upper level, furthermore, the outermost structures in the whole circumference provided space for halls and shrines and for lofty apartments which normally housed either the temple staff or those called *hagneuontes*, meaning those who purify themselves. Behind these in turn were porticoes divided off from each other in rows to form a quadrangle which ran around the whole circumference on the inside. In the middle of the entire area was the sanctuary, outstanding for its precious columns, the exterior fashioned of marble, spacious and magnificent to behold.

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<sup>5</sup> Cynegius's activities in Egypt (see *Consularia Constantinopolitana* 388) would have encouraged the idea that the emperor turned a blind eye toward attacks on idols, but none of Theodosius I's surviving laws authorize them, not even C. Th. 16.10.11 of June 16, 391. This edict applied to Egypt the ban on pagan worship contained in C.Th. 16.10.10 of February 24, 391, and was issued in response to the riots described by Rufinus here. It was forbidden to visit temples, worship idols, offer incense or libations to them, and perform animal sacrifices; but the destruction of temples is prescribed neither here nor in any other edict.

<sup>6</sup> Another ancient description of the Serapeum is offered by Aphthonius of Antioch; see H. Rabe, *Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926), 38–41, with the commentary of John of Sardis, 227–30. The results of archaeological research on the site are given in Michael Sabottka, *Das Serapeum in Alexandria: Untersuchungen zur Architektur und Baugeschichte des Heiligtums von der frühen ptolemäischen Zeit bis zur Zerstörung 391 n. Chr.* (*Études alexandrines* 15, 2008. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2008). Aphthonius's and Rufinus's descriptions are given and compared on pp. 313–28.

### **The Huge Statue of Serapis, and its Destruction**

In it there was a statue of Serapis so large that its right hand touched one wall and its left the other; this monster is said to have been composed of every kind of metal and wood. The interior walls of the shrine were believed to have been covered with plates of gold overlaid with silver and then bronze, the last as a protection for the more precious metals. There were also some things cunningly and skillfully devised to excite the amazement and wonder of those who saw them. There was a tiny window so orientated toward the direction of sunrise that on the day appointed for the statue of the sun to be carried in to greet Serapis, careful observation of the seasons had ensured that as the statue was entering, a ray of sunlight coming through this window would light up the mouth and lips of Serapis, so that to the people looking on, it would seem as though the sun were greeting Serapis with a kiss.<sup>7</sup>

And there was another trick of this kind. Magnets, it is said, have the natural power to pull and draw iron to themselves. The image of the sun had been made by its artisan from the very thinnest iron with this in view: that a magnet, which, as we said, naturally attracts iron, and which was set in the ceiling panels, might by natural force draw the iron to itself when the statue was carefully placed directly beneath it, the statue appearing to the people to rise and hang in the air. And lest it betray what was going on by quickly dropping, the agents of the deception would say, "The sun has arisen so that, bidding Serapis farewell, he may depart to his own place." There were many other things as well built on the site by those of old for the purpose of deception which it would take too long to detail.

Now as we started to say, when the letter had been read our people were ready to overthrow the author of the error, but a rumor had been spread by these very pagans that if a human hand touched the statue, the earth would split open on the spot and crumble into the abyss, while the sky would come crashing down at once. This caused the people some bewilderment for a moment, until one of the soldiers, armed with faith rather than weapons, rose up with a two-edged axe he had seized and smote the old fraud on the jaw with all his might. A roar went up from both sides, but the sky did not fall, nor did the earth collapse. Thus with repeated strokes he felled the smoke-grimed deity of rotted wood, which, upon being thrown down, burned as easily as dry wood when it was kindled. After this the head was wrenched from the neck and from the bushel, which was discarded, and dragged off; then the feet and the other members were chopped off with axes and dragged apart with ropes attached, and piece by piece, each in a different place, the decrepit dotard was burned to ashes before the eyes of the Alexandria which worshiped him. Last of all the torso which was left was put to the torch in the amphitheater, and that was the end of the vain superstition and ancient error of Serapis.

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<sup>7</sup> The existence of the window is confirmed by Alexandrian coinage, and the same arrangement for sun and window is found in other Egyptian temples. The Egyptians thought of the sun as reviving the statues of gods by shining on them and thus recharging them with vital force. The image of the sun kissing Serapis is found on coins and lamps of the period.

## Origin of the Cult

The pagans have different views about his origin. Some regard him as Jupiter, the bushel placed upon his head showing either that he governs all things with moderation and restraint or that he bestows life on mortals through the bounty of harvests. Others regard him as the power of the Nile River, by whose richness and fertility Egypt is fed. There are some who think the statue was made in honor of our Joseph because of the distribution of grain by which he aided the Egyptians in the time of famine. Still others claim to have found in Greek histories of old that a certain Apis, a householder or a king residing in Memphis, provided ample food from his own store to the citizens when the grain ran out in Alexandria during a famine. When he died they founded a temple in his honor in Memphis in which a bull, the symbol of the ideal farmer, is cared for; it has certain colored markings and is called "Apis" after him. As for the *soros* or coffin in which his body lay, they brought it down to Alexandria, and by putting together *soros* and Apis they at first called him "Sorapis," but this was later corrupted to "Serapis." God knows what truth, if any, there is in all this.

### C. Socrates (5<sup>th</sup> century), *Ecclesiastical History* 7.13–15.

Socrates was born around 380 in Constantinople. A Nicene Christian, he was nonetheless sympathetic to other religious groups. Translation: Anon., *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates* (London: George Bell, 1904), pp. 345–349 (slightly modified).

## Chapter 13: Conflict between the Christians and Jews at Alexandria: and breach between Cyril the Bishop and Orestes the Prefect.

About this time the Jewish inhabitants were driven out of Alexandria by Cyril the bishop on the following account. The Alexandrians are more delighted with tumult than any other people: and if they can find a pretext, they will break forth into the most intolerable excesses; nor is it scarcely possible to check their impetuosity until there has been much bloodshed. It happened on the present occasion that a disturbance arose among the populace, not from a cause of any serious importance, but out of an evil that had become inveterate in almost all cities, viz. a fondness for pantomimic exhibitions. In consequence of the Jews being disengaged from business on the Sabbath, and spending their time, not in hearing the law, but in theatrical amusements, dancers usually collect great crowds on that day, and disorder is almost invariably produced. And although this was in some degree controlled by the governor of Alexandria, yet the Jews were continually factious; and there was superadded to their ordinary hatred of the Christians, rage against them on account of the dancers. When therefore Orestes the prefect was publishing an edict in the theatre for the regulation of the shows, some of the bishop's party were present to learn the nature of the orders about to be issued. Among these was Hierax, a teacher of the rudimental branches of literature; one who was a very assiduous auditor of the bishop's sermons, and made himself conspicuous by his forward and noisy plaudits. When the Jews observed this person in the theatre, they immediately cried out that

be had come there for no other purpose than to excite sedition among the people. Now Orestes had long regarded with jealousy the growing power of the bishops, and their encroachments on the jurisdiction of the civil authorities. Believing therefore that Cyril wished to set spies over his proceedings, he ordered Hierax: to be seized, and publicly subjected to the torture in the theater. Cyril, on being informed of this, sent for the principal Jews, and threatened them with the utmost severities, unless they desisted from their molestation of the Christians. These menaces, instead of suppressing their violence, only rendered the Jewish populace more furious, and led them to form conspiracies for the destruction of the Christians; one of which was of so desperate a character, as to cause their entire expulsion from Alexandria. Having agreed that each one of them should wear a ring on his finger, made of the bark of a palm branch, for the sake of mutual recognition, they determined to attack the Christians on a certain night. And sending persons into the streets to raise an outcry that Alexander's church was on fire, they thus drew the Christiana out in great anxiety to save their church. The Jews immediately fell upon and slew them, readily distinguishing each other by their rings. At daybreak the authors of this atrocity could not be concealed: and Cyril going to their synagogue (which is the name they give their house of prayer), attended by an immense body of people, took them away from them, and driving the Jews out of the city, permitted the multitude to plunder their goods. Thus were the Jews, who had inhabited the city from the time of Alexander the Macedonian, expelled from it, stripped of all they possessed, and dispersed some in one direction and some in another. One of them, a physician named Adamantius, fled to Atticus bishop of Constantinople, and professing Christianity, afterwards returned to Alexandria and fixed his residence there. But Orestes the governor of Alexandria viewed these transactions with great indignation, and was excessively annoyed that a city of such magnitude should have been suddenly bereft of so large a portion of its population. He therefore at once communicated the whole affair to the emperor. Cyril also wrote to him, describing the outrageous conduct of the Jews; and in the meanwhile sent persons to Orestes who should mediate concerning a reconciliation; for this the people had urged him to do. And when Orestes refused to listen to a word on the subject, Cyril extended toward him the book of the Gospels, believing that respect for religion would induce him to lay aside his resentment. When however even this had no pacific effect on the prefect, but he persisted in implacable hostility against the bishop, the following event afterwards occurred.

#### **Chapter 14: Sedition of the Monks against the Prefect of Alexandria**

Some of the monks inhabiting the mountains of Nitria,<sup>8</sup> of very fiery disposition, whom Theophilus some time before had so unjustly armed against Discorus and his brethren, being again transported with an ardent zeal, resolved to fight valiantly in behalf of Cyril. About five hundred of them therefore, quitting their monasteries, came into the city; and meeting the prefect in his chariot, they called him a Pagan idolater, and applied to him many other abusive

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<sup>8</sup> Now [Wadi El Nitrun](#), about 60 miles south of Alexandria. Founded in 330, Nitria was one of the earliest Christian monastic sites in Egypt. By Hypatia's day, it was home to thousands of monks.

epithets. Supposing this to be a snare laid for him by Cyril, he exclaimed that he was a Christian, and had been baptized by Atticus the bishop at Constantinople. The monks gave but little heed to his protestations, and one of them, named Ammonius, threw a stone at Orestes, which struck him on the head, and covered him with the blood that flowed from the wound. All the guards with a few exceptions fled, fearing to be stoned to death; but the populace, among whom the fugitive guards had mingled, running to the rescue of the governor, put the rest of the monks to flight, and having secured Ammonius, delivered him up to the prefect. Orestes immediately put him publicly to the torture, which was inflicted with such severity that he died under the effects of it: and not long after he gave an account to the emperors of what had taken place. Cyril on the other hand forwarded his statement of the matter also; and causing the body of Ammonius to be deposited in a certain church, he gave him the new appellation of Thaumasius [The Wondrous One], ordering him to be enrolled among the martyrs, and eulogizing his magnanimity as that of one who had fallen in a conflict in defense of piety (i.e. treated him as a heroic martyr of the Christian faith). This approval of Ammonias on the part of Cyril met with no sympathy from the more sober-minded Christians; for they well knew that he had suffered the punishment due to his temerity, and had not lost his life under the torture because he would not deny Christ. And Cyril himself, being conscious of this, suffered the recollection of the circumstance to be gradually obliterated by silence. But the animosity between Cyril and Orestes did not by any means subside, but was kindled afresh by an occurrence not unlike the preceding.

### **Chapter 15: Hypatia the Philosopher**

There was a woman at Alexandria named Hypatia, daughter of the philosopher Theon, who made such attainments in literature and science, as to far surpass all the philosophers of her own time. Having succeeded to the school of Plato and Plotinus, she explained the principles of philosophy to her auditors, many of whom came from a distance to receive her instructions. Such was her self-possession and ease of manner, arising from the refinement and cultivation of her mind that she not unfrequently appeared in public in presence of the magistrates, without ever losing in an assembly of men that dignified modesty of deportment for which she was conspicuous, and which gained for her universal respect and admiration. Yet even she fell a victim to the political jealousy that at that time prevailed. For as she had frequent interviews with Orestes, it was calumniously reported among the Christian populace, that it was by her influence he was prevented from being reconciled to Cyril. Some of them therefore, whose ringleader was a reader named Peter, hurried away by a fierce and bigoted zeal, entered into a conspiracy against her; and observing her as she returned home in her carriage, they dragged her from it, and carried her to the church called Caesareum, where they completely stripped her, and then murdered her with *ostraka*.<sup>9</sup> After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them. An act so inhuman could not fail to bring the greatest opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian

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<sup>9</sup> Fragments of broken clay vessels, which would have been readily available in the trash, and sharp.

Church. And surely nothing can be further from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort. This happened in the month of March during Lent, in the fourth year of Cyril's episcopate, under the tenth consulate of Honorius, and the sixth of Theodosius (AD 415).

D. Damascius (late 5<sup>th</sup>-early 6<sup>th</sup> century), *The Philosophical History* 43.

Damascius, known as “the last of the Neoplatonists,” was the last scholar of Athens, and one of the pagan philosophers persecuted by Emperor Justinian in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Born in the 460s in Damascus, Damascius came to Alexandria to study under the great Hellenic philosophers of the 480s, including men who had been students of Hypatia herself. He represents the Hellenic tradition in Alexandria, to whom the death of Hypatia was extremely important. Translation: Damascius. *The Philosophical History*. Ed. and trans. Polymnia Athanassiadi. Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999, pp. 130–133.<sup>10</sup>

43. Hypatia: she was born, brought up and educated in Alexandria and, being endowed with a nobler nature than her father [Theon], she was not content with the mathematical education that her father gave her, but occupied herself with some distinction in the other branches of philosophy. And wrapping herself in a philosopher's cloak, she progressed through the town, publicly interpreting the works of Plato, Aristotle or any other philosopher to those who wished to listen. As well as being a gifted teacher, she had reached the peak of moral virtue and was just and prudent; she remained a virgin, but as she was remarkably beautiful and attractive, one of her students fell in love with her and, not being able to control his passion, he betrayed it to her as well. Ignorant legend has it that Hypatia cured him of his disease through music. But the truth is that when music failed to have any effect, she produced a rag of the type used by women, stained with blood and, showing him the symbol of the impurity of birth, she said: "This is what you are in love with, young man, and not a thing of beauty." His soul was overcome by shame and astonishment at the unseemly display and he adopted a more rational attitude.

Hypatia being of such a nature—skilled and dialectical in speech, wise and politic in behavior—the entire city naturally loved her and held her in exceptional esteem, while the powers that be paid their respects first to her, as indeed was the custom in Athens. Even if philosophy itself was dead, its name at least still seemed most honorable and worthy of admiration to those who ran the affairs of the city.

It happened one day that Cyril, the man in charge of the opposing sect, was passing Hypatia's house and seeing a great crowd at the door, “a mix of men and horses,” some going, some coming and some standing around, he asked what the crowd was and why there was this

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<sup>10</sup> The *Philosophical History* is also known as the *Life of Isidore*, after Damascius' teacher. The work is reconstructed from excerpts in Photius and elsewhere. It is the most important source concerning the last polytheist philosophers of Athens and Alexandria. It is the source for much of what is in the Suda on the Neoplatonists.

commotion in front of the house. His attendants told him that honors were being paid to the philosopher Hypatia and that this was her house. When he heard this, envy so gnawed at his soul that he soon begun to plot her murder—the most ungodly murder of all. When she left her house as usual, a crowd of bestial men—truly abominable—those who take account neither of divine vengeance nor of human retribution—fell upon and killed the philosopher; and while she still gasped for air they cut out her eyes; thus inflicting the greatest pollution and disgrace on the city. And the emperor was vexed at that <would have intervened?> had not Aedesius been bribed. He removed the punishment from the murderers and brought it upon himself and his offspring; it was his grandson who paid the penalty.

E. John of Nikiu (late 7<sup>th</sup> century), *The Chronicle* 81–103.

John of Nikiu was a member of the Coptic (Egyptian) church who wrote in the wake of the Muslim takeover of Egypt in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century. Translation from the Coptic: John of Nikiu. *The Chronicle*. Ed. and trans. R.H. Charles. London: Williams and Norgate, 1916, pp. 100–102 (slightly modified)

**Miraculous success of the Christian Emperor Theodosius against barbarian incursions.**

81. In the days of this emperor [[Theodosius](#) II, r. 402–450] also the barbarians who had survived the defeat of John the Usurper (AD 425) reunited and proceeded to invade the Roman territories. 82. And when the God-loving emperor was informed of this event, he meditated, as was his wont, and turned his thoughts to our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ—praise be unto Him—and he fasted and prayed. 83. And he was merciful to the poor and compassionate to the destitute and he devoted himself to the works which are pleasing to God with integrity and that which is beyond (all) these works. 84. He commanded Proclus [Archbishop of Constantinople] and all the priests and monks to pray on his behalf that victory should be given to him over his adversaries and that his efforts should not be exerted in vain. God heard his prayer and the barbaric chief named Roilas died. Indeed God struck him with a thunderbolt (and) he was destroyed, and many of them died by this death which was sent from God. And fire likewise came down from heaven and destroyed those that remained. 86. And all the peoples of the earth recognized by this event that the God of the Christians is great, and the righteousness and faith of the God-loving emperor Theodosius were made known.

**Hypatia**

87. And in those days there appeared in Alexandria a female philosopher, a pagan named Hypatia, and she was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles. 88. And the governor of the city honored her exceedingly; for she had beguiled him through her magic. And he ceased attending church as had been his custom. And not only did this, but he drew many believers to her, and he himself received the unbelievers at his house.

### **Expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria by Bishop Cyril**

89. And on a certain day when they were making merry over a theatrical exhibition connected with dancers, the governor of the city published (an edict) regarding the public exhibitions in the city of Alexandria: and all the inhabitants of the city had assembled there (in the theatre). 90. Now Cyril, who had been appointed patriarch after Theophilus, was eager to gain exact intelligence regarding this edict. 91. And there was a man named Hierax, a Christian possessing understanding and intelligence, who used to mock the pagans but was a devoted adherent of the illustrious Father the patriarch and was obedient to his monitions. He was also well versed in the Christian faith. 92. (Now this man attended the theatre to learn the nature of this edict.) But when the Jews saw him in the theatre they cried out and said, "This man has not come with any good purpose, but only to provoke an uproar." 93. And Orestes the prefect was displeased with the children of the holy church, and had Hierax seized and subjected to punishment publicly in the theatre, although he was wholly guiltless. 94. And Cyril was angry with the governor of the city for so doing, and likewise for his putting to death an illustrious monk of the convent of Pernodj named Ammonius, and other monks (also). And when the chief magistrate of the city [actually Cyril] heard this, he sent word to the Jews as follows "Cease your hostilities against the Christians." 95. But they refused to hearken to what they heard; for they gloried in the support of the prefect who was with them, and so they added outrage to outrage and plotted a massacre through a treacherous device. 96. And they posted beside them at night in all the streets of the city certain men, while others cried out and said: "The church of the apostolic Athanasius is on fire! Come to its help, all you Christians."

97. And the Christians on hearing their cry came forth quite ignorant of the treachery of the Jews. And when the Christians came forth the Jews arose and wickedly massacred the Christians and shed the blood of many, guiltless though they were. 98. And in the morning, when the surviving Christians heard of the wicked deed which the Jews had wrought, they betook themselves to the patriarch. And the Christians mustered all together and went and marched in wrath to the synagogues of the Jews and took possession of them, and purified them and converted them into churches. And one of them they named after the name of St. George. 99. And as for the Jewish assassins, they expelled them from the city, and pillaged all their possessions and drove them forth wholly despoiled, and Orestes the prefect was unable to render them any help.

### **The murder of Hypatia**

100. And thereafter a multitude of believers in God arose under the guidance of Peter the magistrate—now this Peter was a perfect believer in all respects in Jesus Christ—and they proceeded to seek for the pagan woman who had beguiled the people of the city and the prefect through her enchantments. 101. And when they learnt the place where she was, they proceeded to her and found her seated on a (lofty) chair; and having made her descend they dragged her along till they brought her to the great church, named Caesarion. Now this was in the days of the fast. 102. And they tore off her clothing and dragged her [till they brought her]

through the streets of the city till she died. And they carried her to a place named Cinaron, and they burned her body with fire. 103. And all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him "the new Theophilus"; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city.

#### F. The Suda (10<sup>th</sup> century): short biography of Hypatia.

The idiosyncratic Greek encyclopedia from the 10th century AD known as "The Suda" (from the Greek word *souda*, meaning "fortress" or "stronghold") contains a short biography of Hypatia, likely drawn from the neo-Platonist philosopher Damascius, who studied with her. It is notable for its treatment of Cyril as the villain. The translation of this entry is by Catharine Roth. Headword: Ὑπατία (Hypatia), Adler number: upsilon,166

The daughter of Theon the geometer, the Alexandrian philosopher, she was herself a philosopher and well-known to many. [She was] the wife of Isidore the philosopher. She flourished in the reign of Arcadius.[3] She wrote a commentary on Diophantos,[4] the Astronomical Canon, and a commentary on the Conics of Apollonios. She was torn to pieces by the Alexandrians, and her body was violated and scattered over the whole city. She suffered this because of envy and her exceptional wisdom, especially in regard to astronomy. According to some, [this was the fault of] Cyril, but according to others, [it resulted] from the inveterate insolence and rebelliousness of the Alexandrians. For they did this also to many of their own bishops: consider George and Proterios.

Concerning Hypatia the philosopher, proof that the Alexandrians [were] rebellious. She was born and raised and educated in Alexandria. Having a nobler nature than her father's, she was not satisfied with his mathematical instruction, but she also embraced the rest of philosophy with diligence. Putting on the philosopher's cloak although a woman and advancing through the middle of the city, she explained publicly to those who wished to hear either Plato or Aristotle or any other of the philosophers. In addition to her teaching, attaining the height of practical virtue, becoming just and prudent, she remained a virgin. She was so very beautiful and attractive that one of those who attended her lectures fell in love with her. He was not able to contain his desire, but he informed her of his condition. Ignorant reports say that Hypatia relieved him of his disease by music; but truth proclaims that music failed to have any effect. She brought some of her female rags and threw them before him, showing him the signs of her unclean origin, and said, "You love this, o youth, and there is nothing beautiful about it." His soul was turned away by shame and surprise at the unpleasant sight, and he was brought to his right mind. Such was Hypatia, both skillful and eloquent in words and prudent and civil in deeds. The rest of the city loved and honored her exceptionally, and those who were appointed at each time as rulers of the city at first attended her lectures, as also it used to happen at Athens. For if the reality had perished, yet the name of philosophy still seemed magnificent and admirable to those who held the highest offices in the community. So then once it happened that Cyril who was bishop of the opposing faction, passing by the house of Hypatia, saw that there was a great pushing and shoving against the doors, "of men and horses together," some

approaching, some departing, and some standing by. When he asked what crowd this was and what the tumult at the house was, he heard from those who followed that the philosopher Hypatia was now speaking and that it was her house. When he learned this, his soul was bitten with envy, so that he immediately plotted her death, a most unholy of all deaths. For as she came out as usual many close-packed ferocious men, truly despicable, fearing neither the eye of the gods nor the vengeance of men, killed the philosopher, inflicting this very great pollution and shame on their homeland. And the emperor would have been angry at this, if Aidesios had not been bribed. He remitted the penalty for the murders, but drew this on himself and his family, and his offspring paid the price.