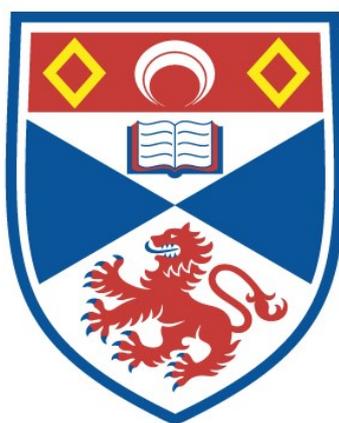


**A TEMPLE OF LIVING STONES : JOHN CASSIAN'S  
CONSTRUCTION OF MONASTIC ORTHODOXY IN FIFTH-  
CENTURY GAUL**

**Richard J. Goodrich**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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A Temple of Living Stones: John Cassian's  
Construction of Monastic Orthodoxy  
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Richard J. Goodrich

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 20, 2002



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## Abstract

This thesis examines John Cassian's attempts to influence the course of Gallic asceticism through the medium of his first ascetic work, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis*, I-IV. Rather than viewing Cassian as a cloistered, proto-Benedictine monk or an inept monastic legislator, it attempts to locate him in his broader, Late Antique context. The thesis first argues that the traditional view which holds that Cassian was a monk/abbot of Marseilles is flawed; in fact Cassian wrote his ascetic works while living in the province of Narbonensis Secunda and only moved to Marseilles sometime after AD 430.

The thesis then turns to a consideration of the strategies Cassian employed to win a hearing for his ascetic works. It examines how he played on his own experience as the quality that gave him the right to overrule both native Gallic ascetic experiments and the works of other western ascetic writers. It also examines how Cassian created a semi-mythical set of monastic laws (the *institututa Aegyptiorum*) and used this construct as an additional source of authority for his recommendations. Having established Cassian's method for winning a hearing for his work, the thesis then examines what Cassian offered that was in some way different from the practices offered by his contemporaries. The most important difference was Cassian's emphasis on a literal renunciation of all ties with the world before someone could enter the ascetic life.

Finally, this thesis argues that a proposal made by Owen Chadwick in 1968, that certain chapters in Book III of *De institutis* were later forgeries, is indeed correct. This is demonstrated by examining these chapters in the broader context of Cassian's thought and work. This traditional, textual analysis is then followed by a computerized stylometric study of the disputed passages, which confirms the likelihood that these chapters were written by someone other than John Cassian.

# Declarations

I, Richard James Goodrich, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is a record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date: September 20, 2002      signature of candidate \_

I was admitted as a research student in September, 1999 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D in May, 2000; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 1999 and 2002.

date: September 20, 2002      signature of candidate \_

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date: 11.03.03      signature of supervisor \_

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*For Mary*

*surge amica mea speciosa mea et veni*

— Canticum canticorum II. 13

## Preface

Of making many books there is no end,  
and much study wearies the body.

— Ecc. XI.12. [NIV]

In many ways the making of this book has seemed somewhat endless; in other ways, however, the end has come much too soon (I have been awash in both of these feelings this final week as I prepare the final draft for submission). The writer of Ecclesiastes wrote that it was good to eat, drink, and find satisfaction in one's labor (Ecc. V.18). I have been extremely fortunate in not only finding that satisfaction, but also in having been surrounded by a group of people who have supported me in countless ways over the past five years.

My quest for a Ph.D. began with a Master's degree in Ecclesiastical History at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada. I had gone to that school with the intention of pursuing a degree in spiritual theology, but was immediately drawn to History by Dr. John Toews, whose love of the past, and his humor in treating our shared heritage, set a standard that I may only aim for. Above all, he taught me not to take it all too seriously. Dr. David Diewert drew me deeper into the marvelous Greek language, was co-author of my first book, and remains a personal role model for my life as a Christian academic.

I would be gravely remiss should I not mention my brothers of the Dead Theologians Society. Special thanks to Greg Cowley ("always stand clear of the ladder, boss"), Kevin Seidel, Jim Bergwall, and Ryan Knight for friendship and grog-fuelled meetings.

Much to my surprise, upon reaching St Andrews, I discovered that a number of my former-Regent classmates had elected to enroll in the University as well. This has allowed me an additional three years of their company, a pleasure I will now miss as completion of our studies drive us in different directions. My thanks to David "Mr Bean" Albon for more strange behaviour than any proper British gentleman should exhibit. I shall also miss the many pleasant hours of putting shared with Andreas Loos on the Himalayas. Chinese New Year will never be the same.

Chris Craun, the quintessential southern gentleman, has been one of my most solid supports here in St Andrews. The Cumberland Sausage roll just isn't the same without you, buddy. My deep thanks also to the Reverend Jonathon Mason, my spiritual director, pastor, and friend, who has also helped keep me on an even keel through the vicissitudes of the thesis production.

I was immensely blessed to land in not only one of the finest classics departments in the world, but also one of the most collegial. The faculty and staff have helped me immeasurably, giving generously of their time, knowledge, and experience. In particular, I should like to single out Dr. Jon Hesk, who coopted me into his CAL Greek project last year, thereby giving me something other than my thesis to worry about. In some odd way, going back and doing something that I knew how to do well (computer programming) made the rest seem easier. Thanks, Jon.

Professor Greg Woolf took the blade that had been forged at Regent and helped put a keen edge on it. He has been unfailingly generous with his time, advice, and friendship. May he live 10,000 years!

Finally, there is no doubt in my mind that this thesis would be immeasurably poorer without the patient scrutiny, encyclopedic knowledge, and Socratic wisdom of my supervisor, Professor Jill Harries. Jill plucked me out of the faculty of Divinity, and planted me in the seedbed of Ancient History, where I have flourished and grown immeasurably. Moreover, she always *appeared* to enjoy my odd sense of humor as well as the little jokes I used to insert in my thesis to make certain she was reading the pages. This is an important quality in a supervisor. I have been immeasurably enriched by our three year association and will miss that relationship when I am no longer here.

I would also like to thank my mother and father (Dick and Lou Ann Goodrich) as well as my mother- and father-in-law (Dick and Ruth Jarvis) for their support in the face of an apparently illogical mid-life career change. I still don't have a good one paragraph summary of what I have been working on, but at least now you can read the book.

It is my considered opinion that anyone setting out to write a thesis should have children to help maintain sanity. My life is richly blessed by my two daughters, Ann (7) and Grace (3). They have helped me to remember what is important in life (badminton), and give me the best of reasons to stop work at 5:00 each evening.

Finally, and most importantly, the person to whom I have dedicated this thesis, my wife, Mary. It may be a cliché to say that I could not have done it without you, but that does not make it any less true. You have provided me the time and space to do this work, have borne the burden of taking care of our children, have watched as we burned all of our retirement savings, and yet always treated it as a great adventure. You are my heart, my life, and my love. Thank you, my beautiful *amica*.

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# Introduction

This study is an attempt to develop connections between an important figure and his Late Antique context. The subject is the Gallic ascetic writer, John Cassian; his context is the burgeoning ascetic movement of early fifth-century Gaul. My approach is by no means novel: similar studies of ecclesiastical writers such as Augustine, Ambrose, Basil, and Paulinus of Nola have evolved out of the growth of scholarly interest in the period that separated the classical from the medieval world. Even in the circumscribed area of Cassian studies there has been a growing awareness of the need to critically rethink the suppositions that have undergirded earlier work.<sup>1</sup> Although Cassian was an ascetic writer, and presumably an ascetic of one form or another, it would be a mistake to pigeonhole him as nothing more than a cloistered, proto-Benedictine monk. In fact, he was an important fifth-century writer with connections to the Late Antique church of three important areas: Constantinople, Rome, and southeastern Gaul. While his work was the foundation for the western monastic tradition mediated by Benedict of Nursia, we must not lose sight of the fact that it was also Cassian's entry in a competition for the hearts and minds of Gallic ascetics. Competition, authority and self-justification are as present in Cassian's works as his teaching on psalmody.

Cassian was probably born sometime in the mid-360s; his place of birth has been disputed and no scholarly consensus exists on this question. Quite possibly he was a native of the Roman province of Scythia Minor;<sup>2</sup> a conflicting opinion locates him in Roman Gaul, the land where

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Rousseau (1995) who signals this change by noting that in his earlier study (Rousseau (1978)), he had assumed that Cassian was a monk and that he (Rousseau) "knew what a monk meant" (78).

<sup>2</sup> This is based on Gennadius' note about Cassian in *De viris illustribus*, LXI, in which he refers to Cassian as: "*Cassianus, natione Scythia*." Recent supporters of this attribution include Chadwick (1950), 190–198; Courcelle (1969), 227 n.5; Rousseau (1978); Damian (1990), 149–170; and Stewart (1998), 6.

he would ultimately settle and live out his days.<sup>3</sup> As a young man he entered a monastery in Bethlehem,<sup>4</sup> where he first began his initiation into the monastic craft. Inspired by an encounter with a visiting ascetic (Abba Pinufius), Cassian and his friend Germanus sought and received permission to make a tour of Egypt, at that time the heartland of the ascetic movement.<sup>5</sup>

Cassian and Germanus remained in Egypt for an extended period,<sup>6</sup> learning the principles of monasticism at the feet of the Desert Fathers. In total he may have spent 15 years in Egypt, and his sojourn there ended with the close of the fourth century. His exodus has been connected to the rise of the Anthropomorphite controversy in Egypt. It is possible that Cassian was among the band of monks who were led out of the desert by the Four Tall Brothers, (ca. 400), but this is by no means certain. Eventually Cassian would show up in Constantinople, arriving in that city before the deposition of John Chrysostom.

Chrysostom ordained Cassian a deacon and placed him in charge of the cathedral treasury. When Theophilus carried his persecution to the door of the Emperor, Cassian was one of the delegation who traveled to Rome in order to solicit support from Innocent I. Following the exile and eventual death of Chrysostom, Cassian disappeared from the gaze of history. References in his third work, *De incarnatione*, and two letters from Innocent suggest that he might have spent some time in Antioch, but little can be stated with certainty about his activities until the early 420s, when he declares his presence in southeastern Gaul by writing his first work, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis*. *De institutis* may be dated to the period (419-425). This work was followed by the longer *Collationes patrum*, which expanded on the teachings in *De institutis* and was probably completed ca. 428.

*De institutis* can be divided into two logical parts: Books I-IV which establish a framework for institutional monasticism, and Books V-XII, which treat the mastery of the eight principal faults (Gluttony, Lust, Greed, Anger, Dejection, Accidie, Vainglory, and Pride).<sup>7</sup> This study began with the modest aspiration of serving as a simple commentary on the first four books

<sup>3</sup>So Cappuyn (1949), 1321; Frank (1997), 422.

<sup>4</sup>How old he might have been at the time, and indeed how he would have made his way to Bethlehem as a young man are not known.

<sup>5</sup>*Cass. Inst.* IV.21-32; *Cass. Coll.* XVII can be read as an elaborate apologetic aimed at explaining why Cassian and Germanus did not return to Bethlehem as they had promised.

<sup>6</sup>Although see Frank (1997), 431 for doubts about the length of this stay.

<sup>7</sup>The list was modified by Pope Gregory and Thomas Aquinas (who conflated Pride and Vainglory) to form a list that is more likely to be familiar to a modern audience: the Seven Deadly Sins.

of *De institutis*. These books have been largely ignored by most Cassian scholars, in favor of the greener fields found in his later *Collationes patrum*.<sup>8</sup> Outside of the liturgical historians, who use Books II and III as evidence for the development of the Eastern monastic offices, *De institutis* seemed to contain little of interest; at least nothing that Benedict of Nursia had not said much better a century later. As Chadwick noted, Cassian lacked the “trim economy of the competent legislator.”<sup>9</sup> What he wrote was poor and uneven; important topics such as how to select an abbot were omitted entirely. Cassian’s true brilliance lay in the development and synthesis of the theoretical aspects of the ascetic life, as found in the latter eight books of *De institutis* and the 24 books of *Collationes*. Consequently, the absolutely fundamental thought contained in the *De Institutis* I–IV is often treated as a preface to the more important writings that follow. These four books are relegated to the status of helpful advice for Gallic monks, underestimating their centrality to Cassian’s entire monastic project.

My early interest in Cassian was stimulated by the apparent wrong-headedness of this view. *De institutis* is many things, but to reduce it a collection of good advice misses the central thrust of Cassian’s approach to the ‘Gallic problem.’ *De institutis* is the wedge that Cassian uses to get his foot in the Gallic door. More than a simple preface to later works, these four books were Cassian’s attempt to establish his right to prescribe ascetic practices for a Gallic audience. His thesis was simple: the Gallic monks had no idea of how to live the ascetic life; if they wanted to be monks, then they would do what Cassian told them to do. Cassian had no interest in the gentle emendation of existing ascetic practices. Cassian advocated replacement. Those who would read his work were to scrap their own novel formulations and adopt the program Cassian advanced: the institutes of the Egyptians (*instituta Aegyptiorum*).

As I studied the first four books of Cassian’s *De institutis*, I began to appreciate the subtlety of Cassian’s approach. He was a superb polemicist and rhetorician, and these qualities have not been properly explored in treatments of his work. He has one simple agenda: to establish his own version of the ascetic life in Gaul. To that end he will repeatedly emphasize his own experience against that of his audience. He will also subtly appropriate the work of other

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<sup>8</sup>Indeed, the only significant look at *De institutis* in its entirety has been Adalbert de Vogüé’s examination of Cassian’s sources for this work (De Vogüé (1985b)).

<sup>9</sup>Chadwick (1950), 60.

ascetic writers while simultaneously suggesting that these writers lacked the experience to offer advice to anyone. Finally, he will prescribe a program that is centered on the concept of renunciation, a program that was more radical than anything offered by his contemporaries.

These themes, which emerged while I was engaged in commenting on this text, form the core of this work. They are complemented by an investigation into the question of Cassian's provenance while writing this work, and an examination of the authenticity of certain chapters in *De institutis* III.

Chapter One will examine the long-accepted notion that John Cassian composed his ascetic works *De institutis* and *Collationes* while a monk or priest of Marseilles. An assessment of the evidence for this attribution will demonstrate that there is little to substantiate the proposition. Indeed, there is no evidence that firmly locates Cassian in Marseilles prior to the year 429. To the contrary, Cassian actually was intimately involved with the ascetic project developing in the Gallic province of Narbonensis Secunda. The antipathy between the bishop of Marseilles (Proculus) and the bishops and ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda created a divide that it was unlikely Cassian could have bridged had he actually been living in Marseilles at that time.

Having suggested an audience for *De institutis*, Chapter Two will then examine Cassian's critique of Gallic asceticism. If this was to be reduced to a single word, it would be inexperience. The Gallic monks, lacking experience, had created their own ascetic structures which Cassian condemned as both diverse and novel. The principal problem of Gallic monasticism was the untrained abbot who had the temerity to establish his own monastery without first having served as a disciple under an experienced master. This action, the epitome of pride, undermined one of the chief goals of the ascetic life, the cultivation of humility.

If native Gallic practices were not to be trusted, what about the ascetic treatises of other writers? Chapter Three will examine how Cassian positioned himself with regard to the works of his competition. Cassian took deliberate steps to promote himself as something quite different from those other men who had written about the ascetic life (Jerome, Rufinus, Sulpicius Severus, Basil, et. al.). These works, Cassian will argue, are the products of men who are more eloquent than experienced. Cassian never overtly attacks any of these writers, but as shall emerge in this chapter, he does make subtle allusions to (and corrections of) their writings

which seem designed to highlight his own experience, over and against their less-trustworthy works.

Ultimately, Cassian will not rest on his own experience as the foundation for his authority. Chapter Four will show how Cassian shifts the ultimate justification for his monastic precepts back onto a mythical code of ascetic law, the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, which had been formulated at the birth of the ascetic movement. This monastic code had its roots firmly set down in antiquity and had been observed by all true ascetics as far back as the apostolic age. Cassian characterized himself as a conduit for this 'orthodox' teaching; the practices that he advocates are not his own creation, but rather, the well-tested wisdom of the holy fathers.

With Chapter Five, we will finally take up the question of what did Cassian offer to his audience that is truly unique? This chapter will argue that his emphasis on an actual renunciation (*renuntiatio*) — as opposed to the theoretical renunciation preached by his contemporaries — sets Cassian apart from his fellow ascetic writers. Whereas other writers used asceticism as a platform for self-promotion, Cassian advocated a complete separation from the world and its concern for rank and status. He proposed a literal interpretation of Christ's words in Matthew XIX.21: *If you would be perfect, go sell your possessions, give to the poor, and then come follow me.* While other western ascetics and writers were busy attempting to integrate traditional Roman elite values and Christian asceticism, Cassian preached a complete change of life: the monk was to cast off everything that conferred status in the secular world and, imitating Christ, he was to don the humility and obedience of a slave. In this way (and this way only) the monk might then take the first steps toward spiritual perfection.

Finally, in an appendix to this study, I change my approach to Cassian slightly in order to follow up a textual question. This investigation centers on four chapters from Book III of *De institutis* (4, 5, 6, and 8) which are in my opinion, a later interpolation into Cassian's work. This claim will be demonstrated through a combination of traditional textual analysis as well as new computer-based statistical stylometry.

## Chapter 1

# Cassian of Marseilles?

It has long been assumed that John Cassian was living in Marseilles when he wrote his two great ascetic works, *De institutis* and *Collationes*. While scholars debate Cassian's birth place, the length of time he spent in Egypt, and the historical reliability of his testimony about Egyptian monastic praxis, there has never been any challenge to the proposition that Cassian settled in Marseilles upon his arrival in Gaul. If there is one 'certainty,' one universally accepted 'fact,' in Cassian studies, it would be his identification with Marseilles and that great sponsor of the Gallic ascetic program, Proculus.<sup>1</sup>

But is this biographical attribution correct? One disturbing objection to this argument is that it ignores the import of the pattern of dedications found in Cassian's ascetic works. These entries point to the patronage of a group of bishops and ascetics located, not in Marseilles, but rather in the province of Narbonensis Secunda. Cassian's dedicatees can all be placed in Narbonensis Secunda; none of them are affiliated with the city of Marseilles. The importance of this observation is heightened when it is placed in the context of the vigorous struggle for ecclesiastical control of southern Gaul during the time Cassian was writing his works. The bishops of Narbonensis Secunda and the bishop of Arles, were resisting Proculus of Marseilles' attempt to exercise the rights of a metropolitan bishop over this region. If Cassian was a priest

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<sup>1</sup>So Chadwick (1950), 41; Marrou (1966), 304; Stewart (1998), 15–16; Marrou (1945), 21–26; Rousseau (1978), 174–175; Rousseau (1995), 68; Leyser (2000), 35. This list could be expanded indefinitely. In fact, I have yet to find any scholar questioning the attribution of Cassian to Marseilles. Leyser (1999), 192 approached the question when he wrote: "Scholars have presumed that the unnamed parties at Marseilles referred to in the late 420s by the Augustinian Prosper of Aquitaine as dissenting from his master's predestinarian views are none other than John Cassian and the Lerinians."

of Marseilles, writing as a client of Proculus, why are all of his works dedicated to men who are (to a greater or lesser extent) Proculus' adversaries? Why does Cassian fail to dedicate any of his works to one of the most powerful bishops to ever serve in southern Gaul? The most likely answer is that Cassian, contrary to received opinion, was not living in Marseilles when he wrote his ascetic works. He was in fact living somewhere in Narbonensis Secunda.

This chapter is intended to substantiate this proposition. Three main points will be demonstrated: first, that there is no conclusive evidence to place Cassian in Marseilles before the year 432. Second, rather than dedicating works to the man who would have been the patron of a Massilian priest (Proculus), Cassian dedicated all of his works to bishops and ascetics who were living in Narbonensis Secunda. Third, in view of the historical enmity between Marseilles and the bishops residing in the province of Narbonensis Secunda, this was an extremely unlikely thing for Cassian to have done if he had been a priest of the Massilian church.

Several interesting adjustments to contemporary scholarship will be needed when Cassian is moved out of Marseilles. There will, for instance, need to be a rethinking of how asceticism developed in southeastern Gaul during this period. A number of works have used Cassian's alleged presence in Marseilles to postulate a thriving ascetic center located in that city, a center that is often connected to Cassian and his monastery of Saint Victor. In fact, as will be demonstrated in the following pages, Cassian reveals no awareness of a Massilian ascetic project (if indeed there ever was such an endeavor). His interest was centered on Narbonensis Secunda — on the monks who would form the monastery at Apt, as well as those who had taken up residence on the island of Lérins.

Moreover, a reassessment of Cassian's provenance should remove another unfortunate blot on his record. Cassian could not have been the leader of a vigorous 'semi-Pelagian' group of monks in Marseilles, simply because he was not in the city during the time Prosper and Hilary of Marseilles first wrote their letters to Augustine to complain about these men. Although Prosper would attack Cassian in his later work, *Contra Collatorem*, there is no evidence that Cassian ever actively 'led' the semi-Pelagian monks of Marseilles.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>And here I am inclined to follow the judgments of Markus (1990), 177–179 and Stewart (1998), 20, who see *Cass. Coll.* XIII as one piece with the themes developed throughout *Collationes*, rather than a response to the arrival of Augustine's *De correptione et gratia* in Gaul.

Finally, Narbonensis Secunda offers a better context for Cassian's work than Marseilles. Although Cassian has the support of provincial bishops (Castor and Leontius), none of these men would have had the authority of a Proculus to impose Cassian's legislation on a burgeoning ascetic movement. In the absence of episcopal clout, Cassian was forced to employ alternate means of persuading his audience to adopt his ascetic legislation. The strategies Cassian chose to forge authority for his *instituta* will be the subject of chapters 2 – 4 of this work.

The concern of this chapter, however, will be a proper placement of Cassian on the Gallic map. When the weakness of the evidence for an early Massilian stay is coupled with the strength of Cassian's connections to Narbonensis Secunda, the received view appears untenable. Cassian surely could not have been living in Marseilles until sometime after he composed the final set of his *Collationes*.

## The Case for Marseilles

In large measure the uncritical attribution of Cassian to Marseilles is due to the entry Gennadius made for the ascetic writer in his *De viris illustribus*,

Cassian, by nationality a Scythian (*natione Scytha*), ordained a deacon in Constantinople by Bishop John the Great, a presbyter in [near?] Marseilles (*apud Massiliam presbyter*), founded two monasteries, that is, for men and women, which endure to this day.<sup>3</sup>

Gennadius then lists Cassian's works and concludes his entry with,

He made an end to his life and writing in [near?] Marseilles (*apud Massiliam*) during the reign of Theodosius and Valentinian.<sup>4</sup>

Although this seems straightforward, Gennadius' entry resists an easy interpretation. As has already been discussed in the introduction, Gennadius' *natione Scytha* has posed difficulties

<sup>3</sup>Genn. *Vir. ill.* LXI: *Cassianus natione Scytha, Constantinopoli a Joanne Magno episcopo diaconus ordinatus, apud Massilian presbyter condit duo monasteria, id est, virorum et mulierum, quae usque hodie exstant.* Note: All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

<sup>4</sup>Genn. *Vir. ill.* LXI: *et in his scribendi apud Massiliam et vivendi fecit Theodosio et Valentiniano regnantibus.*

for scholars, who have been unable to come to any consensus on what Gennadius meant by this obscure phrase.<sup>5</sup> Nor is Gennadius' phrase *apud Massiliam presbyter* entirely straightforward.<sup>6</sup> Although this use of the preposition *apud* is often taken as a reference to Cassian's ordination in Marseilles, this is reading more out of the phrase than is actually present. As Frank has suggested, Gennadius' entry does not require Cassian to have been ordained in the Massilian church.<sup>7</sup>

Nor is it certain that Gennadius meant to suggest that Cassian had been a priest of the Massilian church. This assertion may be demonstrated by studying how Gennadius normally suggested the connection between clerics and a specific church in *De viris illustribus*. In the cases where Gennadius links priest and city (61 times in 99 entries), he almost always places the location in the genitive (e.g. *Leo, urbis Romae episcopus*) or uses the possessive adjective (*Hilarius, Arelatensis episcopus*).<sup>8</sup> The unusual use of the preposition *apud* occurs only in the cases of Vincent of Lérins (*Vincentius, natione Gallus, apud monasterium Lerinensis insulae presbyter*)<sup>9</sup> and Cassian. One wonders why Gennadius would alter his standard formula in the case of Cassian. The most likely answer is that while Cassian may have lived at some point in his life in (or near) Marseilles, he never served as a presbyter in the church of that city.<sup>10</sup> Gennadius was only suggesting residency in Marseilles, not service in the church. This is a far cry from the received view which casts Cassian in a Massilian leadership role, composing his ascetic treatises while commanding the 'semi-Pelagian' monks of St. Victor's.

The concluding sentence of Gennadius' entry does little to dispel this fog of ambiguity. Cassian, according to Gennadius, made an end of writing and living, in (or near) Marseilles, during the reign of Theodosius and Valentinianus. Gennadius' testimony can only substantiate two propositions: sometime between the years 425–450,<sup>11</sup> Cassian died in (or near) the city of Marseilles; he also founded two 'monasteries' in (or near) Marseilles. Gennadius tells his

<sup>5</sup>See pg. 8.

<sup>6</sup>Frank (1997), 419–420.

<sup>7</sup>Frank (1997), 420 argued that Cassian was not ordained in Marseilles, but rather in Rome. Unfortunately, he offered no evidence for a Roman ordination, although his argument that Gennadius is not telling the reader that Cassian was ordained in Marseilles is extremely plausible.

<sup>8</sup>The single exception to this pattern occurs in Genn. *Vir. ill.* XCI: *Theodulus, presbyter in Coelesyria*.

<sup>9</sup>Genn. *Vir. ill.* LXIV. Frank (1997), 420 has interpreted this to mean that Vincent lived on the island, but never actually served as a priest of Lérins.

<sup>10</sup>Frank (1997), 420.

<sup>11</sup>The period of the joint reign of Theodosius II and Valentinian III.

readers where and approximately when Cassian died. He has nothing to say about Cassian's location prior to this end. There is nothing in Gennadius to contradict the theory being proffered here, that Cassian had taken up residence in Marseilles sometime after the completion of his final set of *Collationes* (ca. 428). Gennadius does not claim that Cassian settled in Marseilles immediately on reaching Gaul, or that he was ever connected with Proculus, the bishop of that city.

Nor is there anything in Cassian's own works to assist an inquiry. The closest Cassian comes to identifying himself with Marseilles occurs in his account of the monk/priest Leporius.<sup>12</sup> This story may be found in the first book of his last work, *De incarnatione*, written ca. 430. Here Cassian offered his account of the recantation of Leporius, a man who had been gulled by the teachings of Pelagius and had become one of the greatest Gallic exponents of that pernicious heresy.<sup>13</sup> After a period spent in error, Leporius had been returned to orthodoxy. Leporius was "admonished by us (*a nobis*) and corrected by God."<sup>14</sup>

Who were the 'us' responsible for placing Leporius' feet back on the orthodox path? A second description of the Leporius affair may be found in a letter from Augustine to his co-priests (*consacerdotibus*) Proculus and Cylinnius, written ca. 418-421.<sup>15</sup> In this epistle, Augustine offered an account of Leporius' restoration. The monk, having been justly rebuked and driven out of Gaul by Proculus and Cylinnius, had been received and restored by the African bishops. Proculus and Cylinnius had followed the apostolic injunction to censure the unruly, but Augustine had chosen to "comfort the weak-minded."<sup>16</sup> Under Augustine's pastoral care, Leporius had been led to renounce his former Pelagian errors. He had made a complete confession of his errors (the *Libellus emendationis*), which had been endorsed by four bishops at a synod in Carthage.<sup>17</sup> The *Libellus emendationis* had been attached to Augustine's letter and forwarded to Proculus and Cylinnius to confirm Leporius' return to orthodoxy.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Cass.*Inc.* I.4-5. For a brief biographical sketch of Leporius, see Mandouze (1982), 634-635.

<sup>13</sup>Cass.*Inc.* I.4.

<sup>14</sup>Cass.*Inc.* I.IV: *fuit a nobis admonitus, a Deo emendatus.*

<sup>15</sup>Aug.*Ep.* CCXIX. For the date see Grillmeier (1965), 465. This is the only reference in extant literature to the Bishop Cylinnius — his see and term of office are not known.

<sup>16</sup>Aug.*Ep.* CCXIX.1.

<sup>17</sup>See *Lep.Lib.emend.* XII for the subscriptions of Aurelius of Carthage, Augustine, Florentius, and Secundus. Maier (1965), 42 has argued that this occurred sometime between May and July 418.

<sup>18</sup>Aug.*Ep.* CCXIX.3.

In *De incarnatione* I.5, Cassian quoted a portion of Leporius' recantation. His version of Leporius' rehabilitation squares with Augustine's account. Cassian stated that after Leporius had been expelled from Gaul, he had sought refuge in Africa, where he was received and converted to an orthodox faith. As a sign of this new orthodox stance, Leporius wrote a full confession, which was signed by the African bishops, and sent to Gaul. Cassian appeared well-informed about Leporius when he wrote *De incarnatione*. While this might seem to suggest a Massilian connection (Augustine had sent his letter to Proculus), in fact Cassian wrote about these events nearly a decade after the fact. By that time the story, as well as copies of Augustine's letter and the *Libellus emendationis*, could have spread throughout the West.

What is interesting about Cassian's version of the Leporius affair is the way he treats Proculus of Marseilles. Augustine cast Proculus and Cylinnius as central figures in the drama (they had chastised Leporius and driven the monk out of Marseilles). Cassian completely writes them out of the story. He situates Leporius in a Gallic, rather than a Massilian, context. Leporius was said to have been one of the earliest champions of Pelagianism in *Gaul*;<sup>19</sup> when he repented, he wrote letters of confession to all the cities and bishops of *Gaul*.<sup>20</sup> Cassian did not mention Cylinnius, Proculus, or Marseilles in his version of the events.<sup>21</sup> Leporius had been a Gallic problem, and he had been censured 'by us.' In view of Cassian's emphases, the 'us' (*a nobis*) seems to signify a global or universal Gallic rejection. Proculus and Cylinnius had been excised from the story.

Cassian's complete silence about Proculus — and it should be noted that he does not mention the bishop in any of his works — is extremely puzzling, especially if the bishop of Marseilles was his sponsor and patron. Naturally this is an argument *ex silentio*, but that is not to say it is without merit. Why would Cassian ignore the prominent role Augustine had assigned to Proculus in the rehabilitation of Leporius? Why does Cassian avoid all references to Proculus in his works? A failure to mention Proculus would have been understandable if Cassian's normal practice had been to eschew notice of his patrons, but this was not the case. Every one of Cassian's works takes note of those who had called forth the writings. This range of

<sup>19</sup>Cass.*Inc.* I.4.

<sup>20</sup>Cities: Cass.*Inc.* I.4; Bishops: Cass.*Inc.* I.5; Cass.*Inc.* I.6.

<sup>21</sup>Nor, interestingly enough, does Cassian mention Augustine.

dedicatees stretched from Bishop Castor in *De institutis* to Leo of Rome in *De incarnatione*.<sup>22</sup> Cassian's custom was to mention his connections.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless he studiously avoided all references to Proculus or Marseilles. Moreover, Proculus is also notably absent from the 'Ecclesiastical Hall of Fame' — the chapters closing *De incarnatione* where Cassian lists the famous clerics who disagreed with Nestorius' views.<sup>24</sup> Once again, it would have been simple to insert Proculus' name in this list, yet Cassian does not.<sup>25</sup>

The only other evidence linking Cassian to Marseilles are the possible allusions to him in the writings engendered by the Massilian anti-Augustinian controversy.<sup>26</sup> These consist of Prosper of Aquitaine's *Epistola ad Rufinum*, *Epistola ad Augustinum*,<sup>27</sup> and *Contra Collatorem*,<sup>28</sup> as well as Hilary of Marseilles' *Epistola ad Augustinum*.<sup>29</sup> Although these works have been judged to contain references to "Cassian and the monks of Saint Victor,"<sup>30</sup> this identification is imposed on, rather than substantiated by, these texts. If the reader does not begin with the presupposition that Cassian was in Marseilles at the time the anti-Augustinian controversy arose in that city, then it becomes quite clear that there is no reference in any of these works

<sup>22</sup>This subject will be considered at greater length *infra*, see pg. 35.

<sup>23</sup>And in addition to those who have already been named, he also cites other figures, such as the Abba Pinufius who gives a speech at the end of Book IV of *De institutis*, and the 16 Abbas who were the source of the conferences contained in *Collationes*.

<sup>24</sup>These include Hilary of Potiers, Ambrose, Jerome, Rufinus, Augustine, the Cappadocian Fathers, Athanasius, and John Chrysostom (see *Cass.Inc.* VII.24–31).

<sup>25</sup>Although it should be noted that he does not list any other contemporary Gallic clerics either.

<sup>26</sup>This controversy has been traditionally (at least since the 16th century) referred to as the 'semi-Pelagian' controversy. This is a grave misnomer, as Harnack noted, since the Massilian party was in no sense of the word 'Pelagian' (Harnack (1898), 245, n.3). This group of writers were bound not by their espousal of Pelagian doctrine, but rather by their rejection of Augustine's overemphasis on predestination. Unfortunately, scholarly inertia ensures that the controversy continues to be labelled 'semi-Pelagian.' This misnaming will be resisted in this work.

Casiday (2001), 41–47 has resisted the view that Cassian should be interpreted as 'anti-Augustinian,' and argues that Cassian's appropriation of much of Augustine's thought suggests that Cassian was actually well-disposed toward Augustine. I am not persuaded by this argument. As will be demonstrated in chapter 3, Cassian's subtle allusions to the inexperienced works of those he viewed as competitors was a standard strategy in his work. His acerbic notation that 'Augustine was a priest of Hippo' (*Cass.Inc.* VII.27) amidst lavish praise for the other fathers of the church is probably meant to be insulting, rather than (as Casiday (47) suggests) a variation because Augustine was still alive. Cassian's treatment of Augustine here is of one piece with his treatment of another competitor, Jerome (see pg. 81).

Moreover, as was noted on pg. 18, Cassian also omitted Augustine from his account of the recantation of Leporius. He is passed over by a reference to the African bishops. Considering Augustine's central role in the reformation of Leporius, it is odd (unless deliberate) that Cassian would fail to mention the bishop of Hippo.

<sup>27</sup>Preserved among the letters of Augustine as *Aug.Ep.* CCXXV.

<sup>28</sup>For a discussion of this work see Weaver (1996), 121–131.

<sup>29</sup>Preserved among the letters of Augustine as *Aug.Ep.* CCXXVI.

<sup>30</sup>Stewart (1998), 20. See also Chadwick (1950), 114 for the positive claim that Cassian "was clearly indicted in the references to the monks of Marseilles." Likewise Rees (1988), 105, who asserts that while Cassian was never mentioned in these letters, he was to become the leading figure in the controversy.

that would place Cassian in Marseilles before 432.

The dating of these letters is problematic. Aside from references to Augustine's *De correptione et gratia* which may have reached Gaul in 427/8,<sup>31</sup> there is little internal evidence to narrow the dates. Prosper's letter to Augustine is probably best located after the year 429. This is based on a reference to the "holy Bishop, Hilary of Arles."<sup>32</sup> Shared references to a deacon named Leontius (who seems to have been the courier for these letters) suggest that Hilary of Marseilles' *Epistle* may be dated to the same period.<sup>33</sup> Most scholars have taken the position that Prosper's letter to Rufinus predates these letters, although this is by no means certain.<sup>34</sup> Since the letters to Augustine stimulated the production of two treatises (*De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*) which are among the final works of his life (Augustine died in August 431), a date for these letters after Hilary's accession to the bishopric of Arles is probably to be preferred.

Fortunately for this analysis, these letters do not need to be precisely dated, for when surveyed dispassionately, their value as evidence for Cassian's role in a Massilian, anti-Augustine

<sup>31</sup>This was the second of two works sent to the monks of North Africa (Hadrumetum). It followed Augustine's earlier treatise, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* (Cf. Weaver (1993), 424–425; see Weaver (1996), 94 for the dating).

<sup>32</sup>Prosper, *Ep. Aug. IX: sanctum Hilarium Arelatensem episcopum*. Chadwick (1945), 203 believes this is a copyist's error: the *Hilarium* should actually read *elladium*. He supported this view by noting that while 8 of the 9 extant manuscripts of this letter have the name *Hilarium*, one manuscript (Parisinus nov. acq 1449) offers the reading *elladium*. Although this is not the oldest extant manuscript, Chadwick did claim that it showed independence from the older families. In view of the tendency of copyists to exchange familiar names for less familiar names, Chadwick deemed it likely that the *elladium* had been emended to *Hilarium* in these earlier manuscripts (204).

Although Chadwick's view was accepted by a number of scholars, (see for instance Griffe (1966), 240–241; Rousseau (1995), 70; Mathisen (1989), 124, n. 31), more recently it has come under siege by those who do not believe that Cassian's *Collationes XIII* was written as a response to the arrival of Augustine's *De correptione et gratia* (see now Markus (1990), 177–179; Weaver (1996), 94–96; Stewart (1998), 153, n. 161). I am inclined to agree with this later group: the evidence for Helladius as Bishop of Arles after Patroclus seems sound enough (see discussion of Helladius *infra*, pg. 37), but I am not persuaded by Chadwick's claim that *elladium* is the correct reading based on only one instance of it against the weight of eight other manuscripts. I think that the reading *Hilarium* and the date of 429 must stand. Moreover this makes sense of the publication thereafter of Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*, which were written near the end of his life (August 430) and were responses to the letters of Prosper and Hilary. It seems odd (if Chadwick's date of early 427 for this letter was to hold) that Augustine would have put off answering these works for so long and then hurriedly dashed off two treatises as his life ebbed away (and here see Conybeare (2000), 25–26; 151 for the idea that the normal response time for a letter in antiquity would have been one year. Silences of longer than a year were often met with urgent queries about the reason for the delay). The chronology seems less strained if we suppose that Augustine responded shortly after receiving the letters from Prosper and Hilary.

Nor am I persuaded that Cassian wrote *Collationes XIII* as a response to Augustine. In my view (shared by Stewart (1998), 20), *Collationes XIII* is not "an act within a theological crisis" (Chadwick (1945), 203), but rather a logical development of views Cassian had argued throughout his work. As Stewart (1998), 20 notes: "It (*Collationes XIII*) is the culmination of Cassian's teaching on grace and free will, not an initial foray."

<sup>33</sup>See Aug. *Ep. CCXXV.1* and Aug. *Ep. CCXXVI.10* for the references.

<sup>34</sup>Weaver (1996), 97 dates the letter to 426/7; Amann (1939), 1815–1816 places this letter after the letters written to Augustine (428).

movement proves rather thin. The letters state that Augustine's *De correptione et gratia* had fomented controversy in southeastern Gaul. There was theological unrest in Gaul, but neither Prosper nor Hilary state (nor even imply) that this unrest had a central focus. Their letters do not suggest a single leader opposing Augustine. To the contrary, Augustine's adversaries are always set in the plural.

The strongest allusion to Cassian may be found in Prosper's letter to Rufinus, where he wrote that Augustine's opponents were offering "many conferences against that man of highest authority."<sup>35</sup> Was Prosper's choice of the word *collationes* intended to be a reference to Cassian's three sets of *Collationes*?<sup>36</sup> Possibly, yet a number of scholars doubt whether Prosper had read Cassian's *Collatio XIII* before he wrote *Contra Collatorem* in 432.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Prosper referred to those giving these conferences with a plural pronoun (*his*) — that is, more than one person was offering conferences, an observation that suggests that the word *collationes* should be interpreted as a reference to discussions or meetings rather than John Cassian's *Collationes*. Nor, it should be noted, does Prosper specifically limit these conferences to Marseilles. Finding Cassian and the monks of Saint Victor's monastery in this letter goes well beyond the evidence offered by Prosper.

Prosper returned to his attack on these misguided malcontents in his letter to Augustine (*Epistola ad Augustinum*) which, as noted above, is probably to be dated to 429. Once again Prosper was extremely vague in his identification of Augustine's opponents. The adversaries are "those servants of Christ who live in the city of Marseilles."<sup>38</sup> Despite this, he also seems to have some extra-Massilian adversaries in mind as he notes that some of Augustine's opponents had been raised to the episcopacy, and at least one of these men was the bishop of Arles (Hilary).<sup>39</sup> These references would support the idea that resistance to Augustine's ideas spread well beyond the city of Marseilles. There is no certain reference to Cassian in this letter, and

<sup>35</sup>Prosper.*Ep.Ruf.* V: *quod his quae adversum excellentissimae auctoritatis virum inter multas collationes asservere.*

<sup>36</sup>Stewart (1998), 20.

<sup>37</sup>Cappuyn (1949), 1343 and Chadwick (1950), 115; Weaver (1996), 97 disagrees.

<sup>38</sup>Prosper.*Ep.Aug.* II: *Multi ergo servorum Christi qui in Massiliensi urbe consistunt.*

<sup>39</sup>Prosper.*Ep.Aug.* II; Prosper.*Ep.Aug.* IX. Chadwick (1950), 114 sees here a possible reference to Helladius of Arles and Venerius of Marseilles. Hilary of Arles seems more likely than Helladius. Either way there is the sense of a larger field of action than simply Marseilles.

even if Prosper had Cassian in mind, there is nothing here to place him in Marseilles.<sup>40</sup>

The notion that resistance to Augustine was not confined by the city walls of Marseilles is confirmed by Hilary of Marseilles' *Epistola ad Augustinum*. In this letter Hilary complained about those who were opposing Augustine in "Marseilles and other parts of Gaul."<sup>41</sup> Hilary confirms the hints served up in Prosper's letters: the promulgation of these 'Pelagian' ideas in Marseilles was the primary concern for both men, but both indicate that the heresy was a Gallic problem. Like Prosper, Hilary suggested that a number of people formed the opposition to Augustine and in no case did he identify Cassian, or even a leading ascetic figure among this rival faction.

These three letters have been interpreted as references to an opposition party which consisted of Cassian and the monks of St. Victor's. Nevertheless, as has been detailed here, this is nothing more than a case of reading Cassian into the evidence offered by these letters. The letters mention neither Cassian, nor a leading figure who galvanized the resistance to Augustine, nor the monks of Saint Victor's monastery. Moreover, Prosper suggests and Hilary confirms the idea that the anti-Augustinian movement enjoyed a much wider sphere of action than just Marseilles. Even if Cassian was a target of these letters, he could have been one of those living *in aliis etiam locis in Gallia*. Cassian does not have to be a presbyter or abbot of Marseilles to be embraced by the descriptions of Hilary and Prosper.

Prosper did narrow the focus of his attack to Cassian in 432 when he composed his *Contra Collatorem*. At this time the "Conferencer" (whom Prosper never names) is said to be "living among them."<sup>42</sup> The pointed and deliberate rebuttal of the views that Cassian had advanced in *Collatio XIII* leaves no doubt as to the identity of the "Conferencer." By the time this work was composed (and Prosper's reference to Pope Sixtus substantiates a date of 432)<sup>43</sup> Cassian could probably be placed in Marseilles. Once again, however, there is the problem of ambiguity. The Conferencer is living among them (*inter eos*), but does this require Cassian

<sup>40</sup>In fact, the only named adversary is Hilary of Arles — one of the men who was active in Narbonensis Secunda during the time Cassian lived there (see discussion below). Weaver (1996), 97 suggests that Prosper might have mentioned Hilary but not Cassian because he was less concerned about the views of an abbot than an important bishop. Yet, in *Contra Collatorem*, Prosper seems very interested in the views of an 'abbot.' One wonders if Cassian's views might have become more important to Prosper after Cassian had moved to Marseilles.

<sup>41</sup>Hil.Mar.Ep.Aug. II: *quae Massiliae, vel aliis etiam locis in Gallia*.

<sup>42</sup>Prosp.Coll. II.1: *vir quidam sacerdotalis, qui disputandi usu inter eos*.

<sup>43</sup>Prosp.Coll. XXI.4. Cf. Stewart (1998), 155, n. 189.

to be in Marseilles, or can the preposition *inter* refer to southeastern Gaul? Prosper actually does not say. Nevertheless, when coupled with Gennadius' ascription, it seems reasonable to assume that Cassian spent the final years of his life in Marseilles.

Prosper's *Contra collatorem* offers a possible *terminus ante quem* for Cassian's arrival in Marseilles. He also provides ambiguous evidence that might confirm Gennadius' attribution of Cassian to Marseilles. Nevertheless, as has been demonstrated, there is no certain evidence to link Cassian to that city; moreover, if the evidence presented does refer to Marseilles, there is nothing to place Cassian in Marseilles before 432. The letters of Prosper and Hilary do not contain sure and certain references to Cassian, and even if they did, he would still only be a resident of Marseilles sometime after the completion of *Collationes* (ca. 428) (and certainly not for the period when he was composing *De institutis*, the interest of this thesis).

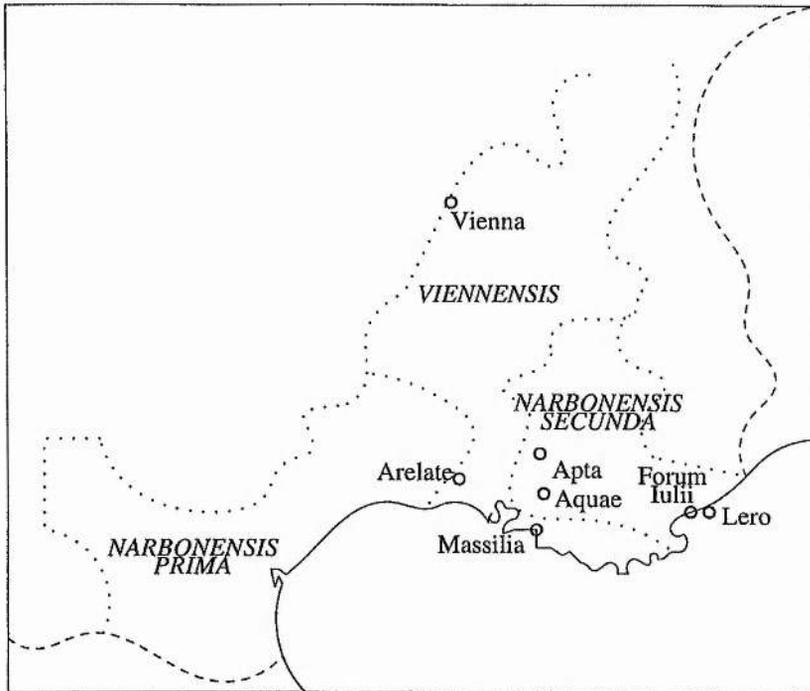
## The Politics of Gallic Bishops

Having demonstrated the weakness of the evidence for Cassian's role as a leader of the Massilian anti-Augustinian party, a consideration will now be made of another factor that argues against Cassian's Massilian identification. What has gone largely unrecognized by those who would assign Cassian to Marseilles is the ecclesiastical polarization of southeastern Gaul during the time he was composing his works. The period in which Cassian wrote (ca. 419–428) paralleled the great struggle between the bishops of Marseilles (Proculus) and Arles (Patroclus) for control of the province of Narbonensis Secunda. This province, the product of the partitioning of the province of Viennensis and the addition of the territory that made up Alpes Maritimae,<sup>44</sup> had been created sometime between the years 359 and 381.<sup>45</sup> The civil authorities had designated Aix the metropolitan city of the new province, and in theory the bishop of Aix should have exercised corresponding metropolitan rights over Narbonensis Secunda. This battle for regional primacy created a great rift in the southern Gallic church. This section will detail this quest for provincial hegemony. The sections which follow will then consider how unlikely Cassian's pattern of dedications would have been for a priest of Marseilles when

<sup>44</sup>Griffe (1964), 335 n.9.

<sup>45</sup>Griffe (1964), 335 uses the listings of provinces in Hilary's *De Synodis* (359) and those found in the canons of the Council of Aquileia (381) to arrive at the *termini* for this date range.

located in this controversial context. Many of Cassian's dedicatees (as will be shown) are to be identified with those bishops and sees that were resisting Proculus' bid for power.



Proculus of Marseilles has to be considered one of the dominant ecclesiastical figures of late fourth and early fifth century Gaul.<sup>46</sup> Longevity was a major reason for his success; it is possible that he controlled Marseilles for half a century. His name appears among the bishops who attended the Council of Aquileia in 381,<sup>47</sup> and it is likely he was still alive in 428 when Pope Celestine wrote a letter to chastise the unseemly glee expressed by the bishop of Marseilles on learning of the demise of Patroclus of Arles.<sup>48</sup>

Proculus was also well served by the position of his bishopric. Marseilles was one of the chief cities in Roman Gaul, important not only as a trading center, but also as a city that

<sup>46</sup> Although his reputation certainly was not only limited to Gaul. "You have that most learned and holy bishop Proculus," wrote Jerome in 411 to a young man seeking ascetic counsel (*Hier.Ep.* CXXV.20). This singular example of Gallic holiness, noted Jerome, was able to offer more guidance to Rusticus through his example and daily homilies than Jerome could deliver in a letter. Naturally this did not *stop* Jerome from offering several pages of advice. Nevertheless, Jerome's tribute to Proculus puts the Gallic bishop on a world stage; more than a remote bishop of an isolated backwater, Proculus' reputation transcended the confines of Gaul. See also Augustine's *Ep.* CCXIX, discussed *supra*, pg. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Duchesne (1894), 265–266.

<sup>48</sup> *Cel.Cup.quid.* 10. Harries (1981), 165.

cultivated an active intellectual life, the "Athens of the West."<sup>49</sup> It is not clear when Marseilles first took on bishops, but it had to have been at least as early as the beginning of the fourth century. The first known bishop of Marseilles, Oresius, was listed among the participants of the Council of Arles (314).<sup>50</sup> This evidence for an early participation in Gallic conciliar matters suggests that Marseilles was the seat of one of the oldest bishoprics in Gaul.<sup>51</sup>

Another reason for Proculus' success was his ambitious nature. This ambition emerged in his failed bid to exercise metropolitan rights over the provinces of southeastern Gaul, despite the fact that Marseilles was not a metropolitan city. The earliest sign of his hegemonic impulse emerges in the events transpiring after the usurper, Constantine III, seized control of Gaul (407–411). During Constantine's brief reign, Proculus appears to have capitalized on the usurper's support to solidify control over southern Gaul.<sup>52</sup> The *Gallic Chronicle of 452* noted that in 408 Proculus managed to have Remigius expelled from the bishopric of Aix on a charge of adultery. Remigius, unwilling to go, was driven out by force of arms and blood was shed in the process.<sup>53</sup> Remigius was replaced by a bishop of Proculus' choice, the former Martinian monk, Lazarus.<sup>54</sup> Proculus' maneuvering allowed him to replace a hostile bishop with a client.<sup>55</sup> The pattern was repeated in the city of Arles, where Heros was elevated to the bishopric of this important see.<sup>56</sup> This ordination of supporters seems to have been a standard practice in Gaul, a strategy frequently employed during times when a metropolitan felt especially threatened.<sup>57</sup>

Proculus' territorial expansion was short-lived. In 411, the imperial army, under the leadership of Constantius and Ulfila, surrounded Arles and after three months compelled Constantine's surrender. The usurper fled to Arles, where he was ordained a priest by Heros in 412. Constantine's attempt to seek shelter from Constantius by taking holy orders did not work. He

<sup>49</sup>Loseby (1992), 179. Loseby offers a general survey of Marseilles as well as documentation of its resurgence in importance during the 5th - 7th centuries.

<sup>50</sup>Duchesne (1894), 265–266.

<sup>51</sup>Lyons was the only Gallic city with a claim to a bishop that predated Marseilles (see Griffe (1964), 91).

<sup>52</sup>Or Constantine used Proculus to assert control over southern Gaul (Frye (1991), 352).

<sup>53</sup>Zos.*Post.nob.* III.

<sup>54</sup>*Chron.Gall.* a. 408. The *Chronica gallica anno 452* is an anonymous text which extended Jerome's *Chronica* from 379 to 452. Mommsen suggested that it was written by an author in southern Gaul (possibly in Marseilles) (Mathisen (1989), 96).

<sup>55</sup>An important strategy for solidifying ecclesiastical control. Cf. Bobertz (1993a), 23–24 for Cyprian's practice of ordaining client presbyters.

<sup>56</sup>*Prosp.Chron.* a. 412.

<sup>57</sup>See now Mathisen (1990), 132, whose research highlights a sudden flurry of ordinations between 427 and 431, as Honoratus and Hilary attempted to consolidate their positions by ordaining supporters.

was handed over to the besieging armies by loyalists in the city of Arles and executed en-route to Ravenna.<sup>58</sup>

The clients of Constantine III fared slightly better than their patron. Heros was expelled from the bishopric of Arles<sup>59</sup> and Lazarus was turned out of Aix. Both men escaped into exile. Proculus, despite his close working relationship with the usurper, managed to retain his position, but his career had passed its apogee. He would never be as strong as he had been during the reign of Constantine III. The defeat of the usurper brought a new, unpleasant (at least for the hegemonic claims of Marseilles) reality to southern Gaul.

This reality was the new bishop of Arles. Having incited the people of Arles to drive Heros out of the city, Constantius quickly replaced the usurper's client with his own man, the ambitious and politically astute Patroclus.<sup>60</sup> Lazarus of Aix was also sent fleeing to Africa, enabling Remigius to resume his position. This re-shuffling of bishops, coupled with Patroclus' accession, marked a major shift in the ecclesiastical balance of power in southeastern Gaul away from Proculus.<sup>61</sup> Patroclus wasted no time in solidifying his own position by placing his own men in the sees around him.<sup>62</sup> No longer the strongest force in southern Gaul, Proculus was forced into a defensive action against a bishop with an extremely powerful patron (Constantius). Yet this power was not absolute, as was demonstrated by Constantius' inability to dislodge Proculus and Hilarius of Narbonne.<sup>63</sup> The pair remained in place even after the defeat of the usurper. In fact, their power would not be seriously challenged until the death of Pope Innocent I in 417.<sup>64</sup>

The accession of a new Pope in Rome marked a turning point in Gallic ecclesiastical politics. Zosimus, the man elected to succeed Innocent, has been characterized as a dupe (or debtor) of Patroclus,<sup>65</sup> a pawn of Constantius,<sup>66</sup> or a man with his own ambitions for asserting

<sup>58</sup>Matthews (1975), 313.

<sup>59</sup>Prosp.Chron. a. 412.

<sup>60</sup>Prosp.Chron. a. 412; Oost (1968), 147.

<sup>61</sup>Arles had become a first tier city with the relocation of the Roman Prefect of the Gauls from Trier to Arles in 407. Cf. Harries (1981), 177, Frye (1991), 350, and Chastagnol (1973), 23-40.

<sup>62</sup>Mathisen (1989), 36-37.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Frye (1991), 354.

<sup>64</sup>In March, 417.

<sup>65</sup>Kelly (1986), 38.

<sup>66</sup>Frye (1991), 354.

the ascendancy of the papacy over Gaul.<sup>67</sup> It is not clear from the evidence what role Patroclus might have played in Zosimus' election.<sup>68</sup> What is certain, is that four days after his accession, Zosimus issued the encyclical letter *Placuit apostolicae* (Mar. 22, 417), which reorganized southern Gaul under Patroclus. Asserting that Arles ought to be accorded primacy based on its apostolic foundation by Saint Trophimus, Zosimus raised Patroclus' bishopric to metropolitan status over the three provinces of Viennensis, Narbonensis Prima, and Narbonensis Secunda.<sup>69</sup> This alliance between Arles and Rome benefited both parties. Patroclus gained a lever for his ecclesiastical aspirations, while Zosimus established a precedent for papal control over Gaul.<sup>70</sup> By accepting this elevation, Patroclus implicitly assented to the right of the Bishop of Rome to make arrangements for the church in southern Gaul.<sup>71</sup> Naturally this unilateral realignment was resisted by the other bishops of Gaul. Proculus of Marseilles, Simplicius of Vienne, and Hilarius of Narbonne all stood to lose by Patroclus' elevation. Proculus in particular would soon test the papal decree, ordaining two men, Ursus and Tuentius, for service in territory that had been reassigned to Patroclus.<sup>72</sup>

Faced with defiance of his decretal, Zosimus convened a council to resolve the territorial disputes in Gaul. The results of this council may be found in the first two canons of the Council of Turin, which have long been erroneously dated to 398.<sup>73</sup> This council met in Turin and was intended to settle the vexed question of ordination rights in southeastern Gaul. Somewhat unsurprisingly, Proculus opted not to attend the gathering of Gallic bishops.<sup>74</sup> Several letters

<sup>67</sup>Mathisen (1989), 48–50; Kulikowski (1996), 164–165.

<sup>68</sup>Frye (1991), 354 sees Zosimus, not as a dupe of Patroclus, but rather a 'puppet' of Constantius. See Oost (1968), 149. Kulikowski (1996), 165 asserts that Patroclus had absolutely no role in Zosimus' election.

<sup>69</sup>*Zos.Plac.apost.* II. Heinzelmann (1992), 244–245 follows Frye (1991), 354, Langgärtner (1964), 26ff, and Fuhrmann (1953), 149ff in seeing Constantius as the driving force behind Zosimus' elevation of Arles to a metropolitan see. This view is certainly substantiated by the sudden reversal of fortune following Constantius' death (see *infra*).

<sup>70</sup>Moreover, Constantius (who may have orchestrated events) gained a tool to further bind the provinces to Rome (Oost (1968), 148), Frye (1991), 355.

<sup>71</sup>Mathisen (1992), 230–231, lists a number of examples of early fifth-century ecclesiastics traveling to Rome in order to lodge an appeal with Rome. These clerics all believed that there was something to be gained by an appeal to the pope.

<sup>72</sup>As noted in *Zos.Cum.adv.* I (Sept. 22, 417). Harries (1981), 168, assigns these ordinations to the disputed sees of Gargarius and Citharista.

<sup>73</sup>The eight canons of the Council(s) of Turin carry a date of Sept. 22, with no year. The first two canons contained in this document concern the ordination rights of Proculus (Canon 1) and the metropolitan rights to be accorded to the bishops of Arles and Vienne (Canon 2). The first argument for seeing these canons as part of the controversy over the metropolitan status of Arles, was advanced by Babut (1904). This view has been supported and refined by Frye (1991), whose opinions I follow here.

<sup>74</sup>A fact Zosimus noted in his letter of Sept. 29, *Zos.Multa.cont.* I.

written by Zosimus<sup>75</sup> near the end of September, 417 offer a glimpse of the working of this Council (which opened on September 22 and ran for several days). The first report from the proceedings was Zosimus' letter which stated that the council had supported the arrangements outlined in *Placuit apostolicae*. Patroclus was to exercise metropolitan rights over the three provinces; those desiring to lodge an appeal with Rome were to first secure letters of introduction (*litterae formatae*) from the Metropolitan; moreover Proculus was to be denied the right of a metropolitan bishop.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, Proculus' ordination of Ursus and Tuentius was illegal, a decision that had been confirmed by Zosimus' council.<sup>77</sup>

Apparently, before the Council of Turin ended, an objection to the elevation of Patroclus was raised by Hilarius of Narbonne.<sup>78</sup> Hilarius' letter does not survive, but from Zosimus' reply, it would seem that the bishop of Narbonne questioned the validity of placing Patroclus over Narbonensis Prima. According to Hilarius, the status of Narbonne as the metropolitan seat for that province had been established by an earlier Roman pontiff.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Hilarius objected to the idea that all appeals to Rome required the approval of Arles (through the *formatae*).

Zosimus responded to Hilarius' concerns in his letter *Mirati admodum* (Sept. 29, 417). In this letter he argued that a respect for antiquity, especially the noble past embodied in St. Trophimus, was more important than Hilarius' opinions. As unlikely as it seems, this response may have pacified Hilarius. Four years later, Pope Bonifacius would receive an appeal from the people of Lodève (which was located within the boundaries of Narbonensis Prima), complaining that Patroclus had consecrated a stranger for their church.<sup>80</sup> The fact that this appeal came from the church of Lodève rather than from Hilarius suggests that he was not directly or openly resisting Patroclus.<sup>81</sup>

The next twist to the saga was the arrival of delegates from Marseilles, with a request to

<sup>75</sup>Who, as Frye (1991), 356–357 was actually at the Council.

<sup>76</sup>Zos. *Quid. Proc.* I (Sept. 26, 417).

<sup>77</sup>And reported in Zos. *Cum. adv.* I. Cf. Frye (1991), 357.

<sup>78</sup>See Frye (1991), 353–354 for Hilarius' resistance to Constantius.

<sup>79</sup>See Mathisen (1989), 57–58.

<sup>80</sup>This appeal was cited in Bon. *Diff. quid.* I (Feb. 9, 422).

<sup>81</sup>For further evidence of Hilarius' cooperation with Patroclus, see Boniface's encyclical, *Valentinae nos*, discussed on pg. 34.

present the case for Proculus and Simplicius at the Council of Turin.<sup>82</sup> Zosimus' angry letter of Sept. 29, 417, *Multa contra*, airs his unhappiness over this turn of events. The Council had waited for Proculus, but he had not deigned to travel to Turin. Consequently, the Council had judged against him, supporting Zosimus' arrangements for Patroclus. Now, the Bishop of Marseilles had the gall to send delegates to urge the reconsideration of his case.<sup>83</sup> Despite Zosimus' disgust, the Council honored this 11th hour appeal, and the results are documented in Zosimus' letter of Oct. 1, *Revelatum nobis*.<sup>84</sup> Here he stated that the council had reversed itself and granted Simplicius of Vienne his traditional metropolitan rights to ordain in his own province. This accords with canon 2 of the Council of Turin which divides the province (Viennensis) between the two bishoprics (Arles and Vienne) and states that the bishops of these cities may ordain priests in their respective halves.<sup>85</sup>

The other decision of the Council (Canon 1) was to preserve Proculus' traditional rights. Proculus was given permission to continue to ordain priests where he had in the past, which included the territory of the province of Narbonensis Secunda.<sup>86</sup> The Council justified this decision by noting Proculus' longstanding relationship with the churches of that province. Presumably, during the early years of his episcopate, Proculus had taken it upon himself to exercise authority over the bishops of Narbonensis Secunda. In doing so, he might simply have been maintaining relationships that dated back several decades to a time when nearby towns, lacking their own bishops, had looked to Marseilles for leadership. But was this claim to a pre-existing relationship sufficient to justify Proculus' exercise of authority over the neighboring province? Not everyone in southern Gaul agreed with this premise. This dissatisfaction is suggested by the first Canon of the Council of Turin, which states that some of the bishops of Narbonensis Secunda were unhappy with the arrangement.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup>Frye (1991), 358.

<sup>83</sup>Zos.*Multa.cont.* I.

<sup>84</sup>Zos.*Rev.nob.* I. Gundlach listed this letter among the spurious letters of Zosimus. Frye (1991), 356 n. 34 follows Babut (1904), 243–265 in asserting its authenticity.

<sup>85</sup>CTaur.*Can.* II; Frye (1991), 358.

<sup>86</sup>CTaur.*Can.* I.

<sup>87</sup>CTaur.*Can.* I: *Nam cum primo omnium vir sanctus Proculus Massiliensis episcopus civitatis se tanquam metropolitanum ecclesiis, quae in secunda provincia Narbonensi positae videbantur, diceret praeesse debere atque per se ordinationes in memorata provincia summorum fieri sacerdotum, siquidem assereret easdem ecclesias vel suas parochias fuisse, vel episcopos a se in iisdem ecclesiis ordinatos; e diversis eiusdem regionis episcopi aliud defensarent, ac sibi alterius provinciae sacerdotum praeesse non debere contenderent.*

Nor was the Pope happy with the ultimate results of his Council of Turin. After the council concluded, he began to intensify his assault on Proculus. Two letters written on March 4, 418 were intended to make life difficult for the bishop of Marseilles. The first, Zosimus' *Non miror*, was addressed to the people and clerics of Marseilles encouraging them to accept a new bishop selected by Patroclus. The second letter, *Cum et in* was directed at Patroclus, encouraging the metropolitan to drive Proculus out of Marseilles.

Unfortunately for the ambitious Patroclus, Zosimus only held the papacy for a year. Upon his death in 418, he was replaced by Boniface, a pope who would prove less sympathetic over time to Patroclus' ecclesiastical ambitions. Boniface was the victor in an hotly contested election, a contest in which Patroclus had journeyed to Rome to take part. Sadly, Patroclus backed the wrong horse in this race, supporting Boniface's opponent, Eulalius.<sup>88</sup> The fallout from this misstep was not immediately evident. Patroclus' powerful patron, Constantius, seems to have ensured that there was no immediate reversal of policy in Rome. As late as June 419 Boniface still maintained the policies of his predecessor. This may be seen in Boniface's letter, *Valentinae nos* (June 13, 419). Here the Pope placed Patroclus at the head of a list of Gallic bishops and ordered him to convene a synod to investigate Bishop Maximus of Valence.<sup>89</sup>

This recognition of Patroclus' metropolitan status lasted only as long as it was politically expedient. Following Constantius' death in 421, the Pope wasted little time in restructuring the Roman position on Gallic territories. In his encyclical *Difficile quidem* (Feb. 9, 422), Boniface stated that every province should have its own metropolitan and no two provinces should be subject to a single bishop. This letter (as noted above) was addressed to Bishop Hilarius of Narbonne, and was ostensibly a response to the people of Lodève who had had a bishop imposed on them by Patroclus. Hilarius might have been unwilling to respond openly or directly to the Metropolitan's ordinations within Narbonensis Prima, but Boniface used this event to curtail Patroclus' extraordinary power.<sup>90</sup> The days of Patroclus' support from Rome were at an end.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Mathisen (1989), 61 has suggested that Patroclus was a victim of circumstances. Constantius, had supported Eulalius, and so Patroclus had no choice but to follow his lead. Oost (1968), 158.

<sup>89</sup>The argument that Boniface was recognizing Patroclus' metropolitan status in this letter may be found in Mathisen (1989), 61-64.

<sup>90</sup>Mathisen (1989), 70-71.

<sup>91</sup>Boniface would die shortly after this letter, but in 428, his successor Celestine would reassert Boniface's

Despite the diminution of papal beneficence, it should not be assumed that Patroclus had lost all momentum. Indeed, his connections to secular power remained largely intact as is illustrated by the extensive powers granted to him in 425 to root out Pelagian error in Gaul. In an imperial edict, Patroclus was directed to identify those Gallic bishops who had deviated from true Catholic doctrine; once notified of their heretical standing, these bishops were given twenty days to adopt an orthodox faith. Those bishops failing to amend their doctrine were to be driven out of Gaul.<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately for Patroclus, the opportunity to exploit this imperial backing was short-lived. In 426 he was killed by a tribune named Barnabas.<sup>93</sup> This death may have been engineered by Felix, the western *magister militum*, and it suggests that Patroclus had dabbled more deeply in secular politics than was compatible with ongoing health.<sup>94</sup>

The struggle for control of southern Gaul did not end with the death of Patroclus. To the contrary, the battle was ably continued by the successors to the see of Arles. Patroclus was (probably) followed by Helladius, an ascetic who served as the dedicatee for two of Cassian's prefaces.<sup>95</sup> His tenure was short — possibly no more than a year and nothing is known of his activities as bishop of Arles. He was followed by Honoratus of Lérins. The major source for Honoratus' life and thought was written by his successor, Hilary of Arles, and so it is difficult to separate Hilary's views from those of his subject.<sup>96</sup> Hilary was as determined as Patroclus to gain control of Narbonensis Secunda, even to the point of taking up arms to enforce his ordinations in southern Gaul.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, it is difficult to separate Honoratus' views from those of his biographer.

If the *Vita Honorati* is to be believed, Honoratus continued the pattern of animosity toward Marseilles. Hilary reported that Honoratus was not partial to either Proculus or Marseilles. At one time, the city, with the approval of Proculus, nearly succeeded in seizing and ordaining Honoratus for itself.<sup>98</sup> Fortunately the monk managed to flee Marseilles and after an extended

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position in his *Cuperemus quidem*.

<sup>92</sup>See Sirm.*Const.* VI for the edict which was dated August 6, 425. See also Pharr (1952), 479–480.

<sup>93</sup>Or a barbarian tribune. *Prosp.Chron.* a. 426.

<sup>94</sup>Heinzelmann (1992), 245.

<sup>95</sup>The assignment of Helladius to Arles is by no means certain. However, as I noted above, based on the scanty evidence available, it still seems likely (see pg. 20, note 32).

<sup>96</sup>On the *Vita Honorati* see Leyser (1999).

<sup>97</sup>Literally, according to Pope Leo, who in his epistle, *Leo.Div.cult.* VI, accused Hilary of enforcing his own ordinations with parties of armed men.

<sup>98</sup>Hil.*V.Hon.* XIII: *Hunc ipsum iam tunc cuius hodie memoria pascimur urbi huic Massiliensis ecclesia paene*

voyage finally came to Italy. Honoratus and/or Hilary's dislike for Proculus is suggested by Hilary's note that while in Italy, Tuscany took the man to its bosom and the bishops contrived to prolong his stay, extensions that were warmly welcomed by Honoratus.<sup>99</sup> This implies that it was Proculus and Marseilles that were disagreeable to Honoratus, rather than the companionship of bishops.

The same antipathy drove Honoratus' selection of a refuge when he returned to Gaul. According to Hilary, he and his early followers chose to settle on Lérins because of its proximity to Bishop Leontius of Forum Iulii.<sup>100</sup> It is odd that Honoratus would scorn the neighborhood of Proculus, especially as the bishop is thought to have been a great patron of asceticism. Yet Hilary explicitly states that Honoratus preferred Leontius, a bishop with demonstrably close links to Arles. Hilary may also be offering a veiled reference to Proculus when he claimed that no bishop succeeded in exercising authority over Honoratus while Honoratus lived on Lérins.<sup>101</sup> Having just praised Leontius, it seems unlikely that this would be a reference to the bishop of Forum Iulii. Possibly this is an allusion to a failed attempt to exercise control over Lérins by an outside (Massilian) force.

As has already been noted, Honoratus ended his career by assuming the bishopric of Arles upon the death of Helladius. Unfortunately, Hilary does not burden his readers with a great amount of detail concerning the circumstances of Honoratus' accession. The *Vita Honorati* does imply a contrast between Arles and Marseilles. Although Honoratus refused ordination to the Massilian priesthood, he did not offer even a sign of token resistance to his elevation to the bishopric of Arles. Once again this seems to signal a close connection between Arles and Lérins. This identification is pushed further by the fact that both Honoratus and Hilary pursued Patroclus' quest for control of the three Gallic provinces. As Mathisen has argued, there was a sudden increase in ordinations of bishops during the years 427–431, which possibly signals an attempt to solidify power and control.<sup>102</sup> Some of these ordinations would have been carried

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*praeripuit.*

<sup>99</sup>Hil. *V.Hon.* XV.

<sup>100</sup>Hil. *V.Hon.* XV.

<sup>101</sup>Hil. *V.Hon.* XVI. Håkanson (1977), 56 suggests that the verb *computarent* which ends this line (XVI.10) should be emended to read [*non*] *computarent*, in order to correspond with the earlier line of this chapter which stated that the bishops treated Honoratus as an equal (rather than thinking him superior to them, as the text currently reads).

<sup>102</sup>Mathisen (1990), 132; Heinzelmann (1992), 243.

out by Honoratus (d. 429), which suggests that the bishop continued Patroclus' quest for metropolitan status.

This policy was also followed by Honoratus' successor, Hilary of Arles. Hilary's strategy of placing his own partisans in Gallic episcopates earned the eventual ire of Pope Leo.<sup>103</sup> Rather than accepting the formula of Boniface, who had stated that each province should have its own metropolitan, Hilary continued to dabble in the ecclesiastical affairs of the surrounding provinces.<sup>104</sup> The enmity between Marseilles and Arles did not come to an end with the death of Patroclus; Hilary shared the territorial ambitions of his predecessor.

### **Narbonensis Secunda vs. Proculus**

The first canon of the Council of Turin states that certain bishops of Narbonensis Secunda were not happy with Proculus ordaining bishops in their province. This resentment would not have been appeased when the Council (against the wishes of Pope Zosimus and these bishops) refused to curtail Proculus' sphere of influence. Evidence from the Council of Turin suggests that there was a group of bishops in Narbonensis Secunda who had a historical basis for their antipathy toward Proculus. Indeed it would not be too far-fetched to see these bishops aligning with Patroclus and the subsequent bishops of Arles if only to thwart the Proculus' hegemonic impulses.

An important piece of evidence for this association may be found in the addressees of Boniface's letter, *Valentinae nos* (Jun. 13, 419), which urged action against Bishop Maximus of Valence. The list begins with Patroclus of Arles, and is followed by Remigius of Aix, Maximus, Hilarius, Severus, Valerius, Julianus, Castor, Leontius, Constantinus, John, Montanus, Marinus, Maurice, and "the other bishops through Gaul and the seven provinces."<sup>105</sup> Although most of the named bishops at the head of this letter are unknown, there are some significant entries and omissions.

One of the more interesting aspects of the list is the observation that Patroclus is accorded primacy among the bishops. His name is listed first. Boniface would disavow Patroclus' claim

<sup>103</sup>Leo.*Div.cult.* II.6. For a discussion of this event see Heinzelmann (1992).

<sup>104</sup>For a recounting of Leo and Valentinian II's engineering of Hilary's fall from power, see Heinzelmann (1992), 239-251.

<sup>105</sup>Bon.*Val.nos.* Pref.

to metropolitan status two and a half years later, but when this letter was written (419) he still supported Patroclus. Patroclus was ordered to assemble the bishops for a synod in the province no later than November so that Maximus could defend himself if he chose to do so. In this case, the province must have referred to Viennensis, and Patroclus' presence at the head of the list of suggests that he was to convene the synod.<sup>106</sup>

Another item worth noting is the presence of the Bishop Remigius of Aix and Hilarius of Narbonne, and the absence of both Proculus of Marseilles and Simplicius of Vienne. The struggle for control of southern Gaul had divided the bishops into two factions — those parties supporting Patroclus and Proculus. Remigius of Aix (who had been driven out of his seat by Proculus during the reign of Constantine III) was no friend of Proculus. Likewise, Hilarius of Narbonne had initially resisted Patroclus' exercise of metropolitan authority, but there is evidence (detailed above) that he had submitted and allowed Patroclus to consecrate bishops in Narbonensis Prima. While Remigius and Hilarius may not have been fervent supporters of Patroclus' ambitions, they do seem to have found themselves on the same side of the fence as Patroclus (aligned only, perhaps, by their dislike for Proculus). These addressees are joined by two less-well known bishops of Narbonensis Secunda: Castor of Apt and Leontius of Forum Iulii, the bishops who would serve as the dedicatees for the works of John Cassian.

It is also noteworthy that two of the most influential bishops in southern Gaul (Proculus and Simplicius) were not named in Boniface's letter. This is nothing more than a tacit acknowledgement that there had been no rapprochement between Rome and the two anti-Patroclan bishops. Boniface clearly was able to separate Patroclus' partisans from the Massilian constituents. His letter was addressed to those bishops who represented the best hope of carrying out the desires of Rome, the bishops aligned with Patroclus.

A reversal of this pattern of papal addressees may be found in Pope Celestine's letter of 431, *Apostolici verba*. This letter is addressed exclusively to those bishops who are aligned with Venerius, the bishop who had assumed Proculus' seat in Marseilles. Again there is the sense of a distinct clustering of bishops around the two ancient enemies (Marseilles and Arles). Reversing the pattern of addressees set in *Valentinae nos*, none of the bishops of Narbonensis

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<sup>106</sup>Mathisen (1989), 62–64.

Secunda, nor any Lerinese bishops are addressed.<sup>107</sup> This should not be surprising as one of the concerns of *Apostolici verba* was to limit the metropolitan rights of the bishop of Arles.

### Cassian's Audience

The preceding discussion has illustrated the ecclesiastical tensions that lay in the background during the time Cassian produced his ascetic treatises. There was a significant rift dividing southern Gaul into parties that were either in communion with Marseilles, or in communion with Arles. Patroclus of Arles may not have been the most beloved bishop to ever serve in southern Gaul, but he did seem to act as a rallying point for those bishops who wanted to resist the overlordship of Marseilles. As was noted above, this included a number of bishops in Narbonensis Secunda.

This excursus on Gallic ecclesiastical politics has been necessary because it highlights a problem that has not been considered in earlier studies which have assigned Cassian to Marseilles. In view of the prevailing provincial rivalries, why would a monk of Marseilles dedicate all of his writings to non-Massilian figures? More pointedly, why did he dedicate these works to monks and bishops living in the province of Narbonensis Secunda, men, who as described above, seem to have been aligned with Arles against the hegemonic ambitions of Proculus of Marseilles? Furthermore, if Cassian and Proculus were on such warm terms, why did Cassian dedicate two of his works to bishops of Arles (Helladius and Honoratus), rather than to Proculus?

Cassian's pattern of dedications points to a non-Massilian identity. His patrons are all local, centered in Narbonensis Secunda. This premise will be illustrated in the following sections, which will examine each of the men that serve as dedicatees of Cassian's works. The restricted horizon for Cassian's web of patrons makes one thing abundantly clear: Cassian must have been in Narbonensis Secunda when he wrote his ascetic works.

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<sup>107</sup>Mathisen (1989), 131–132.

### Bishop Castor of Apt

The first person to receive a dedication in Cassian's works was Bishop Castor of Apt. Little is known about Castor aside from his appearance in *De institutis* and *Collationes*.<sup>108</sup> Cassian claimed that he wanted to found monasteries in his province, which to that point had lacked coenobitic foundations.<sup>109</sup> Castor's see (Apt) was part of the province of Narbonensis Secunda, and nominally under the control of the Bishop of Arles when Cassian wrote *De institutis*. Castor was still living when Cassian completed *De institutis*, and indeed may have commissioned the first division of *Collationes*. Castor would die before this later work was completed.<sup>110</sup> There are only two other reliable pieces of external attestation to the existence of Castor. The first is Pope Boniface's letter *Valentinae nos* (419), which mentions Castor among the list of Gallic bishops who are in some form of communion with Patroclus.<sup>111</sup>

The second reference to Castor occurs in the *Chronica Gallica a. 452*. Here, in an entry for the 28th year of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, the *Chronica* states that monasteries established by Honoratus, Minervius, Castor, and Iovianus, flourished in Gaul.<sup>112</sup>

### Bishop Leontius of Forum Iulii

Following the demise of Castor, Cassian chose to dedicate the first division of *Collationes* to another bishop of Narbonensis Secunda, Bishop Leontius of Forum Iulii (Fréjus). Cassian claimed that since Leontius was linked to Castor by the ties of brotherhood (*germanitatis*

<sup>108</sup>Castor is mentioned in *Cass.Inst.* Pref.; V.1; *Cass.Coll.* Pref.I; Pref.II; IX.1. Outside of Cassian's references to Castor, little is known of the Bishop of Apt. The only other certain reference to him is the appearance of his name in a list of bishops summoned to the Council of Valence by Pope Boniface I. This letter, dated June 13, 419, (Griffe (1966), 181) suggests that Castor was still alive at this point. Cassian's reference to his death in the preface to his first set of *Collationes*, which suggests that he died in the first half of the 420s.

A life of Castor was composed in the thirteenth century by Raymond Bot, who claimed to have based his account on a fifth century *vita*. Bot's hagiographical version provides further details of Castor's life, including the claims that he was born in Nîmes, was the brother of Leontius of Frejus, married a wealthy widow and subsequently (with her consent) separated from her in order to serve the church, and was the founder of the Monanque monastery of Provence. Van Doren judges these details unreliable (Van Doren (1949), 1455-56). Castor appears in the Catholic calendar of Saints as a confessor. His feast day is September 21.

Nor is there much extant information about the see of Apt in early Christian writings. Romanus, a priest of Apt, is listed among those who attended of the Council of Arles (314). Moreover, Sidonius (*Sid.Ep.* IX.19.1) noted that Faustus of Riez visited Apt (Cf. Rivet (1988), 260 n.16).

<sup>109</sup>*Cass.Inst.* Pref.3.

<sup>110</sup>*Cass.Coll.* Pref.1.

<sup>111</sup>See the discussion (*supra*), pg. 33.

<sup>112</sup>*Chron.Gall.* a. 419.

*affectu*) and priesthood, Leontius had a hereditary right (*haereditario fraternum debitum jure deposcit*) to compel the production of *Collationes*.<sup>113</sup> Leontius is also listed with Castor among the bishops at the head of Boniface's *Valentinae nos*, and his name also appears in a letter from Pope Celestine in 431, although he must have died shortly thereafter.<sup>114</sup> His sympathy with the ascetic movement is signalled by both Cassian's dedication of *Collationes* and Hilary's claim that Honoratus had established his community on Lérins in order to be close to Leontius, who was labeled both a holy man and a friend of Honoratus.<sup>115</sup>

Leontius' role as a dedicatee strengthens Cassian's connection to Narbonensis Secunda. Cassian's reason for dedicating *De institutis* to Castor rather than Proculus might be nothing more sinister than the fact that Castor had asked for the works. Consequently, even though Cassian was living in Marseilles, he might have thought nothing of dedicating his work to the man who had solicited it. But what happened when Castor died? At this point, if Cassian had been living in Marseilles, there was no compelling reason for Cassian not to dedicate his next work (*Collationes*) to Proculus or some other Massilian figure. Cassian does not do this. To the contrary, he shifts his dedication to a second bishop of Narbonensis Secunda. He continued to dedicate his works to local figures (Leontius and an obscure ascetic named Helladius). What possible reason could he have for doing this, save that he was living in Narbonensis Secunda and these men were his patrons?

### **Bishop Helladius**

The other dedicatee of the first division of *Collationes* was a "holy brother Helladius."<sup>116</sup> This man had, according to Cassian, sought to shape his ascetic life by following the traditions of the eastern anchorites, rather than (as some had) by following his own novel formulations. As shall be argued below,<sup>117</sup> the reshaping of Gallic asceticism in order to conform to the pattern set out in the *instituta Aegyptiorum* lay at the center of Cassian's *De institutis*,<sup>118</sup> and the form of

<sup>113</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. 1.3. See also Stewart (1998), 18, 153 n. 158.

<sup>114</sup>Cel. *Apost. verba*. Pref. Duchesne places Theodorus in the see from 431 (Duchesne (1894), 276). Mathisen doubts if the Leontius mentioned in Celestine's letter is the same Leontius (Mathisen (1989), 132).

<sup>115</sup>Hil. *V. Hon.* XV.

<sup>116</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. 1.

<sup>117</sup>See pg. 115.

<sup>118</sup>As will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

Cassian's dedication to Helladius suggests that at least one monk in Gaul must have responded positively to his earlier work.

Helladius was only a "holy brother" in this first dedication, but by the time Cassian dedicated his second set of *Collationes*, Helladius had risen in the world. He had (probably) become the bishop of Arles, successor to Patroclus who had been killed in 426.<sup>119</sup>

### **Bishop Honoratus of Arles**

Although Cassian mentions Castor, Leontius, and Helladius in the preface to his second set of *Collationes*, the work is actually dedicated to two holy brothers, Honoratus and Eucherius. The former of the two, Honoratus, was said to preside over a large community of brothers,<sup>120</sup> which was the monastic foundation of Lérins.<sup>121</sup>

Once again Cassian did not look to a Massilian patron, but rather dedicated his work to a future bishop of Arles. After the death of Helladius, Honoratus was raised to the see of Arles. This change in status was reflected in the dedication of his third set of *Collationes*, where Cassian noted that Honoratus had become a bishop.<sup>122</sup> Honoratus had succeeded Helladius; he was the new bishop of Arles.<sup>123</sup>

There is one puzzling aspect concerning the bishops who were elevated to the see of Arles: how did the relatively unknown monks of Lérins gain control of this powerful and highly visible see? Nothing is known about Helladius' elevation (if indeed it happened), but his accession (followed by Honoratus and Hilary) does suggest some pre-existing relationship between Arles and Lérins. That this bond was between the local elites of Arles and the lesser aristocrats<sup>124</sup> who had withdrawn to Lérins is suggested by Hilary's account of Honoratus' accession. Although Hilary was somewhat vague on the circumstances of Honoratus' selection,

<sup>119</sup>The identification of Helladius as bishop of Arles was first suggested by Chadwick (1945), 200–205. As noted above, 20, note 32 this identification is by no means secure. In my view, based on the attributions of Cassian and the presence of an Helladius in a ninth century list of the bishops of Arles (Chadwick (1945), 204), it is probable that Helladius was the bishop of Arles. Cappuyn (1949), 1331 did not agree and Stewart (1998), 153, n.161 asserts that based on the current state of evidence, it is impossible to say with certainty.

<sup>120</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. II.

<sup>121</sup>For a survey of the history of Lérins see Alexander (1991),

<sup>122</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. III.

<sup>123</sup>This elevation occurred at the end of 426 or early in 427 see Harries (1981), 183; Mathisen (1989), 87.

<sup>124</sup>The audience presupposed by Cassian's dedications would be drawn from the local elite, the decurions (see discussion of the orders of the elite in Garnsey (1970), 234–259, esp. 242–245).

he did note that his accession was opposed by the people of Arles. Honoratus' first task, according to Hilary, was to repair this breach.<sup>125</sup> This resistance may have been caused by the fact that the *magister militum* and aristocrats of Arles had chosen Honoratus, overruling the choice of the people and clergy of Arles. These would have been the same men who gathered around Honoratus' cot when he was departing from this world,<sup>126</sup> and the same men who would select Hilary to follow Honoratus.<sup>127</sup>

This selection of a bishop by the power-brokers of Arles would suggest that the see was simply too important to be left in the hands of whomever the priests and people might have selected.<sup>128</sup> This would argue (unquestionably *ex silentio*) that Helladius, Honoratus, and Hilary had a prior relationship with the ruling class of Arles. Again, there is no solid evidence (other than their respective elevations) to support such a contention, but it is difficult to see how it could have happened in any other way. Their accession to the see provides additional evidence for a connection between Arles and the ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda. Moreover, whatever the circumstances of their accession, the advocate of the Massilian provenance must still account for the fact that John Cassian was dedicating his works to bishops of Arles.

#### **Eucherius of Lyons, Jovianus, Minervius, Leontius, and Theodorus**

Of this final group of dedicatees, Eucherius of Lyons is the only figure for whom there is any significant evidence. Cassian named Eucherius a fellow holy brother with Honoratus in the preface to the second division of *Collationes*. At the time he wrote, Eucherius was still a monk of Lérins. A former member of the local elite,<sup>129</sup> he joined the community at Lérins with his wife Galla and two sons, Salonius and Veranius. Cassian connected him with Honoratus, and sometime in the late 420s, Eucherius wrote his *De laudi eremi*, which he dedicated to Hilary of Arles.

Around the year 431, Eucherius was chosen to become the bishop of Lyons,<sup>130</sup> and he first

<sup>125</sup>Hil. *V.Hon.* XXVIII.

<sup>126</sup>Hil. *V.Hon.* XXXII.

<sup>127</sup>Heinzelmann (1992), 246.

<sup>128</sup>As is also suggested by Constantius' earlier selection of Patroclus for the post.

<sup>129</sup>Pricoco (1992), 295.

<sup>130</sup>Date based on Mathisen (1990), 139, who has been able to work out the tenures of a number of Gallic bishops based on a postulated hierarchical pattern found in conciliar documents.

appears in the list of bishops who subscribed to the canons of the Council of Orange (441). Although Eucherius seems to have been a friend and supporter of Hilary of Arles, he did exercise independence at Orange. Where the other bishops simply subscribed to the canons of that Council, Eucherius added the phrase: *sanctorum sacerdotum conprovincialium meorum super his expectaturus adsensum*.<sup>131</sup> Although Eucherius supported Hilary at this council, a clear distinction was to be drawn between the two metropolitans.

Eucherius' presence at both Lérins and among the dedicatees of Cassian's *Collationes* ties him to Narbonensis Secunda during the early part of his career. He seems to have been a long-time friend of Hilary, and his own writings display a great deal of John Cassian's influence.<sup>132</sup> In fact, according to Gennadius, Eucherius had composed an epitome of Cassian's *De institutis*, but unfortunately, this text has been lost.<sup>133</sup>

As was noted above, nothing certain is known about the lives and careers of Jovianus, Minervius, Leontius, and Theodorus. A certain Theodorus became bishop of Forum Iulii after the death of Leontius (ca. 433),<sup>134</sup> and this bishop is often linked to the monk mentioned in Cassian's preface to the third set of *Collationes*,<sup>135</sup> but there is no good evidence to support or disprove this claim.

One view postulates that these monks had established themselves on the Stoechadian Islands, said to be located "off the coast of Gaul near Marseilles."<sup>136</sup> In Cassian's preface to the second set of *Collationes*, he suggested that there would be a third set of seven *Collationes*, which were to be sent to those brothers living on the Stoechadian Islands.<sup>137</sup> The preface of the third division of *Collationes* is dedicated to four monks who have helped ensure that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* flourish among the monks of the West and the Islands.<sup>138</sup> Naturally, most commentators have been drawn to use these two references to locate Jovianus, Minervius,

<sup>131</sup>Carau. *Sub.* 10.

<sup>132</sup>Stewart (1998), 24 notes that Eucherius' *Formulae spiritalis intellegentiae* relied heavily on Cass. *Coll.* XIV.

<sup>133</sup>Genn. *Vir. ill.* LXIV. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (PL L.867) contains an epitome of *De institutis* which was attributed to Eucherius, but this text has since been shown to be a translation of a Greek epitome (Honselmann (1961), 303-304.

<sup>134</sup>Duchesne (1894), 276 provides this date, which is judged the most likely by the research of Mathisen (1990), 138.

<sup>135</sup>See for instance, Stewart (1998), 18.

<sup>136</sup>Stewart (1998), 18. Stewart cites de Vogüé (1982), 110, n. 59 for this attribution.

<sup>137</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. II: *qui in Stoechadibus consistunt insulis*.

<sup>138</sup>Cass. *Coll.* Pref. III: *qua non solum occiduas regiones, verum etiam insulas, maximis fratrum catervis fecistis florere*.

Leontius, and Theodorus on the Stoechadian Islands.<sup>139</sup>

But a location off the coast of Marseilles is not the most likely residence for these monks. In fact, the chain of islands off Marseilles is the *Stoichades Minores*. A group of three islands (Hypaea, Mesa, and Prote) formed the *Stoichades Majores* which lay off the southern coast of Narbonensis Secunda. Although there is nothing in Cassian to judge between the two sets of islands, in view of the fact that all of his other dedications are made to figures associated with Narbonensis Secunda, it seems eminently probable that he had this larger chain of islands in mind.

Castor of Apt, Leontius of Forum Iulii, the monks of Lérins and (possibly) those of the Stoechadian Islands are all linked to the province of Narbonensis Secunda. Furthermore, there are also strong connections between these men and the see of Arles. Is it likely, in the middle of a pitched battle for the control of southern Gaul, that a priest of Marseilles would have dedicated all of his works to the avowed enemies of his own bishop? If Cassian was living and working in Marseilles, why did he avoid dedicating his works to the ascetic figures of Marseilles? More importantly, if Proculus is his patron, why are none of Cassian's works dedicated to Proculus? Why would Cassian favor Honoratus, Bishop of Arles over his own powerful patron?<sup>140</sup>

### Gallia as 'Other'

An earlier examination of Cassian's works for internal evidence of a Massilian affiliation proved fruitless.<sup>141</sup> This is not the case when the same material (especially *De Institutis* I – IV) is surveyed for signs of an affiliation with Narbonensis Secunda. Cassian's pattern of dedications, which points to a group of local patrons in Narbonensis Secunda, has already been discussed. Another argument for Cassian's literary distance from Marseilles is the way he characterizes the Gallic provinces laying beyond the borders of Narbonensis Secunda as something that is 'other.'

In the preface to *De institutis*, Cassian asserted that Castor's province (Narbonensis Se-

<sup>139</sup>See, for instance Stewart (1998), 18 and Ramsey (1997), 402, n. 2 praef. 3.

<sup>140</sup>See Bobertz (1993a), 20–27 for bishops as patrons of client presbyters.

<sup>141</sup>See *supra*, pg. 17.

cunda) was devoid of monasteries.<sup>142</sup> Castor wanted to establish his own monastery, and just as King Solomon had summoned the foreigner Hiram to assist in building the Jewish Temple, Castor had summoned Cassian to share in the task of constructing a monastery.<sup>143</sup> It is not clear how far one should look for parallels in this analogy, but as Cassian does play on the fact that both he and Hiram were foreigners, imported to give assistance in building a temple (although in Cassian's case it will be one of living stones, a monastery), this preface would seem to suggest that Cassian actually had physically come to Narbonensis Secunda.

This impression is heightened by the way he characterizes the deficiencies of Gallic monasticism in contrast with the excellence of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>144</sup> In Cassian's discussion of what is wrong with Gallic monasticism, there seems to be no attempt to localize error within the borders of Narbonensis Secunda. One explanation of this might be that Narbonensis Secunda is a blank slate, that is there was no monasticism of any kind to be found in the province. Yet, the historical record suggests that there was at least one monastery extant in Narbonensis Secunda — Lérins.<sup>145</sup> It cannot be said for certain when Cassian became aware of Lérins, although he certainly had learned of it by the time he dedicated his second set of *Collationes*.<sup>146</sup>

Cassian's reluctance to directly attack extant ascetic projects within Narbonensis Secunda could also be attributed to his presence in the province and his hope that he might influence the course of events there. This explanation dovetails neatly with the observation that when Gallic ascetics are censured, they are ascetics of other regions. For instance, in the preface to *De institutis*, Cassian promised to revise the ascetic guidelines found in "those regions" which were not in accordance with the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>147</sup> In discussing psalmody, he mentioned those who in "other regions" (*alias regiones*) had established contradictory and conflicting rules.<sup>148</sup> Cassian portrayed himself as something of an ecclesiastical investigator, stating that he had,

<sup>142</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3.

<sup>143</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.2.

<sup>144</sup>I will defer the specifics of this comparison to the next chapter (which treats this subject at length).

<sup>145</sup>Traditionally scholars have assigned a date of 410 to the foundation of Lérins. That it was a going concern at the time Cassian wrote *De institutis* is substantiated by Paulinus of Nola's Epistle to Eucherius (*Paul.Ep.* LI) which has been dated to 423 (Walsh (1967), 365 n.1). In this letter, Paulinus noted the arrival of three monks sent by Honoratus from Lérins (Gelasius, Augendus, and Tigridius) and recalled an earlier visit by emissaries from Eucherius who had already settled on Lerum.

<sup>146</sup>Which were dedicated to Honoratus and Eucherius.

<sup>147</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.8.

<sup>148</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2.

in “various places” (*diversis in locis*), noted all manner of practices which diverged from the canonical rules.<sup>149</sup> The criticism of Gallic practices implicit in these statements becomes explicit when Cassian states that untrained leaders were responsible for the “diverse forms and rules found throughout the other provinces.”<sup>150</sup>

Cassian drew lines with these statements, contrasting the discordant and non-canonical practices of other provinces and regions with the orthodoxy that would characterize Castor’s new monastery. His suspension of criticism about the ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda seems calculated. Deficiencies in Gallic practices are attributed to ascetics beyond the borders of Narbonensis Secunda. About his own province, Cassian remains tactfully silent. Once again this selective condemnation of Gallic practices further cements Cassian’s own identification with Narbonensis Secunda, where he lives and hopes to have an influence.

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This chapter has traveled quite far to reach a simple point: John Cassian was living somewhere in Narbonensis Secunda when he wrote his ascetic works. The preceding sections of this chapter have elaborated a larger context for the production of John Cassian’s ascetic works. Several points have emerged from this discussion which bear on Cassian’s location while writing *De institutis* and *Collationes*. These points may be arranged in the following order:

Firstly, Cassian’s association with the Massilian church can only be substantiated for the final years of his life. The evidence of Gennadius links Cassian to Marseilles, but it does not require one to believe that Cassian wrote his ascetic works in Marseilles. Prosper and Hilary of Marseilles, the only other sources of information about Cassian’s location, do not clearly place Cassian in Marseilles until the year 432 when Prosper writes his *Contra collatorem*. Even then, as observed above, both Prosper and Gennadius may only be suggesting a regional identification — that is, Cassian ended his life near Marseilles.

<sup>149</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2.

<sup>150</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.5: *Ideoque diversitates typorum ac regularum per ceteras provincias cernimus usurpatas.*

Second, Cassian does not mention Marseilles, Proculus, or any other Massilian figure in any of his works. Indeed, as has been demonstrated, the closest he came to betraying a Massilian connection was by suggesting his knowledge of the Leporius affair. In this story, however, he stripped Leporius of his Massilian connections and located him in a larger Gallic context.

Finally, despite the fact that there seemed to have been significant enmity between Marseilles and some of the bishops and ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda, Cassian dedicated all of his works to men living in Narbonensis Secunda. This makes no sense in view of the anti-Proculean sentiments which historically had been adopted by the bishops of Narbonensis Secunda. Canon I of the Council of Turin demonstrates that some of the bishops of Narbonensis Secunda were resisting Proculus' attempt to act as a metropolitan over them. There was an historical precedent for animosity toward Proculus in the province.

Moreover, it seems likely that this pattern of animosity would have persisted as long as Proculus was alive and fighting for control of Narbonensis Secunda. Patroclus may not have been welcomed as a metropolitan, but a common desire to resist Proculus might have encouraged an alliance between the bishops of Narbonensis Secunda and Patroclus. These alliances are further suggested by Boniface's letter of 419, which still accorded metropolitan status to Patroclus, and listed a number of bishops who seemed to be in communion with Patroclus. This list included two future Cassian dedicatees: Castor of Apt and Leontius of Forum Iulii.

The conclusion to be drawn from Cassian's pattern of dedications and the internecine rivalry that characterized southern Gaul in the early fifth century is that Cassian did not write *De institutis* in Marseilles. To the contrary, his pattern of dedications show him reaching out to an audience within Narbonensis Secunda. When the evidence is assembled in this manner, one is drawn to the conclusion that Cassian began his ascetic writing career somewhere in Narbonensis Secunda. It was only later, after completing the third set of *Collationes*, that he would make a move to (or near) Marseilles. The reasons for this move are completely unknown, although one might wonder (albeit speculatively) if perhaps the death of Proculus (sometime before 431) might have been a contributing factor. Disapproval of Proculus would be a very cogent explanation for both the timing of Cassian's move to Marseilles and his failure to mention him in any of his works.

For the present, however, the interest of this thesis will turn from a consideration of Cassian's location while writing *De institutis* to an examination of the topic suggested by the preceding section: in the absence of a powerful patron such as a Proculus, how does Cassian suggest and project his own authority? What gave Cassian the right to legislate rules for the ascetic projects that were expanding in Gaul? This is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 2

### *Experientia* vs. Gallic Inexperience

Having relocated John Cassian to Narbonensis Secunda, this thesis will now turn its attention to Cassian's goals for the ascetic projects underway in that province and the way he structured his argument in order to win an audience for his work. As suggested in Chapter I, Cassian's initial audience was Castor, the bishop of Apt and the ascetics who would serve in the monastery that Castor hoped to establish. Yet, even though Cassian makes a point of stating that he was operating under the aegis of Castor, the arguments developed in his work suggest that he felt additional justification was required if his ascetic legislation was to make any headway with his audience. One reason for this may have been that the version of asceticism he would promulgate, one which did not preserve the distinctions of Roman social mores, was bound to meet stiff resistance.<sup>1</sup>

His program of justification also seems designed to demonstrate the superiority of his work over his competitors. One form of competition would have been found in the practitioners of asceticism in Narbonensis Secunda. Whether or not his characterization of 'this province'<sup>2</sup> as devoid of monasteries is accurate, there was certainly ascetic experimentation in progress in other parts of Gaul and nearby Italy. Martin's monks were still active in Tours; Paulinus of Nola was exchanging letters (and ascetics) with the monasteries on Lérins.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, beyond

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<sup>1</sup>Cassian's reformation of the ascetic social order will be the subject of Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3. Presumably Narbonensis Secunda.

<sup>3</sup>See Paul.*Ep.* LI. Although some might wonder whether Paulinus can accurately be termed a monastic figure, it should be noted that his most recent biographer (Trout (1999), 1) does not hesitate to label him both a "monk and priest." A similar pigeonholing of the man can be found in Walsh (1966), 2 who sees Paulinus' letters originating from "his monastery at Nola" and being "an indispensable part of his monastic life."

the indigenous experiments in the ascetic life, those Gauls interested in asceticism would also have been able to draw on the writings of men like Jerome, Basil, Rufinus, and Sulpicius Severus. These works brought additional, sometimes discordant, opinions to the question of how to practice the ascetic life.

Cassian's prospective audience, those interested in attempting the ascetic life, already had a great deal of inspiration to draw upon. Moreover, there was the Roman ideal of *otium*, where a person simply withdrew from the cares of the world in order to practice philosophy. This practice could be Christianized, trading the Bible for Seneca.<sup>4</sup> With all of these exemplars, why would the ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda or Lérins need the dictates of John Cassian?

Cassian's program of self-justification suggests an awareness of his place in a crowded field. He was a newcomer who proposed a radical restructuring of a Gallic program already in progress. Something more than Castor's patronage was required if his work was going to be accepted. The need to establish his position as an ascetic authority explains much of the content of the preface to *De institutis*.

In justifying his right to prescribe ascetic practices for the monks of Narbonensis Secunda, John Cassian played repeatedly on three themes: his experience versus the lack of Gallic experience; his experience versus the inexperience of other ascetic writers; and the idea that there was only one true ascetic way, the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. These rhetorical tactics will be explored in this chapter and the two which follow. Cassian's critique of the Gallic ascetic scene will form the substance of this chapter. According to Cassian, the great problem of Gallic asceticism was the untrained leader who had the temerity to establish a monastery and impress his own fanciful ideas on those monks drawn to his foundation. This fundamental lack of

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Naturally this all boils down to the question: 'what is a monk?' If we are to think of the closed Benedictine cloisters of the medieval period, then surely Paulinus was not a monk. If the definition is broadened to include those who have some interest in importing ascetic practices into the day-to-day Christian life, then surely Paulinus was a monk. Moreover, in a letter designed to lure Sulpicius Severus and his monks to Nola, Paulinus identified the complex he had constructed at Nola as a monastery (Paul.Ep. V.15). See now the discussion of Mratschek (2001), 514–517 for a description of the monastic center at Nola.

Paulinus' significance for this thesis is the fact that Cassian would *not* have considered Paulinus a monk. A very useful dimension is added by considering how firmly Cassian rejects those ascetics who would fit into the pattern of a Paulinus, especially in the wake of all the prominent figures who were promoting Paulinus as a paradigm for both the renunciation of the world and as a model for the ascetic life (now see Trout (1999), 2–10 for a discussion of how Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, and Eucherius of Lyons all used the example of Paulinus as a 'verbal icon' to promote their own views of the Christian life; see also Conybeare (2000), 1–9 for Paulinus as an emblem).

<sup>4</sup>Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Nola, and Augustine all serve as prominent examples of this practice.

knowledge had yielded a hopeless diversity of customs and practices in Gaul, none of which were suitable for the ascetic formation that led to spiritual perfection.

The theme of *experientia* will also be examined in Chapter III, which will consider how Cassian discredited the works of competing ascetic writers. Finally, in Chapter IV, this thesis will examine Cassian's other claim to authority: that he was simply passing on the most ancient and divinely inspired *instituta Aegyptiorum* to his audience.

## A New Hiram

In the preface that opens *De institutis*, Cassian chose to employ a *synkrisis* which compared Bishop Castor of Apt to King Solomon.<sup>5</sup> This comparison is based on a quote from III Kings IV.29, a text that establishes the wisdom and prudence of the Hebrew king. This is followed by allusions to III Kings III.12 (God tells Solomon that no man will ever possess greater wisdom), III Kings VII.13-14 (Hiram, the son of a widowed woman is sent to assist Solomon in building the Temple), and Daniel V.3 (a reference to the desecration of the Temple by the Babylonian king).

Cassian's analogy proposed three parallels between the present (Gallic) and historic (Hebraic) situations. The first was the connection between the act of founding a new monastery and the construction of the Temple. While it stood, the Temple served as the center of the Hebraic cult, the place where God dwelled among his people.<sup>6</sup> In a similar way, suggested Cassian, Castor wanted to emulate Solomon by building a monastery that would house men devoted to the service of God, a holy place set apart from the world. God would dwell in the hearts of Castor's monks. The second similarity propounded in Cassian's analogy linked Solomon and Castor. Solomon was the son of David, the Israelite king celebrated for his wisdom. The most wise Solomon, first builder of the Hebraic Temple found his equivalent in Bishop Castor of Apt, Cassian's patron. This "most-blessed" bishop was a man who had been instructed by Solomon's example,<sup>7</sup> and like the ancient king, wanted to erect a spiritual edifice dedicated to

<sup>5</sup>The beginning of a work is not the usual place for this rhetorical device, but see Hollerich (1989), 423-427 for a discussion of a similar usage by Eusebius in his *Vita Constantini*.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. II Sam. VII.

<sup>7</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3.

the worship of God. He would build a temple, not of insensate brick, but rather, of living stone.

This holy work was not a project for amateurs. Like Solomon, Castor had been forced to seek a highly trained craftsman in order to carry out his ambition. This need for a skilled workman is the third similarity proposed in the analogy.<sup>8</sup> Although inspired by divine wisdom, King Solomon did not scorn the counsel of a "poor and foreign man."<sup>9</sup> Likewise, when Bishop Castor realized that he needed help to establish his monastery, he solicited the assistance of Cassian, an "indigent man and the poorest in every respect."<sup>10</sup> Cassian, at least by analogy, casts himself in a role that is broadly equivalent to Hiram's position.

Cassian's *synkrisis* suggested the themes that would be developed over the course of the preface. The reader is intended to understand that like Hiram, Cassian was a specialist of unparalleled skill. Hiram was the master craftsman; Cassian the expert in the field of monastic science. Both men sat atop their respective disciplines, as is attested by the fact that they were both imported for that holiest of construction projects, the creation of a sacred space where God would dwell.

Moreover, their knowledge surpassed the knowledge of the local people. Solomon would not have asked the King of Tyre to send someone to work with his craftsmen had those artisans been capable of performing the work. The implication of his request is that the skill and knowledge required to create the sacred metalwork of the Temple (at least to the standard required for this holiest of places) did not exist within Israel.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Cassian's analogy suggests that the skill and knowledge required to found a monastery did not exist in Narbonensis Secunda. Ascetic craftsmen of a sort might reside there, but the expertise required to establish a proper monastery, a place where Christ will dwell in the hearts of the monks, must be imported. The

<sup>8</sup>When Solomon, the wisest of kings wished to build the Temple, he solicited help from Hiram, the king of Tyre (I Kings V.2-6). Solomon's request was for a "skilled man" who could "work in gold, silver, brass, and iron, and in purple, scarlet, and blue, and one who knows how to work together with the craftsmen who are with me in Judea and Jerusalem, the materials prepared by David, my father" (II Chr. I.7 (LXX)). King Hiram responded to this request by sending a skilled craftsman, also named Hiram. This second Hiram, according to the accounts in III Kings and II Chronicles, was in charge of the Temple project and the creator of the furnishings which adorned the interior.

<sup>9</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3: *pauperis atque alienigenae*.

<sup>10</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3: *me egenum omnique ex parte pauperrimum*.

<sup>11</sup>DeVries (1985), 110 points to what might have been an attempt to smooth over the troublesome aspect of having a foreigner involved in the Temple project by the writer of III Kings: "The narrator wants to tell us that Hiram had all the skills of the Tyrian copper-workers, one of whom had been his father, but in order to ease troubled consciences, he emphasizes by bringing forward, the fact that this man was nevertheless a true Israelite, the son of a widow woman from Naphtali."

equation of himself with Hiram suggests Cassian's position on indigenous Gallic monasticism: if what passed for asceticism in Gaul was suitable for the creation of a Temple of living souls devoted to the service of the Lord, if skilled craftsmen existed in Gaul, then Castor would not have summoned Cassian. The fact that Cassian has been given a commission by Castor demonstrated that this knowledge was missing.<sup>12</sup> A monastic mason was required to dress the living stones.<sup>13</sup>

What is the ultimate qualification of the craftsman? It is experience. Having established the sacred nature of the work and the need for a specialist to execute the project, Cassian began to buttress his position by developing the theme of experience (*experientia*) as the *sine qua non* for the ascetic teacher. This line of argumentation emerges in the middle of a list of the reasons he is unfit to compose the work requested by Bishop Castor,

4 Because first, my merits are not the equal [of the years] of my life, that I might have confidence that I can worthily comprehend with heart and mind matters so

<sup>12</sup>It may also be possible that Cassian is linking his work to a request from Castor in order to validate his right to be considered a teacher. The seventh canon of the Council of Saragossa had stated that only those who had been granted the right (presumably by a bishop) were allowed to teach in the church (see discussion of Canon 7 in Burrus (1992), 101). However, for the idea that a work has been solicited as a literary topos, see Janson (1964), 117–120.

<sup>13</sup>Cassian's use of the word *alienigena* (foreigner) to describe Hiram the king in verse 1 and Hiram the craftsman in verse 3 of the preface has drawn significant attention from those scholars working to identify Cassian's place of birth. Cassian, as can be seen above, labels both men foreigners. It is argued that for the correspondence between Cassian and Hiram to hold, Cassian must likewise be a foreigner, someone from Scythia (*Cassianus, natione Scythia* (Genn. *Vir.ill.* LXII)). This view has been held by a number of scholars, including Owen Chadwick, who notes "The biblical simile loses all its point if Castor is summoning the help of one who is not a foreigner at all" (Chadwick (1950), 192. Chadwick makes this point again on page 194).

Cassian does not specifically label himself an *alienigena*. Karl Suso Frank, representing those scholars who would assign Cassian to a Gallic provenance, interprets this omission as a suggestion that Cassian was a son of Gaul. When Cassian compares himself to Hiram (who has been described as *pauperis atque alienigenae viri*), he notes that he is also "an indigent man and the poorest in every respect" (*me egenum omnique ex parte pauperrimum*) (v. 3). Cassian attaches two adjectives to the description of Hiram and two adjectives to his own self-characterization. Frank notes, "In his own case, as has often been noticed, Cassian has dropped the description 'foreign'" Hiram is *pauperis atque alienigenae*, while Cassian is *egenus omnique ex parte pauperrimum*. This telling substitution, in Frank's view, suggests that Cassian was either no longer a foreigner in Gaul or there were reasons not to refer to himself as a foreigner (Frank (1997), 422.). The most obvious reason would be that Cassian was a native of Gaul.

As the preceding discussion of the connections Cassian makes with his analogy has suggested, it may not be helpful to attach too much weight to the word *alienigena* as an indicator of Cassian's homeland. The central point of Cassian's analogy does not concern his own provenance, but rather is an assertion that the knowledge required to create Castor's monastery is unavailable in Gaul. Solomon had to look to Tyre for the required expertise; Castor, as Cassian will advocate, must look to the *instituta Aegyptiorum* in order to form his monastery (see pg. 115 and following). Cassian's use of *alienigena* is intended to highlight the absence of a specialist's knowledge in Israel and suggest that same lack in Gaul. Requiring the term to bear more weight as evidence for or against Cassian's status as a Gaul is inappropriate. The simile does not come apart if Cassian is a Gaul by birth, any more than it does if we discover that Cassian was not sent by a king to assist Castor (or that Cassian was not the son of a widowed woman); likewise seeing the missing term as an attribution of homeland is an argument *ex silentio*, and in the context of Cassian's larger purpose, a dubious guess at best.

difficult, so obscure, and so sacred. Secondly, because we are now unable to retain in its entirety those things which, from our youth, having been established among those same men and encouraged by their daily exhortations and examples, either we tried to do, or learned, or we have seen, having been removed by the passing of so many years from their company and from the imitation of their conversation, especially because an understanding of these matters cannot be taught or understood or held in the memory by idle meditation or wordy doctrines.

5 For it consists entirely in experience and practice alone, and just as these things cannot be taught except by one who has experience in them, so also they may not be grasped or understood, except by him who will have striven to grasp them by an equal amount of study and sweat. Which things, if they will not have been frequently discussed and refined by the continuous conferences of spiritual men, quickly melt away again through carelessness of mind. In the third place, because an extremely unskilled discourse<sup>14</sup> is inadequate to explain the matter itself, which we are not able to recall according to the merit of the matter, but according to our condition at the present time.<sup>15</sup>

Amid the *insinuatio*,<sup>16</sup> Cassian inserts both his *curriculum vitae* as well as the thesis for the ar-

<sup>14</sup>Cassian's *inperitior sermo* may be an allusion to II Cor. 11.6, where Paul writes that he might be unskilled in speech, but not in knowledge, and consequently in no way inferior to the 'super-Apostles' who had been leading the Corinthians astray (*et si inperitus sermone sed non scientia*). Cf. Janson (1964), 139 who cites this as an example of Paul not attempting to be modest.

<sup>15</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.4-5: 4. *Primum quia nec vitae meae ita aequiparant merita, ut confidam me res tam arduas, tam obscuras, tam sanctas, digne posse animo ac mente complecti. Secundo quod ea quae a pueritia nostra inter eosdem constituti atque ipsorum incitati cotidianis adhortationibus et exemplis vel agere temptavimus, vel didicimus, vel visu percepimus, minime iam possumus ad integrum retinere, tot annorum circulis ab eorum consortio et imitatione conversationis abstracti, praesertim cum harum rerum ratio nequaquam possit otiosa meditatione doctrinaque verborum, vel tradi, vel intelligi, vel memoria contineri. 5. Totum namque in sola experientia usque consistit, et quemadmodum tradi nisi ab experto non queunt, ita ne percipi quidem vel intelligi, nisi ab eo qui ea pari studio ac sudore apprehendere elaboraverit, possunt: quae tanen si collatione iugi spiritalium virorum frequenter discussa non fuerint, et polita, cito rursus mentis incuria dilabuntur. Tertio quia id ipsum quod utcumque non pro merito rei, sed pro praesentis temporis statu possumus reminisci, inperitior sermo congrue non valet explicare.*

<sup>16</sup>*Insinuatio* is a rhetorical set piece designed to win a hearing. As Quintilian noted, "It also makes a great deal of difference who it is that is offering the advice: for if his past has been illustrious, or if his distinguished birth or age or fortune excite high expectations, care must be taken that his words are not unworthy of him. If on the other hand he has none of these advantages, he will have to adopt a humbler tone." Quint.*Inst.Orat.*, III.8.48. (Butler, trans.). Kennedy (1969), 65 suggests that the use of the *exordium* as a device for making the audience well-disposed toward the orator was quite standard in the teaching of rhetoric, although he suggests that Quintilian may have played down the importance of *insinuatio* as a device for winning this approval.

This is not to imply, of course, that Cassian had read Quintilian, but rather that *insinuatio* was a common rhetor-

gument that would be developed over the rest of his preface: *experientia* gave him an expertise that demanded the attention of his audience. This line of reasoning was by no means novel. Personal experience and inquisition had been offered as certification of the truth of historical works for centuries. What made a good historian was a personal knowledge of the events he recorded. He had experienced something worth passing on.<sup>17</sup>

The same observation could easily be extended to the ascetic life. Cassian claimed to have forgotten much, but in doing so he staked a claim to having once known something worth passing on. The reader is reminded that unlike the other voices contending for a hearing in Gaul, Cassian had lived among the Egyptian Desert Fathers from his youth. For an unspecified number of years, he was an imitator and student of the Desert Fathers.<sup>18</sup> His monastic training was provided by the finest school of asceticism in existence at the time. He sat at the feet of masters, his thoughts shaped and stimulated by being one of the company that associated with them. Although Cassian's assertions are cloaked in *insinuatio*, they are intended to remind his readers of his formidable credentials.<sup>19</sup>

The priority of *experientia* becomes doubly important in view of his claim that asceticism is a craft that may only be learned at the feet of a trained teacher.<sup>20</sup> The knowledge is by nature abstruse and difficult to master; its complexity requires a teacher. Consequently Cassian places

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ical device, one that Cassian would have been trained to employ in anything he wrote (as indeed he does — see *Cass.Coll.* Pref.I.3; *Cass.Coll.* Pref.II.2; and *Cass.Coll.* X.1.1 for further examples). See also the discussion of Janson (1964), 120–121, as well as 129 where he notes that pleas of incompetence are a literary topos, not a statement of fact or a product of humility.

<sup>17</sup>See for instance *Plb.Fr.* XII.26.4. Here the historian Polybius censures Timaeus for his lack of experience, which has been revealed in certain parts of his works. Citing Heraclitus, Polybius avers that there are two ways to gain information: through the eyes and through the ears (that is, by seeing events or hearing about them). Things can be learned from books, but personal inquiry, although it requires a greater amount of labor and hardship, yields the more valuable account *Plb.Fr.* XII.27.6.

<sup>18</sup>We lack adequate evidence to determine how long Cassian stayed among the fathers. The consensus opinion is approximately 15 years (mid-380s to shortly after the Anthropomorphite controversy that was sparked by Theophilus' Festal Letter (399)). At the end of *Coll.* 17, Cassian mentions a brief visit to his old Bethlehem monastery, which took place after seven years in the desert (*Cass.Coll.* XVII.30). Stewart (1998), 8, notes that this reference does not occur in one early manuscript. Nevertheless, he asserts that Cassian's formidable knowledge of Egyptian monasticism presupposes a long familiarity with those monks (8). But now see Frank (1997), 431, who argues for a much shorter stay in the desert. Dunn (2000), 74 builds on this proposition by asserting that Cassian had virtually no direct contact with Egyptian monasticism.

<sup>19</sup>The success of Cassian's effort to portray himself as an experienced ascetic may be seen in the later judgment of Gennadius: "He wrote, with experience as his teacher, in poised speech (and to speak more openly, with meaning behind his words, and action behind his talk [or possibly: choosing words guided by the sense, and [creating a text] that set the tongue in motion when read aloud]), concerning the matters necessary to the profession of all monks" *Genn.Vir.ill.* LXI: *Scriptis, experientia magistrante, librato sermone, et ut apertius dicam, sensu verba inveniens, et actione linguam movens, res omnium monachorum professioni necessarias.*

<sup>20</sup>*Cass.Inst.* Pref.5.

the master-disciple relationship at the center of the monastic curriculum. Nor would just any self-proclaimed abbot serve. The master needs the qualification of *experientia*, "for these things cannot be taught except by one who has experience in them."<sup>21</sup> Likewise the student must apply himself with diligence, as the same things "may not be grasped or understood, except by him who will have striven to grasp them by an equal amount of study and sweat."<sup>22</sup> *Experientia* informs both sides of the relationship; the teacher is an experienced master who passes on *experientia* to a worthy pupil. This relationship, and this relationship alone, serves as a conduit for this sacred knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

### **Coenobia as Conduit**

One of the fundamental presuppositions of *De institutis* is the idea that this transmission of experience required a structure; that structure was the monastery. The monastery was the nursery for ascetics, the place where the principal fruits of the monastic life, humility and obedience, were formed. Moreover it was an institution that preserved and passed on experience.

Cassian schematized the initial phases of monastic training in Book IV of *De institutis*. Once a postulant had been accepted into the monastery by the abbot, he was made to live in the gate house with a brother who had been selected for his discernment and ability with new ascetics.<sup>24</sup> The postulant lived in the gate house for a year. During this time he was initiated into the rudiments of ascetic life and made to serve the monastery's visitors. In this way the brother overseeing him could assess whether he had a vocation for the coenobitic life; it also gave the postulant a year for reflection on the cost of dedicating his life permanently to the monastery.

If the postulant was found to have a coenobitic aptitude, he was then admitted into the main community and placed under the care of another elder who was skilled in the training of

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<sup>21</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5. This thought is developed over the course of the first four books of *De institutis*, especially in Books II and IV. This assertion is echoed by Germanus in Cass.*Coll.* XIX.7, who states that there is no one more qualified to discuss a matter than the man who has pursued it over a long period and has experience as his teacher.

<sup>22</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5.

<sup>23</sup>The opposite of this is either the inexperienced master or the obtuse pupil who refuses to accept the guidance of an elder. Both are condemned in Cass.*Coll.* XIV.18.

<sup>24</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.7.

novices.<sup>25</sup> This elder had the task of cultivating the self-abnegation that was required in the monastic life. To this end, he consciously probed the novice for weakness and assigned tasks that would be loathsome to the monk in order to teach him to conquer his own self-will.<sup>26</sup> Cassian presented this initial ascetic formation in a medical context. The novice required the application of appropriate healing remedies<sup>27</sup> in order to cure the spiritual diseases that had blighted his soul. The diagnosis and treatment of these spiritual diseases required an experienced spiritual physician, one who had himself undergone the cure. At the core of Cassian's training program was a twofold emendation of life. The first step focused on the external, the eradication of vices. Only after these external vices had been mastered could the ascetic move forward on the inner path to God, the cultivation of contemplation.<sup>28</sup> Cassian had a systematic approach in mind, and his system required both a teacher and a proper context.

The disciple's training was also enhanced by dwelling among experienced men. The shaping of the monk was facilitated by the frequent conferences on spiritual matters offered by the seasoned fathers for the benefit of the other monks. This idea, first suggested in Cassian's preface,<sup>29</sup> received a fuller treatment in Book VII of *De institutis*. In many cases a novice would be led to a cure for his own ills simply by listening to the spiritual conferences of the elders of his monastery. The novice learned from the examples around him, and quietly overcame his own spiritual sickness without shame or confusion. The novice in the company of experienced ascetics could absorb a good deal of the ascetic life through simple association littera with salutary examples.

This process was illustrated by a story about Abba Moses.<sup>30</sup> According to Moses, when he was a novice living under the direction of Abba Theonas, he had fallen prey to the sin of gluttony. At the evening meal he would secretly hide an extra biscuit in his robes, which he would later eat when he was alone in his cell. The twin sins of theft and gluttony were so shameful to Moses that he could not bring himself to confess them to his master. One

<sup>25</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.7.

<sup>26</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.8.

<sup>27</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VII.13.4: *congrua medicinae curatio.*

<sup>28</sup>Cassian's view of the spiritual path is detailed at some length in Cass.*Coll.* XIV.2.

<sup>29</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5: *quae tamen si collatione iugi spiritalium virorum frequenter discussa non fuerint, et polita, cito rursus mentis incuria dilabuntur.*

<sup>30</sup>Cass.*Coll.* II.11.

night however, at the evening conference, the old man who was speaking offered a discourse on gluttony and the tyranny of secret thoughts. Moses was terrified, believing that God had revealed his inner condition to the old man. As he listened, a wave of compunction swept over him, and he was moved to make a full and complete confession of his crimes. The old man pronounced him not only absolved of his sins, but also free of further servitude to the evil spirit which had driven him to these acts.<sup>31</sup>

Cassian's coenobitic structure created a context for the development of ascetic proficiency. A solitary, self-taught monk lacked a standard to serve as a gauge of progress. Those who placed themselves under the rules of a self-proclaimed abbot had a flawed standard. There was an order to the ascetic life, a guided progression toward experience. Cassian's structure placed novices under elders who had already undergone the training they imposed on their subordinates. Surrounded by exemplars of the spiritual life, the novice in an Egyptian monastery was more likely to make progress than the monk who did not have the advantage of dwelling among experienced men. The example of Moses' triumph over gluttony suggested that spiritual progress could be acquired through osmosis when the novice was placed in a suitable context: even when he could not bear to confess his sins to his master, Moses still received healing from the serendipitous teaching of another elder.

### The Self-Professed Abbot

This, however, could not be said about the ascetic practices Cassian had observed in the regions surrounding Narbonensis Secunda. Cassian was extremely explicit in his diagnosis of both the problems of Gallic asceticism and the identification of those who were responsible for these problems. The blame lay with those inexperienced 'abbots' who had set up their own monasteries without first serving as monks.<sup>32</sup> Cassian traced the scattered and diverse Gallic ascetic practices back to their source: the inexperienced Gallic abbot.

<sup>31</sup>Cass. *Coll.* II.11.4. At this point a smoking, sulphurous torch emerged from Moses' chest, which was taken to be a sign that God had confirmed the old man's words.

<sup>32</sup>Cassian claimed to have been warned against this by Abba Nesteros, who cautioned John to first receive and master the precepts of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* before attempting to teach them (Cass. *Coll.* XIV.9.4). See also Cass. *Coll.* XIV.14.1 for the claim that an inexperienced master could not teach, and if he tried, what he offered would be useless.

In place of knowledge, these men had substituted individualistic whim as the basis for their ascetic rules. They did what seemed right to their untrained minds rather than pursuing what was truly right. In his preface, Cassian indicated the general shape of the Gallic problem,

8. In this also I will be diligent in satisfying your guidelines, so that if by chance I discover anything that is not in accordance with the example of the ancestors, established by the most ancient constitution, but rather, based on the decision of anyone founding a monastery, has been either removed or added in these provinces, I will add or cut away in a trustworthy discourse, following [the rule] we have seen, i.e. the rule of monasteries founded in antiquity throughout Egypt and Palestine.<sup>33</sup>

The Gallic rules are based on the opinion (*arbitrio*) of the individual. The importance of this charge in Cassian's thought is suggested by the fact that he repeats it in Book II, where he notes that in Egypt,

monasteries are not established based on the opinion of each person renouncing [the world], but through the successions and traditions of the fathers, either they remain even in the present day or they are being founded to remain.<sup>34</sup>

Lacking knowledge and *experientia* the Gallic organizers had simply made up their own ascetic rules. Every ascetic did as he or she thought fit, following the whims that appealed to the individual mind rather than looking to a broader framework of established practice.

Naturally this created a divergent plethora of practices. Without a common framework to guide praxis, the Gallic rules had sprouted in many different directions. Cassian illustrated this discordant diversity by detailing the varying rules for psalmody he had discovered in Gaul. Wherever he looked in Gaul, monks were doing something different. Some believed that twenty or thirty psalms ought to be said during the nocturnal office; some opted for more while

<sup>33</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.8: *In eo quoque tuis praeceptis satisfacere studebo, ut si quid forte non secundum typum majorum antiquissima constitutione fundatum, sed pro arbitrio uniuscuiusque instituentis monasterium, vel deminutum, vel additum in istis regionibus comprobavero, secundum eam quam vidimus monasteriorum regulam, per Aegyptum vel Palaestinam antiquitus fundatorum, fideli sermone, vel adjiciam, vel recidam.*

<sup>34</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2: *Itaque per universam Aegyptum et Thebaidem, ubi monasteria non pro uniuscuiusque renuntiantis instituuntur arbitrio, sed per successiones ac traditiones maiorum, usque in hodiernum diem vel permanent vel mansura fundantur.*

others thought eighteen was an appropriate number. Some monks prolonged the nocturnal offices with the addition of antiphons of rhythmical measures (*modulationem*). During the diurnal offices, some monks thought it best to make the number of recited psalms match the hour of the day (i.e. three psalms at Terce, six at Sext, nine at None), while others judged it best to sing six psalms at each office. In fact, stated Cassian, he had witnessed almost as many different practices as there were individual cells and monasteries in Gaul.<sup>35</sup> Diversity, created by a lack of understanding was Cassian's caricature of the Gallic rules concerning psalmody.

The responsibility for this lack of consistency was attributed to the uninformed decisions made by the self-proclaimed abbot. The Egyptian abbot served a long discipleship under the supervision of experienced men so that he would know how to train those who would follow him. The Gallic abbot, on the other hand, dared to declare himself a leader before he had received any training and required that his followers adhere to his own ill-conceived ascetic code.<sup>36</sup> Lacking experience, the self-proclaimed abbot simply made rules up. The Egyptian system was designed to extirpate pride and self-centeredness; the fact that Gallic abbots began their careers at the top proved that they were entrapped by these vices. They would rather lead than follow, would rather train than be taught.

Cassian equated the self-professed abbot with the height of pride. This view was offered in *Collationes* IV, where he discussed those who hoarded money under the pretext of establishing a community. If these people had ever sought the way of perfection with sincere hearts, they would have stripped themselves of both their money and their pride, and placed themselves under the guidance of an experienced master. Unfortunately, they preferred to spend their time trying to attain a high position among the brothers rather than learning the spiritual discipline of humility. Pride had blinded them to such a degree that they saw themselves in the role of teachers rather than students. Blind guides, they led the blind into ditches.<sup>37</sup> This judgment of Jesus, which Cassian cited at the end of his discussion in *Collationes* IV, neatly summarized his position on the folly of the inexperienced abbot. A sharper point was placed on this view in *Collationes* XIV, where Cassian asserted that those who were presumptuous enough to teach

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<sup>35</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2.

<sup>36</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>37</sup>Cass.*Coll.* IV.20.2.

before first serving as a disciple risked the fires of Gehenna.<sup>38</sup>

Cassian's charges do not appear unfounded. Examples of untrained ascetics who had started their monastic careers as leaders of ascetic foundations are plentiful in the western sources.<sup>39</sup> The most noteworthy example in Gaul was Sulpicius Severus, who, despite his professed admiration for Martin of Tours, did not feel compelled to join Martin's monastery at Marmoutier for training. To the contrary he chose to dabble in the ascetic life at his own estate, Primuliacum.<sup>40</sup> A similar example may be found in Paulinus, who chose Nola for his foundation rather than casting his lot with Martin. Jerome offers another example. After a short amount of time spent among the Syrian monks, a period which did not agree with him, Jerome preferred the leadership of his Bethlehem monastery to a monastic life in the Egyptian desert.<sup>41</sup> It would not be surprising if Cassian had these examples in mind when he wrote this chapter.

In each of these cases, inexperienced men started monasteries on their own property,<sup>42</sup> and set themselves up as ascetic leaders. Rather than first gaining experience under an accredited master, these self-proclaimed abbots pressed their own vain notions of how the ascetic life was to be conducted on their monks. This proliferation of the half-baked ideas of inexperienced men was the source of the unhelpful diversity Cassian noted in Gaul. As monks who were more engaged in promotion of self rather than the promotion of the ascetic life, the Gallic abbots were leading their monks into ruin.

Central to the Cassian's description of the ascetic life was the idea that ascetic disciplines were intended to foster humility rather than pride.<sup>43</sup> Cassian opposed the pride embodied in the

<sup>38</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XIV.9.6.

<sup>39</sup>See the parallel observation of Jones (1964a), 923 who, commenting on the western episcopacy, noted that there is very little evidence for western aristocrats entering holy orders as anything other than a bishop.

<sup>40</sup>See now the assessment of Van Dam (1985), 135: "Under the influence of Martin, Sulpicius had founded his own monastery in Southern Gaul. But this community, however strict its rules, resembled most of all an aristocratic spa, in which 'learned men' spent their time in discussions similar to those they had once enjoyed on their estates."

<sup>41</sup>After being driven from Rome (ca. 385), Jerome and Paula made a tour of Egypt, visiting Alexandria and Nitria. Paula seems to have been particularly impressed with the Desert Fathers and entertained thoughts of remaining among them (*Hier. Ep.* CVIII.14). Jerome seemed to be less enthused. Kelly (1975), 127 believes that Jerome was neither willing to repeat the hardships he had endured among the Syrians, nor to surrender his influence over Paula by sharing her with the Egyptian ascetics. A scholarly, genteel form of asceticism, practiced at Bethlehem seemed infinitely preferable to a gritty life of renunciation among the Egyptians.

Now see Rebenich (1997) for a very persuasive reconstruction of Jerome's Syrian experience which casts grave doubt on the rigor of the experiment.

<sup>42</sup>Jerome was an exception. He founded a monastery on property purchased in Bethlehem by his patroness Paula.

<sup>43</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XIV.9.4-5. See also Cass. *Coll.* XV.7.1-5 on the vain desire of self-promotion as opposed to the

Gallic abbot with the example of the Egyptian program of spiritual formation which cultivated humility rather than fostering self-exaltation. A properly trained Egyptian monk would place the cultivation of humility over the desire to lead others. The victory of humility over pride was illustrated near the end of *De institutis* IV, where Cassian offered an extended panegyric to one of his personal heroes, the Abba Pinufius.<sup>44</sup>

According to Cassian, Pinufius had been the priest and abbot of a large Egyptian monastery located near the city of Panephrisis. All of the people in the region were in awe of Pinufius on account of his personal sanctity, his great age, and the position he held. Unfortunately, Pinufius found his position stifling. Everyone accorded him great respect, showering him with honor and praise. Consequently, Pinufius was unable to practice the fundamental disciplines of the monastic life: obedience, humility, and submission to others.

Consequently, one night Pinufius stole away in the darkness and withdrew into the deep wastes of the Thebaid. There he exchanged his monastic habit for secular clothing, and presented himself at the gate of a Pachomian monastery. The brothers (as was their practice) reviled Pinufius for ten days in order to discourage him. Having enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, they claimed, Pinufius was only turning to the religious life because he had run out of secular options. Pinufius patiently bore their abuse, and after the time of testing had passed, they admitted him to the monastery and assigned him to work in the garden under a much younger monk.

Pinufius exulted in his new role, and practiced submission and humility by carrying out both his own duties and those duties which all the other brothers considered beneath them. He also, noted Cassian, rose in the middle of the night and did additional work in secret. Three years passed in obscurity and no one in the monastery figured out that there was more to the useless old man who worked in the garden than appeared on the surface. One day however, one of the brothers from Pinufius' old monastery near Panephrisis (who had been scouring the countryside in search of their leader) came to the monastery, recognized him, and carried him (against his will and with great weeping) back to his monastery, where he resumed his former position.

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proper virtue of humility.

<sup>44</sup>Cass. *Inst.* IV.30.

Cassian advanced Pinufius as a paradigm for the ideal abbot. He was presented as a man of great renown, respected and admired by both his own monks and the people who lived around the monastery. This was certainly the sort of acclaim a Gallic ascetic would seek. Yet, rather than cultivating or basking in this adulation, Pinufius found it a hindrance to his spiritual life and sought to flee it. Leadership, reputation, power over others — those ephemeral goals of the secular world — were of no interest to Pinufius. His example was intended to turn the ambitions of most (especially those of the Gallic monks who sought to lead rather than to follow) upside down. Pinufius' life of renown was a distraction that he gladly exchanged for subjection, obedience, and the cultivation of humility, the qualities Cassian placed at the core of the monastic training program.

Pinufius can be compared to the sketch of the self-proclaimed abbot that Cassian offered in Book XII of *De institutis*. Here Cassian offered the desire to found a monastery as one of the symptoms of carnal pride.<sup>45</sup> The monk who fell victim to this vice began to chafe under the discipline of the monastery, and eventually would break away to form his own foundation with himself as abbot. The example of Pinufius was intended to be a rebuke to those who refused to submit to more experienced men as well as those Gallic ascetics who thought they could, without training, establish their own monasteries. Both of these actions were rooted in pride rather than the monastic goal of humility.

Those who had been trained under the *instituta Aegyptiorum* would have had to master their own pride and desire for recognition before being given the opportunity to lead and train others. They would be able to say (as Cassian attributes to Abba John) "I never did my own will nor taught anyone what I had not done first myself."<sup>46</sup> The important quality of the Egyptian monasteries, according to Cassian, was the fact that no one was allowed to lead until they had completed the course of training and were judged (by other experienced monks) qualified to take on the leadership of a monastery.<sup>47</sup> In this way they perpetuated a system that stretched back into antiquity, the certain and tried path to spiritual perfection.

<sup>45</sup>Cass.*Inst.* XII.30.

<sup>46</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.28: *numquam, ait, meam feci voluntatem nec quemquam docui quod prius ipse non feci*. See also the words of Abba Chaeremon who was reluctant to offer teaching to Cassian and Germanus because he was no longer able to perform the difficult asceticism he taught (Cass.*Coll.* XI.4.1-2).

<sup>47</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

Those ascetics who started their own monasteries and professed themselves abbots before first serving as disciples were fools, blind guides who led blind men. Lacking experience and even the first intimation of the goals of the ascetic life, they had promulgated a diverse collection of contradictory and useless rules, which were a testament to their own pride rather than an appropriate foundation for the ascetic life.

## Gauls Lack Experience

Pride was the central flaw of the Gallic self-professed abbot. The legacy of this pride was inexperience and ignorance. The uninformed legislation of the self-professed abbots had led to a hopeless Gallic diversity, which rested on a lack of understanding about fundamental ascetic practices. Rather than being part of an established, proven system for ascetic living, the Gauls had created rules that were "based on a zeal for God, rather than knowledge."<sup>48</sup> The Gallic monks had devised a great number of rules, but as they did not understand the goals and means of the ascetic life, none of these rules served to lead a monk toward spiritual perfection.

Cassian illustrated this deficient understanding in his discussion of the nocturnal offices of prayer by contrasting the praxis of the Egyptians with what he had observed in Gaul. In Egypt, according to Cassian, the monks did not hurry to fall to their knees at the conclusion of the psalms, as many of the monks in Gaul did.<sup>49</sup> To the contrary, the Egyptians remained standing for a period of time, praying. They then lay face down on the ground for the briefest moment, before rising again to continue praying with arms outstretched.<sup>50</sup>

The Gallic monks followed a different (flawed) procedure. Although they recited a great number of psalms (and Cassian stated that this was greater than the 12 psalms that had been fixed by the elders in antiquity), they tended to hurry through their psalms in order to prostrate themselves on the ground. While chanting their larger number of psalms, the minds of the monks were focused on counting how many remained rather than on the words of the psalms. Fatigue drove them to finish their prayers quickly. The attention of the Gauls did not dwell on

<sup>48</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2, quoting Rom. X.2: *zelum Dei, sed non secundum scientiam.*

<sup>49</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.7.2-3: *ut finito psalmo non statim ad incurvationem genuum conruant, quemadmodum facimus in hac regione nonnulli.*

<sup>50</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.7.

the prayers at hand, but rather on the refreshment to be found at the end of the office. This explained their desire to quickly stretch out on the ground at the end of the psalmody. Cassian suggested that the Gauls did this, not out of awe at the presence of God, but rather so that they might snatch a moment's rest while prone.<sup>51</sup>

Cassian's comments on the Gallic practice were intended to illustrate how, lacking knowledge about the means and ends of the ascetic life, the Gauls had missed out on what was important in corporate psalmody. For the Gauls the central goal of the nightly offices was the recitation of a great number of psalms. Since psalmody was one of the duties of a monk, the more psalms a monk chanted, the better that monk must be. Success in the monastic vocation was measured, not by the intangible spiritual gains to be found in concentrated prayer, but rather by the worldly standard of productivity. Quantity trumped quality in the Gallic offices.

With productivity as the goal, it is no surprise that those who stood on the psalmodic assembly line came to focus on the ends, rather than the means of the office. They hurried toward completion, tumbling to their knees before the prayers were finished so that that they might reach the end of the office more quickly. Completion of the office, rather than experiencing the presence of God in the office became the criterion for success. The Gauls assessed their prayers in material, worldly terms; they failed to understand that spiritual value could not be measured by secular standards of success. Their focus on the recitation of a large number of psalms (and their desire to complete this number expeditiously) betrayed the failure of their minds to grasp an essential spiritual truth. The Gallic monks understood neither the proper practice of prayer, nor the reasons that undergirded that practice.

This lack of understanding translated into spiritual apathy. With their eyes on the wrong goals, the Gallic monks made no progress toward perfection. Moreover, as their prayers were simply empty rituals, means practised to the wrong end, it is no surprise that the Gallic monks did not take them seriously. Cassian's description of a Gallic nocturnal prayer office (implied by its contrast with the pure Egyptian office) is worth citing in its entirety,

And so when they [the Egyptians] gather together to celebrate the aforementioned offices, which they call *synaxes*, everyone maintains such a great silence that even

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<sup>51</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.7.

though a large number of brothers have come together as one, a person might believe that no one was present except for the monk who rises and sings psalms among them. This is especially true when the prayer is finished, in that no spittle is hawked, no phlegm makes a racket, no cough sounds among them, there is no sleepy yawning issuing from wide and gaping mouths, neither groans nor sighs are brought forth to impede those standing nearby, no voice is heard apart from the priest who concludes the prayer, unless [there might be] that noise which through a digression of the mind will have slipped past the fortress of the mouth, and which will have insensibly surprised the heart, clearly having been inflamed by a limitless and unbearable heat of spirit, while that, which the burning mind is unable to keep to itself, tries to evaporate through a certain ineffable groan [which emanates] from the innermost chambers of the breast.<sup>52</sup>

Cassian's catalogue of unspiritual noises points to a lack of Gallic absorption in prayer. Once again, the experienced Egyptians were offered as a standard; in Egypt a monk would not dare to utter a sound that would signify that he was less than completely absorbed in his prayer. The monk who allowed a sound to slip out of his throat demonstrated the coolness of his prayer. Rather than being absorbed in his task, he was like those who were more intent on rushing through the office than dwelling in the presence of God. The monk who yawned, coughed, spit, or gaped open-mouthed was distracted and gained nothing from the office of prayer. His diffidence was not only an offense against the purpose of the office, but also risked the further offense of disturbing someone who had successfully entered into the act of prayer.<sup>53</sup> The Gallic lack of understanding about the ascetic life had yielded a nocturnal office which did not engage the monk, and contributed nothing to his spiritual development.

<sup>52</sup>Cass.Inst. II.10: *Cum igitur praedictas sollempnitates, quas illi synaxes vocant, celebraturi conveniunt, tantum praebetur a cunctis silentium, ut cum in unum tam numerosa fratrum multitudo conveniat, praeter illum qui consurgens psalmum decantat in medio, nullus hominum penitus adesse credatur: ac praecipue cum consummatur oratio, in qua non sputus emittitur, non excreatio obstrepit, non tussis intersonat, non oscitatio somnolenta dissutis malis et hiantibus trahitur, nulli gemitus, nulla suspiria etiam adstantes inpeditura promuntur; non ulla vox, absque sacerdotis precem concludentis, auditur, nisi forte haec quae per excessum mentis claustra oris effugerit, quaeque insensibiliter cordi obrepserit, immoderato scilicet atque intolerabili spiritus fervore succenso, dum ea quae ignita mens in semet ipsa non praevaleret continere, per ineffabilem quemdam gemitum ex intimis pectoris sui conclavibus evaporare conatur.*

<sup>53</sup>Cass.Inst. II.10. The exception to this of course, is the monk who is so caught up in a holy fervor that he loses control of his mouth and an utterance breaks out unexpectedly (v. 1).

The Gallic lack of understanding about the means and goals of the ascetic life extended beyond the spiritual formation of the individual monk. A lack of knowledge prevented the Gallic monasteries from thriving as corporate entities. Cassian illustrated this point on a material plane with his assertion that one reason Gallic monasteries did not endure was because the monks did not understand that they needed to work in order to support the foundation.<sup>54</sup> Work has more than an economic import in Cassian's syllabus for spiritual development,<sup>55</sup> but here his emphasis was entirely pragmatic. The monastery could only endure as long as there was money to fund it. When the money ran out, the monastery would collapse and the monks would have to seek their living elsewhere. And even in those cases where a patron could be found to support the monastery out of his or her own *largesse*, idleness was still the enemy of the monastic life, creating a torpor which inhibited spiritual development. Because the Gauls did not understand the true aims of the monastic life, they were not working. Consequently their monasteries did not endure, nor were the monks found in them on the path to spiritual perfection.

Another example Cassian offered concerned anger. The Gauls did not know that one of the goals of the ascetic life was the elimination of anger from the soul.<sup>56</sup> To the contrary, Cassian stated that some people in Gaul were defending the vice of anger. According to these people, it was all right to be angry with a brother because God was also said to be angry with those who did not accept or know Him.<sup>57</sup> This was a fallacious understanding of both the nature of Divine wrath and the spiritual life. The goal of the monk was to allow anger no place in his life. Unfortunately, because the Gauls had misunderstood the spiritual life, and believed that anger was permissible, they cherished it and let it burden their hearts for days.<sup>58</sup> This lack of understanding poisoned the relationships between the monks in community, disrupting and disturbing the fellowship.<sup>59</sup>

Once again, the problem was not necessarily that the Gallic monks became angry with each other, but rather, they did not understand that the goal of the spiritual life was to eliminate

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<sup>54</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.23.

<sup>55</sup>See pg. 184.

<sup>56</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VIII.2-4.

<sup>57</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VIII.2.

<sup>58</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VIII.11.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. Cass.*Coll.* XVI.6.5-8; Cass.*Coll.* XVI.15; Cass.*Coll.* XVI.19.

strife. Anger was not to be excused or rationalized away. Unfortunately, with no experience to guide them, the Gallic monks were in no position to understand these things.

## Cassian's Judgment of the Gauls

Cassian, the ecclesiastical investigator, claimed that he had spent time poking his head into the ascetic nooks and crannies of Gaul. This chapter has detailed his findings. The principal result of his inquiry was the conclusion that in Gaul, everyone was doing what they thought best. Untrained monks were led by untrained abbots down the broad road that led to ruin. Self-professed abbots were starting their own monasteries, rather than entering established foundations as novices. The ascetic foundations of Gaul fostered pride rather than humility, substituted vainglory for obedience and submission. What was to be done about this lamentable state of affairs?

Cassian's recommendation is both clear and nonnegotiable. Gallic asceticism must be standardized around the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. This fundamental premise emerges in the preface to his work where Cassian stated the primary presupposition that would guide his work: nothing found in Gaul could surpass the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>60</sup> Cassian cast himself in the role of an ecclesiastical auditor. He would correct any Gallic practice that was not in accordance with the most ancient constitution of the fathers. Those things that had been added by the whims of inexperienced men were to be rooted out. The unchecked, unregulated overgrowth of Gallic asceticism would be pruned back to a spare shape from which a useful plant could grow. The practices of the Gauls were at variance with the canonical rule, by which Cassian meant the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>61</sup> Cassian's remedy was to extirpate these practices and replace them with the universal and perfect standard (which he would provide).

Nor was there to be a Gallic appeal to the example of their own notable figures. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* were a universal standard, which should not be contradicted even if a few Gallic figures, drawing on the authority conferred by their own virtue, had established their own practices.<sup>62</sup> Every practice that was assumed by one or a few and was not maintained

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<sup>60</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref. 8.

<sup>61</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2.

<sup>62</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2.

universally by all the servants of God, was either superfluous or vain.<sup>63</sup> These practices were condemned, no exceptions or quarter offered.<sup>64</sup> Any Gallic rule deviating from the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, the monastic code rooted in the saints of antiquity, passed on through succession, and currently guarded by the present day fathers, was to be curtailed. Ascetic practices at variance with the universal and ancient monastic code were attributed to the sins of vanity, self-glory, and ostentation.<sup>65</sup>

Cassian's plan for Gaul was not one of gentle emendation of a program already under way. Cassian did not propose to reform existing Gallic practices; he argued for replacement. He offered a blanket condemnation of what he had observed in Gaul. Any practice that failed to conform to the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was to be eliminated. Nor was opposition by the Gallic monks to be taken into account in Cassian's renovation. His position on this was clear: "to these institutes and rules, we ought to give undoubting faith and an obedience that does not require discussion. [This faith and obedience should given] in all respects, not to those [rules] introduced by the will of a few, but to those which can claim great age and which countless numbers of the holy fathers have passed on, by unanimous agreement, to those who followed."<sup>66</sup> The whole-hearted adoption of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was a signal that a monk (or group of monks) had begun to cultivate the fundamental virtue of obedience. Rather than offering allegiance to the ill-informed, idiosyncratic rules foisted on them by untrained men, the Gallic ascetics were supposed to humbly submit to the larger, universal rule. Those who would not submit to this formulation demonstrated that they had yet to make progress in obedience, a virtue that was a certain prerequisite for progress toward spiritual perfection.<sup>67</sup> Since the untrained Gallic monk lacked the spiritual discernment to appreciate the *instituta Aegyptiorum* on their own terms, Cassian stated that a beginning should be made by simply obeying them. Or, as he later has Abba Theonas state in *Collationes*, "even when we have not grasped the reason behind a practice, it will be to our benefit to yield to the authority and

<sup>63</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2.

<sup>64</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2.

<sup>65</sup>As for instance Cassian's claim about dietary practices that varied from the *instituta Aegyptiorum* (Cass.*Inst.* V.23).

<sup>66</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2: *Illis enim debemus institutis ac regulis indubitata[m] fidem, et indiscussam oboedientiam per omnia commodare, non quas paucorum voluntas intulit, sed quas vetustas tantorum temporum, et innumerositas sanctorum Patrum concord[i] definitione in posterum propagavit.*

<sup>67</sup>See the discussion pg. 195.

customs of the ancient fathers, which have endured for so many years; and that which has been handed down from antiquity ought to be kept with unrelenting care and reverence."<sup>68</sup>

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As has been demonstrated in this chapter, Cassian had strong views about what was passing for asceticism in Gaul. He sought to replace the diverse and contradictory practices of the Gallic ascetics with a single unified code that would standardize observance and guide monks onto the road that led to spiritual perfection. In the main this meant placing experience at the heart of the ascetic project. Formation occurs in the context of an experienced community. A postulant is accepted into the monastery and immediately placed in the hands of an experienced teacher. When the initial training under the oversight of the gate keeper was concluded, the monk was transferred to a second teacher who would build on this foundation. An orderly progression was maintained, and no one advanced in the monastery until they had learned to extinguish their own self-centeredness. Humility was to replace pride and self-will; the monk was to place the good of the community over his own needs and desires. This was essential for corporate life, according to Cassian.<sup>69</sup> Self-will needed to be extirpated in order to preserve concord and allow the brothers to function as a body. Moreover, he also attacked the source of the idiosyncratic Gallic customs, the self-professed abbot who dared to lead monks before he had first served as a disciple.

Naturally this agenda places Cassian in a strong position. Who was the man who could tell the ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda how to arrange their monasteries? Who was to serve as the conduit for the *instituta Aegyptiorum*? Clearly John Cassian.

There was however one other problem: Cassian was certainly not the first writer to offer ascetic advice to the Gauls. Even if native Gallic examples were not to be trusted, why could one not simply adopt the writings of a Jerome, Rufinus, or Pachomius to serve as a foundation

<sup>68</sup>Cass.Coll. XXI.12: *Oportet quidem nos auctoritati Patrum, consuetudinique maiorum usque ad nostrum tempus per tantam annorum seriem proelatae, etiam non percepta ratione cedere; eamque, ut antiquitus tradita est, iugi observantia ac reverentia custodire.*

<sup>69</sup>Cass.Inst. IV.8.

for ascetic life? An examination of how Cassian positioned himself in relation to these other writers will be the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### *Experientia vs. Other Builders*

The preceding chapter focused on one of Cassian's strategies for gaining a hearing for *De institutis*: discrediting the practices that passed for native Gallic asceticism. According to Cassian, indigenous practitioners were inexperienced, and this inexperience was responsible for the lack of uniformity that characterized Gallic asceticism. Cassian's solution to this problem was to replace these haphazard practices with a tried and tested code, the code an experienced monk (Cassian) could offer.

There was, however, an obvious objection to be made: why should Cassian be allowed to set the agenda in Gaul? Even if the native Gallic experiments were unreliable, there were other sources available. Why not employ the ascetic writings of Basil, which Rufinus had translated into Latin? Or the *Rule of Pachomius (Regula Pachomi)*, as mediated by Jerome? Why not, in fact, let Jerome, himself a famous 'ascetic,' serve as teacher and guide?

One of the great difficulties of writing history, claimed Livy, was the challenge of making one's work stand out in a crowded field.<sup>1</sup> Five centuries later, Cassian also faced the difficult task of separating his work from the pack. Established and well-known writers — Jerome, Rufinus, and Sulpicius Severus — had produced treatises on the ascetic life; the problem for a newcomer like Cassian was to create the authoritative basis to win an audience for his work. Who, after all, was John Cassian among these luminaries? Why should his advice be allowed to displace the work of other, respected authorities?

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Livy, *Urb. cond.* Pref.3 on the difficulties of placing a work *in tanta scriptorum turba*.

This chapter will examine Cassian's strategies for making his work stand out in a crowded field. The difference between his works and the works of his ascetic competitors, Cassian argued, was that their works relied on eloquence, while Cassian offered the plain, unvarnished truth that was obtained only through experience.<sup>2</sup> He proposed a fundamental polarization of the world of ascetic writers, a division along the line of experience. There were those who knew what they were writing about and those who were merely writing. The works of Cassian's competitors were flawed because they had written about what they had heard, rather than what they had witnessed with their own eyes.

Cassian's preface to *De institutis* stands as a textbook example of how to craft an authoritative voice. Like a good classical historian,<sup>3</sup> Cassian sets out what made him uniquely qualified to offer advice on the ascetic life, while simultaneously undermining the works of his contemporaries. In doing so, he simply followed a rhetorical model that dated back to Aristotle, who counselled writers to "right away introduce both yourself, what sort of person you are so that they may see it, and your opponent. And do so inconspicuously."<sup>4</sup> Cassian followed Aristotle's dictum to the letter; in fact he was so inconspicuous that the combative quality of *De institutis* has gone largely unappreciated. As this chapter will demonstrate, Cassian did consciously introduce both himself and his opponents in the preface to *De institutis*. He employed a common rhetorical device to suggest that his competitors had made up for their lack of experience with eloquence. He, on the other hand could be counted on to deliver the pure truth in a rough, unornamented style. Having laid the foundation for a comparison of his work with his pre-

<sup>2</sup>On the use of rhetoric to denounce the use of rhetoric by other writers see Kennedy (1980), 134. The claim to simplicity is a commonplace among writers of this period (see pg. 3 for a discussion of this device).

<sup>3</sup>And by this I do not mean to suggest that Cassian consciously thought of himself as a historian or that he considered himself to be writing history. What does seem to be the case, however, is that Cassian faced the same problem that a classical historian would face: establishing the authenticity and accuracy of his work over the competing claims of other writers. Consequently, a comparison of Cassian's methods with the tactics employed by historians to win a hearing seems particularly appropriate. Additionally, in certain sections of *De institutis*, Cassian does write history (see pg. 127 for a discussion of Cassian's 'history' of asceticism as a justification for the *institutata Aegyptiorum*). Cassian is a historian of Egyptian asceticism, although his work couples a strong prescriptive element to his description of Egyptian praxis.

On use of history in fifth century writing, see Markus (1975), 1–17 and Liebeschuetz (1993), 151–163.

<sup>4</sup>*Arist. Rh.* III.16. See also Gotoff (1993), 289–313 for an examination of how Cicero used rhetoric to shape audience perception of his own persona. Marincola (1997), 128 suggests that this use of rhetoric was much more common among the Roman historians, where rhetoric was used to balance a shortfall of research.

The preface was the usual place in historical writing for the author to establish his character (Marincola (1997), 133). The audience's perception of the veracity of his account was usually linked to their estimation of his character, and so consequently (and especially in Roman history) the author would attempt to shape that perception with his words (Marincola (1997), 128). On the functions of the preface in Latin writing, see Janson (1964).

decessors, Cassian then began undermining the views of his competitors, a subtle campaign that lasted throughout *De institutis*. A consideration of how Cassian handled his opponents will be the focus of this chapter. While Cassian rarely offered direct criticism of the work of another writer, he did emend and correct his contemporaries, which again (inconspicuously as Aristotle had suggested) served to bolster his own claim of *experientia*.

### *Eloquentia vs. Experientia*

As discussed in the preceding chapter, Cassian used the claim to *experientia* to buttress his right to prescribe an institutional structure for the ascetics of Narbonensis Secunda. There was also a second thread of argumentation that emerged in the opening lines of the preface: asceticism could not be learned apart from the oversight of an experienced teacher, nor could it be learned from “wordy doctrines.”<sup>5</sup> This marked a shift in Cassian’s interest as he moved from the self-taught Gallic ascetic to the works of those who might influence the Gauls.

This attack is framed by two zones of rhetorical self-deprecation. Cassian began by noting that his own unskilled discourse was barely adequate for the task of passing on the lofty teachings of the Desert Fathers.<sup>6</sup> He then compared his own literary ineptitude with the incredible eloquence of his fellow writers,

5 Added to this is the fact that concerning this matter, men both noble in life and distinguished for their speech and knowledge, have already sweated out many minor works: I speak of Saint Basil, Jerome, and some others. The former of these, when questioned by the brothers upon various institutes or questions, responded not only by speaking eloquently, but also with a discourse abounding in the testimonies of the divine Scriptures; the other not only brought forth books which were composed by great labor from his own genius, but also he translated works

<sup>5</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.4: *doctrina verborum*. Cassian illustrated the futility of trying to convey spiritual truths to men who lacked experience with the analogy of attempting to describe the taste of honey to men who had never eaten anything sweet (Cass.*Coll.* XII.13.1). See also Cass.*Coll.* XII.16.3 where Chaeremon states that experience, rather than words, had been his teacher in the battle for chastity, and that while his teaching might earn the derision of the indolent, spiritual (i.e. experienced) men would recognize the truth of his words. Another contrast between vain talk and experience may be found in Cass.*Coll.* XIII.18.1.

<sup>6</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.4.

arranged in the Greek language into eloquent Latin.<sup>7</sup>

Who were Cassian's competitors? A Gallic audience surely would have known the two famous authors Cassian mentions here (Basil of Caesarea and Jerome). A first reading of the text suggests that Cassian had a very positive view of these writers. They are "noble in life," "distinguished for their speech and knowledge," and "eloquent." Their elegant works are then contrasted with the miserable texts Cassian hopes to produce,

6. And after such exuberant rivers of eloquence from these men, not undeservedly could I be reproached for presumption if I had been tempted to produce some dripping moisture of this sort, were it not that this confidence of your sanctity encouraged me and the assurance that either these trifles, whatever their quality, would be acceptable to you or that you might consider commending them to the congregation of brothers sojourning in so new a monastery: who, if by chance something may have been less cautiously expressed by me, may both dutifully read it and endure it with rather kind indulgence, requiring honesty in my discourse rather than the grace of style.<sup>8</sup>

Basil, Jerome and (unnamed) others receive lavish praise for the eloquence of their work. This praise comes sandwiched between two sections of self-deprecation. Yet, the reader must be warned not to take this too seriously. Cassian most certainly is not offering a balanced estimate of his own abilities as a writer, nor is this an expression of proper monastic humility.

In fact, claims to inelegance and a crude writing style are an extremely common literary topos in both classical and patristic writing.<sup>9</sup> Claims of crudeness and ineptness in the preface of a work are a ubiquitous rhetorical set piece.<sup>10</sup> A fine patristic example of this practice may

<sup>7</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5: *Huc accedit, quod super hac re viri et vita nobiles, et sermone scientiaque praeclari, multam iam opuscula desudarunt, sanctum Basilium et Hieronymum dico, aliosque nonnullos. Quorum anterior sciscitantibus fratribus super diversis institutis vel quaestionibus non solum facundo, verum etiam divinarum Scripturarum testimoniis copioso sermone respondit, alius vero non solum suo elucubratos ingenio edidit libros, verum etiam Graeca lingua digestos, in Latinum vertit eloquium.*

<sup>8</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.6: *Post quorum tam exuberantia eloquentiae flumina, possem non immerito praesumptionis notari, si aliquid stillicidii huius inferre temptassem, nisi me haec fiducia tuae sanctitatis animaret et sponsio, quod vel tibi hae nugae forent acceptae qualescumque sunt, vel eas congregationi fratrum in novello tantum monasterio commorantium deputares: qui, si quid a nobis minus forsitan caute prolatum fuerit, et pie relegant, et cum venia indulgentiore sustentent, fidem potius mei sermonis, quam venustatem eloquii requirentes.*

<sup>9</sup>See, for instance, Gr.Nyss.V*Macr.* I; Pall.H.*Laus.* Prol.4; Hier.*Ep.* I.1; Vinc.*Comm.* I.3.

<sup>10</sup>Janson (1964), 120–121; 124.

be found in the preface to Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*. Here the author begs the indulgence of his audience, stating that he feared for his work because he had no practice or training in writing. Moreover, his treatise was bound to be flawed because he lived among the Celts and almost always employed their barbarous dialect.<sup>11</sup> The denigration of one's own writing allowed the author to make a connection between an unornamented style and the truth. By claiming literary clumsiness, the author portrays himself as someone who has nothing to offer to the reader but simple honesty.<sup>12</sup> The eloquent, with their rhetorical tricks, could make falsehoods seem palatable, but the simple writer could only rely on veracity. The connection between simple prose and truth may be found, for instance, in the anonymous account of the life of Emperor Probus in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Here the author notes that in his account of the emperor's life he will not imitate the eloquence of a Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, or Trogus, but rather would follow the example of those who wrote with truthfulness rather than eloquence.<sup>13</sup> The obverse of this sentiment may be found in Dio, who, in the preface to his histories, expresses the hope that although he has employed a beautifully-wrought style, no one would suspect him of untruthfulness.<sup>14</sup>

The connection between an unadorned style and truthfulness was also used by Christian authors to discredit their opponents. Rufinus, for instance, in his *Apologia ad Hieronymum* suggested that while his readers might find his defense written in an uncouth style, they should excuse him because his purpose was not to amuse his audience, but rather to set out the truth.<sup>15</sup> Those who desired eloquence should consult the works of his adversary (Jerome), who was unduly concerned with eloquence. Eloquence was not a concern for the writer who sought only to present the facts.<sup>16</sup>

Irenaeus hewed the same line against the disciples of Valentinus. These writers used clever words to deceive the innocent, adorning their lies with rhetorical finery. The inexperienced were led astray by their eloquence, just as the untrained cannot distinguish between an emerald

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<sup>11</sup>Iren.*Haer.* Pref.3.

<sup>12</sup>Carey discusses this use of rhetoric in his survey of the rhetorical tactics for winning the favor of an audience. He notes: "Simplicity, manifested in inexperience of public speaking and ignorance of law courts offers the promise of unadorned fact." Carey (1994), 37.

<sup>13</sup>SHA.*Probus.* II.7.

<sup>14</sup>Dio.*Hist.* XXXX.

<sup>15</sup>Ruf.*Apol.* I.3.

<sup>16</sup>Ruf.*Apol.* I.3.

and cleverly cut glass, or tell that brass has been mixed with gold. In countering these deceptive lies, Irenaeus pledged that he would offer the simple truth in plain words. Truth required no tricks.<sup>17</sup>

The same suggestion that eloquence was simply a means of masking lies may also be found in the Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*. In the preface to this work, Gregory wrote that Eunomius had arranged his heretical arguments extremely eloquently. Indeed he devoted a couple of chapters to surveying the rhetorical tricks to be found in Eunomius' work, concluding that one could almost hear the rhetor beating the time as the rhythmic lines fell out of his mouth. Despite this eloquence (which only is employed to mask heresy), Gregory opted to follow the Apostle Paul and use truth as the only ornament for his work. "Perhaps for those who do not possess truth," noted Gregory, "it is an advantage to varnish their falsehoods with an attractive style."<sup>18</sup>

Not only was eloquence a mask for untruthfulness, but many eloquent writers were not concerned with truth at all. These authors wrote only to show off their mastery of eloquence.<sup>19</sup> The subject and point of view were immaterial; they wrote only to win praise. This charge was leveled by Salvian of Marseilles in the preface to *De gubernatione Dei*. His work, on the other hand, with its simple style, could be counted on to truthfully argue an important point.<sup>20</sup>

Cassian's praise for the eloquence of his ascetic contemporaries, as well as the denigration of his own abilities, must be located in this established literary convention. When placed alongside the works of authors who use the same arguments against their adversaries, it becomes readily apparent that Cassian's aim was not to praise his predecessors in the preface

<sup>17</sup>Iren.*Haer.* Pref.3.

<sup>18</sup>Gr.Nyss.*Eun.* I.4.

<sup>19</sup>Jerome, for instance, had to defend himself against the charge that his letter written to a Gallic mother and daughter (*Hier.Ep.* CXVII) was nothing more than an exercise in eloquence and a demonstration of Jerome's own rhetorical and declamatory skills (*Hier.Vigil.* III). Although Vigilantius' work has not been preserved, it is certainly possible that Cassian was co-opting a charge that Vigilantius had leveled at Jerome.

On the tensions underlying the conflict between Jerome and Vigilantius, see Van Dam (1985), 73-74, who noted that at this time there was great competition among exegetes for positions, which may explain some of the literary belligerence Jerome directs toward his fellow teachers. Wiesen (1964), 218 locates Jerome's animosity toward Vigilantius in the context of a personal dislike that stimulated intellectual disagreement. Wiesen's attribution of the root of this dislike — to a rebuke administered by Jerome when Vigilantius was caught praying naked during an earthquake — seems unlikely (Wiesen (1964), 219). A more cogent explanation may be that Jerome and his monastery were under interdiction by John of Jerusalem at the time Vigilantius visited (ca 395), which led Vigilantius to leave abruptly. See the reconstruction of events in Stancliffe (1983), 302-303.

<sup>20</sup>Salv.*Gub.* Pref.1-2. Cf. Janson (1964), 157.

to *De institutis*.<sup>21</sup> Cassian was simply employing a common literary topos to cast doubt on the works of his competitors. Cassian the inarticulate is reliable, whereas the works of his competitors are nothing more than eloquence.

Cassian's downplaying of his own literary skill is evident from the opening lines of his preface. Like Irenaeus, he pleads that he lacks the talent to carry out the task that Castor has set for him. He is "an inarticulate man, a pauper in speech and knowledge."<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Cassian is also worried because his "unskilled discourse"<sup>23</sup> might not be up to conveying the deep spiritual truths contained in the teaching of the Egyptian Fathers. Furthermore, in comparison with the *eloquentia* of his fellow ascetic writers, the "exuberant rivers of eloquence," what could Cassian hope to produce except "dripping moisture?"<sup>24</sup>

His *insinuatio* is paralleled by the effort he made to highlight the eloquence of the works of his competitors. Basil's work abounds in citations from the Bible and it is eloquent.<sup>25</sup> Jerome's translations from Greek into Latin are *eloquium*. These men have produced works that are exuberant rivers of eloquence. How could Cassian's artless doggerel, his slow dripping moisture, hope to compete with them?

Cassian employs this rhetorical device to cast doubt on the work of his predecessors. Yes, their works are eloquent, but are they true? Jerome, in particular, is made the target of doubt. He was a particularly eloquent writer, but his ascetic works were drawn from his own *ingenium*. That is, Jerome made them up. His teachings were the product of his fertile mind, rather than the fruit of *experientia*. In fact, this seems to be the point of Cassian's 'praise.' Just as the earlier lines of his preface set the stage for a contrast between his *experientia* and the inexperience that had led to Gallic innovation, Cassian now recycles this theme to discredit his competitors. Cassian the inarticulate (but experienced and by extension truthful) arrays his work against the eloquent, but inexperienced works of his predecessors.

<sup>21</sup>Contra De Vogüé (1985b), 378, who writes, "Cassien y rend hommage à ses prédécesseurs, notamment à Basile et à Jérôme."

<sup>22</sup>Cass.Inst. Pref.3: *me quoque elinguem et pauperem sermone atque scientia.*

<sup>23</sup>Cass.Inst. Pref.5: *inperitior sermo*. This line evokes the similar phrase (*et si inperitus sermone sed non scientia in omnibus autem manifestus sum vobis*) employed by Paul in II Cor. 11.6, where the Apostle is certainly not being modest (cf. Janson (1964), 139).

<sup>24</sup>Cass.Inst. Pref.6. The word Cassian uses, *stillicidium*, is generally used to suggest water that falls drop by drop.

<sup>25</sup>Cass.Inst. Pref.5: *non solum facundo, verum etiam divinarum Scripturarum testimoniis copioso sermone respondit.*

Both Jerome and Basil were essentially self-taught “monks.”<sup>26</sup> Neither had ever served as a novice under the direction of an experienced master. This same criticism could be extended to Sulpicius Severus, whose ascetic “training” seems to have consisted of a handful of visits to see Martin of Tours.<sup>27</sup> It is significant that Sulpicius, while professing admiration for Martin’s monastery, never actually entered it himself. Like Basil and Jerome, he seemed to prefer the life of a leader, founding his own “monastery” at Primuliacum.<sup>28</sup> None of these writers had undertaken a rigorous course of training under an experienced master. Lacking this training, what could they be expected to produce?<sup>29</sup> Writing out of their own *ingenium*, Basil, Jerome, and the others substituted *eloquentia* for *experientia*.<sup>30</sup>

The merit of Cassian’s work was not its uninformed *eloquentia*, but rather its honesty and

<sup>26</sup>See chapter II for Cassian’s views concerning the self-taught abbot.

<sup>27</sup>Sulp.V.Mart. XXV; Sulp.Dial. I.26.

<sup>28</sup>Absolute anathema to Cassian — see Cass.Inst. II.3 and the earlier discussion on pg. 55.

<sup>29</sup>Even the terms that Cassian uses to ‘praise’ the works of his competitors seem backhanded at best; their works are labeled *opuscula*, “little works, treatises, trifles” (Cass.Inst. Pref.5).

It would be possible to make too much of Cassian’s selection of this word to describe the treatises of others. His choice is interesting and has a condescending tone about it but it certainly cannot carry the argument by itself. It is possible that he simply refers to all written works as *opuscula*. It is also significant that he uses the same term to describe *De institutis* in Cass.Inst. Pref.9. Perhaps all monastic treatises are *opuscula*.

On the other hand, it has been observed that Cassian freely engages in self-deprecation in this preface. His use of the term *opusculum* to describe *De institutis* might be nothing more than the continuation of his *insinuat*o. This conjecture is borne out by a look at the other places in his written works where he uses the term. In the second preface of *Collationes*, *De Institutis* and *Collationes* I-X are referred to as *praeteritis nostris opusculis*. In this reference, Cassian is expressing his hope that whatever was obscure in his former treatises might be explained in his second set of *Collationes*. A similar reference closes the second set of *Collationes*, when Cassian apologizes for the ineptitude of his writing, and hopes that those who find good in his *opuscula* will attribute the good to the excellence of the fathers rather than any merit of his own (Cass.Coll. XVII.31). In Book XX, Cassian suggests that his former *opusculum* (*De institutis*) might be so obscure that many would not have heard of or read it (Cass.Coll. XX.1).

Cassian again uses *opusculum* in the context of self-deprecation, when in the preface to *De incarnatione* he writes, *Ego enim ne in illis quidem opusculis, quibus per ingenioli nostri oblatiuncula Domino sacrificavimus, moliri aliquid aut usurpare tentassem, nisi episcopali tractus imperio.* (Cass.De.Inc. Pref.). This reference is matched by the closing chapter of book VII, in which Cassian, although humble, insignificant, and not worthy to stand with the great teachers of the church, nevertheless has shared his grief with the people of Antioch *per opusculorum nostrorum* (Cass.Inc. VII.31).

There does seem to be a close link between literary self-deprecation and Cassian’s use of the term *opusculum*. Indeed, when he is not intent on running down his own reputation, Cassian uses words which are less derogatory to refer to *De institutis* (for example in the first preface of *Collationes*, he describes the work as his *prioribus libris, voluminum. . . duodecim libellis, and superioris operis*).

Consequently, it is likely that his use of *opusculum* in Cass.Inst. Pref.9 is nothing more than *insinuat*o. Moreover, by repeatedly using the word in self-deprecatory contexts, Cassian signals that the word is to be understood in a negative sense. He is an inarticulate man and the reader should only expect an *opusculum* from his pen. But what does the word mean when applied to those who are eloquent and noble of life like Jerome and Basil? The contrast between Basil and Jerome’s *eloquentia* and the limited achievement implied by *opuscula* does seem intentional.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Gr.Nyss.V.Macr. I.17–20 who after claiming literary ineptitude, justified his right to tell his sister’s story because he, unlike others, would not rely on hearsay about Macrina. Personal experience had been his teacher. For Gregory’s presentation of Macrina, see Cardman (2001), 36. See Miles (1995), 9–10 for the argument that firsthand knowledge of a subject was the ideal for a classical historian.

fidelity to the truth. This judgment is substantiated by the statement that closes paragraph 6: Castor can expect to find truth in Cassian's work, rather than the charm of eloquence.<sup>31</sup> By implication, the works of his predecessors were long on eloquence, but, lacking experience, had fallen short of the mark. Cassian's competitors had employed eloquence to paper over a lack of experience and knowledge. Cassian would use this rhetorical contrast between truth and eloquence again in *Collationes*, where he had Abba Nesteros caution his listeners not to rush into teaching the ascetic life, inspired by the example of those who through their eloquence were able to persuade their readers that they had something worth offering.<sup>32</sup> Experience, not eloquence, gave substance to teaching.

The idea that Cassian was making a subtle attack on his competitors, highlighting their use of eloquence to compensate for a lack of truthfulness and experience, is confirmed by a line in paragraph 7 of his preface. As treatises suitable for monastic training, the works of his predecessors were tainted by a fatal flaw. Cassian competitors had "attempted to describe things that they heard rather than what they experienced."<sup>33</sup> Again Cassian plays on the contrast between himself, the experienced monk, and those who lacked experience. He downplays the value of their works by noting that although what he will deliver lacks eloquence, it will prove a strong drink for "those who are, in truth, thirsting."<sup>34</sup> There would be no thirsty monks in Gaul if his predecessors had written useful guidelines. Since they have not (and how could they have, Cassian implies, as they have no direct experiential knowledge of these matters), Cassian the inarticulate will step into the breach and sate the thirst of his Gallic audience.

Moreover, Cassian would make it a point not to concern himself with an "account of the miracles and wonders of God."<sup>35</sup> This was not because Cassian had no knowledge of such things, he hurried to assure his readers, but rather because his predecessors, by displaying an inordinate interest in miraculous feats had failed to confine their narratives to those things which contributed to the spiritual formation of a monk.<sup>36</sup> The purpose of the work that Cassian proposed was not to entertain his readers, but rather to provide a serious plan for spiritual

<sup>31</sup> *Cass.Inst. Pref.6: fidem potius mei sermonis, quam venustatem eloqui requirentes.*

<sup>32</sup> *Cass.Coll. XIV.9.7.*

<sup>33</sup> *Cass.Inst. Pref.7: utpote qui audita potius quam experta describere temptaverunt.*

<sup>34</sup> *Cass.Inst. Pref.7: in veritate sitientibus.*

<sup>35</sup> *Cass.Inst. Pref.7: Nec plane mirabilium Dei signorumque narrationem studebo contexere.*

<sup>36</sup> *Cass.Inst. Pref.7.*

growth. By implication, Cassian's predecessors had missed the mark by spending too much time on miracle stories. Once again this was a mark of inexperience, a sign that the writer had nothing substantial to offer.

As has been demonstrated, the points elaborated in Cassian's preface should not be understood as a case of monastic humility, or awe at what his predecessors (Basil, Jerome, and others) had already produced. In fact, when examined in the light of a long-standing rhetorical tradition, it becomes evident that Cassian was actually doing nothing more than employing standard literary devices to cast doubt on his predecessors. Cassian's claim to a lack of literary ability promises the unvarnished truth. His 'praise' for the eloquence of his competitors is intended to suggest that they had little that was truthful to offer to their readers. Beneath the rhetoric was a reworking of his claim to experience. Although Cassian characterized himself as an inarticulate old man who had forgotten much, his readers should not forget that he had been to the desert. He had been trained by the Egyptian Desert Fathers. His work rested solidly on the rock of *experientia*. Eloquent words that lacked the foundation of *experientia* were without value. In Cassian's opinion, the works of his predecessors fell short because *they attempted to describe things that they heard about rather than what they experienced.*

## The Competition

Having established that Cassian used his preface to challenge the works of his predecessors, this chapter will now turn to an examination of the rest of *De institutis* in order to see how Cassian continued to handle his fellow ascetic writers. As the discussion of the preface has suggested, Cassian preferred an elliptical attack on the work of his fellow writers to direct confrontation.<sup>37</sup> He does not challenge any of his 'competitors' directly, but rather offers a program of subtle correction.<sup>38</sup> Much of what he writes could be misread as praise and ap-

<sup>37</sup>See McGuckin (1988), 119-124 who notes a parallel situation in Lactantius' handling of Cyprian, namely damning Cyprian's copious output with faint praise and making denigratory allusions to those works that would have resonated with a Late Antique Christian audience.

<sup>38</sup>Walbank (1962), 1 noted that it was extremely common for ancient historians to forego naming their predecessors, even when attacking or contradicting their works. One reason he suggests for this (and one that seems quite likely in the case of Cassian) was the desire to avoid referring a reader to another work, especially if there was a danger that the reader would then learn how much the historian had actually borrowed from the work of his predecessor (5). Cassian borrowed quite extensively from Basil, Rufinus, and Jerome, while simultaneously appearing to challenge their experiential basis for making ascetic recommendations. Cassian's sources for *De institutis* I-IV

probation. He offers bouquets of flowers to the eloquence of his fellow writers, but on closer examination these prove to have been composed of tansy ragwort and gorse. For a modern reader, many years removed from fifth-century Gaul, the process of separating accolade from antagonism can be a difficult proposition.<sup>39</sup> It does seem likely, however, that a fifth-century audience would have been more attuned to Cassian's allusions and appreciated his rhetorical deftness. In this respect Cassian's method bears a strong resemblance to his predecessor Sulpicius Severus, whose *Dialogi* stand as a masterful exercise in mocking the views and persona of a well-known figure (Jerome) while appearing to praise him.<sup>40</sup>

It would be a mistake to confuse Cassian's subtle approach with approval. The modern reader must always try to locate Cassian's 'praise' in a larger historical context, sifting his words carefully to see if they ring true. An excellent illustration of Cassian's subtlety may be found in *Collationes* X. This book, which concerns prayer, opens with a vignette on that "foolish heresy," anthropomorphism.<sup>41</sup> Underlying Cassian's discussion is the controversy over the teachings of Origen which split the church at the end of the fourth century.<sup>42</sup>

Cassian and his contemporary Palladius found themselves on the losing side of this controversy. Significantly, both writers continued to fight for the Origenistic cause long after the principal battle had cooled. Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* is an extended treatment of Palladius' sojourn in Egypt which portrayed Origenism as the monastic norm.<sup>43</sup> Cassian, as has

are detailed in the complete and well-argued study of de Vogtlé (1985b).

Rousseau (1978), 235 wonders if Cassian was cautious in his attacks on others simply because he had an Origenistic past to live down. One would think that if distancing himself from questionable theology was Cassian's aim, then the mass importation of Origenistic/Evagrian theology found in *De institutis* and *Collationes* were less than obvious ways to achieve this goal.

<sup>39</sup>See the similar conclusion about the works of Sidonius offered in Harries (1994), 11.

<sup>40</sup>I have argued for this interpretation of *Dialogi* in my "The Hound of the Heretics: Jerome as a Literary Figure in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*" (Currently Unpublished).

<sup>41</sup>*Cass. Coll. X.2: contra ineptam quoque Anthropomorphitarum haeresim*. And here I find myself in disagreement with those who believed that Cassian avoided controversy and polemic (see for instance Stewart (1998), 28). Cassian's portrayal of the anthropomorphic view as heretical seems to risk much.

<sup>42</sup>See Brown (1972a), 210; Clark (1992), 11-42 offers an excellent overview of the Origenist controversy.

<sup>43</sup>My "Hunting Monks: Forced Ordination in Early Monastic Sources" (also unpublished), examines Palladius' rewriting of monastic history from a pro-Origen standpoint in his *Historia Lausiaca*. One of the arguments developed in this paper is the notion that Palladius writes a version of history that features (and portrays as normative) prominent (known) Origenistic monks. These include those who were persecuted by Theophilus and driven out of the desert.

Cassian also will write in glowing terms about Origenistic monks. One example is his mention of the most Holy Isidore, priest of the community of Scetis before Paphnutius (*Cass. Coll. XVIII.15.3*). The precise identification of this Isidore is uncertain (Palladius mentions three Isidores in the *Historia Lausiaca*), but he is probably to be identified with the 'great' Isidore, priest of Scetis mentioned in *Pall. Dial. XIX.9-11*. Cassian shows some sympathy with Palladius' agenda by offering similar praise of the priest. This is also reflected in his offering the names of

long been recognized, offered an ascetic system that rested squarely on the Origenistic formulation of his master Evagrius.<sup>44</sup> Where the two men differed was the subtlety with which they handled their subjects. Palladius did not seem capable of writing Bishop Theophilus' name without invective (Theophilus was "like a dog that bites you when you are off your guard;"<sup>45</sup> he arrived in Constantinople "like a beetle loaded with dung... emitting a sweet scent to cover his stinking jealousy").<sup>46</sup>

Cassian, in the one instance he mentioned the bishop, handled Theophilus in an entirely different manner. In *Collationes* X, he shaped Theophilus' role in the Anthropomorphic controversy so that the bishop became the leading exponent of the Origenistic cause. This was accomplished by only telling part of the story. In Cassian's version of the story, the bishop sent a solemn festal letter to all the churches in Egypt, which not only countered the foolish heresy of anthropomorphism, but destroyed it with elegant arguments.<sup>47</sup> Theophilus carried the standard for Origen in this story; his enlightened views were opposed by the rustic and demon-possessed monks, but those who saw clearly supported their bishop and eventually (Cassian implies) prevailed over ignorance. Cassian only told part of the story. He neglected to mention that Theophilus had abruptly switched from being a supporter of Origen the theologian, to one of Origen's most passionate adversaries, eventually driving all of the pro-Origen monks out of the Egyptian desert.

Cassian's use of Theophilus works three ways here: those who knew what happened in the Egyptian desert<sup>48</sup> and supported the Anthropomorphic campaign would be discomfited by a reminder of the Bishop's *volte-face*; those who supported the Origenists would have been amused by the views Cassian attributed to Theophilus, and possibly greatly satisfied by the knowledge that Theophilus' scurrilous conduct was again under scrutiny; and those who knew nothing of the controversy (if such a reader could be found) might have been persuaded that Anthropomorphism was a vile heresy of the uninformed — after all, that was the position of the

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Moses, Paphnutius, and the two Macarii as examples of those who had achieved perfection in both coenobitic and anchoritic living (Cass. *Coll.* XIX.9.1).

<sup>44</sup>The work of Marsili (1935), *passim*, offers the most complete exposition of this dependence.

<sup>45</sup>Pall. *Dial.* VI, trans. H. Moore.

<sup>46</sup>Pall. *Dial.* VIII, trans. H. Moore.

<sup>47</sup>Cass. *Coll.* X.2.

<sup>48</sup>One would imagine that this would include most of Cassian's readers.

noted bishop of Alexandria. Cassian's story concluded with the Origenist monks triumphing over the rustic Coptic monks, a resolution that does not square with other accounts of the event, but does serve to support a larger, pro-Origen agenda.

As this story suggests, Cassian's treatment of his opponents could be daring and crafty. He was not above misrepresenting an opponent's view to make his own argument. In the case of Theophilus, this certainly could not be attributed to ignorance, but rather a deft handling of the opposition. The modern reader must be cautioned against taking anything he writes at face value.<sup>49</sup>

The following question will serve as the basis for the rest of this chapter: what was Cassian's position on his fellow ascetic writers? As has already been noted, Cassian was aware that he was participating in a debate for the hearts and minds of Gallic ascetics. Having concluded an examination of how he played the card of *experientia* to strengthen his claim on authority; the following sections will consider how Cassian positions himself with respect to the other authors who would have been known to his Gallic audience.

### Jerome

One of the loudest voices in the ascetic debate of the late fourth and early fifth-centuries belonged to Hieronymus Stridonensis.<sup>50</sup> Jerome's relentless self-promotion of himself as a master of the ascetic life created a body of work that endures to this day.<sup>51</sup> As has been noted by Steven Driver, Jerome had disseminated a version of asceticism centered on an heroic asceticism, a version that Cassian implicitly and subtly corrected.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Laird (1995), 150–1, sees this account as context for Sarapion's transition to imageless (i.e. higher) contemplative prayer.

<sup>50</sup>For Jerome's connections to the ascetic brotherhood of southern Gaul, see Hunt (1992).

<sup>51</sup>There is something incredibly ironic (in view of the evidence I will offer in the following section about Cassian's opposition to Jerome) about the fact that on the dust jacket of the most recent English translation of Cassian's *Collationes* (ACW 57) there is a picture of Jerome, entitled 'Saint Jerome in his Study' which was taken from an illustration in the Bible of Borso d'Este. One wonders what Cassian would think to see his nemesis decorating the cover of his book.

On Jerome's self-promotion and crafting of a literary persona, see Vessey (1993), 135–145 who concludes that Jerome tried to portray himself as a new Origen in his correspondence, a venture that ran into shoal water when the Origenist controversy broke out. See also Rebenich (1997) for an examination of the role of patronage in Jerome's success as an ascetic writer.

<sup>52</sup>See Driver (1997), 308 who contrasts Jerome's version of the heroic ascetic life with the more balanced description proposed by Cassian.

Cassian certainly had good reasons to despise Jerome on a personal level.<sup>53</sup> Jerome had been one of the more vocal supporters of Bishop Theophilus in his purge of Origenistic monks from Nitria, and the eventual deposition of Bishop Chrysostom in Constantinople. The monks who had been Cassian's teachers in the desert were scorched by Jerome's vitriol. In an account of his journey to Egypt with Paula, he noted the presence of 'vipers' among the Nitrian monks, and in his *Epistle CXXXIII* to Ctesiphon, Jerome claimed that many of the expelled Nitrian monks (Ammonius, Eusebius, Euthymius, Evagrius, Or, and Isidore) were those who gave bitter wormwood to children in cups smeared with sweet honey.<sup>54</sup> Indeed Cassian's master Evagrius preached a doctrine of *apatheia*, which, according to Jerome, would lead to a monk's mind turning into a god or a rock.<sup>55</sup> Cassian may have been among those monks who were led from the Egyptian desert by the Four Tall Brothers,<sup>56</sup> and he was certainly on hand for the tragic aftermath which saw John Chrysostom driven from his bishopric in Constantinople. His strong identification with the anti-Theophilus party is cemented by his presence in the delegation sent to Rome to appeal for Innocent's support against the bishop of Alexandria.<sup>57</sup>

Cassian would indeed have to possess great charity if he did not feel some of the anger that drove his contemporary Palladius to defame Jerome. Again it is instructive to compare Cassian's method with that of Palladius. Palladius attacked Jerome twice in the *Historia Lausiaca*. In one story, Jerome is said to be a great scholar, but his evil temper had eclipsed the good of his other gifts. His envy was so corrosive that no monk would live near him, and the

<sup>53</sup>And perhaps more personal than even documented in the following text. The 'accepted' biography of Cassian has him leaving his monastery in Bethlehem before Jerome arrived with Paula (after 386). Frank (1997), 428-429 disputes the traditional view that Cassian did not know Jerome in Bethlehem and cites the usual reasons given ("that Cassian devotes friendly words to the later bitter enemy of Origen, that he fails to criticize Jerome, and above all was so little influenced by his writings") as unconvincing. Unfortunately, Frank offers no positive evidence for an earlier association between Jerome and Cassian, although the possibility that Cassian had first served under Jerome and learned the folly of his version of asceticism firsthand is extremely interesting. Moreover, it would explain some of Cassian's contempt for the institutes of the Palestinians (see pg. 144).

One of the points that will be demonstrated in this section is that contrary to Chadwick's claim that there is "no extant evidence [which] shows Cassian's opinion of Jerome," (Chadwick (1950), 11), ample evidence for enmity toward Jerome can be found in *De Institutis*.

<sup>54</sup>Hier.Ep. CXXXIII.3. Evagrius was also listed in a chain of heresiarchs that led to Pelagius in the preface to Book IV of his commentary on Jeremiah.

<sup>55</sup>Hier.Ep. CXXXIII.3.

<sup>56</sup>The traditional view has been that Cassian was among the party of exiled monks led out of the desert by Ammonius the one-eared monk and his brothers (but see the caution advanced by Stewart (1998), 12). Chadwick suggests that Cassian's departure from Egypt was connected with the Anthropomorphite controversy, but doubts if Cassian traveled with the Four Tall Brothers (Chadwick (1968), 36).

<sup>57</sup>Pall.Dial. III.

monk Posidonius prophesied that Paula would die before Jerome so that she would be released from the burden of Jerome's temper.<sup>58</sup> At a later point in his work, Palladius returned to the subject of Paula and stated that while she was a distinguished lady, she had been held back from reaching her full spiritual potential by Jerome's jealousy.<sup>59</sup> Palladius disparages Jerome, offering a backhanded praise of his work, but then suggesting that the man was so poisoned by envy and jealousy that he was a blight on the lives of all those around him.

Cassian's attack on Jerome foreshadowed his later handling of Theophilus. His direct references to Jerome seem complimentary. Jerome is praised for his erudition — he has brought forth numerous works from his own *ingenium*, and has translated many Greek works into eloquent Latin.<sup>60</sup> Yet, as was suggested above, there are good reasons not to take this 'praise' literally. Cassian's veneer of good masks two potent attacks on Jerome.

The first attack may be an allusion to one of Jerome's controversial works. In his preface, Cassian states that Jerome had written *elucubratos*, that is, he had composed his works by lamplight.<sup>61</sup> One of the most famous parallels to this statement could be found in Jerome's *Contra Vigilantium*, a tract Jerome claimed to have dashed off in a single evening.<sup>62</sup> Jerome's intent in drawing the attention of the reader to his brisk productivity seems to have been to suggest both the unworthiness of his opponent, as well as to produce awe at his ability to produce a polished work in such a short time.

Cassian's reference to Jerome's work by lamplight can be taken two ways. It could be nothing more than a sly allusion intended to provoke a chuckle in his readers, or it could be a reminder of Jerome's long history of meddling in Gallic affairs. Gaul had been the recipient of many Hieronymic assaults.<sup>63</sup> Jerome's derogatory remarks about Gallic bishops in *Contra Vigilantium* may have engendered hostility among Jerome's Gallic readers. Indeed, a Gallic view is expressed in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*, when Gallus states that "He [Jerome] is, in

<sup>58</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* XXXVI.6.

<sup>59</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* XLI.2. Jerome, for his part, was aware of Palladius' antipathy, and referred to him as "a villainous slave" (Hier.*Pelag.* Prol.2).

<sup>60</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5.

<sup>61</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5: *vero non solum suo elucubratos ingenio edidit libros.*

<sup>62</sup>Hier.*Vigil.* XVII: *unius noctis lucubratione dictavi.*

<sup>63</sup>For accounts of Jerome's influence on Gallic monasticism see Driver (1997), 298–309. Clark (1992), 11–42 has documented the proliferation and dissemination of Jerome's anti-Origen works to a wide audience. Rousseau (1978), 120–122 documents Jerome's growing interest in Gaul.

truth, only too well-known to us: for five years earlier, I read a certain book of that man, in which our entire nation of monks was vehemently harassed and cut to pieces by him.”<sup>64</sup> Later, in the same work, after Postumianus has recited a litany of the failings of the Gallic clergy, Gallus claims that Postumianus had not left much more for Hieronymus to say in a future tract.<sup>65</sup> These examples suggest a certain level of resentment in Gaul over Jerome’s self-appointed role as the conscience and corrector of the Gallic church. It may not be too far-fetched to find Cassian playing on that resentment, reminding his readers of past attacks.

The second attack is on the value of Jerome’s experience. Cassian claims that Jerome had produced his works from his own *ingenium*.<sup>66</sup> This is not complimentary in the context of the contrast that Cassian had drawn between eloquence and experience. In fact, what Cassian was actually suggesting was that Jerome made up his ascetic teaching. His writings were eloquent, but they lacked an experiential foundation. Jerome’s ascetic works were the product of his own fertile mind. Like a Gallic abbot, Jerome had fabricated his own version of the ascetic life. Cassian casts a shadow of doubt over Jerome’s work by suggesting that Jerome’s inexperience made these works unreliable.

In retrospect, this would appear to be a very fruitful line for Cassian to employ. Despite a sustained literary attempt to promote himself as the East’s leading authority on the monastic life, Jerome surely lacked the thing Cassian asserted was essential for a monk: experience. Jerome’s monastic “training” in the Syrian desert consisted of no more than two or three years,<sup>67</sup> and it was a very strange form of asceticism at that.<sup>68</sup> Jerome’s “monastic cell” housed his library as well as copyists. He seemed to spend much of his time reading his books, requesting books from his acquaintances, or improving his language skills.<sup>69</sup> Letters flowed in and out of his cell, carried by his dutiful friend Evagrius;<sup>70</sup> those correspondents who delayed

<sup>64</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* 1.8: *Nobis vero, Gallus inquit, nimium nimiumque compertus est: nam ante hoc quinquennium quemdam illius libellum legi, in quo tota nostrorum natio monachorum ab eo vehementissime vexatur et carpitur.*

<sup>65</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* 1.21.

<sup>66</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5.

<sup>67</sup>See Kelly (1975), 48. Scourfield (1993), 3 only allows Jerome ‘a year or so’ in the desert. Now see Rebenich (1997), 362–364 for the extremely likely view that Jerome’s ‘Syrian desert’ was on an estate owned by his patron, Evagrius, located approximately 30 miles from Antioch.

<sup>68</sup>Kelly (1975), 48 notes “For all the reality and severity of his mortifications, his self-imposed seclusion must have had some highly unusual features.”

<sup>69</sup>Kelly (1975), 49. Kelly believes Jerome improved his Greek, possibly learned some Syriac, and began his study of Hebrew (50).

<sup>70</sup>Hier.*Ep.* VII.1.

or wrote brief responses to Jerome were soundly chastised.<sup>71</sup> Jerome's letters, although repeatedly trumpeting the fact that he had withdrawn from intercourse with the world, seem designed to ensure that the world did not forget him. Jerome's vigor in letter writing and self-promotion receives its antithesis in Cassian's story of a monk, who upon receiving a bundle of letters from family and friends, burned the letters fearing that news from the world would distract him from the cultivation of perfection.<sup>72</sup>

One is left with the impression that Jerome's monastic experiment was closer to a Syrian version of *otium* than an attempt to cut himself off from the world in order to acquire monastic knowledge through intense study and sweat under the direction of an experienced teacher. After abandoning his Syrian "cell," Jerome portrayed himself as an ascetic master, first among the Roman ladies, and later at the "monastery" he founded in Bethlehem. Nevertheless, despite his sustained championing of the ascetic life, he showed no inclination to prolong the one contact he had with the Egyptian Desert Fathers which occurred during the visit he made to Egypt with Paula. Nor did he seek training among them, although he grudgingly admitted that Paula would have liked to remain.<sup>73</sup> It is quite possible that Cassian had Jerome in mind, when he has Abba Piamun speak against those men who come from Palestine to make tours of the Egyptian monasteries.<sup>74</sup> These ascetic sightseers had no interest in learning the monastic life, but came only to meet celebrated ascetics. Characterized by obstinate, stubborn minds, they refused to learn anything nor did they stay long in Egypt.<sup>75</sup> Naturally, this describes Jerome's visit perfectly, and significantly comes in a description of the three types of monks (which probably represents a correction of Jerome's version of the three categories of monks laid out in his *Epistle XXII.34*).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Hier.*Ep.* VII.2; Hier.*Ep.* VIII.1; Hier.*Ep.* IX.

<sup>72</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.32. See pg. 178 for an extended discussion of this passage.

<sup>73</sup>A description of Paula's enthusiasm for Egyptian monasticism can be found in Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.14. Likewise, his sourness (perhaps at being eclipsed in Paula's affections by the desert monks (Kelly (1975), 127)) comes through in his *Apologia ad Rufinum*, in which he justified his lack of enthusiasm for remaining among the Egyptians by claiming that Nitria had been awash with Origenistic vipers (Hier.*Apol.Ruf.* III.22).

<sup>74</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.2. Cf. Driver (1997), 313.

<sup>75</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.2.

<sup>76</sup>Jerome states that the three types of monks found in Egypt are the coenobites, anchorites, and those who are called the *Remnuoth*. This inferior and despised group of monks are the chief sort found in Jerome's home province. They live in groups of two and three following their own made up rules (Hier.*Ep.* XXII.43).

According to Cassian, there are three types of monks in Egypt: the coenobites, anchorites, and those who are called in the Egyptian language, the Sarabaites (Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.4.2; Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.7.2). The Sarabaites are by far the largest type of monks in the provinces outside of Egypt (Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.7.8). Moreover, they live in

Whether or not Jerome is the target of *Collationes* XVIII.2, it is unlikely that Cassian would have been overawed by Jerome's training.<sup>77</sup> In stating that Jerome's works were the product of his *ingenium*, Cassian effectively highlighted the source of Jerome's teaching. Jerome's ascetic writings flowed out of his own cleverness; they certainly were not the product of training under an experienced monk, the absolute prerequisite for one who would be qualified to speak or write on the subject.<sup>78</sup>

Cassian's approach to the problem of Jerome was to correct the errors that had cropped up because of Jerome's inexperience. Cassian never directly attacks Jerome (as does Palladius), but rather he undermined him before the same audience that Jerome had once enthralled with his tales of Egyptian asceticism. He relies on subtle allusion and implicit correction in order to promote his (accurate) version of asceticism over the version that had been offered by Jerome. An example of this approach may be found in *De institutis* I.1. Here Cassian explicitly corrects the account of the origins of the monastic life that Jerome had offered in his *Vita Pauli*. In this fable, written either while Jerome was still experimenting with the monastic life in Syria (ca. 375-376) or shortly thereafter in Antioch,<sup>79</sup> Paulus was promoted as the originator of the eremitic life. Jerome wrote, "Among many it is often wondered, by which of the monks was the desert first inhabited? Certain people, looking back too far, suppose the beginning was made by the blessed Elijah and John. Of course Elijah is considered by us to have been more than a monk, and John, began to prophesy before he was born."<sup>80</sup> Jerome goes on to note that other people favored Antony as the progenitor of the anchoritic life. These people were also misled,

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groups of two and three, following their own rules (*Cass. Coll.* XVIII.7.4).

The verbal parallels between these two texts make it almost certain that Cassian is modifying Jerome's account. What seems significant here is that he hints that Jerome does not know what he is talking about by offering the 'correct' name for the third type of monk.

Moreover, Jerome's categorization of the types of monks is further compromised by the fact that there are actually four (not three) types of monks (*Cass. Coll.* XVIII.8.1-2).

<sup>77</sup>Precedent for an attack on Jerome's lack of training may be found in *Ruf. Apol.* II.12. Here Rufinus responded to Jerome's claim that unlike *some people* (which Rufinus interprets as an attack), Jerome had not been his own teacher. Rufinus states that to the contrary, he had actually spent six years learning from Didymus of Alexandria (as opposed to Jerome's 30 days), and then two more years with the Desert Fathers (Serapion, the two Macarii, Isidore, and Pambo), men whom Jerome did not even know by sight. The only teaching Jerome had received came from the Jews and Porphyry who taught Jerome to revile Christians.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Driver (1997), 312.

<sup>79</sup>Kelly (1975), 60.

<sup>80</sup>*Hier. V. Paul.* Pref. 1: *Inter multos saepe dubitatum est, a quo potissimum monachorum eremus habitari coepta sit. Quidam enim altius repentes, a beato Elia et Joanne sumpserunt principium: quorum et Elias plus nobis videtur fuisse, quam monachus: et Joannes ante prophetare coepisse, quam natus sit.*

for as Jerome proposed to illustrate, it was his hero, Paulus, who actually had inaugurated the anchoritic life.

As Kelly noted, the *Vita Pauli* was one of Jerome's most popular works, translated shortly after its publication into six different Greek versions, as well as versions in Coptic, Syriac, and Ethiopic.<sup>81</sup> Its circulation in Gaul is substantiated by a reference to it in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*.<sup>82</sup> Evidence for Cassian's familiarity with the book may be adduced from two references to Jerome's hero in *Collationes*. Cassian states that the system of coenobitism which had been established by the Apostles endured right up to the time of Paul and Antony.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Paul and Antony were given credit as the originators of the anchoritic life.<sup>84</sup>

In Jerome's account of the origins of monasticism, three points of view are offered to answer the question, who was the first monk in the desert? Certain people (according to Jerome) considered Elijah and John to have been the first monks.<sup>85</sup> There is no indication who these certain people might be. Possibly they may have been the Syrian monks Jerome had met in the desert, or more likely, this point of view was fabricated by Jerome as a rhetorical device, an easy argument to demolish. The evidence points to this latter view. Immediately after his claim that some people believed this, Jerome immediately refuted it: these people were obviously wrong because Elijah was more than a monk, as was John, who prophesied before his birth.<sup>86</sup> There is nothing to this argument in Jerome's opinion; he advances it only as a rhetorical straw man. Next Jerome offers the opinion in common circulation at that time, that Antony was the first monk in the desert. This view had been put forward by the *Vita Antonii*.<sup>87</sup> It was a view that Jerome attempted to correct with his *Vita Pauli*.<sup>88</sup> In his version, it was Paulus, not Antony who had been the first ascetic in the desert.

<sup>81</sup>Kelly (1975), 60.

<sup>82</sup>Sulpicius has Postumianus claim to have visited Paul's cell in the desert (*Sulp.Dial.* I.17).

<sup>83</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>84</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVIII.6.

<sup>85</sup>And I am using Jerome's word, *monachus* here. He does not distinguish between the coenobite and the anchorite in his discussion.

<sup>86</sup>A reference to John leaping in Elizabeth's womb when the pregnant Mary came to visit her (Luke I.44).

<sup>87</sup>This document has been traditionally ascribed to Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, but now see Barnes (1986), 353-368 for the argument that the *vita* was first composed by an unknown Coptic monk and later translated into Greek by an Alexandrian editor.

<sup>88</sup>Driver (1995), 50. Jerome's motivation for writing the work are uncertain, although in part he may have wanted to achieve the same sort of reputation that Athanasius had earned by writing *Vita Antonii*. Jerome may have sought to bolster his own standing by proffering his own ascetic exemplar. See Rousseau (1978), 133; 135.

In *De institutis* I.1, Cassian counters Jerome's foundation myth. First he returns Elijah and John to the genealogy of Egyptian monasticism. Although he does not assert that Elijah was a monk, he does claim that the prophet laid down the earliest beginnings of the way of life. In describing Elijah's role, he uses the verb *fundo*, which expresses the idea of laying a foundation for a building or a keel for a ship. Elijah established the foundation of the monastic life, a base that supported the teaching of subsequent generations. Additionally, Elijah prefigured the monks. Where Jerome had dismissed Elijah and John as non-monastic, Cassian placed them at the root of the ancestral tree. Secondly, Cassian disagreed with Jerome's claim that Paulus was the original monk. According to his exposition in both *De Institutis* and *Collationes*, the coenobitic life was actually the earliest form of monasticism. Originating with the apostles,<sup>89</sup> it endured until the time of Paulus and Antony.<sup>90</sup> The coenobites, not Paulus, were the first monks in the desert.

It is interesting to note that while Cassian pairs Antony with Paulus, he does not endorse Jerome's creation.<sup>91</sup> An element of disbelief on Cassian's part is suggested by the way he justifies Paulus' place in his account of the beginning of the anchoritic profession. In *Collationes*, writing about Paulus, Cassian noted "the former of whom (Paulus) is said to have entered the desert out of necessity, while he was avoiding the plots of his neighbors during the time of persecution."<sup>92</sup> Two things are striking about this statement. The first is that unlike Antony, whose place in monastic history required no substantiation, Cassian felt a need to add this biographical note about Paulus. Nor does he simply assert that Paulus had entered the desert. He qualifies the statement with the passive form of *dico* (*dicatur*). The sense conveyed by Cassian's statement is not one of certainty; "*it is said that Paulus...*" The claim for the priority of Paulus has been advanced, but is certainly was not an unquestionable fact. Cassian's phrase raised the specter of doubt — he does not endorse Jerome's myth of Paulus.

The second point is the nature of his qualification. Antony, as Cassian's readers would

<sup>89</sup>Cass. *Inst.* II.5; Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>90</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>91</sup>The question of whether Paulus was a real person or a figment of Jerome's imagination was a real issue, as is suggested by Jerome's defense of the *Vita Pauli* in his second biography, the *Vita Hilarionis*. Chadwick offers the following judicious conclusion: "There appears to be no good reason for doubting that an early hermit named Paul existed. There appears to be every reason for supposing that Jerome knew nothing about him" (Chadwick (1968), 5).

<sup>92</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.6.

have known, had turned his back on a modest inheritance.<sup>93</sup> He had picked up his cross and followed Christ out of his own volition. In Cassian's words, Antony and Paulus "entered the desert out of a desire for loftier progress and divine contemplation."<sup>94</sup> However, having offered this accolade to Jerome's hero, Cassian immediately qualifies it with an 'although' (*licet*). For unlike Antony, as Cassian points out, the former (Paulus) was said to have fled persecution out of necessity. Antony sought perfection out of his own free choice, turning his back on a life of comfort. Paulus was driven by circumstance into an ascetic life — he was hiding from persecution. What makes this interesting is that Cassian had implied that necessity was not a valid reason for becoming an ascetic.<sup>95</sup> It was the taunt that monks were said to use in order to discourage those who waited outside the gates of the Egyptian monasteries. In *De institutis* IV.3, Cassian stated that those who hoped to enter the coenobium were forced to remain outside its gates for ten days. While they waited, the brothers would pass by and heap derision upon them, claiming that they have sought entrance into the monastery not out of religious conviction, but necessity.<sup>96</sup> The pinnacle of abuse is the idea that the postulants were forced to take refuge in a monastery because they had exhausted their secular options.

The same sentiment is repeated in a later story about Abba Pinufius. When Pinufius (in order to strengthen his great humility) entered a Pachomian monastery as a postulant, Cassian noted that the brothers heaped scorn upon him,

At last he was admitted with great contempt, because he was clearly a decrepit old man. Having lived all of his own life, he expected to enter the monastery now that he was no longer able to gratify his own pleasures. They said that he sought to enter the monastery not for any religious reason, but from the constriction of hunger and by the necessity of poverty.<sup>97</sup>

Cassian's comment about Paulus should be located in this context. Whereas the great ascetic

<sup>93</sup> Ath. V. Anton. I–III.

<sup>94</sup> Cass. Coll. XVIII.6: *sed desiderio sublimioris profectus contemplationisque divinae.*

<sup>95</sup> Although he would amend this position in Cass. Coll. III.4.4 to suggest that a monk could advance to spiritual perfection even from an unpromising beginning like necessity.

<sup>96</sup> Cass. Inst. IV.3: *non religionis, sed necessitatis obtentu monasterium optet intrare.*

<sup>97</sup> Cass. Inst. IV.30: *Cumque multo despectu tandem fuisset admissus, quod scilicet decrepitis senex et qui omnem suam pervixisset aetatem ingredi coenobium postularet, quo tempore iam ne deservire quidem suis voluptatibus praevaleret, ac ne hoc ipsum quidem causa religionis expetere eum adsererent, sed famis et inopiae necessitate constrictum.*

heroes went into the desert in order to seek God, Paulus was driven into the desert to avoid death. He did not remain to suffer persecution as so many martyrs had, but sought concealment out of necessity. Yet necessity, as Cassian makes abundantly clear in *De institutis* is an ignoble motivation for entering the ascetic life. It is a basis for insults and derision, not something to be praised. Significantly, it is this point that Cassian chooses to relate about Jerome's monastic progenitor, Paulus.

Cassian also knew and reacted against one of Jerome's most widely read works, his *Epistola XXII ad Eustochium*. This letter, written in 384, was intended to offer direction in the ascetic life for Paula's daughter (and undoubtedly a much wider audience).<sup>98</sup> The letter offers, in the words of one commentator, "a complete account of his opinions on asceticism at that stage of his life."<sup>99</sup> This ascetic vision was circulated widely, as the letter's readership spread well beyond its addressee. Indeed, penetration of Jerome's remarks into Gaul is suggested by a reference to the letter in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*.<sup>100</sup>

A discussion of the practices and customs of the Egyptian monks lay at the heart of Jerome's letter.<sup>101</sup> Jerome offered his 'expert' account of how the Egyptians conducted their lives, a singularly interesting discussion as, before 384, Jerome had never been to Egypt. Surely this entire passage reflects a triumph of *ingenium* over *experientia*. Jerome poses as an experienced ascetic, passing on the wisdom of the desert, but at best he can only have received this information secondhand.

Cassian, on the other hand, was in a much better position to comment on the practices of the Egyptians. Consequently in *De institutis* I-IV there are subtle emendations of the description Jerome had offered of Egyptian life.<sup>102</sup> This practice begins with Cassian's earliest chapters of Book I, his description of the monastic garb.<sup>103</sup> In *De institutis* I.3 Cassian offered a discussion

<sup>98</sup>See Scourfield (1993), 13–15 for a discussion of how Jerome wrote certain letters (and Scourfield cites *Ep. XXII* among his examples) with an eye on a wider audience than simply the addressee. On the amazing circulation of some of these letters see Conybeare (2000), 41–46.

<sup>99</sup>Rousseau (1978), 108.

<sup>100</sup>Galic readers of the *Epistola* are suggested by Gallus' remarks concerning the 'gluttony of the Gauls' in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi* (*Sulp. Dial.* I.8).

<sup>101</sup>*Hier. Ep.* XXII.33–37.

<sup>102</sup>The emendation of Jerome's categorization of the types of monks was discussed above (see n. 76).

<sup>103</sup>The subject that Cassian treats in Book I of *De institutis* — the monastic garb — has always seemed an odd place to begin an exposition of the monastic life. Certain modern commentators have wondered whether Cassian really intended his audience to wear the garb he stipulates. Chadwick, for instance, noted that an able monastic legislator "would not have confused his readers by these irrelevant details" (Chadwick (1950), 60–61). Cassian's

of the monastic hood, the *cucullus*. Whereas his master Evagrius had emphasized the hood as a symbol of humility, Cassian chose to focus on it as a sign that the monk had returned to a state of infancy in Christ.<sup>104</sup> Cassian wrote,

For in fact, by day and night they use very small hoods which drop to the boundary of the neck and shoulder, which hide only their heads, so that they might be continually reminded to keep the innocence and simplicity of children by the imitation of the garment itself. Who, having reverted to an infancy of Christ, at all hours with feeling and virtue they sing: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor are my eyes lifted up."<sup>105</sup>

Cassian's emphasis on the childlike nature of the Egyptians can be read as a deliberate refutation of the comments Jerome made in *Epistola XXII*. Here, reviling the ascetic "pretense" of certain Roman women, Jerome wrote, "There are others who put on sack cloth and having fashioned hoods (*cucullis*), so that they might be carried back to their infancy, resemble night owls and horned owls."<sup>106</sup> Jerome equated the wearing of the *cucullus* with childishness, and further derided it as a deplorable example of false asceticism.

Jerome's comments should not be considered a carefully deliberated position on the role purpose in writing the chapters was "because he delighted in allegorical interpretations." To the contrary, the more fundamental issue here is that these chapters on dress allow Cassian to highlight his *experientia*. Cassian knows what monks wear because he has lived among them. This thought is suggested by the opening line of Chapter 10: "These things have been written so that no one will think we have omitted anything from the dress of the Egyptians" (*Cass.Inst.* I.10). Cassian can treat the monastic garb in some detail because he is familiar with it, and this familiarity is made evident for his readers. It could be argued that Cassian's decision to begin *De institutis* with clothing was merely an imitation of his master, Evagrius. Evagrius' *Epistola ad Anatolium* seems to have provided a schematic framework for the order of Cassian's presentation of clothing (de Vogüé (1985b), 381–403; Guy (1965), 36–55), and in later manuscripts was attached as a preface to Evagrius' *Praktikos* (Bamberger (1981), 12, n.1).

This would not explain Cassian's decision to begin with dress however. It is my view that in addition to the advantages of providing a display of *experientia*, Cassian has schematized his presentation of monastic life to proceed from the external (dress, prayer, rules for communal living) to the internal (the eight principal vices). Dress, being the most external thing, and that which is a visible sign of separation from the world, thereby becomes the logical starting point.

<sup>104</sup>Contra de Vogüé (1985b), 390, I believe that Cassian made a deliberate choice not to follow Evagrius, and rather developed the theme of *infantiam Christi* in response to Jerome.

<sup>105</sup>*Cass.Inst.* I.4: *Cucullis namque perparvis usque ad cervicis umerorumque demissis confinia, qui tantum capita contegant, indesinenter diebus utuntur ac noctibus, scilicet ut innocentiam et simplicitatem parvulorum iugiter custodire etiam imitatione ipsius velaminis commoneantur. Qui reversi ad infantiam Christi cunctis horis cum affectu ac virtute decantant: Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum, neque elati sunt oculi mei.*

<sup>106</sup>Hier.*Ep.* XXII.27: *Sunt, quae ciliciis vestiuntur et cucullis fabrefactis, ut ad infantiam redeant, imitantur noctuas et bubones.*

of the *cucullus* in monastic dress.<sup>107</sup> Jerome simply targeted an obvious facet of the women's clothing and made a snide remark about it. Nevertheless, the widespread dissemination of this letter ensured that his comment on the *cucullus* reached a large audience. Those who might have missed the original remark were granted a reprise when Rufinus quoted this passage as an illustration of the slanders Jerome had placed in *Epistola XXII*.<sup>108</sup> In Rufinus' opinion, this notorious letter had given the enemies of Christianity ample ammunition for their attack. Indeed, "all the pagans and enemies of God, apostates and persecutors, and whoever else hated the Christian name, were struggling with one another to copy it, because everywhere in that book (through his loathsome attacks) he defamed the class of Christians, every grade, every profession, as well as the entire church."<sup>109</sup>

With Jerome's well-publicized comment in the background of a Gallic reader's mind, Cassian's comments on the *cucullus* take on a second level of meaning. Although Cassian had been following Evagrius' description of the spiritual significance of the monastic garb,<sup>110</sup> he deviated here in order to take issue with Jerome. Not only *do* the Egyptian monks wear the *cucullus*, but they wear it because they want to be reminded of the laudable simplicity and innocence of children. The state that Jerome condemns is the blessed infancy commended by Christ. The *reversi ad infantiam*, scorned by the ill-informed, was the goal of the true monk, the mark of their profession. Cassian's comments would suggest two things to his Gallic readers: A.) that Jerome did not know much about Egyptian monastic dress; and B.) he did not understand the motivations and goals of the ascetic life. In other words, Jerome lacked *experientia*.

A similar sort of correction may be found in Cassian's description of monastic footwear,

Rejecting shoes as having been forbidden by evangelical precept, they protect their feet with sandals only when the weakness of their bodies or the morning cold of winter, or the burning heat of midday requires it, explaining that the use of them

<sup>107</sup>He has nothing negative to say about the *cucullus* in his later works which mention it as an item of dress. Jerome's ascetic hero Hilarion wears a *cucullus* (*Hier.V.Hil.* XLVII), and it is mentioned as a component of the dress of the Pachomian monks (*Hier.Reg.Pach.* Pref.4; *Hier.Reg.Pach.* XXXVIII).

<sup>108</sup>*Ruf.Apol.* II.5.

<sup>109</sup>*Ruf.Apol.* II.5. *omnes Pagani et inimici Dei, apostatae et persecutores, et quicumque sunt, qui Christianum nomen odio habent, certatim sibi describebant—pro eo, quod omnem ibi: Christianorum ordinem, omnem gradum, omnem professionem, universamque pariter foedissimis exprobrationibus infamavit Ecclesiam.*

<sup>110</sup>As found in *Evag.Anat.* I.

has been sanctioned by the Lord's permission, inasmuch as if we are not able in this world to be settled free from the care and solicitude for our flesh, nor are we strong enough to be thoroughly released from it, at least we may arrange for the needs of our bodies with as little preoccupation and as shallow an entanglement [with the world as possible], and we should not allow the feet of our soul, which ought always to be ready to set out on the spiritual race and to announce the peace of the Gospel — with which, "after the fragrance of the perfume"<sup>111</sup> of Christ we run, and concerning which David said: "I have run in thirst,"<sup>112</sup> and Jeremiah: "I have not worked following you"<sup>113</sup> — to be entangled in the deadly cares of this world, meditating on those things, which do not pertain to the satisfaction of natural needs, but to superfluous and harmful pleasure. We will thus satisfy it if, following the Apostle, we have not taken care of the flesh with respect to its desires.<sup>114</sup> Although they use these things lawfully, as sandals have been permitted by a mandate of the Lord, by no means do they permit them to stick to their feet when they approach to celebrate or to take the sacred mysteries, as they believe that ought to kept following the letter, which was spoken to Moses or to Joshua, son of Nun: "Loosen the lace of your shoe: for the place upon which you stand is holy ground."<sup>115</sup>

In his *Epistola XXII*, Jerome had supported a convoluted argument for the priority of virginity with the following lines,

<sup>111</sup>Cant. I.3.

<sup>112</sup>Ps. LXI.5.

<sup>113</sup>Jer. XVII.16.

<sup>114</sup>Rom. XIII.14.

<sup>115</sup>Cass.Inst. I.9: *Calciamenta vero velut interdicta evangelico praecepto recusantes, cum infirmitas corporis, vel matutinus hiemis rigor, seu meridiani aestus fervor exegerit, tantummodo gallicis suos muniunt pedes: hoc interpretantes usu earum vel Dominica permissione signari, ut si in hoc mundo constituti cura et sollicitudine carnis huius omnimodis exuti esse non possumus, nec ab ea penitus praevalemus absolui, saltim occupatione levi et implicatione tenui necessitatem corporis explicemus, neve animae nostrae pedes, qui expediti ad spiritualem cursum, et praedicandam Evangelii pacem semper esse debent parati — quibus post odorem unguentorum Christi currimus, et de quibus David: Cucurri, inquit, in siti et Hieremias: Ego autem non laboravi te sequens — morticinis huius saeculi curis patiamur involvi, de his scilicet cogitantes, quae non ad supplendam necessitatem naturae, sed ad superfluum noxiamque pertinent voluptatem. Quod ita inplebimus, si secundum Apostolum carnis curam non fecerimus in desideriis. Quibus tamen gallicis quamquam licito utantur, utpote Domini mandato concessis, nequaquam tamen pedibus eas inhaerere permittunt, cum accedunt ad celebranda, seu percipienda sacrosancta mysteria, illud aestimantes etiam secundum litteram custodiri debere, quod dicitur ad Moysen, vel ad Hiesum filium Nave: Solve corrigiam calciamenti tui: locus enim in quo stas, terra sancta est (Ex. III.5, Jos. V.16).*

Moses and Joshua were told to strip their feet bare before standing on holy ground. When the disciples were selected to preach the gospel, they were not to be burdened with sandals (*calciamentorum*) or shoe laces; when the soldiers were casted lots for a share of Jesus' clothing, he did not have sandals (*caligas*) which they could carry away. For the Lord would not possess what he had forbidden to his servants.<sup>116</sup>

There are some obvious points of contact between Jerome's *Epistola* and Cassian's chapter on monastic footwear. Both offer interpretations of the three passages from the Gospels, as well as the passage where Moses stands before the burning bush.<sup>117</sup> In the New Testament, a distinction is made between the sandals allowed in Mark VI.9 (the *ὑποδεδεμένους σανδάλια*)<sup>118</sup> and the *ὑποδήματα* forbidden in both Matthew X.10 and Luke X.4.<sup>119</sup> Jerome has missed the subtle distinction between the *calciamentum* and the *caligas*.<sup>120</sup> He also offers a fallacious argument from silence: since sandals were not listed among Christ's clothing, he must not have worn them.<sup>121</sup>

Cassian's discussion of monastic footwear is a correction of Jerome's flawed exegesis.<sup>122</sup> *Calciamentia* had been forbidden by evangelical precept,<sup>123</sup> but the *σανδάλια*, which he translated with the diminutive form of *galliculae*, were permitted by the mandate of the Lord.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, rather than being an argument for going about barefoot (as Jerome advocates), Moses and Joshua prove that sandals could be worn. This use is carefully qualified by the observation that like Moses, the monks always removed their sandals in the presence of the holy. Consequently, Cassian's monks would never permit their sandals "to stick to their feet" when approaching the numinous. By this practice, Cassian's Egyptians demonstrated a correct (as opposed to Jerome's flawed) understanding of the passage cited from Exodus. Moreover,

<sup>116</sup>Hier.Ep. XXII.19.

<sup>117</sup>Ex. III.5.

<sup>118</sup>Translated as *calciates sandaliis* in the Vulgate.

<sup>119</sup>Translated as *calciamentia* in the Vulgate.

<sup>120</sup>Guy (1965), 48 prefers the word *gallicis* in his critical edition of Cassian's text, although, as he makes clear in the apparatus, three major manuscripts (including the 9th century *Sessorianus 66*) have the reading *caligas*.

<sup>121</sup>Although an equally valid counter-argument would have been John the Baptist's claim that he was not worthy to untie Christ's *calciamentia* (Matt. III.11; Luke III.16).

<sup>122</sup>For examples of Jerome doing much the same thing to Ambrose, see Adkin (2001), 5–14.

<sup>123</sup>Cass.Inst. I.9: *Calciamenta vero velut interdicta evangelico praecepto recusantes.*

<sup>124</sup>Cass.Inst. I.9: *Quibus tamen gallicis quamquam licito utantur, utpote Domini mandato concessis.*

Cassian not only highlights the fact that the most famous exegete of his day had offered a mistaken interpretation of a passage, but he also implies that Jerome did not know that the Egyptians wore *galliculae*.<sup>125</sup>

This program of correction continued as Cassian moved beyond clothing. Jerome had stated that the coenobites "lived separately, in adjoining cells."<sup>126</sup> The reality of the situation, according to Cassian, was that the monks lived either alone, or "with at most one other, who will be united for fellowship in work or discipleship for the instruction of discipline, or certainly one who a similarity of virtues has made a companion, or again, [a companion who] celebrates with more eagerness the same duty of prayer as their own sacrifice)."<sup>127</sup>

Despite the fact that Jerome's coenobites lived alone, he stated that they did enjoy a daily period of pious fraternization. "Until the hour of None, this is what has been established: no monk may visit another except for those deans of whom we spoke. . . [after dinner they return to their cells and] there they talk with each other until the hour of Vespers."<sup>128</sup> This intercourse was anathema in Cassian's formulation. The Egyptian coenobites absolutely did not enter into conversation with one another, no matter how pious the talk

And so, when the psalms have ended and the daily gathering has been released, as we related above, none of them even dares to stop for a little or to converse with another; nor does he even presume to leave his cell during the whole space of the day or to abandon the work which he is accustomed to practice in it, unless by chance they have been called to a duty of urgent work.<sup>129</sup>

Even extraordinary work was performed in absolute silence, "each man repeating from mem-

<sup>125</sup>There may also be a connection here to the Priscillianist heresy. The followers of Priscillian were said to have gone barefoot in the winter in a literal observance of Matt. X.10. Chadwick (1985), 15 n. 60 notes that the Council of Saragossa (380) condemned this behaviour. Augustine also wrote against it in *Aug.Haer.* LXVIII.

<sup>126</sup>*Hier.Ep.* XXII.35: *manent separati, sed iunctis cellulis.*

<sup>127</sup>*Cass.Inst.* II.12: *unusquisque ad suam recurrens cellulam quam aut solus, aut cum alio tantum inhabitare permittitur, quem scilicet societas operationis, vel discipulatus, et disciplinae imbutio copulavit, vel certe quem similitudo virtutum comparem fecit, idem rursus orationum officium velut peculiare sacrificium studiosius celebrant.*

<sup>128</sup>*Hier.Ep.* XXII: *Usque ad horam nonan quasi iustitium est: nemo pergit ad alium exceptis his, quos decanos diximus. . . ibi usque ad vesperam cum suis unusquisque loquitur.*

<sup>129</sup>*Cass.Inst.* II.15: *Finitis itaque psalmis, et cotidiana congregatione, sicut superius memoravimus, absoluta, nullus eorum vel ad modicum subsistere, aut sermocinari audeat cum altero: sed ne per quidem totum diei spatium cellam suam progredi, aut deserere opus quod in ea solitus est exercere, praesumit, nisi forte cum fuerint ad officium necessarii cuiusque operis evocati.*

ory a psalm or a certain scripture, [so that ] he might not share any opportunity or time for guilty conspiracies or depraved purposes, not even for idle discussions, as the service of the heart and mouth are equally occupied in ceaseless spiritual meditation.”<sup>130</sup> Failure to maintain this silence or to solicit the company of other monks resulted in a stern punishment, the suspension from prayer.<sup>131</sup> Jerome’s monks may have been allowed to gather together for gossip, but among the ‘true’ Egyptian monks, this sort of discourse was banned.

These examples have suggested that Cassian was aware of Jerome’s more famous ascetic works, and though he never explicitly derides them, he did offer deliberate corrections to the version of Egyptian coenobitism Jerome had placed in them.<sup>132</sup> Jerome had promoted himself as an authority on Egyptian practices; Cassian challenged that authority. Jerome composed works out of his own *ingenium*, writing about what he had heard rather than experienced. Cassian’s corrections noted above suggest an attempt to discredit the ‘great’ ascetic authority. Cassian contrasts his *experientia* with Jerome’s *ingenium* and implicitly asks his readers whom they will trust.

### Pachomius

Another source of competition for Cassian in the West was the collection of rules attributed to the Egyptian monk Pachomius. This legislation was the fullest expression of a plan for coenobitic organization to be found in its day. By the death of its founder (ca. 346), the Pachomian federation contained nine monasteries,<sup>133</sup> and may have ordered the lives of as many as 5,000 monks.<sup>134</sup> It was the most successful coenobitic system of its time, and it is not

<sup>130</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.15: *sed sic unusquisque opus exsequitur iniunctum, ut psalmum vel scripturam quamlibet memoriter recensendo, non solum conspirationi noxiae, vel consiliis pravis, sed nec otiosis quidem conloquiis, ullam copiam vel tempus impertiat, oris pariter et cordis officio in meditatione spirituali iugiter occupato.*

<sup>131</sup>Outlined in Cass.*Inst.* II.15–16.

<sup>132</sup>Another possible point of contact might be found in Jerome’s letter to a young Gallic ascetic named Rusticus (Hier.*Ep.* CXXV). In this letter Jerome advocated moderate fasts, but justified them by stating that the reason was physical — fasts carried to excess weakened the stomach and promoted indigestion. Cass.*Inst.* V.9 stated that harsh fasts often led to compensating gluttonous excesses, which undermined the practice.

Jerome also said that it was permissible for Rusticus to see his mother (Hier.*Ep.* CXXV.7). Cassian, to the contrary, would forbid this act, requiring a monk to sever all ties to his family, a point that is explored further on pg. 173.

<sup>133</sup>Listed in Dunn (2000), 26.

<sup>134</sup>Palladius claimed that there were 7,000 monks in the Pachomian federation (Pall.*H.Laus.* XXXII.8); The anonymous author of the *Historia monachorum* claims 3,000 monks for Ammon’s foundation in the Thebaid (Hist.*mon.* III). Cassian asserts that the federation contains 5,000 monks (Cass.*Inst.* IV.1).

surprising that Pachomius is often considered the father of coenobitism.<sup>135</sup>

The *Regula Pachomii* reached the West through the good offices of Jerome. He translated the rules into Latin from a Greek version in 404.<sup>136</sup> The Greek copies which formed the basis of Jerome's translation were allegedly supplied by a priest named Silvanus. Jerome stated that he had been asked to make the Latin translation on behalf of some brothers in the Pachomian monastery of Metanoia who could not read Greek.<sup>137</sup> The provenance of Jerome's Greek manuscripts is disputed, and some modern scholars question whether they represented a genuine Pachomian tradition at all.<sup>138</sup> In addition to Jerome's translation of the Rule, it is possible that another rule based on Pachomius' legislation, the *Regula Orientalis*, may have been available in Gaul during the early part of the fifth century.<sup>139</sup>

In *De institutis* IV.1, Cassian made a point of telling his readers that some of the rules he was going to offer for the organization of the coenobia would be drawn from the rules used to guide the Pachomian monasteries. The Pachomian monastery in the Thebaid was "the largest of all, just as the rigor of its rules is the strictest of all, since in it, more than 5,000 of the brothers are ruled by one abbot, and so great is their obedience, that all of the number of monks are constantly subject to their elder, [rendering] an obedience that no one among us is able to offer to one, or to obey for even a short time, or to order [from others]."<sup>140</sup>

Cassian's claim to knowledge about the Pachomian monks raises some interesting questions. Chief among these is the issue of how he came by this knowledge. A number of studies have attempted to reach a conclusion about the source of Cassian's knowledge about Pacho-

<sup>135</sup>Although, as Chadwick (1968), 55 notes (quite rightly) Pachomius was not the *inventor* of coenobitism, as other coenobitic communities were present in the East during his life time. Nor, as Rousseau notes, should we take claims in Pachomian literature that Pachomius had created something that was unknown when Antony went to the desert too seriously as these declarations were certainly untrue (Rousseau (1997), 242). O'Neill (1989), 273-4 provides a list of references in Pachomian legislation which refer to other monks, which he believes points to parallel coenobitic organizations.

<sup>136</sup>Veilleux (1981b), 9; Rousseau (1985), 48.

<sup>137</sup>Hier.*Reg.Pach.* Pref.1. Jerome may be relating an accurate account of his reasons for translating these rules, although it should be noted that Rufinus had recently finished translating the *Regula Basili* (AD 397), and there is always the possibility that the ever-competitive Jerome might have been responding to Rufinus' work with one of his own.

<sup>138</sup>See Rousseau (1985), 38; 49 who is dubious about the prospect of separating the original Pachomian rules from the accretions built up in the 58 years between Pachomius' death and Jerome's translation.

<sup>139</sup>Chadwick (1968), 56; Rousseau (1985), 183.

<sup>140</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.1: *quorum in Thebaide est coenobium, quantum numero populosius cunctis, tanto conversationis rigore districtius, siquidem in eo plus quam quinque millia fratrum ab uno regantur abbate, tantaque sit oboedientia hic tam prolixus numerus monachorum omni aevo seniori suo subditus, quanta non potest apud nos unus uni vel obedire pro modico tempore vel praeesse.*

mian monasticism.<sup>141</sup> The resolution of this question is not germane to this study, whose interest is not how much Cassian did or did not know about Pachomius, but rather, how he positions his *instituta* with respect to the Pachomian legislation that was available to his Gallic audience. The important point, irregardless of whether Cassian actually drew his account of Pachomian legislation from Jerome's translation, is the fact that Cassian claimed to know the rules which guided the Pachomian monks. Once again he lays claim to *experientia*, pointing to the fact that unlike other ascetic advisors in the West, he was well-acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the Pachomian rules. In fact, he knows these strictures so well, that he can state with certainty that no one in the West would be able to bear up under the rigor of that system.<sup>142</sup> Cassian characterized Pachomian monasticism as a system of unremitting severity. This point is first made at the beginning of *De institutis* Book IV, where he noted that the Pachomian system was so difficult that "no one among us (the Gauls)" would be able to aspire to that standard.<sup>143</sup> Cassian restated this point in *De institutis* IV.2 and IV.11. The Pachomian system was so rigorous, according to Cassian, that he could not recall anyone from our monasteries (again, presumably the Gallic monasteries) having been able to keep the discipline for a full year.<sup>144</sup> This sentiment was repeated when Cassian commented on their food: the Pachomian monks considered it a great delicacy to feed on "a bundle of salted herbs called 'labsanion'"<sup>145</sup> that had been steeped in water.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, wrote Cassian, "we shall pass over these things in silence which climate and weak constitutions would not permit in Gaul."<sup>147</sup>

Once again Cassian gives with one hand while simultaneously taking away with the other; as he praises the ascetic rigor of the Pachomian monks, he repeatedly states that the system is nevertheless unsuitable for a Gallic audience. It may work well in Egypt, producing long-

<sup>141</sup>For the most recent negative appraisal of Cassian's firsthand experience of Egyptian monasticism, see Dunn (2000), 74, who suggests that Cassian's knowledge of Pachomian (and indeed all Eastern communal) monasticism may have been gained by "cobbling together information from a variety of written sources which could be read in the West and which he probably used when founding his own communities in southern Gaul." This opinion would certainly be in step with the view offered by Frank (1997), 431, who sees Cassian as being a visitor to the Egyptian desert rather than a long term resident there.

<sup>142</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.2.

<sup>143</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.1.

<sup>144</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.2: *tanta namque est, quantam neminem in monasteriis nostris ingressum ne anno quidem integro tenuisse meminimus.*

<sup>145</sup>A transliteration of the Greek word *λαψάνη*, which is the herb called 'charlock,' *Brassica arvensis*.

<sup>146</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.11: *si herba sale condita, quam labsanion vocant.*

<sup>147</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.11.

suffering monks, but Cassian would not recommend it for the Gauls. Cassian's message concerning the *Regula Pachomii* is unambivalent: it will not work in Gaul — do not use it.

When Cassian began to discuss the institutes of the Tabennesiotes, he drew a distinction between the Pachomian monks and the Egyptian fathers who had been the 'source' for his work up to the beginning of Book IV. In Book IV, according to Cassian, certain rules of the Egyptians were to be mixed with rules from the Pachomians.<sup>148</sup> Why does Cassian distinguish between the Egyptian Desert Fathers and Pachomius' followers? Were not the Pachomian monks also Egyptians?

One possibility, which supports the argument developed to this point, is that the Pachomian system was unsuitable for the Gallic monks, while the *instituta Aegyptiorum* (as mediated by Cassian) was the orthodox formulation that the Gauls should follow. The versions of the *Regula Pachomii* extant in Gaul should be ignored, while Cassian's *instituta Aegyptiorum* deserved complete allegiance. Secondly, there was the question of the nature of the monks produced by each system. Cassian does praise the humility and perseverance of the Pachomians,<sup>149</sup> but a later story seems to relativize these accomplishments when compared to the example of a true Egyptian Abba. This emerges in *De Institutis* IV.30, where Cassian tells the story of Abba Pinufius' great humility.<sup>150</sup>

Pinufius, the famous abbot, spent three years as a despised old man in a Pachomian monastery in order to cultivate humility. His sojourn there came to end when one of the monks from his old monastery visited and recognized the Abba. He threw himself at Pinufius' feet, an act that the Pachomians did not understand because Pinufius was only a novice and one who had only recently come out of the world. After they were told his name, however, they begged forgiveness for their earlier ignorance, for they had considered him to be no better than a child.<sup>151</sup>

Cassian's point was not very subtle. The Pachomians do not compare with Abba Pinufius, a true Egyptian Abba. He exceeded them in humility, enduring three years of ill-treatment, assigned to duties that they felt were beneath them. He was also capable of greater effort than

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<sup>148</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.1.

<sup>149</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.2.

<sup>150</sup>This story was recounted earlier (see pg. 59).

<sup>151</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.30.

the Pachomians; he rose in the night to perform additional work in secret. And finally, for all their rigor, not a single monk among them possessed enough spiritual discernment to see that Pinufius was more than a wicked old man fleeing the world.<sup>152</sup> This last point is subtly strengthened by the story which followed in the next chapter: Pinufius fled again and went to Bethlehem where he met Cassian and Germanus. Both of these young monks recognized his great qualities, and consequently choose to seek him out after he had returned to Egypt.<sup>153</sup> Cassian and Germanus quickly discerned the superior qualities that had gone unnoticed in the Pachomian monastery after three years of close association.

Cassian's presentation of the Pachomian system emphasized its unsuitability for Gallic monks, and implies that it is unlikely to produce the same quality of monk as the Egyptian system. For all its commendable rigor, it still fell short of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.

### Basil and Rufinus

The relationship between Cassian and Basil (as mediated by Rufinus) is not as straightforward as Cassian's relationship with Jerome.<sup>154</sup> In 397, after his return to Italy, Rufinus had abridged and combined Basil's *Longer* and *Shorter Rules* to form a single work, *Regula Basilii*.<sup>155</sup> The purpose of this work, was to provide an account of Basil's *instituta* for western monks, who lacked definitive legislation to guide their lives.<sup>156</sup> Cassian's familiarity with this work can be

<sup>152</sup>Cassian liked this story so much that he told it again in *Cass. Coll.* XX.1 (although now see Chadwick's warning that the story may have been copied from *De institutis* into *Collationes* by a later editor (Chadwick (1968), 48–49). This story is very similar to the one told by Palladius about Abba Macarius, who hearing about the superior way of life kept by the Pachomians, goes to Pachomius' foundation at Tabennesi to test them. After convincing Pachomius to let him in, Macarius begins his ascesis, fasting for 40 days in a corner, until the other monks beg Pachomius to drive Macarius out because they are jealous of his abilities. Macarius' identity is revealed to Pachomius, who thanks the Abba for coming and chastising his followers so that they will not be arrogant, then sends him on his way (*Pall. Hist. Laus.* XVIII.12–16). In both stories, the superiority of an Egyptian Abba to the Pachomian monks presents itself as a theme. But as was noted in my earlier discussion of the treatment of Bishop Theophilus, Palladius and Cassian differ in degrees of subtlety. Palladius' point is obvious to all readers: the Pachomian monks cannot endure the ascesis of a desert father. Cassian makes the same point with greater subtlety: the Pachomian monks were stupefied when it was revealed that the man they had treated so poorly for so long was a famous desert father. It was Pinufius' humility, not his ascesis that proved a marvel. Palladius emphasizes the external, while Cassian promotes an inner, deeper virtue.

<sup>153</sup>*Cass. Inst.* IV.31–32.

<sup>154</sup>On Basil, see Rousseau (1994). Rufinus is not as well served, but a lucid and useful account of his later life may be found in Hammond (1977).

<sup>155</sup>Rufinus used 213 of the 313 rules found in the two works (Clarke (1925), 29).

<sup>156</sup>*Ruf. Reg. Bas.* Pref.11. A translation of this preface may be found on pg. 120, which considers the similarities between Cassian and Rufinus in their use of the term *instituta*.

deduced from the verbal parallels between the two works,<sup>157</sup> Cassian's appropriation of Basil's ideas and biblical proof texts, and Cassian's allusion to Basil's work.<sup>158</sup> Judging by the extent of his borrowings, Cassian certainly would seem to approve of Basil's legislation. In addition to this, Cassian must have had more sympathy for Rufinus than he did for Jerome; moreover, Basil had been an important, influential bishop.

But this does raise an obvious problem. If Cassian approved of Basil's monastic legislation, why would he write his own version? Why not simply direct Castor to Rufinus' extant translation? One possible explanation is that Cassian did not wholeheartedly approve of Rufinus' *Regula Basili*. Cassian seems to have felt that his ascetic work was not an appropriate basis for the ascetic life. Of course this idea must be held in tension with the observation that had Cassian simply responded to Castor by telling him to use the *Regula Basili* for his monks, he would have had no reason to write *De institutis*. In other words, Cassian can only promote his own unique status as a monastic legislator by implying that there is something wrong with the works of his contemporaries. Implicit in his failure to endorse Basil's *Regula*, (even though he borrows heavily from it) is the notion that there is something wrong with this text as a basis for monastic life. It is not as evident as it was in the case of Jerome and Pachomius, however, why Cassian might have taken exception to Basil's work.

Cassian groups Basil and Jerome together as eloquent writers. As has already been noted, this was not intended to be complimentary. These eloquent writers lacked experience; they had written about what they had heard rather than what they had experienced. This objection holds true in Basil's case. Like Jerome, Basil had not undertaken any significant period of monastic training. After his education in Athens, Basil had followed his hero Eustathius of Sebaste to Egypt. What he found in Egypt evidently did not appeal to his sensibilities,<sup>159</sup> for after a short sojourn, he returned to his family estates at Annisi in order to withdraw from the secular world. Rousseau has quite rightly cited this experiment as closer to the philosopher's ideal of *otium* than the asceticism of Egypt.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>157</sup>See de Vogüé (1985b), 378; 380.

<sup>158</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.5.

<sup>159</sup>Or perhaps more accurately, what Basil did not find in Egypt, as he seemed to be trying to find Eustathius, who had preceded him (see Rousseau (1994), 73).

<sup>160</sup>Rousseau (1994), 70-76.

The brief sojourn in Egypt, his contact with Eustathius of Sebaste, and the retreat at Annisi would be the basis for Basil's 'monastic qualifications.' It would not be surprising if Cassian, who had stressed the need for a long discipleship under the guidance of an experienced master, had been dubious of these credentials. Basil was, like Jerome, a self-educated ascetic, an entity that Cassian strongly opposed.

There are two other direct references to Basil in *De institutis*. In both instances the Bishop is quoted to support Cassian's arguments.<sup>161</sup> Neither of these points reflect unfavorably on Basil. There is, however, a reference to the Cappadocian monks in Book IV that could be construed as criticism. This occurs in Cassian's discussion of the monastic practice of listening in silence to spiritual reading while eating.<sup>162</sup> The custom, according to Cassian, originated with the Cappadocian monks, not the Egyptians. The practice had been established not as a spiritual discipline, but rather because the Cappadocian monks were unable to resist chattering and starting arguments while they ate together. In fact, an enforced silence was the only way they had to keep squabbles from erupting over the dinner table.

It goes without saying, noted Cassian, that among the Egyptians, and especially the Pachomian monks, there was no need for this custom, for no one would think to break the holy silence that enfolds even the largest company of monks.<sup>163</sup> The fractious and spiritually immature Cappadocian monks are unfavorably contrasted with the Egyptians who do not even notice what (or how much) their companions are eating. Cassian does not specify the source of the contention among the Cappadocians, but the sentences that close this chapter (commenting on how the Egyptians pay no attention to what their companions eat) suggest that the Cappadocians may have been bickering about food. Cassian's claim that these arguments could only be ended by a ban on speech places the Cappadocians in an unfavorable light, especially when immediately compared with the loftier standard set by the Egyptian monks.

Ultimately, the most important difference between Cassian and Basil might have been their conceptions of the role of the ascetic in the church and world. It is important to note, as

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<sup>161</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VI.19, quoting Basil as having said that he never knew a woman, yet was not a virgin; and Cass.*Inst.* VII.19, where Cassian quotes a saying of Basil in which Basil allegedly chastises a Senator for not making a complete renunciation of his wealth.

<sup>162</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.17.

<sup>163</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.19. See also above, pg. 3.

Rousseau has argued, that Basil's works such as the *Regulae fusius tractae* may not have originally been intended for monks.<sup>164</sup> Basil's ascetic works cannot, Rousseau writes, "be taken as symptomatic of some ordered and completed monastic system, presided over by the bishop himself."<sup>165</sup> To the contrary, the *Regulae fusius tractae* seem to have been composed with the entire church in mind. The rule was part exhortation and part guide to a more serious life, reflecting Basil's thought that all Christians were called to an ascetic vocation. This sense of a universal call was opposed to the formation of an elite group which would fracture the church into a threefold caste system: clerics, ascetics, and *κοσμικοί*.<sup>166</sup>

The *Regulae fusius tractae*, according to Rousseau, although certainly featuring elements of an institutional structure, were in fact intended to lay a framework for all Christians.<sup>167</sup> A hint of this can be found in the Greek preface to Basil's rule, which set the scene for the ensuing discussion. This preface describes a scene where a group of people who sought the same end as Basil himself, the "life of piety," had gathered with the Bishop in a quiet place in order to solicit his answers to their questions concerning Christian living. The "rule" takes the ancient form of a question and answer session.<sup>168</sup> Running through the work is an emphasis on how the *Χριστιανός* rather than the monk ought to live.<sup>169</sup>

Rousseau notes that this work had taken on a "specifically monastic, indeed [an] elitist interpretation" by the time of Rufinus. Indeed in the preface to his translation, Rufinus claimed that Basil had written the *Regulae fusius tractae* in response to questions asked by his "monks"<sup>170</sup> Moreover, as will be demonstrated below, Rufinus had translated Basil for a

<sup>164</sup>Rousseau (1994), 190–201.

<sup>165</sup>Rousseau (1994), 192.

<sup>166</sup>In trying to find terms to describe the different types of Christian one might meet in the Late Antique world, I have chosen to use the word *κοσμικός* as a label for someone who would have considered themselves a Christian, but was not a full time ascetic or cleric. Naturally there is a significant danger of oversimplifying a complicated situation by the selection of this term. It was however a term used by the Desert Fathers to describe a person who was a "lay" Christian (*A.Pat.*, Arsenius IV; Macarius the Great, I; Pambo VII), and was understood to be different from the term used to describe those of the world who were non-believers (*ἔλλην*. See *Apophth.Patr.* Epiphanius I; *Apophth.Patr.* Macarius the Great XIII; *Apophth.Patr.* Psenthaisius I).

Brown has argued that the distinction between *κοσμικός* and *μοναχός* lay primarily in the "virgin body of the monk" (Brown (1988b), 243). Sexuality served to differentiate the full time ascetic from the married Christian who undertook ascetic practices such as fasting and abstinence during certain times of the liturgical year, (Brown (1988b), 245).

<sup>167</sup>Rousseau (1994), 199.

<sup>168</sup>The *Regula Basili* is posed as a series of questions and answers. In this, it bears a much stronger resemblance to the *Apophthegmata patrum* than a formal monastic rule (Rousseau (1994), 354).

<sup>169</sup>Indeed, neither the word *μοναχός*, nor any of its synonyms appear in the *Regulae fusius tractae*.

<sup>170</sup>*Ruf.Reg.Bas.* Pref. 6.

Latin audience so that order might be brought to the monastic experiments of the West.<sup>171</sup> In Rufinus' opinion, the *Regula Basili* was the best extant rule for monastic living available for a western audience. By adopting it as their own, the western monks could follow the example of the Cappadocians.<sup>172</sup> Rufinus narrowed the original scope of Basil's vision, using the *Regula Basili* to draw a line between the *κοσμικός* and the monk.<sup>173</sup>

Rousseau's view, that Basil emphasized an undivided Christian body, is borne out admirably in Basil's two chapters on clothing, a discussion which emerges in response to the question: What clothing is suitable for a Christian?<sup>174</sup> According to Basil, it is the vain who strive to have rich, beautiful clothing. Why should the Christian, who has chosen the path of humility and abasement, pursue the trappings of vanity? Who should be a role model for the *Χριστιανός*, asks Basil? Those who live in kings' houses and wear soft clothing, or the man who announced the Lord's advent (John the Baptist)? Paul teaches the answer to this question: "Having food and covering, let us be content."<sup>175</sup> Moreover, since God clothed Adam to ward off the shame of his nudity, anything more than simple covering is to be rejected.

Basil then offered a rule of dress which was to be applied to all Christians: Christians should wear the same garb. This standardized dress will identify the Christian in the secular world, forcing that person to maintain a higher standard of conduct than if his dress blended in with the non-Christians. Basil notes that no one would take much notice of a plebeian "giving or receiving blows in public, uttering indecent words, or sitting in taverns,"<sup>176</sup> but a marked Christian would be chastised for such behavior by all observers (Christian and non-Christian). The adoption of a universal Christian garb would force the weaker brethren, even against their desires, to maintain decorum.

This brief exegesis of Basil's chapter on dress suggests, at least at this point, Rousseau's observations about the overall character of the *Regulae fusius tractae* seem to hold. Basil was

<sup>171</sup>Rufinus' *Regula Basili* is a combination of two of Basil's 'rules:' the *Regulae fusius tractae* and the *Regulae brevius tractae*. A short discussion of Rufinus' goals in translating this work, and the parallels with Cassian's aims may be found on pg. 120.

<sup>172</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref. 11.

<sup>173</sup>On the other hand, Rufinus does follow Basil by avoiding the term *monachus* in the body of the rule. The word occurs twice in his preface, but not in his translation. Despite asserting that this work was a monastic rule, Rufinus preserved Basil's term *Christianus*.

<sup>174</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* XI.

<sup>175</sup>I Tim. VI.8.

<sup>176</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* XI.23.

advocating a style of dress for all who profess to follow Christ. Of course in retrospect, Basil was fighting a rear guard action. The sun had long been up on the monastic movement by the time Basil wrote, and the division of the body of Christ into *κοσμικός* and *monachus* seems as if it might have been a foregone conclusion. Indeed, Basil seemed to surrender to the inevitable near the end of his life.<sup>177</sup>

The opening sentences of Cassian's *De institutis* I.1 — his book on monastic dress — reflect this new reality. Although borrowing many ideas from Basil, Cassian uses clothing to erect a barrier between the monk and world. While Basil eschewed the use of the word *μοναχός*, Cassian signals the specificity of his interest by stating his intention to focus on the *ipso habitu monachorum*.<sup>178</sup> Whereas Basil drew the line between *Christianus* and non-Christian, Cassian draws it between *monachus* and non-monk. *De institutis* presupposes an elite, a group separated from the world on the other side of the wall.

That Cassian drew a line between the monk and the *κοσμικός* is best illustrated by considering the tripartite division of souls he outlined in *Collationes*.<sup>179</sup> Humanity, according to Cassian was broken into three major divisions, the *animalis*, the *carnalis*, and the *spiritalis*. The *animalis* was the person who is utterly insensate to the things of God. He is, citing Paul, “unable to receive the gifts of God because they are folly to him. He is unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”<sup>180</sup> These souls, according to Cassian, are hopelessly lost. Time spent ministering to them is the equivalent of planting seed in soil that is barren, unfruitful, and choked with noxious thorns.<sup>181</sup> No amount of effort will alter their fate.

The *carnalis* are the second category of souls. These are the immature Christians, those whose attachment to the things of the world prevent them from moving to the next higher level. They are like the members of the Corinthian church, who, unready for spiritual meat, still require the milk fed to infants.<sup>182</sup> Sheltering under the umbrella of the *carnalis* are the *saecularis*, Cassian's equivalent of *κοσμικός*, the *gentilis*, and the *paganus*. Although he makes a distinction between the *saecularis*, and the *gentilis* and *paganus*, Cassian does offer

<sup>177</sup>Rousseau (1994), 205.

<sup>178</sup>Cass. *Inst.* I.1.

<sup>179</sup>The following exposition is based on Cass. *Coll.* IV.19.

<sup>180</sup>I Cor. II.14.

<sup>181</sup>Cass. *Coll.* IV.19.

<sup>182</sup>I Cor. III.1-2.

hope that all three of these groups may move up to the next level. On the other hand, the *saecularis* and his concern with the things of the world is represented as a being a distinct step down from the *monachus* in Cassian's thought.<sup>183</sup>

The final category of soul is the *spiritalis*. In one sense this is more of a goal than a category. The renunciation (*renuntiatio*) of the world is the step which lifts a soul out of the realm of the *carnalis*. The *spiritalis* is characterized by an ever-ascending climb toward the *summam perfectionis*.<sup>184</sup> Because perfection is not possible in this life, the *spiritalis* is seen as ever-traveling, never arriving. This is in contrast to the *tepidus*, who having made a renunciation of the world, considers himself perfected and does not press on toward perfection. The fate of the *tepidus* is to be spat out of God's mouth,<sup>185</sup> a fate shared with the *animalis*.

For Cassian then, the world is divided into those who have made their *renuntiatio*<sup>186</sup> and those who have not. Among other things, *renuntiatio* means that the *monachus* has sold all of his possessions, given the proceeds away, and entered a monastery. While it is important to avoid the trap of thinking in terms of the Benedictine abbeys of the medieval period, it would be an error in the opposite direction to insist that Cassian did not use the idea of a monastery to denote a gathering of brothers, set apart from the world, based on a clear institutional structure.<sup>187</sup> In *De institutis* I-IV, the institutional structure of a monastery is never out of sight. A preoccupation with the definition of structure is evident in Cassian's opening declaration of his intent to provide an account of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* to guide the monasteries of Castor

<sup>183</sup>Monks are not allowed to meet with *parentum quempian vel amicorum saecularium* without the steady presence of a superior (Cass.*Inst.* IV.16); A monk who refuses to fight against the 'noontime demon' (*accedia*), and *implicet se negotiis saecularibus*, is like a soldier who deserts from the army (Cass.*Inst.* X.3).

<sup>184</sup>Cass.*Coll.* IV.19.

<sup>185</sup>Rev. III.15.

<sup>186</sup>*Renuntiatio* is a key word in Cassian's thought. It divides the monk from the rest of the world and is the subject of a large portion of Book IV. An extended consideration of this concept will be offered in Chapter 5, pg. 150 and following.

<sup>187</sup>Naturally I disagree with Leyser's comments that Cassian's thought "does not gell" at the level of prescribing an institutional structure for monks (Leyser (1994), 82) and that Cassian exhibited a "reluctance to commit to a specific structure" (Leyser (1994), 83). Leyser's claim that "Cassian's project was not to institute coenobitic monasticism in the western Mediterranean" seems to have ignored the very clear evidence that Cassian had a specific institutional structure in mind for monasticism, a structure which is set out in *De institutis* I-IV. It seems odd that a writer whose priority was to "establish the ascetic's mental priorities rather than his corporate affiliation" (Leyser (1994), 82), would spend so much time outlining the appropriate garb for a monk (*De institutis* I), the proper method of corporate prayer (*De institutis* II-III), and the various rules governing life in a monastery (*De institutis* IV). Moreover, if Cassian was truly indifferent to institutional structure, why the repeated attacks on the Gallic ascetics who were not conforming to Cassian's *instituta Aegyptiorum*?

wants to establish in his provinces,<sup>188</sup> and does not finish until his closing exhortation directed toward the monk who is about to enter a monastery.<sup>189</sup> While Cassian's monastery might not have been the cloister of the High Middle Ages, it would be misguided to argue that Cassian had no institutional structure in mind for monks. For Cassian, monks (at least in the early part of their spiritual journey) lived in a monastery.<sup>190</sup> While Basil envisages the possibility that some of the weaker brethren might frequent taverns or be involved in fisticuffs, Cassian places his monks in a community that has closed its doors to the world.<sup>191</sup> In effect, he shares the view of Eucherius of Lyons, who, writing in the early 420s about the monks of Lérins, noted, "They want to dwell apart from sinners, and so they do."<sup>192</sup> Cassian's use of the term *monachus*, with all of its connotations of separation from the world, draws a circle around the monastery, a barrier that situates the monk in a symbolic (if not literal) "desert."

The sense that the monk is a higher form of Christian than the *carnalis* or *saecularis* is reinforced by Cassian's use of the term *miles Christi*<sup>193</sup> to describe the monk.<sup>194</sup> The terms

<sup>188</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3.

<sup>189</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.32-43.

<sup>190</sup>"It is those who are perfect and purified from all faults who ought to seek the desert, and when they have thoroughly exterminated all their faults amid the assembly of brothers, they should enter it not by way of cowardly flight, but for the purpose of divine contemplation." Cass.*Inst.* VIII.18. Now see Rousseau (1975), 126, who sees *De institutis* as "the blueprint of the coenobitic life, [providing] a framework of organization and discipline, within which the spiritual (and contemplative) ideals of Conferences would have the freedom to develop in practice."

<sup>191</sup>Again we are reminded of his strict injunctions to avoid the affairs of the world, as well as the clear attempt to limit a monk's contact with the world as expressed in Cass.*Inst.* IV.16.

<sup>192</sup>Euch.*Laud.* XLIII.

<sup>193</sup>Cassian uses *miles Christi* in Cass.*Inst.* I.1; I.11; II.1; V.19; V.21; VII.21; X.3, XI.3; XI.7; and in Cass.*Coll.* IV.12; VII.22; VIII.18.

<sup>194</sup>The term *miles Christi* had a long history in Christian writing. The concept of Christian life as a battle against an unseen foe can be traced back to Paul (Eph. VI.10-12). The Apostle advocates donning spiritual armor to meet the enemy (Eph. VI.13-17). This metaphor was also used by the author of II Timothy, who noted that every Christian was a warrior and should suffer hardship as a *καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ* (II Tim. II.3). Moreover (providing a precedent for thinkers like Cassian) this author also noted that no soldier involved himself in the affairs of everyday life, but rather focused his attention on pleasing the one who had enlisted him (II Tim. II.4).

Jerome used the term in his *Vita Pauli* to describe a heroic martyr who was thrown into a pleasure garden and tempted by a *meretrix speciosa*. Bound hand and foot, the poor man was at the mercy of the seductress, who threw her arms around his neck and began *manibus attricare virilia!* About to be overcome with lust, this brave *miles Christi* conceived of the dire stratagem of biting off his tongue and spitting it at the courtesan. The sudden pain conquered the anguish of lust and he regained his senses (Hier.*V.Paul.* IV). Jerome's use of the term here suggests that the martyr was a bite above the average Christian.

Martin (we are told) entreated Julian to release him from military service, claiming that he had served Julian as a soldier, but now he wanted to become a *miles Christi* (Sulp.*V.Mart.* IV.2). As Martin had already been baptized, his request seems to imply a transition to a more serious calling, a step Cassian would describe as the move from the *carnalis* toward the *spiritalis*. A similar linking of *miles Christi* to the monastic state can be found in the sentiment expressed by an ex-soldier who has become a monk. Since his wife had a similar sense of dedication to Christ's higher calling, the monk petitioned Martin that he and his wife might be allowed to live together as spiritual brother and sister. "I am," noted the monk, "a soldier of Christ" (Sulp.*Dial.* II.11). It was not enough of an assurance to convince Martin to let the pair cohabit.

*monachus* and *miles Christi* appear as synonyms in Cassian's works, and never are used as references to the *saecularis*.<sup>195</sup> Implicit in both of these terms is the idea of heightened discipline, special training, and a single-minded focus on a task that is beyond the ordinary ability of the mediocre masses. Monks and soldiers, both face an enemy on the battlefield, one in the spiritual realm, one in the temporal. The military aspect of monastic life was emphasized by the writer of the *Historia Monachorum*, who noted, that "there is no town or village in Egypt and also in the Thebaid which is not encircled by hermitages as if by walls. And the people depend on their [the monk's] prayers as if on God."<sup>196</sup> With the 'triumph of Christianity,' Satan and his demons had been chased into the desert. The monks marched out to engage the enemy there. Cassian's choice of the military metaphor reinforces the line between monk and world.<sup>197</sup>

Basil's program of social service, of ascetics who engage with the world in service of the church, has no currency for Cassian. Where Basil seemed to want to discourage the formation of an elite in the church, Cassian's thought presupposes this division. This fundamental difference in conception of the ascetic life may then account for the fact that unlike Rufinus, Cassian was not eager to embrace Basil's ascetic rule.

### Sulpicius Severus

The only Gallic writer to offer a vision for the ascetic life before Cassian was Sulpicius Severus, who composed two works centered on Martin of Tours, *Vita Martini* (ca. 396) and *Dialogi* (ca. 404-6).<sup>198</sup> If both Jerome and Basil were essentially self-taught "monks," those who had

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Paulinus of Nola, repeatedly uses *miles Christi* to describe both his and Sulpicius Severus' ascetic vocation (writing to Severus, he notes, *tu vero miles Christi* (Paul.Ep. I.9). While waxing rhapsodic about his ascetic vocation, he describes himself as a *commilito* (Paul.Ep. XXIV.13) with Sulpicius Severus, who will launch an attack on the "princes of darkness and the columns of night" (Paul.Ep. XXIV.14). Paulinus is much more Pauline in his thinking. He goes on to note that the armor of Christ described by Paul (Eph. VI.13-17) is not just for himself, *sed omni fidelis de virtute Christi promitto* (Paul.Ep. XXIV.14).

<sup>195</sup>He also uses the term *athleta Christi*, evoking Paul's advice to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. . . I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (I Cor. IX.24-25, 27) [NIV].

<sup>196</sup>Hist.mon. Prol.10.

<sup>197</sup>The difference between the *saecularis* and those who were committed to the Christian life (clerics and monks) can be seen in the reception of visitors to the Pachomian monasteries. Newly arrived clerics and monks have their feet washed and are lodged in the guest house (Hier.Reg.Pach. LI). Seculars, the infirm, and 'weaker vessels' (women) are lodged in a separate place, cut off from the community (Hier.Reg.Pach. LII).

<sup>198</sup>The dating is Stancliffe's (Stancliffe (1983), 72, 81.

not served a long apprenticeship under a known master,<sup>199</sup> then this same criticism could be extended to Sulpicius Severus. Sulpicius Severus' lack of ascetic formation was even more painfully obvious than the case of Jerome and Basil. His monastic training was limited to several interviews with Martin; when the time came to embrace the ascetic life, he chose to establish his own monastery at Primuliacum, rather than entering Martin's monastery at Marmoutier. Like Basil and Jerome, he seemed to prefer the life of a leader.<sup>200</sup>

Sulpicius Severus is never mentioned directly in *De institutis*, and the evidence for Cassian's familiarity with his work is circumstantial at best. Nevertheless, as shall be demonstrated, familiarity with the Gallic writer's work is more likely than ignorance. Both the *Vita Martini* and *Dialogi* seem to have enjoyed a wide circulation. The *Vita Martini* is said to have traveled around the Mediterranean basin by 404<sup>201</sup> and there is a possible reference to *Dialogi* in Jerome's *Commentary on Ezekiel* (ca. 412).<sup>202</sup> It would be odd if Cassian, a man whose works demonstrate familiarity with a wide variety of Greek and Latin ecclesiastical authors, had not read Sulpicius Severus.

Sulpicius would seem to be a natural member of the *alios* who had written about asceticism for a Gallic audience.<sup>203</sup> This impression is strengthened by the way Cassian compares his work to the writings of others in his preface,

Nor to be sure will I make it my concern to weave together a narrative of the miracles and signs of God. Although not only have we heard many things that are beyond belief through our elders, but also we have seen these things fulfilled under our eyes. Nevertheless [I shall] omit all these things, which to the readers contribute nothing more than amazement to the formation of the perfect life.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>199</sup>A criticism that would naturally follow from Cassian's statement that the ascetic life could not be learned in any other way than through this relationship (*Cass.Inst.* Pref.5).

<sup>200</sup>Absolute anathema to Cassian — see *Cass.Inst.* II.3.

<sup>201</sup>Although it should be noted that this claim is made by Sulpicius Severus himself, *Sulp.Dial.* I.23; *Sulp.Dial.* I.26; *Sulp.Dial.* III.17.

<sup>202</sup>*Hier.Comm.Hiez.* XI. Here Jerome lists Sulpicius among those who had misinterpreted Ezekiel 36:1-15. Stancliffe (1983), 297-298 notes two other negative remarks which might refer to Sulpicius. The likelier of the pair dates from 408-410, and is a reference to *Vita Martini*, III.1-2. Here, in *Hier.Comm.Esai.* XVI.58.8, he notes that Christ did not command that a cape was to be cut in two and half given away to curry popular opinion.

<sup>203</sup>*Cass.Inst.* Pref.5.

<sup>204</sup>*Cass.Inst.* Pref.7: *Nec plane mirabilium Dei, signorumque narrationem studebo contexere. Quae quamvis multa per seniores nostros et incredibilia non solum audierimus, verum etiam sub obtutibus nostris perspexerimus inpleta, tamen his omnibus praetermissis, quae legentibus praeter admirationem nihil amplius ad instructionem*

Cassian's preface presses an indictment against unnamed works which have circulated in Gaul. These are the works which spice up simple accounts of the monastic life with wild tales of God's miraculous intervention in the affairs of men. Cassian does not object to the miraculous; to the contrary he is quick to tell his readers that he personally knew of many miraculous occurrences. What Cassian does oppose is the way in which certain ascetic writers have made miracles, rather than the hard work of becoming a monk, the focus of their writings.

Sulpicius Severus was an obvious and likely target for this criticism.<sup>205</sup> Severus' stories included the raising of the dead,<sup>206</sup> the exorcism of demons (which included episodes of levitation),<sup>207</sup> conversations with saints and apostles,<sup>208</sup> and what may be the only account recorded in Christian literature of the Gospel being preached to Satan.<sup>209</sup> There can be little doubt that if he knew of them, Cassian certainly would have had these works in mind as examples of writings which minister nothing more than amazement. As noted above, while impossible to prove with certainty, the balance of probability favors an acquaintance with these works.

Perhaps the most widely accepted allusion in Cassian's work to Sulpicius is the story of the monk who waters a stick. In *Dialogi*, Sulpicius Severus has Postumianus, his protagonist, tell a story about a monk who was ordered by his superior to water a stick that had been driven into the ground. The monk carried water for the stick every day from the Nile, which was two miles distant. After three years of this marvelous obedience, the stick sprouted and grew into a tree which Postumianus claims to have seen.<sup>210</sup>

A similar story is found in *De institutis* IV.23.<sup>211</sup> Cassian's account of the monk who

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*perfectae vitae conferunt*. This sentiment is reiterated in *Cass.Coll.* XVIII.1.3, where, writing about the extraordinary qualities of Abba Piamun, Cassian states that he will not offer an account of Piamun's miracles and deeds because he intends to offer his readers only what is essential for the life of perfection rather than stories which contribute to a sense of wonder but offer no correction of faults.

<sup>205</sup>Advocating this position are Stewart (1998), 17, Chadwick (1955), 231-232, de Vogüé (1985b), 448, and de Vogüé (1993), 11; cautiously optimistic include Chadwick (1950), 46-47. Rousseau (1978), 182 doubts if we can be certain about Cassian's knowledge of Sulpicius' work.

<sup>206</sup>Sulp.*V.Mart.* VII; Sulp.*V.Mart.* VIII; Sulp.*Dial.* II.4.

<sup>207</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* III.6.

<sup>208</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* II.13.

<sup>209</sup>Sulp.*V.Mart.* XXII.

<sup>210</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.19. Another version of this story (which preserves Sulpicius' emphases) may be found in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Apophth.Patr. John the Dwarf I).

<sup>211</sup>Stancliffe (1983), 51-52 postulates that the three extant versions of this story (found in Cassian, Sulpicius Severus, and the Greek *Apophthegmata patrum*) are independent of one another. De Vogüé (1985b), 448-450 offers a well-reasoned (and most certainly correct) case for Cassian's dependence on and knowledge of Sulpicius' version of this story.

watered a stick conforms to the general outline of Sulpicius' account. Both stories present the obedient monk who follows his superior's instructions to the letter. The difference is in the ending: in *De institutis*, the abbot asks the monk if the stick has sprouted roots. When it was discovered that the stick had not been recalled to life, the abbot tossed the stick aside and commended the monk for his obedience. Cassian will also fill in details that Sulpicius does not seem to know: in *De institutis*, the monk has a name, John of Lycopolis.<sup>212</sup> In Postumianus' version, the monk has no name.

Cassian's version of the stick story, set in exactly the same context of obedience but with a very different ending, counters Sulpicius Severus' account. Cassian knows that obedience is what is truly important about this story and he brings that quality to the foreground in correcting Sulpicius' miraculous account. His knowledge of the monk's name substantiates his version and contributes to his claim of *experientia*. He writes about what he has seen, rather than about what he had heard.

Cassian also seems to be correcting Sulpicius in a note about "two old men."<sup>213</sup> Postumianus claims to have met the men who had lived 40 years in a monastery. One of them "the sun never beheld feasting, while the other the sun never saw him angry."<sup>214</sup> Cassian relates a nearly identical story, but again in his account the two men have names: Paesius and John. In Cassian's story, John, who was the abbot of a monastery, decided to visit his old friend Paesius. The pair had not seen each other for 40 years. When he found the old man, Paesius said, "Never has the sun seen me eating." John replied, "Nor me angry."<sup>215</sup> The important correction that Cassian makes is moving the pair out of a monastery. It may seem an innocuous detail, but the parallels are so sharp otherwise between the two stories that it seems difficult to believe that Cassian was unaware of Sulpicius' account. Again, Cassian seems to be suggesting that Severus had erred in his presentation.

Another possible reference to Martin (as transmitted by Sulpicius Severus) may be found in Cassian's discussion of the monastic robe. Having established a general rule for the robe

<sup>212</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.23.

<sup>213</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.12. Note again that the men are not named.

<sup>214</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.12.

<sup>215</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.27.

(it ought to be simple, inexpensive, and inconspicuous),<sup>216</sup> Cassian then turned his attention to those who had deviated from this guideline by wearing a covering of sackcloth, which Cassian deems inappropriate. A number of instances of ascetics wearing sackcloth can be adduced from Gallic sources. The most notable example, according to Sulpicius Severus, was Martin of Tours.<sup>217</sup> Sulpicius also refers to the garments of sackcloth he wore,<sup>218</sup> as well as the robe of sackcloth worn by his friend Postumianus.<sup>219</sup> Sackcloth also seems to have been worn by Sulpicius' correspondent, Paulinus of Nola.<sup>220</sup>

Cassian, however, was intractably opposed to the use of sackcloth as a covering. In his view, sackcloth was an ostentatious display. Its use puffed up the monk with pride, rather than humbling the spirit. Nor was it something that had been sanctioned by the Egyptian Desert Fathers. In fact, stated Cassian,

Even though we have heard that certain respectable men have existed who have wrapped themselves in this clothing, we are not to sanction a rule for the monasteries from this, nor are the ancient decrees of the holy fathers be upset, because the few, presuming on the privilege of other virtues, are not believed to be blamed, not even in these things which, not following the catholic rule, have been employed by them. For the opinion of a few must not be preferred or favored over the universal constitution of all.<sup>221</sup>

Martin (or those who imitated his example) may have been commendable, but Cassian discred-

<sup>216</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2.

<sup>217</sup>Martin is reported to have worn sackcloth while praying for divine assistance in overthrowing a heathen temple (Sulp.*V.Mart.* XIV); threads plucked from the sackcloth garment worn by Martin were said to heal the sick (Sulp.*V.Mart.* XVIII); Martin's sackcloth garment was one of the 'weapons' he used to overcome Valentinian (Sulp.*Dial.* II.5) as well as the demons (Sulp.*Dial.* III.6).

<sup>218</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.1.

<sup>219</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.2.

<sup>220</sup>Paulinus wrote a letter thanking Sulpicius for the gift of sackcloth robes (Paul.*Ep.* XXIX.1), and stated that this was a necessary gift because he needed to lament his sins. Looking for a biblical precedent for the use of sackcloth, Paulinus linked the gift to Elijah (IV Reg. I.8), John the Baptist (Matt III.4), and David (Ps. CXXXI.1; L.19; LXVIII.11 ff.). The robe also reminded Paulinus of the camel which passes through the eye of the needle (Matt. XIX.24), a reminder of Paulinus' own unworthiness to enter the kingdom of Heaven. It was a gift that would serve as an incitement to prayer and humility.

<sup>221</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2: *Quodsi quosdam hoc amictu circumdatos audivimus probabiles exstitisse, non ex eo nobis est monasteriorum regula sancienda, vel antiqua sanctorum Patrum sunt proturbanda decreta, quod pauci praesumentes aliarum virtutum privilegio, ne in his quidem quae non secundum catholicam regulam ab eis usurpata sunt, reprehendi debere creduntur. Generali namque omnium constitutioni, paucorum non debet praeponi nec praeiudicare sententia.*

its him as a precedent for a usage which contradicts the established practices of the East.<sup>222</sup> Again it is not completely certain that this passage should be read as a reference to Martin, but it certainly stands as a very strong allusion to Sulpicius' version of the man.

Finally, much of what Cassian writes about Gallic monks makes very good sense when Martin's monks of Marmoutier and Sulpicius' foundation at Primulacium are seen as the object. This is especially pointed in Cassian's chapters on the Gallic monks who retain their possessions and do no work.<sup>223</sup> As Stewart notes, "The *Institutes* are inescapably a critique of the native monastic tradition associated especially with Martin of Tours."<sup>224</sup> On balance, as has been detailed here, the probability that Sulpicius Severus was among the *alios*, seems quite high.

\* \* \*

The underlying presupposition of this chapter is that Cassian wrote for an audience that already had views and opinions about how the ascetic life was to be conducted. The Gauls had a homegrown ascetic tradition that stretched back at least as far as Hilary and Martin. Moreover the Gauls had been the recipients of ascetic advice from Jerome and Rufinus, and had been exposed to the rules of Pachomius and Basil. Cassian wrote *in tanta scriptorum turba*.

Cassian was aware of this background when he began to compose *De institutis*. Consequently, one of the first things he did (in the preface to his work) was to establish his position vis-à-vis these other ascetic writers. His premise was simple: they lacked *experientia*, a quality that he possessed in abundance.

What is extremely interesting is the great subtlety Cassian employed to disarm his opponents (especially, as has been demonstrated, in the case of Jerome and Sulpicius Severus). There was ample precedent in ecclesiastical writing for simply demolishing an opponent;<sup>225</sup>

<sup>222</sup>There is much more to be said about this line of reasoning, but the discussion will be deferred to the next chapter which considers how Cassian created authority for his work.

<sup>223</sup>Sulp. *V. Mart.* X; Cass. *Inst.* IV.4-6.

<sup>224</sup>Stewart (1998), 17.

<sup>225</sup>Jerome's attacks on Rufinus, Vigilantius, Jovinianus, et. al. certainly offered a contemporary precedent.

Cassian, however, attacked his opponents indirectly, methodically suggesting to his audience that their views were in error, and consequently, not to be trusted.

## Chapter 4

# *Instituta* as Independent Authority

The two preceding chapters examined Cassian's claim to experience as a strategy for winning a hearing for his work. Cassian articulated a distinction between his own experience and the lack of experience that characterized Gallic abbots and other western ascetic writers. This chapter will investigate the second major component of Cassian's approach: the creation of an independent basis of authority for his ascetic code. Cassian's claim to authority centers on one key word, *instituta*. Coupled with a qualifier (usually *Aegyptiorum*, but occasionally *coenobiorum* or *seniorum*) Cassian developed the claim that the *instituta* were an enduring body of legislation, which by virtue of their antiquity and centuries of use, possessed an unparalleled authority for the monastic life. This stood in stark counterpoint to the practices Cassian had observed in Gaul,

And for that reason, it will be appropriate that we too curtail as superfluous and unprofitable these examples we see being taught, which are neither from the saints of old who laid the foundations of this profession, nor from the fathers of our times, who now constantly guard their institutes through succession.<sup>1</sup>

Cassian's *instituta* originated (he would claim) in the Hebraic prophets and had been refined by the early church. This legislation (according to Cassian), faithfully guarded in the East, had

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<sup>1</sup>Cass. Inst. I.2: *Et idcirco haec quae nec a veteribus sanctis qui huius professionis fundamenta iecerunt, neque a Patribus nostri temporis, qui eorum per successiones instituta nunc usque custodiunt, tradita videmus exempla, ut superflua et inutilia nos quoque resecurare conveniet.*

ordered the lives of four centuries of monks. It had deep historical roots; it had been passed from master to disciple; it was the highest expression of the ascetic path.<sup>2</sup>

Cassian portrays himself not as the originator of this body of legislation, but rather as a trustworthy transmitter, a conduit for knowledge. His claim, advanced in the preface of *De institutis*, was that he could render an account of these *institututa*, fulfilling the request of Bishop Castor who wanted “to lay the foundation for the rules and customs of the eastern and most especially the Egyptian monks in a province lacking monasteries”.<sup>3</sup> Cassian was not going to make up a set of guidelines for Castor; he would relate the one true path for the ascetic life, the *institututa* laid down by the earliest monks of the apostolic church. His work was not a novel formulation cobbled together out of his own *ingenium*, but rather a reliable account offered by a man who had himself been trained under this system. Consequently, as a report of what was practiced throughout the East, Cassian’s *institututa* rested on a much deeper stratum than anything guiding ascetic practices in Gaul. The *institututa* transcended their reporter, they had an existence that was independent of their advocate.

The ostensible purpose of the first four books of *De institutis* was the exposition of the *institututa Aegyptiorum*. The first chapter of *De institutis* began with the phrase, “As we are going to speak concerning the institutes and rules of the monasteries, from where will we make a better beginning, by the grace of God, than from the monk’s habit itself?”<sup>4</sup> Likewise the opening sentences of Book V of *De institutis* look back to a task that had been completed, the work that had already been written: “four books which have set in order the institutes of the monasteries.”<sup>5</sup> Between these two entries lay Cassian’s account of the *institututa Aegyptiorum*. The remainder of Cassian’s ascetic works presuppose this structure. The last eight books of *De institutis* turned from the external practices to a discussion of the internal vices which corrode a monk’s soul. Books V–XII of *De institutis* — which turn from a consideration of the structure of the monastery to the internal aspect of the ascetic life — presume that the

<sup>2</sup>It also stood against the recent claims to authority rooted in the ‘self-fashioning biographies’ of notable figures like Martin of Tours, Clarus, and Melania the Elder, as practiced by Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus of Nola (cf. Trout (1993), *passim*).

<sup>3</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3: *In provincia siquidem coenobiorum experti, Orientalium maximeque Aegyptiorum volens instituta fundari.*

<sup>4</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.1: *De institutis ac regulis monasteriorum dicturi unde competentius donante Deo quam ex ipso habitu monachorum sumemus exordium.*

<sup>5</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.1: *Nam post quattuor libellos, qui super institutis monasteriorum digesti sunt.*

practices outlined in the first four books have been adopted (as do the twenty-four books of *Collationes*). The *instituta* are not helpful recommendations, something to be accepted or rejected by the individual, but rather the gateway through which the monk passes into the ascetic life. Any other path, especially one formulated by an inexperienced leader was doomed to lead one astray.

This chapter will examine how Cassian created an authoritative basis for his *instituta*. As will be demonstrated, Cassian opened a literary distance between himself and the *instituta* by giving them a basis in antiquity. Old Testament prophets became antecedents of the ascetic life, which received its first full expression in the apostolic church. Cassian's earliest monks had withdrawn from this church when the initial fervor of that congregation had begun to cool. These monks, wishing to give their successors a firm foundation, had drawn up the *instituta*. This body of practice had received the *imprimatur* of God through the validation of an angel. Moreover, the *instituta* had been handed faithfully down through the centuries by devout men, and ultimately had been passed on to Cassian, who was providing a version for Castor. In elaborating his justification for the authority of the *instituta*, Cassian drew together a wide variety of sources, and recycled arguments which previous writers had used to defend their positions against other 'heretical' viewpoints. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of how Cassian solved the problem of justifying the changes he made to his inviolate *instituta*.

### The Nature of the *Instituta*

Cassian's use of this term raises a natural question: what precisely are *instituta*?<sup>6</sup> Cassian suggests that they are a body of Egyptian legislation that have been passed down, master to disciple, from the first monks. Against the disordered, made up 'rules' that order Gallic monasteries, Cassian would claim that Egyptian asceticism was both homogeneous and universal. All Egyptian monks, with the exception of the Pachomians, adhered to the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.

<sup>6</sup>Stewart (1998), 29 describes Cassian's use of *instituta* as "a collective term for the teachings, customs, and structures of monastic life." I would argue that this definition does not go far enough in bringing out the authoritative or legal force that Cassian brought to the word.

This ascetic legislation was obeyed throughout all of Egypt.<sup>7</sup> The Egyptians prayed the same way, they ate the same food at the same hours, and they had the same rules governing their monasteries.

There are two problems with this claim, however. The first is that other sources for Egyptian monasticism do not reveal the same degree of homogeneity asserted by Cassian. The *Historia monachorum*, *Apophthegmata patrum*, and Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* all testify to the fact that there was considerable variation in the practices that Cassian ascribed to the inviolable and universally-held *instituta Aegyptiorum*. In fact, these sources tend to suggest a fluid situation that does not appear different in many respects to that of the Gauls.

The second problem is that Cassian's *instituta Aegyptiorum* is a synthesis of a number of different ascetic practices. The primary source for Cassian's legislation was not the ancient church, but rather is the teaching of Evagrius Ponticus.<sup>8</sup> This thesis will not restate the dependence that Marsili has documented at length. Nevertheless, a simple example may be proffered to illustrate Cassian's debt to his master:

Chapter	Topic	Source
1	The Monk's Girdle	Ruf. <i>Reg.Bas.</i> XI.32-38
2	The Robe	Ruf. <i>Reg.Bas.</i> XI.1-31
3	The Hood	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> II
4	The Tunic	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> III (Implied)
5	The Cord	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> V
6	The Scapular	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> IV
7	The Goatskin	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> VI
8	The Staff	Evag. <i>Anat.</i> VII

Table 4.1: The Monastic Garb

Table 4.1 compares Cassian's exposition of the monastic habit (in Book I of *De institutis*) to that of his sources. Cassian's first two chapters (the girded loins and the robe) follow Basil, but thereafter he adheres to the order and arrangement of the monastic garb that was laid out in Evagrius' *Epistola ad Anatolium* (although he reverses the cord and the scapular). The monastic habit that Cassian attributes to the *instituta Aegyptiorum* is actually drawn from Evagrius. On a much larger scale, the systematization of the principal vices that interfere with the ascetic

<sup>7</sup>See for instance, Cass.*Inst.* II.2: *quae nunc usque per totam Aegyptum a Dei famulis custoditur.*

<sup>8</sup>So Marsili (1935), *passim.*, followed by Courcelle (1943), 213. See also de Vogüé (1985b), *passim* for a complete and methodical identification of the sources Cassian drew together to create *De institutis* I-IV.

life (the eight principal vices) that make up books V–XII of *De institutis* are also the work of Evagrius.<sup>9</sup> The teachings Cassian ascribes to the *institututa Aegyptiorum* are largely those of Evagrius. Other additions are taken from a wide range of authors, including Basil, Pachomius, Jerome, and Palladius.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, Cassian's *institututa Aegyptiorum* are actually a rhetorical construct, a device used to buttress the authority of what he prescribed for Gaul. Although Egyptian monastic practice was not as uniform, ancient, or binding as Cassian asserted, this did not prevent Cassian from stitching together a code of legislation that he then used to correct the Gauls.

The word he used as a framework for his ideas, *institututa*, is a plural form of the noun *institutum*—*arrangement, plan, mode of life, practice, ordinance or regulation*.<sup>11</sup> The noun is derived from the verb *institulo* — *to institute, found, establish, organize*.<sup>12</sup> The word was often used to describe the customs or practices that guided groups of people.<sup>13</sup> It also appears as the title of legal works which purport to explain the basic principles of law for budding jurists.<sup>14</sup>

Although Cassian could have looked to the earlier classical (and especially the juridical) writers as a precedent for his use of the term *institututa*, it should be noted that there was an ascetic precedent to be found much closer to home: Ambrose, the bishop of Milan was the first Latin writer to employ the term *institututa monachorum*. In a letter detailing his initial resistance to ordination, Ambrose wrote about Eusebius of Vercelli who was the first bishop in the West to combine life as a priest with a life that conformed to the institutes of the monks (*institututa monachorum*).<sup>15</sup> In detailing Eusebius' monastic training, Ambrose notes that patience took root in Eusebius, through the customs of the monasteries.<sup>16</sup> Two things stood at the pinnacle of Christian devotion, the duties of the cleric and the institutes of the monks.<sup>17</sup> Both are

<sup>9</sup>See *Evag.Prak.* VI–XIV for the description of the eight principal vices and *Evag.Prak.* XV–XLIX for the remedies for these vices.

<sup>10</sup>Again, the most thorough account of this may be found in de Vogüé (1985b), *passim*. See also Rousseau (1978), 222.

<sup>11</sup>Lewis and Short, s.v.

<sup>12</sup>Lewis and Short, s.v. II.

<sup>13</sup>The idea of ancient guidelines that dictated current practices may be found in *Livy.Urb.cond.* XLII.31.2 and *Suet.Aug.* XCVIII. Tertullian (*Tert.Nat.* I.10) links the word to the customs and practices that guide pagan worship, as do Minucius Felix (*Min.Oct.* XVIII) and Augustine (*Aug.Civ.* IV.26).

<sup>14</sup>Harries (1999), 18. Works by this name (or the cognate *Institutiones*) were composed by Florentius, Ulpian, Paulus, Callistratus, Marcian, and Gaius (Harries (1999), 18, n. 55).

<sup>15</sup>*Ambr.Ep.* LXIII.66.

<sup>16</sup>*Ambr.Ep.* LXIII.71: *Haec igitur patientia in sancto Eusebio monasterii coaluit usu.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ambr.Ep.* LXIII.71: *clericorum officia et monachorum instituta.*

*disciplinae*: the duties of the cleric are a discipline which produce pleasantness and morality; the *monachorum instituta* produce abstinence and patience.<sup>18</sup> The significance of these remarks for this study, is that Ambrose had advanced the proposition that there were *instituta monachorum* which would produce certain qualities in the monks who trained under them. He established a precedent for the idea that Cassian would use, even though he did not define the nature or source of these *instituta*.

A work which set an even stronger precedent for Cassian's use of the term *instituta* was Rufinus' conflation/translation of Basil's *Regulae fusius tractatae* and *Regulae brevius tractatae*, the *Regula Basili*. This translation, produced in 396,<sup>19</sup> was (according to Rufinus) drafted at the request of a certain Ursacius, said to be the abbot of a monastery in Italy.<sup>20</sup> One of the most interesting features of this translation is the way Rufinus uses the word *instituta* in his preface, attaching a meaning and authority to the word which foreshadows Cassian's work,

1. We were very glad, most dear brother Ursacius, when, having come from the Eastern regions, and at that time longing for the customary fellowship of the brothers, we entered your monastery... 3. And there we were greatly delighted, because, you had diligently enquired, not as is the custom of some concerning either the places or the wealth of the East, 4. but you asked what observance had been kept there by the servants of God, what virtues of soul, what institutes were kept in the monasteries. 5. To this, lest I might expound something less worthy to you (I do not speak of what is produced, but what ought to be brought forth), 6. I produced the institutes of the monks of Saint Basil, bishop of Cappadocia, a man famous for his faith and works, and every kind of sanctity, who, having been questioned by his monks, [laid down these *instituta as*], so to speak, responses on sacred law. 7. At the same time you were admiring the definitions and opinions of that, you earnestly demanded, that I might translate this work into Latin, 8. promising me that throughout all the monasteries of the western

<sup>18</sup> Ambr. Ep. LXIII.71.

<sup>19</sup> Zelzer (1986), X.

<sup>20</sup> Ruf. Reg. Bas. Pref.1.

regions, if these holy and spiritual institutes of a saintly and spiritual man were made known, 9. advancing these servants of God, who might be produced from institutes of this sort, it would bring something of grace or reward to me from their merits or prayers. 10. And so I have produced them, so that I might be able [to fulfill] my ministry: may you and all those you bring together and watch over be filled with grace, so that when working and praying, if these statutes are kept, you might be remembering me too. 11. Let it be your duty also to offer a copy to other monasteries, so that following the example of the Cappadocians, all monasteries might live in the same way, and not by diverse institutes and observations.<sup>21</sup>

Several important parallels between Cassian and Rufinus may be drawn from an examination of this preface. The first is that Rufinus, in translating Basil's rule, demonstrated a clear concern for the state of monasticism in the West. These monasteries, lacking a guideline, were following "diverse institutes and observations."<sup>22</sup> The independent and unregulated nature of Gallic monasticism was also Cassian's reason for putting forward the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. For both authors, eastern *instituta* were the appropriate remedy for a western situation that lacked guidelines.

Cassian and Rufinus both asserted that their versions of Eastern monasticism had been solicited by someone in a position of authority who was interested in western reform. In the case of Rufinus, it was Ursacius.<sup>23</sup> This Ursacius, who had no interest in superficial stories

<sup>21</sup>Ruf.Reg.Bas. Pref.1-11: *Satis libenter, carissime frater Ursaci, adventantes de partibus orientis, et desiderantes iam fratrum consueta consortia, monasterium tuum ingressi sumus. . . 3 Et inde maxime delectati sumus, quod non, ut aliquibus mos est, vel de locis vel de opibus orientis sollicite percontatus es, 4 sed quoniam ibi observatio servorum Dei haberetur, quae animi virtus, quae instituta servarentur in monasteriis perquisisti. 5 Ad haec ego ne quid tibi minus digne, non dico quam geritur, sed quam geri debet, exponerem, 6 sancti Basili Cappadociae episcopi, viri fide et operibus, et omni sanctitate satis clari, instituta monachorum, quae interrogantibus se monachis velut sancti cuiusdam iuris responsa statuit, protuli. 7 Cuius cum definitiones ac sententias mirareris, magnopere poposcisti ut hoc opus verterem in Latinum, 8 pollicens mihi quod per universa occidentalis partis monasteria, si haec sancti et spiritualis viri sancta et spiritualia innotescerent instituta, 9 omnis ille servorum Dei profectus, qui ex huiusmodi institutionibus nasceretur; mihi quoque ex eorum vel meritis, vel orationibus, aliquid gratiae vel mercedis afferret. 10 Exhibui ergo, ut potui ministerium meum: imple et tu, et omnes qui legis et observatis gratiam, ut et agentes et orantes sic quemadmodum statuta haec continent, mei quoque memores sitis. 11 Tui sane sit officii etiam aliis monasteriis exemplaria praebere, ut secundum instar Cappadociae, omnia monasteria eisdem, et non diversis vel institutis vel observationibus vivant.*

<sup>22</sup>Ruf.Reg.Bas. Pref.11.

<sup>23</sup>I have referred to Ursacius as the "abbot" of the Italian monastery. Although my use of the term "abbot" is decidedly anachronistic, evoking images of later Benedictine monasticism, Rufinus does suggest that Ursacius has a leadership role in the *monasterium*. He refers to the place where Ursacius resides as "your monastery" (v. 1) and implies that Ursacius has charge over other brothers, "all those you bring together and watch over" (v. 10).

about the East,<sup>24</sup> asked Rufinus to produce an account of the institutes kept in the Eastern monasteries, with the evident intention of reforming both his own monastery and the other monasteries in his region. Similarly, Cassian's account had been called forth by Bishop Castor of Apt, who wanted to establish monasteries in his province.<sup>25</sup>

The other similarity between these two writers is their selection of the term *instituta* to describe the ordinances they were transmitting to the West. Rufinus uses the word five times in his short preface, once as a dismissive note about the disorder of Western monasticism,<sup>26</sup> and four times with a force that went beyond the idea of practice, implying a legal, binding force. Rufinus argued that the *instituta* set out by Basil ought to be normative for all monks. Basil's law was observed or kept (*servo*) by the servants of God in the East. These *instituta* were laid down by Saint Basil, a renowned holy man and bishop of Caesarea, famous for his virtue, works, and sanctity.<sup>27</sup> Basil had set out (*statuo*) these *instituta* as "a kind of sacred law."<sup>28</sup> The legal force of this sentence is unmistakable. Basil, drawing on his authority as both a bishop and a renowned holy man, had laid down or "established" a monastic law. Rufinus then reasserts the quality of these *instituta*: they are "holy and spiritual,"<sup>29</sup> the product of a "saintly and spiritual man,"<sup>30</sup> which will give birth to servants of God in the West if the ordinances are made known to them.<sup>31</sup> A further legal reference occurs in line 10, where Rufinus urges the monks to hold fast to these statutes.<sup>32</sup> And finally, in closing, he advances his hope that the *instituta* he has translated will replace the disorder of Western monasticism.<sup>33</sup>

The idea that *instituta* are a body of normative guidelines for monastic life is apparent in Rufinus' preface. The *instituta* were established by Basil for his monks, and ought to replace the diverse practices observed in the West. These *instituta*, the product of a saintly and holy man, whose sanctity was well-known to all, were like *sancti iuris*, the equivalent of *statuta*. Moreover, if faithfully observed, they would produce servants of God, leading those who kept

<sup>24</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.3-4.

<sup>25</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.3.

<sup>26</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref. 11.

<sup>27</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.6.

<sup>28</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.6.

<sup>29</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.8.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.9.

<sup>32</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.10.

<sup>33</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.11.

them to a higher life. All of these ideas are present in Cassian's thought.

A final precedent for the idea that there were *instituta* which guided monastic practice may be found in the writings of Sulpicius Severus. Although the main purpose of Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi* was to defend the reputation of Martin of Tours (as created by the author's early *Vita Martini*), *Dialogi* can also be read as a response to the Eastern writers who were trying to prescribe monastic practices for the West.<sup>34</sup> The two places Sulpicius employs the term *institutum* in his *Dialogi* both evoke a strong echo of Rufinus' preface to the *Regula Basili*.

In the first instance, he applies the term to the Egyptian monks when he asks Postumianus to "tell us. . . what peace of the saints is there; what are the institutes of the monks; and by what great signs and virtues Christ is working in his servants."<sup>35</sup> This formulation bears a strong resemblance to the request Ursacius makes of Rufinus, to tell him "what observance had been kept there by the servants of God, what virtues of soul, what institutes were kept in the monasteries."<sup>36</sup>

The second use of the term also evokes Rufinus' work. Postumianus, the "advocate" for Eastern monasticism in *Dialogi* has offered a devastating critique of Gallic practices, to which Gallus, the advocate for the Gauls, responds that, in a brief time, Postumianus has "comprehended all our institutes."<sup>37</sup> One wonders if this might not have been aimed again at Rufinus, who had urged the Western monks not to live according to their diverse practices and observations.<sup>38</sup>

The issue of whether Sulpicius was alluding to Rufinus in his *Dialogi* is ultimately beyond the scope of this thesis. More important at this point is the observation that by the time Cassian wrote *De institutis* for a Gallic audience, three earlier authors had already laid the groundwork for the idea that there was a code which guided monastic life. Ambrose had alluded to a set of rules that governed the ascetic life; Rufinus had suggested that this code was the *instituta* created by Basil, while Sulpicius had made a direct reference to the institutes observed by the Egyptian monks.

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. Sulp.*Dial.* III.17.

<sup>35</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.2: *quae sit ibi sanctorum quies, quae instituta monachorum, quantisque signis ac virtutibus in servis suis Christus operetur.*

<sup>36</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.4.

<sup>37</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.21: *ita breviter universa nostrorum instituta complexus es.*

<sup>38</sup>Ruf.*Reg.Bas.* Pref.11.

Cassian's *instituta* are built on the foundation laid by his predecessors. He adopted the idea that there might be *instituta monachorum* and developed it into an entire system, a unified body of legislation that guided the lives of the Egyptian Desert Fathers. Moreover, unlike the ascetic guidelines made up by whomever wished to found a monastery in Gaul, Cassian's *instituta* had guided the true ascetics for centuries. As he noted in his preface,

For I do not believe that it has been possible to discover a new constitution in the western parts of Gaul more reasonable or perfect than those institutes which have been established, in which, from the beginning of the apostolic proclamation, the monasteries that have been founded by saints and spiritual fathers, endure right down to our day.<sup>39</sup>

The *instituta Aegyptiorum*, as shall be demonstrated, were certified by the weight of antiquity, and they had long governed the lives of all true ascetics. This legislation, which dated back to the founding of the church, had been carefully passed on from master to worthy disciple, and even in Cassian's day, was the standard that ordered the lives of the Desert Fathers.

### The Sources of the *Instituta*

One of Cassian's most important arguments was the idea that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* were not a new thing, but rather dated back to the foundation of the church, and in fact, to the pre-Christian prophets. One of the methods he used to substantiate this proposition was to cast Elijah and Elisha in the role of proto-monks. This appeal to antiquity was a common literary topos; in classical writing it could be used to justify an argument by showing that a custom or practice had been established in the far-distant past. Conversely, an opponent's views could be discredited by suggesting that they were somehow novel or new. This practice is found in both secular and ecclesiastical argumentation.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Cass.*Inst.* Pref.8: *nequaquam enim credens rationabilius quippiam, vel perfectius constitutionem novellam in occiduis Galliarum partibus reperire potuisse, quam illa sint instituta, in quibus ab exordio praedicationis apostolicae a sanctis ac spiritualibus patribus fundata monasteria ad nos usque perdurant.*

<sup>40</sup>See for instance the case of the philosopher Celsus, who argued that Christianity was a novel religion (*Or.Cels.* I.26; *Or.Cels.* II.4-5; *Or.Cels.* VI.10) Cf. *Tert.Apol.* XXXVII.4. See also Burrows (1988), 209-235 for Tertullian's use of history in his *Apologia*.

Cassian employed an appeal to antiquity to defend the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. An example of this may be found in Cassian's discussion of the monastic practice of girding the loins.<sup>41</sup> In developing his argument for girded loins, Cassian closely followed Basil's exposition of the same subject.<sup>42</sup> His emulation of Basil included appropriating the same biblical texts to support his argument.<sup>43</sup> Where he deviated from Basil was his interpretation of the significance of his biblical proof texts.

Basil felt that Christians should gird their loins for reasons that were largely practical. The girdle was essential for one who worked. It created a neat appearance, and made it easier to move by drawing the tunic close to the body, which preserved bodily warmth.<sup>44</sup> Moreover Christ had girded his loins when he washed his disciples' feet, and "the saints who have gone before (*praecesserunt*) us show that the use of belts is necessary."<sup>45</sup> Basil followed this statement with five examples of saints who had worn the *zona*. In Basil's opinion, these men (Elijah, Job, John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul) had set a pattern for later Christians to follow. His recommendation that Christians should follow this practice is buttressed by both these examples and the functional reasons which made girded loins a good idea.

Although Basil's practical observations may have been shared by Cassian, Cassian approached his subject from a different angle: Elijah and Elisha were not simply precedents for Christian dress; they had "laid the first foundations of the monastic life," and were the architects of Egyptian monasticism.<sup>46</sup> The equation of Elijah and the Egyptian monks was not unprecedented. Elijah's life had been a model for the accounts written about various fourth-century monks. Like them, Elijah had shunned civilization, haunting the wilderness in search of God. Eager to validate the deeds of their latter-day heroes, Christian writers reworked the tales of Elijah and applied them to the monks.<sup>47</sup> The points of contact between their lives and

<sup>41</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.1.

<sup>42</sup>And in the following discussion, 'Basil' should be understood as a reference to Basil's *Regulae fusius tractae*, as mediated by Rufinus' *Regula Basili*.

<sup>43</sup>Rufinus (*Ruf.Reg.Bas.* XI.32-41). Cassian's reliance on this chapter has been demonstrated by a number of commentators, including Gibson (1890), 201, n. 1; Guy (1965) 39, n. 1; de Vogüé (1985b), 384-386. Now see Harries (1991), 272 for Eusebius as the progenitor of the use of proof texts by Christian historians.

<sup>44</sup>*Ruf.Reg.Bas.* XI.37-38.

<sup>45</sup>*Ruf.Reg.Bas.* XI.32.

<sup>46</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.1: *Hoc enim habitu etiam illos ambulasse, qui in veteri testamento professionis huius fundavere primordia.*

<sup>47</sup>For instance, the story of God using ravens to feed Elijah (III Reg. XVI.4-6) is applied by Jerome to his hero Paulus. When Antony comes to visit Paulus in the far desert, the raven which had been supplying Paulus with food

the life of Elijah proved that God continued to work as directly and immediately in the desert as he had during the time of the Old Testament. This was in contrast to the cities where no miracles took place. The writers who chronicled late-fourth century Egyptian monasticism modeled their stories on the narratives contained in Holy Scripture.

Cassian took this a step further. Where other writers had stressed the similarity of their subjects to the prophets, Cassian argued that the prophets had originated the monastic movement. Elijah laid the foundation (*fundavere primordia*) of what became the monastic lifestyle. He was the founder of a system which flowered at the time of the apostles and persisted into the present age. Elijah was more than a type, as for instance Moses is considered a type for Jesus. He prefigured the desert life, but he also founded or laid down what became the monastic life. Where Basil had simply offered Elijah as an example of an important figure who girded his loins, Cassian forged an explicit connection between the early prophets and the later monks.<sup>48</sup>

This connection was reinforced in Cassian's discussion of the monastic robe, where he asserted that nothing should be done that had not been taught by the ancient saints who had laid the foundations of the monastic profession.<sup>49</sup> Another connection to the prophets is made when he noted that the present day monks wore goatskins, "in order to imitate those who in the Old Testament prefigured the lines of this vocation."<sup>50</sup> The link with the prophetic office was strengthened by Cassian's citation of Heb. XI.37-38 in the following lines of his chapter on the goatskin. The anonymous writer of Hebrews<sup>51</sup> had penned a description of the prophets which could just as easily have been a description of the monastic movement. Separated from (and superior to) the world, these men haunted lonely places in search of God. The connections to the monastic life were obvious and Cassian was not alone in citing them. That Cassian found these verses particularly apposite as a reference to the monastic life can be demonstrated from the fact that he cited them in two other places in his work.<sup>52</sup>

for 60 years, brings a whole loaf instead of the usual half (Hier. V. Paul. X).

<sup>48</sup>This forging of links is also found in *Collationes* where Cassian notes that Elijah, Elisha, Antony, and certain others made it their purpose to pursue "the secret works of the desert" (*erga eremi secreta*) and purity of heart (Cass. Coll. XIV.4).

<sup>49</sup>Cass. Inst. I.2.

<sup>50</sup>Cass. Inst. I.7: *quae gestant ad imitationem eorum qui professionis huius praefiguravere lineas iam in veteri Testamento.*

<sup>51</sup>Thought to have been Paul during Cassian's time.

<sup>52</sup>Cassian cites Heb. XI.37-38 twice in *Collationes*. The first time is in connection with those who are now imitated by the Egyptian monks, namely John the Baptist, Elijah, Elisha, and those of whom the Apostle speaks in

### The Apostolic Church and the Rule of the Angel

Another, equally important source for the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was the apostolic church.<sup>53</sup> This source emerges in Cassian's discussion of the two nocturnal offices of prayer that are observed by the Egyptian monks. According to Cassian, the Gallic monks employed widely divergent practices of prayer.<sup>54</sup> This was in contrast to the Egyptian practice of two nocturnal offices, which,

established in antiquity, endures inviolate down through the ages until now in all the monasteries of those provinces: because it was not sanctioned by the invention of men, laid down by the fathers, but was brought down from heaven to the fathers under the supervision of an angel.<sup>55</sup>

This statement serves as a *précis* for Cassian's justification of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. The *instituta* are preeminent not only because of their great antiquity, but also because certain aspects of the code had come from heaven, given directly to men by God. Cassian developed this startling proposition over three chapters of the second book of *De institutis*.<sup>56</sup> In compiling this early history of the monastic movement, Cassian drew on the Book of Acts and Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*. These two sources, plus the Rule of the Angel (which will be discussed below) anchor Cassian's account of the origins of monasticism.

He began with an exploration of the ancient roots of the coenobitic life. According to Cassian, the monastic life was started by the evangelist Mark, who was also the first bishop of Alexandria. This first group of monks, under Mark's leadership, embraced not only all of the virtues recorded of the first believers in the early Jerusalem community,<sup>57</sup> but "added even

the book of Hebrews (Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.6). These same saints, along with those referred to in Heb. XI.37-38, also form an honor roll of men who went beyond the requirements of the law laid down by Moses (Cass. *Coll.* XXI.4).

<sup>53</sup>In the following discussion the term 'apostolic church' should be understood as a reference to the early Jerusalem community described in the Book of Acts. This first body of believers formed around the Apostles after Christ's ascension into heaven (Acts 1.9-15) and remained in Jerusalem until they were dispersed after the death of Stephen (Acts VIII.1). It is not my intention to engage with any theological or historical issues about this group, and my term 'apostolic church' is nothing more than a convenient reference for the sake of discussion.

<sup>54</sup>See Cass. *Inst.* II.2 and the discussion beginning on pg. 53 for a discussion of Gallic novelty versus Egyptian orthodoxy.

<sup>55</sup>Cass. *Inst.* II.4: *Qui modus antiquitus constitutus, idcirco per tot saecula penes cuncta illarum provinciarum monasteria intemeratus nunc usque perdurat: quia non humana adinventione statutus a senioribus adfirmatur, sed caelitus angeli magisterio patribus fuisse delatus.*

<sup>56</sup>Cass. *Inst.* II.4-6.

<sup>57</sup>And here Cassian cites Acts 4:32; 34-35.

more sublime things to their example.”<sup>58</sup> They withdrew into the secret places of the suburbs and led lives of such strict rigor that all who saw them were amazed. They brooded, day and night, over the Holy Scriptures and fasted for great lengths of time, taking food and drink out of necessity rather than desire. Those who wanted to learn more about their lives could read about it in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, wrote Cassian.<sup>59</sup>

Cassian’s link between the apostolic church (as described in Acts IV.32–35) and the monastic movement is not without logic. This passage portrays a community which strikes even a modern reader as being monastic in many respects,<sup>60</sup>

Now the heart and soul of the great number who were believing was one, and no one said that any of his possessions belonged to him,<sup>61</sup> but rather, all things were held in common... for no one was poor among them, for those who owned houses or lands sold them and brought the proceeds of the sale and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and this money was distributed to each as they had need.<sup>62</sup>

These verses describe an early fervor, the feeling that Christ (who had just ascended into heaven) would soon return. Anticipating an imminent *parousia*, the believers were exchanging their earthly treasures for treasures in heaven.<sup>63</sup> Goods and property were sold and donated to a common fund, an action which Cassian would later interpret as a precedent for his belief that monks must sever their ties to all worldly goods.<sup>64</sup>

The importance of these verses for the monastic movement is demonstrated by the range of writers who utilized them. The Pachomian abbot Horsiesios took them as a proof text that the Pachomian monastic community sprang from God, and was intended to be united in love,

<sup>58</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.5: *verum etiam his multo sublimiora cumulaverant.*

<sup>59</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>60</sup>See now Capper (1995), 1730–1744 for the idea that the early ascetic and communal quality of the apostolic church was derived from the teachings of the Essenes.

<sup>61</sup>A modern commentator on the Book of Acts, I. Howard Marshall, suggests this clause means that the believers did not renounce their property until it was needed by the community (Marshall (1980), 108). This interpretation would be favored by those who advocated Christian stewardship of property (Paulinus of Nola, for instance; see discussion pg. 162). Needless to say, it does not correspond to Cassian’s exegesis of this passage.

<sup>62</sup>Acts IV.32–34: *Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία, καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι, ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς πάντα κοινά... οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον, πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πωρασκομένων καὶ ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων· διεδίδοτο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν.*

<sup>63</sup>Matt. XIX.21.

<sup>64</sup>See esp. Cass.*Inst.* VII.17, and the discussion in Chapter 5 (pg. 153 and following).

just as the hearts and souls of the apostolic church members had been united.<sup>65</sup> Everything done by the monk was for the sake of community, to further the communal goal of having one heart and one mind.<sup>66</sup> Implicit in this unity was the idea that a monk had no right to withhold worldly goods from his brethren, and must follow the saints who had relinquished their goods by placing them at the feet of the apostles.<sup>67</sup> In the *First Sahidic Life of Pachomius*, when disciples began to flock to Pachomius, he established a rule which required each monk to work enough to be self-supporting and to provide a share of food and goods to offer hospitality to guests. In a passage modeled on Acts, these early disciples each brought a share to Pachomius, who administered these goods. Pachomius' early disciples required this oversight, states the author, because they were not yet ready to enter into the perfect *koinonia*, the state where all the brothers were of one heart and mind.<sup>68</sup>

Basil used these verses to support his argument for the superiority of communal living (which leads the brethren both to Christian perfection as well as unity of heart and mind). Communal life allows monks to make progress toward perfection in love through the service of others.<sup>69</sup> He closed his chapter on the advantages of community by stating that those who worked communally toward this goal adhered to the pattern set in Acts IV. The words "mine" and "yours" are not to be allowed among the brothers, he wrote later, as the brothers are to aim toward the goal of unity of heart and soul.<sup>70</sup> This goal was fostered by the renunciation of possessions, and Basil forbade the private ownership of goods as contrary to Acts IV.32.<sup>71</sup> Each monk was to receive in accordance with his needs, like those who had been part of the apostolic church, an act that would lead the monk into bodily continence.<sup>72</sup> Sober overseers were to be placed over the community to see that this goal was met, dispensing goods impartially and

<sup>65</sup>Hors.*Test.* L.

<sup>66</sup>Hors.*Reg.* LI. Theodore, in his discourse on Pachomius to some erring brothers, asserts that it was Pachomius who had made the brethren one spirit and one body (*V.Pach.Bo.* CXCIV).

<sup>67</sup>Hors.*Test.* XXVII. See also *Aug.Ep.* CXXI.5 where he uses the same precedent to support his claim that the women living under his sister must contribute all of their private property to a common pool for the good of their sisters.

<sup>68</sup>*V.Pach.Sad.* XI.

<sup>69</sup>*Bas.Reg.fus.* VII.

<sup>70</sup>*Bas.Reg.fus.* XXXII.

<sup>71</sup>*Bas.Reg.br.* LXXXV. Clarke notes some inconsistency in Basil's application of this precept to himself. One of Basil's letters (*Bas.Ep.* XXXVII) suggests that Basil continued to maintain an interest in his ancestral home. He also wrote a letter (*Bas.Ep.* CCLXXXIV) requesting that his monks be exempted from imperial taxation (Clarke (1925), 262 n.4).

<sup>72</sup>*Bas.Reg.fus.* XIX.

without favoritism.<sup>73</sup>

For Cassian, like the early Pachomian monks and Basil, the one heart and soul signalled the perfection of this community in Christ. The Egyptian monastic forebears were cast in the image of the apostolic church which had been dispersed. Their unity was displayed by their voluntary shedding of temporal goods for the benefit of their brethren.<sup>74</sup> But this was only a starting point for the progenitors of the monastic life. Having received their monastic training from the blessed Mark, the first Egyptian monks went on to deeds which exceeded those recorded in Acts IV.

Cassian's source for his account of the early monk's excellence may be found in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>75</sup> According to Eusebius, Mark was the first to preach the Gospel in Egypt and establish churches in Alexandria.<sup>76</sup> Under Mark's tutelage, an ascetic community sprung up which had been so impressively philosophical (*ἀσκήσεως φιλοσοφωτάτης τε καὶ σφοδροτάτης*)<sup>77</sup> that it gained the notice of famous the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria.

In Eusebius' account, Philo was impressed with Christianity ("he not only knew, but also warmly accepted, revered, and also exalted those apostolic men")<sup>78</sup> and had made a trip to Rome to consult with Peter. The Jewish philosopher's sympathy for the Christian church is supposed to account for the favorable remarks about the early Alexandrian (Christian) ascetics Philo made in *On the Contemplative Life*. These men and women (according to Eusebius) were called *Therapeutae* because of their ability to heal the evils of those who sought their help.<sup>79</sup> Those who joined this community first renounced all of their worldly goods, distributing them among their relatives. This was in accordance with (once again) the example set by

<sup>73</sup>Bas.Reg.fus. XXXIV. See also Bas.Reg.br. CXXXI; Bas.Reg.fus. CXXXV concerns the duty of the overseer to know the needs of those for whom he makes provision. In Bas.Reg.br. CL, Basil claims that the overseer who fails in this task receives Christ's condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink" (Matt. XXV.41-42, RSV).

<sup>74</sup>A point I will develop more fully in Chapter V of this thesis where I consider Cassian's views on renunciation.

<sup>75</sup>Cass.Inst. II.5. Cf. Runia (1993), 230.

<sup>76</sup>Eus.H.e. II.16.1.

<sup>77</sup>Eus.H.e. II.16.1.

<sup>78</sup>Eus.H.e. II.17.2: *οὐκ εἰδώς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποδεχόμενος ἐκθειάζων τε καὶ σεμνύων τοὺς κατ' αὐτὸν ἀποστολικοὺς ἄνδρας.*

<sup>79</sup>Philo's term for this community is something of an uninformed mistake according to Eusebius (Eus.H.e. II.17.4), but forgivable as the name *Christian* was not widely known at the time he wrote. See Taylor and Davies (1998) for a recent appraisal of the identity of this group.

the apostolic church.<sup>80</sup> These men and women went out beyond the city walls to make their dwellings in the desert in imitation of the prophets.<sup>81</sup> They engaged in the study of the sacred scriptures from dawn to dusk,<sup>82</sup> and they took no food or drink until after sunset, because the study of philosophy deserves the light of day, while the needs of the body should be attended to in darkness.<sup>83</sup> Some of these ascetics ate every third day while others went six days at a time without food.<sup>84</sup>

Eusebius deduced that the community described by the Jewish philosopher were Christians from the observation that some of their practices were found only among Christians. These practices included women remaining virgins out of their great love for learning,<sup>85</sup> their celebration of the feast commemorating Christ's passion,<sup>86</sup> and the way the assembled group sang Christian hymns during the vigils (one person sang while the others listened in silence).<sup>87</sup> They also abstained from wine, ate no meat, and drank only water.<sup>88</sup> It should be plain to any reader, concluded Eusebius, that Philo recorded some of the earliest traditions of the Christian church which had been handed down from the Apostles.<sup>89</sup>

The story of the *Therapeutai* underwent a twofold process of redaction in its transmission from Philo to Cassian. This process can be observed by tracing the evolution of ideas concerning the disposal of temporal goods, a subject near Cassian's heart. According to Philo, the *Therapeutai* renounced all of their worldly possessions before joining the communities. They did this out of their longing for the "deathless and blessed life" (*ἀθανάτου καὶ μακαρίας ζωῆς*) the life that lies beyond mortal existence. The renunciation of property signals their "death" to this world, and their goods and possessions are passed on to their descendants, relatives, and friends.<sup>90</sup> Eusebius, while noting that the ascetics gave their possessions to their relatives, attempted to link this renunciation to the prophetic vocation. According to his ex-

<sup>80</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.6.

<sup>81</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.5.

<sup>82</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.10.

<sup>83</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.16.

<sup>84</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.17.

<sup>85</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.19.

<sup>86</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.22.

<sup>87</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.22. See *Cass.Inst.* II.10 for the same practice among the Egyptian monks.

<sup>88</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.22.

<sup>89</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.24.

<sup>90</sup>Philo.*Con.* XV.

planation, the prophets had always followed this course, as is suggested by the example of the apostolic church — a rather curious blending of precedents.<sup>91</sup> It would seem that Eusebius introduced the apostolic church in an attempt to Christianize Philo's Jewish *Therapeutai* — by drawing in the Acts story, Eusebius gave his ascetics a Christian past, although he neglected to reconcile his opening statement (that the ascetics gave their property to their relatives) with his closing example of the apostolic church members contributing their wealth to a common pool.

Cassian reworked the story a second time, strengthening the parallel with the apostolic church while simultaneously eliminating the claim that the ascetics had given their goods to relatives. Indeed, his claim that the monastic forebears preserved the practices of the Jerusalem church (followed by the Acts IV:32–35 citation) strongly suggests that the ascetics had contributed their goods to a common pool. Cassian enhanced the argument that Eusebius had proposed, eliminating all references to relatives and placing his ascetic forebears in a direct line with the apostolic church.

The parallels between the *Therapeutai* and Cassian's monastic forefathers are rather evident and require little elucidation. Both groups were said to have been founded by the evangelist Mark during his tenure as the first bishop of Alexandria.<sup>92</sup> Both groups used the apostolic church as a model for their organization and both advocated a complete renunciation of worldly possessions before joining the community.<sup>93</sup> Cassian's monks withdrew from the city and become a source of marvel for those who were not as fervent; Eusebius' *Therapeutai* gathered around Lake Mareia, south of Alexandria.<sup>94</sup>

The main occupation of both groups was the rigorous study of Scripture. They did this during the day and ministered to their bodily needs only after sundown.<sup>95</sup> The members of both groups lived like angels, so absorbed in study and prayer that they would often go three days without food. On this point, however, Eusebius' ascetics take the palm as some would often double this period, fasting for six days at a time.<sup>96</sup> And finally, there is an interesting

<sup>91</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.5–6.

<sup>92</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.16.1; Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>93</sup>This is more explicit in Eusebius than in Cassian, although the latter's comments elsewhere sustain the view that Cassian intends his use of the Acts IV church to signify renunciation. Eus.*H.e.* II.17.5–6; Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>94</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.9; Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>95</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.16; Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>96</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.17; Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

correspondence between Eusebius' description of communal prayer and the model that Cassian advances. In both versions, the assembled group listens to the voice of one person reading a psalm (an ὕμνος in Eusebius) and then all sing a refrain or antiphon at the conclusion of the piece.<sup>97</sup>

Cassian's foundation story received a fuller exposition in *Coll.* XVIII.5. Here Abba Piamun, while offering an account of monastic origins, stated that the earliest orders of monks were coenobitic. Out of this tree grew the branches of anchoritism, as exemplified by the lives of Paul and Antony. In repeating this story, Piamun provided more information than is found in *De institutis* II.5. He began by citing the example of the apostolic church: the believers had one heart and soul; all possessions were shared equally. This primitive perfection, said Piamun was found only rarely in his day among a handful of believers.<sup>98</sup> The reason for the decline of this group is spelled out more fully: it was a victim of its own success. The introduction of gentile converts into the church led to a decline in standards. This was not a case of xenophobia, but rather an expression of Cassian's belief that the church had opened its doors to laxity when it relaxed its strict observances to admit gentiles.<sup>99</sup> In Cassian's view, the less stringent requirements adopted for the gentile believers proved to be a case of excessive liberty, one which diluted the original high standards of the apostolic church.<sup>100</sup> Some, seeing the liberty extended to the former hellenes, began to apply it to themselves, and believed that they did not have to renounce their property.<sup>101</sup>

Excessive liberty, in Cassian's view, led to an antinomian position: the Christian view that deeds were unimportant as long as belief remained unshaken. By relaxing the strictures of the Mosaic law, the Apostles had allowed mediocrity to creep into the primitive church. It is striking that for Cassian, this degeneration of purity did not manifest itself as a loosening of sexual or social mores, but rather as a growing refusal to renounce property and possessions. Impropropriety was economic. The tepid Christians asserted that for those who believed in Christ, possession of property was a matter of indifference. Wealth could be retained as long as it was

<sup>97</sup>Eus.*H.e.* II.17.22; Cass.*Inst.* II.5; Cass.*Inst.* II.8.

<sup>98</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>99</sup>Acts XV.29. At the first church council, the Council of Jerusalem, Paul and his followers were able to gain an exemption for the new Gentile believers, freeing them from the ritual observation of the Mosaic law.

<sup>100</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>101</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.5.

used for a good purpose. This was, as will be discussed in Chapter V, a line of justification employed by the western ascetics of Cassian's time.

This theme is reiterated in Book XXI of *Collationes*, where Abba Theonas discussed the origin of the ecclesiastical custom of Lent. According to Theonas, the Lenten observance did not exist while the primitive church remained in its original pristine state. Unfortunately, the believers began to fall away from this apostolic purity and started not only to retain their possessions, but going beyond Ananias and Sapphira, actually were adding to their wealth.<sup>102</sup> Again in Cassian's view, wealth and possessions were the great evil that had destroyed the apostolic church.

Fortunately, there were some who retained the fervor that had been instilled by the Apostolic proclamation. These men and women began to withdraw from the deteriorating church. They abandoned the towns, seeking lonely places in which to practice what they remembered of the apostolic example. In this way, according to Cassian, they separated themselves from contamination, preserving the purity of the early church. They cut themselves off from marriage, possessions, and relatives. They became monks.<sup>103</sup>

While Peter Brown's assertion that Late Antique theological writers used the example of the apostolic church to stimulate greater zeal among their congregations, by pointing to the degeneration of the present day church,<sup>104</sup> may be correct for a number of authors, Cassian focused attention on a different aspect of the story.<sup>105</sup> His argument is not that the church had lapsed from its original apostolic perfection — that corruption was presupposed. Whereas other writers would lament the fact that the church of their day fell short of the apostolic church, Cassian's story was designed to shine a spotlight on the group that had nursed the small flame of apostolic perfection down through the centuries. The Egyptian desert fathers preserved the charisms of the apostolic church while the rest of the church had slid into darkness. As keepers

<sup>102</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XXI.1-3.

<sup>103</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>104</sup>Brown (1995), 23. This "myth of decline" was especially prevalent in Latin ascetic circles, according to Brown, who lists Cassian as an example of this use of the Acts IV church on page 81, n. 50. See also Grant (1970), 295-299 for a discussion of the rhetorical uses of the myth of decline in Tacitus.

<sup>105</sup>Although in recent scholarship the idea of monasticism as a reaction against a corrupt Catholic church has lost much currency, there are still some scholars who read passages like this as evidence for a reforming spirit among the ascetics. See for instance, Lindars (1984), 237, who cites Cass.*Coll.* XVIII as a passage that demonstrates "very clearly that the monastic movement of the late Third century regarded itself as a reform movement, a protest against the corruption of the church by the world."

of the heritage of perfection, the Egyptians were the best model for Gallic ascetic life.

Although it is tempting to read these lines as a condemnation of the contemporary church or a positioning of the ascetic life as a form of 'institutionalized protest,'<sup>106</sup> Cassian's primary intent in both *De institutis* II and *Collationes* XVIII is to demonstrate the great antiquity of the *institututa Aegyptiorum*, especially in comparison to the novel Gallic practices. He employs the myth of the fall of the church as neither object lesson nor rallying call, but rather as a historic event which located the birth of true monasticism at the beginning of Christian history. Unlike those who were simply making up ascetic practices in Gaul, the *institututa Aegyptiorum* could be dated back to the time of the Apostles. This legislation had endured because the ever-sapient fathers had taken steps to create a body of legislation that would guide successive generations through the gathering gloom.

The second half of *De institutis* II.5 narrates the events that grew out of the founding fathers' perception that the original purity of the coenobitic life was in danger of contamination. This threat was met by the convocation of a monastic council charged with defining the rules for coenobitic living. The goal of these rules, was to define ascetic practices and standards so that future generations of monks would enjoy a legacy of "piety and peace" rather than noxious schism and division.

Cassian told his readers that the process of definition was not free from acrimony. Indeed one of the primary points of contention raised at this council was the number of psalms the monks should chant together in the nocturnal offices. Each father was allowed to make a case for his own usage: some advocated large numbers of psalms (as many as fifty or sixty a night). Some fathers thought that there should be more, others less. The assembly was not able to reach a unanimous decision about the number. Finally, when the hour of prayer approached, the monks decided to celebrate vespers together. A monk rose and chanted twelve psalms. At the conclusion of the twelfth psalm, he vanished from sight, imposing a sudden end to the office as well as to the dispute over the number.<sup>107</sup> The holy fathers understood, wrote Cassian, that God, through the agency of an angel, had established an universal rule for the nocturnal

<sup>106</sup>As have Markus (1990), 166 and de Vogüé (1961), *passim*.

<sup>107</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

offices, which was to be kept by the congregations of brothers.<sup>108</sup>

Aside from a continuing intent to give his version of the *institutum* an underpinning in antiquity, Cassian here also seems to be drawing a contrast between the disordered state of the Gallic observance (where every ascetic did whatever pleased his fancy) and the Egyptian ancestors, who, concerned for future generations, came together as a group to delineate the rules for their successors.

Cassian evoked the imagery of a monastic council to lend additional authority to his *institutum Aegyptiorum*. In view of the great fourth-century councils this imagery may have been deliberate. Freed from the immediate threat of a general persecution, the fourth-century church began devoting considerable energy to a definition of 'orthodox' theology and praxis. Consensus of bishops was becoming a powerful force in the formation of what was normative for the church. An early fifth-century reader might have this in mind, and Cassian seems to be playing on the idea by attributing the decision to an early monastic council.

In Cassian's account, the early fathers were divided over the question of psalmody. Like the Gauls, each man had his own particular practice which he advocated for adoption. The important distinction Cassian sets out, is that unlike the Gauls, the Egyptian fathers were interested in uniformity and establishing a rule for all rather than simply following their own individualistic whims. The difference between the Egyptians and Gauls is not that they do not have their own ideas about what is appropriate, but rather that the Egyptians were willing to conform to the consensus of the whole, whereas the Gauls persisted in their self-centered practices.

Cassian illustrated the heroic excellence of the fathers in his account of the number of psalms each man advocated. Each monk submitted ever-larger numbers of psalms, championing what came easily to him, while simultaneously neglecting the needs of the weaker brothers.<sup>109</sup> Some of these great prayer warriors advocated the recitation of 50 or 60 psalms at each office, while others pressed for more. Cassian makes it clear that these varying rec-

<sup>108</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.6.

<sup>109</sup>And here we see a theme that Benedict of Nursia would develop as the backbone of his rule, the need to set goals that even the weakest of the monks could attain. See, for instance, his legislation on the proper amount of wine for a monk: a monk is allowed a half bottle per day as a concession to the weak, although the strong brother should aim to take no wine at all (Ben.*Reg.* XL).

ommendations did not grow out of a spirit of pride or braggadocio, but rather were reflections of the individual excellence of these early monks. The debate was not contentious but rather a 'pious struggle,' a 'holy disagreement.'<sup>110</sup> The fathers were not engaged in monastic one-upmanship. Each was sincere in his advocacy of what he had found to be the best practice in his own personal prayer life.

Nevertheless the council had reached an impasse, one which human negotiating skills were unable to resolve. At this point Cassian shifted the justification for the *instituta Aegyptiorum* to a higher plane. Whereas his earlier claims about what monks should wear had been supported by appeals to the example of the prophets, apostles, and early fathers, Cassian now made God the source of the rule for prayer. In doing so, he reworked an Egyptian story and placed it at the heart of his foundation myth. The idea that God had directed the organization of primitive monasticism through the intervention of an angel was not unique to Cassian. The best parallel to his version is offered by Palladius in the *Historia Lausiaca*, which recounts how Pachomius received a bronze tablet containing the rules for monastic life from an angel.<sup>111</sup>

In Palladius' account, Pachomius was sitting alone in a cave when an angel appeared. The angel told Pachomius that because he had reached perfection, he was now fit to go forth and lead young men into the monastic life. To aid in this task, the angel gave Pachomius a bronze tablet which contained directives for food and drink, work, dress, and the organization of the monastery. Additionally, the angel ordered the monks to "offer twelve prayers throughout the day, twelve at the time of lamp-lighting, twelve at the night vigils, and three at the ninth hour; but when the monks are about to eat, he ordered a psalm to be sung before each prayer."<sup>112</sup> When Pachomius protested that this number of prayers was too small, the angel answered that the measure had been set with the needs of the weak rather than the strong in mind.

<sup>110</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>111</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* XXXII. This story is repeated in Soz.*H.e.* III.14, where Sozomen adds the interesting detail that the bronze tablet existed in his day. The correspondence with the version offered in the *Historia Lausiaca* suggests that Palladius' work was the source for Sozomen (cf. Butler (1904), 206, n. 50).

For an angelic source as validation of a text's authority, see Lane Fox (1994), 132-133.

<sup>112</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* XXXII: ἐτύπωσε δὲ διὰ πάσης τῆς ἡμέρας ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐχὰς δώδεκα, καὶ ἐν τῷ λυξινικῷ δώδεκα, καὶ ἐν ταῖς παννυχισι δώδεκα, καὶ ἐννάτην ὥραν τρεῖς· ὅτε δὲ μέλλει τὸ πλῆθος ἐσθίειν ἐκάστη εὐχῇ ψαλμὸν προῖδεσθαι τυπώσας.

Stylistic variations between Palladius' chapter on Pachomius and the rest of his book suggest the view that Palladius copied this account from a written source.<sup>113</sup> Indeed the idea that an earlier version of the story was circulating in the desert is implied by Jerome's preface to the *Regulae Pachomii*, where he mentions the "angel who was sent to them, having been sent on behalf of this rule itself."<sup>114</sup> Jerome's reference (made in the year 404) suggests familiarity with the Rule of the Angel story.<sup>115</sup> Veilleux sees this story as one which predated Palladius, and concludes "the famous Rule of the Angel is a document composed in Lower Egypt by someone who had only a very superficial knowledge of the Pachomian *Koinonia*."<sup>116</sup> If the extant Pachomian *vitae* are accepted as a more accurate depiction of the genesis and development of Pachomian monasticism, then Veilleux is certainly right; the rules which gave structure to Pachomian monasticism emerged through a lengthy process of trial and error. They were not handed to Pachomius on bronze tablets.

Nevertheless, the evidence of Jerome and Palladius supports the idea that there was a version of this story circulating at the time they wrote their works. Cassian appears to have reworked this fable to suit his own purposes. He used the story to buttress his version of psalmody simply because it was already in place and known. His readers might have already heard some version of it. By appropriating this account and inserting it into *De institutis*, Cassian not only strengthened his own case, but also demonstrated his *experientia*: he knew this story and, quite possibly was correcting an aberrant version which may have reached the West through Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*.<sup>117</sup>

Cassian does make significant adjustments to Palladius' version of this story. The angel does not appear to Pachomius, but rather to a group of ancient fathers determined to set an

<sup>113</sup>The arguments for this view can be found in Veilleux (1981b), 5–6.

<sup>114</sup>*Hier.Reg.Pach.* Pref.1: *qui ad eos ob hanc ipsam institutionem missus venerit.*

<sup>115</sup>Van der Mensbrugge (1957), 445 dates the genesis of the Rule of the Angel to the period between 346 and 390. He attributes (447) the differences in Cassian's and Palladius' versions to the fact that the Rule (and the monastic practice of prayer it purports to legislate) developed between the time Cassian first heard it (prior to 400), and when Palladius heard it (during a trip back to Egypt after Theophilus' death in 412). There is, unfortunately, no evidence for such a trip by Palladius. The likelier explanation is that Cassian and Palladius both had heard a version of this Rule while in Egypt, and modified it to serve their own rhetorical ends when the time came to present it to their readers.

<sup>116</sup>Veilleux (1981b), 6.

<sup>117</sup>I have already argued that Cassian did the same thing with his story of John who waters a stick until it turns into a tree (*Cass.Inst.* IV.24). This story, first reported by Sulpicius Severus (*Sulp.Dial.* I.19), was reworked by Cassian in an apparent attempt to correct the erroneous, miraculous ending Sulpicius had given the story (see pg. 110).

appropriate number of psalms for future generations. In Cassian's version the angel does not give the fathers a list of regulations for monastic life, but only disappears in a timely manner to settle an irreconcilable division. The angel in Cassian's story provides guidance in a much subtler way than the angel in Palladius. The ancient fathers were required to exercise their spiritual discernment in order to interpret the significance of the angel's sudden disappearance.

The objections of the fathers to the small number of psalms proposed stand as a verbal allusion to the Rule of the Angel as transmitted by Palladius. When the angel proposed the twelve psalm recitation, Pachomius objected, saying that the number was too small.<sup>118</sup> The angel's response, that he had legislated what was possible for even the weakest monks, is implied by Cassian's observation that the fathers were not considering the needs of the weakest members among the brothers in advancing their proposals.

Divine intervention was required to both break the deadlock and set the seal of orthodoxy upon the practice of reciting twelve psalms at each office. Cassian's account of the disappearing angel points to both the Rule of the Angel as well as other biblical stories where angels or God appear or disappear unexpectedly.<sup>119</sup> The sudden disappearance of this angel was (properly) interpreted by the fathers to signify God's will that the monks sing twelve psalms at each office. By reworking the Rule of the Angel to meet his purpose, Cassian grounded his version of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* in the ultimate authority.

Cassian, as has been demonstrated, used a wide range of sources to provide a history for his *instituta Aegyptiorum*. The *instituta* had an ancient and noteworthy pedigree, reaching back to embrace the Old Testament prophets, Apostles, and the early apostolic church. Moreover, the version of monasticism Cassian claimed to proffer also bore the seal of divine approval, as illustrated by the story of the angel who set the standard for monastic psalmody. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* possessed great age and had been divinely instituted. This certainly could not be said about the haphazard Gallic practices.

<sup>118</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* XXXII.6.

<sup>119</sup>This account of angelic intervention strongly resembles the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke XXIV.13-35). Christ accompanies the pair on the road, but they do not recognize him until he breaks bread at the evening meal. At this point, as their eyes are opened, he disappears. One might also recall the injunction to hospitality contained in the Letter to the Hebrews, where the author states that those who open their homes to strangers will "entertain angels unawares." Heb. XIII.2.

Another example of an angel offering guidance on ascetic practices may be found in Apophth.*Patr.* Antony I where an angel offers an example of work and prayer as the path that leads to salvation.

## The Transmission of the *Instituta*

One of Cassian's important arguments, as has been demonstrated above, was the suggestion that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* were of great age and antiquity. Far from being a collection of novel practices, they were rooted in the early apostolic church where true monasticism began. Indeed, as Cassian suggested, these earliest monks met in a council to establish normative practices for the ascetics who would come after them.<sup>120</sup>

But what guaranteed that the *instituta* forged by these earliest monks were the same as those used by the Egyptian monks of the early fifth century? Cassian presents a simple answer for this problem: the *instituta Aegyptiorum* had been handed on from master to disciple in an unbroken line that linked the apostolic church to the present day Egyptian fathers. In positing this chain of transmission, Cassian invoked the same argument that ecclesiastical writers had used since the first century, the idea that orthodox doctrine was guaranteed by Apostolic succession.<sup>121</sup>

The earliest writer (ca. 96) to employ this line was Clement of Rome in his *Epistula i ad Corinthios*. In this letter he suggested the continuity of orthodox doctrine by stating that Jesus had taught the apostles, who had then taught and ordained the bishops and deacons who taught those who would follow.<sup>122</sup> This uniformity of doctrine and practice was still to be found among the apostolically-founded churches, according to Hegesippus, who had made a tour of these churches (ca. 154–166).<sup>123</sup>

This line of argumentation received further development in Irenaeus' polemic against gnosticism.<sup>124</sup> In *Adversus haereses*, he stated that the doctrines taught by the "true" church were those which had been taught by the apostles.<sup>125</sup> This body of tradition had been so zealously

<sup>120</sup>See Cass.*Inst.* II.5 and *supra* pg. 135.

<sup>121</sup>The use of apostolic succession as an argument for the authentication of orthodox practice may have derived from the example provided by the Hellenistic philosophers. See Brent (1993), 367–389, who postulates a clear connection between the creation of lists demonstrating apostolic succession by writers like Irenaeus, and the succession lists created by philosophers like Diogenes. It was also one of the major tests for Eusebius for differentiating between orthodoxy (which was characterized by lineal succession and continuity of teaching) and heresy (discontinuity) (Cf. Markus (1975), 6). See Eno (1984) for a florilegium of patristic authors on authority.

<sup>122</sup>*I Clem.* XLII.

<sup>123</sup>Eus.*H.e.* IV.22. Hegesippus' five volume polemic against the gnostics (from which Eusebius quotes) is lost

<sup>124</sup>Daniélou (1973), 144–151.

<sup>125</sup>In *Iren.Haer.* III.3, Irenaeus traced the chain of the bishops of Rome from Linus (Peter's successor) to Eleutherius (the bishop who presided when he wrote).

guarded and handed down, maintained Irenaeus, that if the apostles had left no writings behind, the church would still be succored by properly transmitted tradition.<sup>126</sup> Indeed this was what was occurring among the barbarian churches which did not have access to the written copies of the Bible.<sup>127</sup>

Cassian employed the same argument. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* had been established by the earliest monks for the benefit of those ascetics who would succeed them.<sup>128</sup> Having agreed on a mode of daily practice, (and in the case of the number of psalms having received divine instruction on the question), the fathers passed on the *instituta* to their followers. Consequently, like the orthodox doctrine that was guaranteed by a chain of bishops reaching back to the apostles, the *instituta Aegyptiorum* could similarly be traced back to the first monks.

Cassian makes this point in his discussion of the monastic robe. Opposing those who have chosen to wear sackcloth coverings, he writes,

And for that reason, it will be appropriate that we too curtail as superfluous and unprofitable these examples we see being taught, which are neither from the saints of old who laid the foundations of this profession, nor from the fathers of our times, who now constantly guard their institutes through succession.<sup>129</sup>

Cassian restates this point more emphatically at the end of the same chapter,

For we ought to bestow sure faith and unquestioned obedience in all respects to these institutes and rules, not those that the will of a few introduced, but rather those whose antiquity is of such great age, and the countless numbers of the holy fathers have passed on, by unanimous agreement, to later times.<sup>130</sup>

The idea that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* were laid down by the 'holy fathers' who established the monastic life, and subsequently transmitted without dilution or modification to the present

<sup>126</sup>Iren.*Haer.* III.4. See Stam (1969), 101–115 for the role of apostolic succession and tradition.

<sup>127</sup>Iren.*Haer.* III.4. A similar view on apostolic succession is expressed by Origen in his preface to *De Principiis* (Or.*Princ.* Pref.2).

<sup>128</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.5.

<sup>129</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2: *Et idcirco haec quae nec a veteribus sanctis qui huius professionis fundamenta iecerunt, neque a Patribus nostri temporis, qui eorum per successiones instituta nunc usque custodiunt, tradita videmus exempla, ut superflua et inutilia nos quoque reseccare conveniet.*

<sup>130</sup>Cass.*Inst.* I.2: *Illis enim debemus institutis ac regulis indubitam fidem, et indiscussam oboedientiam per omnia commodare, non quas paucorum voluntas intulit, sed quas vetustas tantorum temporum, et innumerositas sanctorum Patrum concordia definitione in posterum propagavit.*

day Egyptian monks, is Cassian's most powerful argument against the novelty of the home-grown Gallic practices.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, as Cassian stated in his preface, these *instituta* had been passed on to him, a claim he made when he told Castor that he would offer an account of the institutes of the monasteries which had been "handed on to us by the fathers in that place."<sup>132</sup>

Cassian stood in the line of men who had been trained in (and now were poised to pass on) the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. This claim points to his *experientia* as well as highlighting the unbroken chain of praxis that reached back to the ancient founders of monasticism.<sup>133</sup> Cassian does not offer novel practices, but rather asserts that he can deliver what is "kept" (*custodiri*) by the present day monks in Egypt. Their zealous custodianship ensured the purity of what had been passed on (*tradita sunt*). Like the "orthodox doctrine" which had been passed from apostles to bishops, and whose consequent roots in antiquity were a defense against heretical innovation, the *instituta Aegyptiorum* had been passed along a chain which stretched unbroken back to the apostolic church. Cassian had been trained in the *instituta* which were kept in the East, and they had been handed on to him by those who guaranteed the purity of these doctrines by their zealous custodianship, the successors of an apostolically-instituted monasticism.

### Antiquitas against Diversitas

One of the principal arguments Cassian employed in *De inst.* I.2 (his discussion of the robe) was the idea that the practices of the few (even the notable few) must not take precedence over established monastic practices (the *instituta Aegyptiorum*). The opinions of the few should not be preferred or favored over the universal constitution of all which has its roots in antiquity. With this sentiment, Cassian foreshadowed the test Vincent of Lérins offered to distinguish orthodoxy (*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*)<sup>134</sup> from heresy.

Indeed, Cassian's strategy of creating a history for his *instituta* and then contrasting this ancient background with the novelty of Gallic practices had a long tradition in Christian polemic

<sup>131</sup> A theme explored in chapter II of this thesis.

<sup>132</sup> *Cass.Inst.* Pref.3: *ita ut ibi nobis a patribus tradita sunt*.

<sup>133</sup> In *Cass.Coll.* X.10, Cassian hints that the duty of transmitting this knowledge was given only to the best disciples. Abba Isaac, offering the formula for unceasing prayer, states that it had been passed to him by a few of the oldest fathers, and he passed it on only to the most exceptional disciples who desired it.

<sup>134</sup> *Vinc.Comm.* II.

against heretics.<sup>135</sup> Cassian's creation of a monastic tradition, founded by the prophets and apostles, and handed down from master to disciple, also evoked the arguments Hippolytus and Irenaeus used against the teachings of the Montanists.<sup>136</sup> The Montanists had claimed that their possession of the prophetic voice meant that their beliefs were inspired and valid. That the voice of prophecy no longer spoke in the hardening 'Catholic' church proved that the Spirit had departed from that institution.

Hippolytus' solution to the challenge offered by the Montanists was to maintain that Christ's return was not imminent, and that true prophecy had ceased with John's Apocalypse.<sup>137</sup> The normative guidelines for church doctrine were ensured by the Holy Spirit, who had inspired the texts of the Bible, not in the present innovation and interpretations offered by the Montanists. Likewise, Irenaeus stipulated that the Holy Spirit no longer worked through the prophetic voice, but through a threefold norm: Scripture, the Apostolic Creed, and Apostolic Succession.<sup>138</sup>

Cassian certainly offers a parallel to Irenaeus' threefold guarantee of orthodoxy. His founders of the monastic life (the prophets, apostles, and Acts IV church) are the equivalent of those who wrote Scripture. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* find their parallel in tradition and the Apostolic Creed, and the faithful fathers who have passed them generation to generation, suggests the doctrine of Apostolic Succession.<sup>139</sup>

These guarantors of orthodoxy and correct praxis are then contrasted with the few<sup>140</sup> who make up rules for monks which do not follow the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. These men are the spiritual equivalent of Montanists, presuming that they have the right to legislate because of

<sup>135</sup>In the following discussion, the term 'heretic' is used to denote a person or party which held a view different from the author of a polemic against that view. The use of the term might seem anachronistic, applied to those views which did not ultimately prevail, but in fact, it was a favorite pejorative used by polemical writers.

<sup>136</sup>This is not to suggest that Cassian was arguing that those who made up their own rules were Montanists. The arguments Cassian employed against Gallic innovators were the same sorts of arguments that the church had used against those who would be termed heretics. In forming an argument in this manner, Cassian followed the same lines which church writers used against groups like the Montanists. In other words, Cassian deployed a very standard argument used against heretics. Cf. *Cass. Coll.* I.20 where he refers to those who are making 'counterfeit' rules.

An excellent discussion of the evolution of the church's defense against charismatic challenge may be found in Pelikan (1971), 97–123.

<sup>137</sup>*Hipp. Antichr.* XXXI; *Hipp. Antichr.* XLVII–XLVIII.

<sup>138</sup>*Iren. Haer.* III.5.

<sup>139</sup>Chadwick (1993), 45.

<sup>140</sup>See, for instance *Cass. Inst.* I.2.

their *virtutes*. By characterizing the conflict in this manner, Cassian evokes the specter of heresy, the danger of those who set their *charismata* against the ancient practices of the Church.

But even more dangerous than heresy is the knowledge that the deceiver (Satan) was behind these false rules. Cassian offers this explicit connection in *Collationes*, where he asserts that just as the devil attempted to twist Scripture in order to trick Jesus, so too does he incite men to formulate rules not in keeping with the *instituta Aegyptiorum* in order to lead ascetics astray. Although these rules resemble the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, they are in fact, counterfeits. Cassian employed a numismatic analogy to illustrate his point: rather than being the true coin of the elders, the false rules were stamped with the image of the usurper. Satan tries to lead the monks astray by encouraging them to follow rules that appear as if they would cultivate spiritual perfection, but in fact, lead to destruction. The unwary are trapped and drawn off the proper path. The rules (coins) have not been minted by the trusted and experienced Catholic fathers, but rather are offered only to deceive the inexperienced.<sup>141</sup>

It is the monastic tradition, the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, which must command the monk's obedience. This tradition was founded in antiquity by prophets, apostles, and the holy fathers; it was passed master to disciple over the centuries; moreover it enjoyed the unanimous agreement of all.<sup>142</sup> Consequently, the laws which had guided untold legions of ascetics demand unquestioning faith and obedience, a compliance which brooks no discussion. This is the tradition that guides the lives of true monks.

### **Deviations from the *instituta Aegyptiorum***

The preceding sections have demonstrated how Cassian created and supported an independent basis of authority for his monastic teaching. Cassian told his readers that what he intended to give them, the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, had been forged in antiquity when the church was pure, and had been handed down (unaltered) through successive generations of like-minded followers. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* were not a novel formulation on Cassian's part, but ancient teaching, and consequently should command the allegiance of all who walked the

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<sup>141</sup>Cass. *Coll.* I.20.

<sup>142</sup>Now see Harries (1999), 65–69 for the role of *consensus universorum* in imperial legislation. See Roueché (1984) 187–188, for the idea that in Late Antiquity the *consensus universorum* certified divine will.

ascetic way.

There is, however, a problem in all of this. Cassian had raised the *instituta Aegyptiorum* to an exalted position, the pinnacle of all monastic praxis; he had rigorously justified the authority of this body of legislation. Yet all of this work seems to be undermined by his claim that he was going to alter them for his Gallic audience,

I shall however presume to add this moderation to this little work, that those things which, following the Egyptian rule, whether through the severity of the climate or on account of the difficulty and difference of custom, are impossible in these regions, or hard or arduous, I will modify, by the institutes of the monasteries which are kept throughout Palestine or Mesopotamia. Let me temper them to a certain degree, because, if a reasonable measure of what is possible is kept, there is the same perfection of observance, although the skill may be inferior.<sup>143</sup>

If the *instituta Aegyptiorum* enjoy the status of a quasi-divine law, who was Cassian to change them? And perhaps more importantly, does not his claim to be offering a diluted version of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* threaten the basis of authority he had so rigorously developed? By altering what had been instituted in the age of the apostolic church and passed down unmodified to the present generation, Cassian would seem to lay himself open to being as much a source of novel innovations as those who were creating monastic works out of their own *ingenium*.

Cassian makes four different points in his pledge to Castor. The first is to once again fix the *instituta Aegyptiorum* at the pinnacle of monastic *instituta*. Secondly, he locates his Gallic audience (who are engaged in making up their own monastic practices) in the monastic hierarchy (near the bottom, unable to even come close to matching the Egyptians). The third point is to reinforce his own claim to experience: Cassian is such an expert that he will be able to rig up a diluted version of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* for his ascetic beginners. And finally, Cassian broadly suggests that even though the Gauls will fall well short of the Egyptians, even a little progress in the right direction is a good thing.

<sup>143</sup>Cass. *Inst.* Pref.9: *Illam sane moderationem opusculo huic interserere praesunam, ut ea quae secundum Aegyptiorum regulam, seu pro asperitate aerum, seu pro difficultate ac diversitate morum impossibilia in his regionibus, vel dura vel ardua conprobauero, institutis monasteriorum, quae per Palaestinam vel Mesopotamiam habentur, aliquatenus temperem, quia, si rationabilis possibilium mensura seruetur, eadem observantiae perfectio est etiam in inpari facultate.*

Cassian claims, as has been suggested in the discussion to this point, that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* sit at the peak of monastic *instituta*. Cassian will consistently maintain this view throughout *De institutis* and *Collationes*. The *instituta Aegyptiorum* are closely followed by the ordinances of the Pachomian monks.<sup>144</sup> Although the Pachomians practice a commendable rigor, they do lack the spiritual discernment found among those who are formed under the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>145</sup> Consequently the Pachomian system is placed on the second tier of Cassian's monastic hierarchy, a position that is inferior only to the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.

Much further down the ladder one finds the institutes of the Palestinians, Syrians, Mesopotamians, and Cappadocians. The practices of the monasteries in these regions are useful for diluting the *instituta Aegyptiorum* for the Gauls. This point, which was implied in *De institutis*, is stated explicitly in *Collationes*. Germanus and Cassian had promised the elders of their monastery in Bethlehem that they would return to the monastery after a short Egyptian sojourn. Unfortunately the excellence of the Egyptian monks had convinced both men that they ought to stay in the desert, reneging on their promise. While discussing whether to honor their promise to return, Germanus is asked whether what he has learned in Egypt is superior to what he learned in Bethlehem. He replied, "We are not able to draw a comparison between these [the Egyptian institutes] and those institutes we learned there."<sup>146</sup>

This denigration of the Palestinian *instituta*, is developed further in the next book of *Collationes*. Here, a certain Abba Piamun claimed that Cassian's earlier training in a Bethlehem monastery had to be forgotten before he could begin to make progress in the perfect life.<sup>147</sup> There was no possibility of moving forward in the ascetic life until he had unlearned his old *instituta*.

Likewise, the quality of the monks formed under the Cappadocian system is suggested by Cassian's claim that a rule of silence had to be instituted among them to still the bickering over the dinner table.<sup>148</sup> Whereas the leaders of those monasteries had to deprive their monks of the

<sup>144</sup>See now *Cass.Inst.* IV.1-2.

<sup>145</sup>Now see the earlier discussion, pg. 96.

<sup>146</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVII.7: *nullam ducimus comparationem inter haec atque illa quae illic percepimus instituta.*

<sup>147</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVIII.3. The same negative view is expressed in *Cass.Coll.* XIX.1 where Cassian notes that he had never seen such a great expression of the virtue of patience in his Syrian monastery. And again in *Cass.Coll.* XIX.2 where he says that virtue of humility is completely lacking in our own institutes (presumably Syrian again).

<sup>148</sup>*Cass.Inst.* IV.17.

right to speak in order to keep arguments from erupting, the Egyptians sat in perfect, contented silence.

As inadequate as the *instituta* of the Cappadocians, Mesopotamians, and Palestinians may be, they still are better than the diverse rules of the Gauls, which are placed at the bottom of Cassian's ascetic hierarchy. In fact, it should be noted that Cassian never uses the term *instituta* as a reference to the practices of the Gallic monks. The strongest terms Cassian grants the Gauls are *typus* and *regula*. The Gauls "have arranged for themselves, concerning these matters, various plans and rules."<sup>149</sup> Whatever practices the Gauls follow, they are certainly not *instituta*.

Cassian repeatedly reminds his Gallic readers that they are not capable of the rigorous excellence of those formed under the *instituta Aegyptiorum*.<sup>150</sup> In order that they might still get something out of their ascetic practice, Cassian stated that he would dilute the rigorous excellence of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. In doing so, however, he is careful to note that he will not be introducing his own ideas, but rather adopting the baser monastic practices of the Pachomians, Cappadocians, Palestinians, and Mesopotamians. One example of this is the addition of the three daily offices of prayer to the monastic cursus. According to Cassian, the Egyptians only have two communal offices of prayer each day, Vespers and Nocturns.<sup>151</sup> The rest of the time the Egyptians 'pray without ceasing.' For the Gauls, who are unable to match this excellence in prayer, Cassian claims that he will interpolate three daily offices (Terce, Sext, and None), a cursus which has been drawn from the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia.<sup>152</sup> Cassian makes this change because the Gauls simply are unable to match the "perfection and rigor of the Egyptians."<sup>153</sup>

<sup>149</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2: *super hac re diversos typos ac regulas sibimet constituuisse... typos ac regulas vidimus usurpatas*. See also Cass.*Inst.* II.3: *diversitates typorum ac regularum*.

<sup>150</sup>In addition to making this point in the preface, he reasserts it in Cass.*Inst.* III.2 when he states that the Gauls needed to pray at fixed times because they were incapable of the unceasing prayer of the Egyptians. The argument is repeated in Cass.*Inst.* IV.2 where he states that no one from our (presumably Gallic) monasteries would be able to maintain Egyptian (in this case Pachomian) rigor for even as long as a year.

<sup>151</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.2. The monks do gather communally at the third hour of Saturday and Sunday when they share communion.

<sup>152</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.1. And these are the only offices that Cassian adds to the Egyptian cursus, yielding a system of five offices. See Appendix A of this thesis, page 206.

Another example of a noted change to the *instituta Aegyptiorum* may be found in the legislation concerning the reception of novices. Cassian states that these rules have been drawn from the rules of Pachomians and the *instituta Aegyptiorum* (Cass.*Inst.* IV.1).

<sup>153</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.1: *perfectionem Aegyptiorum et inimitabilem disciplinae rigorem horum*.

The Gallic monks will never compare with the spiritual giants who have been formed under the *instituta Aegyptiorum*, but short of going to Egypt and seeking training, a Gallic monk has few options.<sup>154</sup> Unable to endure the rigors of the Egyptian system, the Gaul might make a little progress by adopting Cassian's version of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. Ultimately the Gallic monk's skill will be inferior to the Egyptian, but even this smaller gain will outdistance those who are making up their own practices in Gaul.<sup>155</sup>

\*                     \*                     \*

This chapter has advanced the premise that the *instituta Aegyptiorum* were a construct Cassian employed to create an authoritative basis for his ascetic ideas. Cassian does this by making an essentially simple proposal: the ascetic life is not something new to Christianity, but rather, was forged in the same fires that gave birth to the church. In fact, Cassian asserts, it is the Egyptian ascetic strand which preserved the original fervor that had characterized the apostolic church.

Nevertheless, since fervor only lasts a season (or a generation in this case), the monastic forebears who had emerged from the decaying apostolic church met together to craft an enduring body of legislation that would guide all true ascetics. The authority conveyed by their individual charisms was codified, preserved for those who sought the highest way of life. This ascetic code, according to Cassian, was the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. Organized by the most excellent of the ascetics and an angel, based on the examples of prophets and apostles, this code was intended to be normative for all who followed. Moreover, it served its purpose, and to the present time, served as the code for the Egyptian monks, to whom it had passed through an unbroken line of succession. Since this was the case, those who practiced asceticism were

<sup>154</sup>It is intriguing that Cassian never proposes this as a viable course of action. The one time he mentions the possibility is in reference to Eucherius of Lyons (*Cass.Coll.* Pref II.1). Here he noted that Eucherius had wanted to go to Egypt to learn the greatest system, leaving behind a Gaul that was sluggish with the numbness of frost. Consequently, Cassian felt obliged to offer a second series of Conferences in order to make unnecessary such a dangerous voyage (*Cass.Coll.* Pref. II.2). Stewart (1998), 28 labels this a "suspiciously ingenuous motivation." Had Eucherius traveled to Egypt he might have found the situation somewhat different from what was described by Cassian.

<sup>155</sup>Cassian's premise, that faithful observance of even a little is better than negligence in much is restated by Abba Paul in *Collationes*, who, commenting on his reasons for leaving his hermitage and joining a coenobium, states: "It is better to be found faithful in keeping little promises than careless in keeping great ones" (*Cass.Coll.* XIX.3).

obliged to turn from their own novel formulations and adhere to this normative code, which had been tempered to accommodate the weaker Gallic monks.

Unfortunately, the other contemporaneous sources for Egyptian monasticism do not bear out Cassian's claim of a unified practice. Egyptian practices varied from monk to monk and place to place. What this chapter has suggested is that the *instituta* are a means of substantiating anything Cassian wishes to prescribe for his Gallic audience. They have an authority that transcends his own, one which he had consciously created with this purpose in mind.

Cassian employed two major strategies to win a hearing for his ascetic ideas in Gaul. Firstly, he emphasised the experience which underpinned his work, experience that was missing in both the native Gallic ascetic experiments, as well as in the work of competing ascetic writers. Secondly, he shifted the basis for authority from himself to an ancient body of monastic legislation. Cassian, unlike those who made up their ascetic regulations, was an experienced monk passing on an ancient system.

Having examined how he employed these two approaches to buttress the authority of his own work, this thesis will now turn its attention to what he did with this authority, namely his attempt to replace an indigenous Gallic asceticism with a more rigorous version of his own.

## Chapter 5

# *Renuntiatio* and the ‘Rhetoric of Renunciation’

Earlier chapters of this thesis have examined the strategies Cassian employed to win a hearing for his coenobitic legislation. As was demonstrated, Cassian went to considerable length to promote himself as an experienced ascetic, someone who was in a position to offer the true *instituta Aegyptiorum* to his untrained audience. Cassian argued that he was not only more experienced than the self-proclaimed abbots who were responsible for Gallic disarray, but he also drew on a source that was more authoritative than the misguided ideas presented by other ascetic writers. Cassian’s work was based on an ancient, enduring system that had been established in the apostolic age.

The goal of this final chapter will be to consider what (if anything) Cassian offered to his audience that was in some measure unique. As will be demonstrated, Cassian’s work emphasizes the need for true renunciation against the ‘rhetoric of renunciation’ offered to an elite class by other promoters of the ascetic life.<sup>1</sup> This rhetoric had been shaped to appeal to a well-born class, portraying asceticism as something that made an aristocrat even more noble.<sup>2</sup> The version of the ascetic life celebrated in much of the literature of the late-fourth

<sup>1</sup>See Lane Fox (1986), 301 for the nature of extant Christian writings from this period as the product of an elite class offered to an elite audience.

<sup>2</sup>Salzman (2001), 362. See Elm (2001), 70–71 for the idea that the adoption of Christianity by the elite class was facilitated by accommodating their traditional values and maintaining their status in the new Christian community.

to early-fifth century more closely resembles the traditional Roman practice of *otium*<sup>3</sup> than the rigorous, self-abnegating discipline of the Egyptian Desert Fathers. While the historian must not make the mistake of assuming that the extant literature captures the entire spectrum of ascetic practice in the West, there also should be little doubt that these works were written to serve as models for those aristocrats who might have been contemplating the ascetic life.<sup>4</sup> These sources represent asceticism tamed, a Christian philosophical life made palatable for an elite class. By conflating *otium* and Christianity, they provided a wide gate through which the aristocrat could pass with most of his or her traditional values intact. These sources portray an ascetic life that has been accommodated to the values and *mores* of the elite.<sup>5</sup>

Elite western Christians took captive the classical ideal of *otium* and reconsecrated it as a suitable vehicle for Christian asceticism. The idea that one might withdraw to the country in order to cultivate virtue had roots that reached back to Cicero. The reworking of this long-standing ideal, placing Christian theology rather than philosophy at the center of study, seems to have occurred rather easily.<sup>6</sup> When the Roman elite, inspired by tales from the eastern deserts, looked for a model for their own withdrawal, they quite naturally turned to *otium*.

As Christianity infiltrated the higher echelons of Roman society, examples emerged of aristocrats who blended *otium* with the study of Christian *philosophia*. Ausonius of Bordeaux

<sup>3</sup>A full analysis of the word *otium* from its first use in classical literature down to the time of Cassian may be found in LeClercq (1963), 25–41.

<sup>4</sup>Augustine offers one example of the recruiting value of these works in his story of the emperor's agents who are drawn into the ascetic life after reading the *Vita Antonii* (Aug. Conf. VIII.6). Cf. Clark (1986a), 176.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 5: "Some of them [aristocrats] did show signs of believing that Christianity as they understood it — the Christianity of personal renunciation — was not for everyone. The real thing was for elites, small groups and families for whom baptism meant new life. It was something private by its nature, preserve of the elect, a treasure for aristocrats. Herein, rather than in any substantial point of doctrine, may have lain the attraction to some of them of the example of Pelagius and his followers. It was an exclusive way of looking at Christianity. Such is the tone of ascetic correspondence. Moreover, the asceticism was of a special kind, nurtured in the Gallic tradition of St Martin and of the fathers of Lérins and Marseille." See also Salzman (2001), 359–385.

<sup>6</sup>And indeed this distinction is something of an anachronism. The division between theology and philosophy was a later development. Consequently, Christian withdrawal from the world was often labeled a retreat for the purpose of studying 'philosophy.' Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, claimed that Macrina induced both Basil and her mother to take up the study of philosophy (i.e. Christian theology) (Gr.Nyss.V.Macr. VI).

Christian asceticism was interpreted in terms of the ideals of the philosopher by many early Christian writers. Eusebius, for instance, when writing about Origen noted that he had lived the philosophic life for many years, which Eusebius defined as following certain ascetic practices (limiting sleep, fasting, going barefoot, taking no wine) and the intense study of the Scriptures (Eus.H.e. VI.3.9–12). This sustained demonstration of the philosophic life (*φιλοσόφου βίου*) attracted many students, including some who had been unbelieving gentiles (Eus.H.e. VI.3.13). Likewise, the Cappadocian Fathers also equated Christian asceticism with the life of philosophy, although this link is more common in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzen than in Basil (Cf. Ruether (1969), 15 n.2).

was an early, prominent Gallic example of this synthesis. Although certainly not an ascetic, Ausonius does show how *otium* and Christianity could be fused. This conflation is illustrated by the scene Ausonius constructs in his poem, *Ephemeris*. The extant sections of this poem create a charming picture of villa-oriented Christian life. The poet rises in the morning and offers a prayer (in hexameters) to God in the poet's private chapel. At the conclusion of his prayer, Ausonius notes that his duty had been fulfilled: "Now I have prayed enough to God."<sup>7</sup> Ausonius' Christian devotion forms one of the many duties the poet will perform during his day, set in its proper place alongside tasks like writing lunch invitations, directing the cook, and dictating literary works to his secretary. Ausonius' exercise of faith may have been an important part of his routine, but it certainly did not seem to be the focus of the poet's daily round.<sup>8</sup>

A more deliberate attempt to merge Christian asceticism with *otium* seems to have motivated Augustine's early retreat with his friends to the estate of Verecundus at Cassiciacum for the purpose of studying Christian *philosophia*.<sup>9</sup> As Trout noted, Augustine repeatedly characterized his retreat as a life of *otium*.<sup>10</sup> Although his retreat was ostensibly devoted to Christian study, Augustine also alludes to more traditional Roman activities: the men spent a good deal of time on literary pursuits, writing letters (or as in Augustine's case, four dialogues),<sup>11</sup> as well as reading Virgil (half a book before the evening meal).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Augustine's dialogues were consciously set in the framework of the *otium ruris* — they took place while strolling in the meadows or sitting together in the baths.<sup>13</sup> This was a far cry from the radical renunciation of the world associated with the Egyptian Desert Fathers. Augustine and his companions, as Trout notes, "assumed that the proper and complete practice of Christianity required a degree

<sup>7</sup>Aus.Eph. IV.1: *satis precum dato deo*.

<sup>8</sup>On Ausonius in general, see Chadwick (1955), 47–62; Sivan (1993); Hopkins (1961).

<sup>9</sup>Now see LeClercq (1963), 25 for the Roman idea that leisure was essential for the cultivation of virtue. This leisure and seclusion from the world was also essential for the literary task. Cf. Vincent of Lérins, who claimed that his retreat from the bustle and crowds of the cities to a remote monastery situated on a small country estate (*villula*) made the composition of his work possible (Vinc.Comm. I.2).

<sup>10</sup>Aug.Ord. I.7.20; Trout (1988), 136.

<sup>11</sup>Augustine's works, *Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De Ordine*, *Soliloquia* all date from this period.

<sup>12</sup>Aug.Ord. I.8.26.

<sup>13</sup>Aug.Beat. IV.23; Aug.Acad. III.1.1. Cf. Trout (1988), 137. See also the literary activities of Paulinus. In addition to composition of his letters and *Natalicia*, he also apparently offered literary readings of poetry and, on at least two occasions, served up Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* to his guests (Paul.Ep. XXIX.14). Mratschek (2001), 541 suggests that poetry readings were held in an open air forum when the weather permitted.

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of learning and leisure probably available to few outside the elite."<sup>14</sup> The Roman ideal of *otium ruris* was maintained; the study of Christianity was substituted for the study of *philosophia*; the complex web of social ties and values that linked the elite to the Late Antique aristocratic world was left in place in a way that would have not been possible in a retreat to the Egyptian desert.<sup>15</sup>

Cassian opposed this accommodation. For him, asceticism was the narrow way, a life which required the renunciation of all ties to the world rather than a self-congratulatory rhetoric of renunciation which did not serve to transform those who embraced it. Cassian's debate was not with those who doubted the value or place of asceticism within the Late Antique church<sup>16</sup> — the place of asceticism in the church was presuppositional for him.<sup>17</sup> It was the adaptation of tamed asceticism by a western elite that Cassian opposed most vigorously in *De institutis*.

Like Jerome and the other writers of late-fourth, early fifth century ascetic literature, Cassian hoped to facilitate the growth and spread of the ascetic movement in the West. Unlike them, however, Cassian did not see asceticism as something that could simply be worked into the existing lifestyle of an elite class. Cassian's version of the ascetic life was transformational and centered on the idea of renunciation (*renuntiatio*). The renunciation of the world and everything which bound a monk to that world was the absolute first step, the *sine qua non* of the ascetic life. As Christ had commanded, the monk sold everything he had, gave it to the poor, then took up his cross and followed.<sup>18</sup> Half measures — the retention of property, a continuing involvement in the outside world — were not options in Cassian's thought. A person had either made a *renuntiatio* or had not. The former was the true monk; the latter was simply playing at

<sup>14</sup>Trout (1988), 140.

<sup>15</sup>See Salzman (2001), 375 for the essential conservatism of the rhetoric of most Christian leaders from this period and their reluctance to challenge the traditional class consciousness of their elite audience. As Torjeson (1992), 49 noted, Christian writers emphasized traditional standards of status when praising those members of the elite classes who had embraced the ascetic life: Paula, for instance was "noble in family," a descendant of the Scipios and Gracchi clans, whose origins could be traced back to Agamemnon; her husband's family tree included the Iulii and was linked to Aeneas (*Hier.Ep.* CVIII.3–4).

<sup>16</sup>Writers such as Jovinian (see now Hunter (1987), 45–64), Vigilantius, and Ambrosiaster. For the anonymous Ambrosiaster as a Roman cleric and opponent of Jerome's views on virginity, see Hunter (1989), 283–299. Leyser (2000), 11–16 has argued that Augustine also resisted the formation of a spiritual elite, and this point has also been suggested in an earlier discussion of Basil (see pg. 104).

<sup>17</sup>Moreover this is the presupposition of his audience — Castor had commissioned him to produce *De institutis*, and the further pattern of dedications show him reaching out to Lérins, where a group of well-born men and women were engaging in some form of ascetic endeavor (see pg. 35).

<sup>18</sup>Matt. XIX.21.

the ascetic life, or worse, attempting to win the unmerited praise of others.

Cassian required a monk to renounce wealth, property, possessions, and the comforts that accompanied secular life. He was to renounce his claim to social status and break off connections with family members, friends, and acquaintances. The formerly free man would virtually don the chains of slavery, offering instant and unquestioning obedience to his superiors, renouncing self-will, the privacy of his own thoughts, and control over his own destiny. The monk became a servant of Christ as well as a servant for Christ, imitating the master who had renounced all things in order to serve mankind.

Only a proper *renuntiatio* set one's feet on the path that led to the heights of perfection.<sup>19</sup> Apart from this immolation of self, there was no possibility of ascending into the rarefied air of the true Christian ascetic. The monk who wanted to enter the ascetic life, wrote Cassian, should not follow his own prescriptions, but rather should seek out the discipline and institutes of the monastery where he could renounce the world.<sup>20</sup> The lifestyle practiced by the Gauls was asceticism in name only. True monks began their lives with renunciation.

Nor was this a step to be taken lightly. Although it was the absolute prerequisite for ascetic life, the prospective monk was offered an opportunity to weigh the cost of the course he sought. An attempt was made to drive this home by making the postulant spend ten days waiting on the doorstep of the monastery before he was admitted. Each day the brothers would parade past, jeering at those who wanted to join their cloister, attempting to drive them away with their words.<sup>21</sup> Although this postulant-baiting seems rather uncharitable, its purpose was wholly constructive. The true goal of the ascetic was self-renunciation, the surrender of pride and self-centeredness. Those who could not bear the shallow barbs of sharp-tongued monks had very little hope of persevering under the oppressive weight of the self-abnegating discipline practiced in the monastery itself. It was certainly better to discover that one could not run the course by buckling under the crude taunting of the brothers, than to fall after having spent months or years in the monastery. Consequently the provisions of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* called for a cooling off period, a ten day opportunity to assess one's sense of vocation.

<sup>19</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.2. Cf. Cass.*Coll.* XIV.9.2 for the injunction to separate from all worldly cares as a prerequisite for the spiritual life. It was impossible for the person still caught up in the world to acquire knowledge.

<sup>20</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3; Cass.*Inst.* VII.18.

<sup>21</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.3.

*Renuntiatio* was a death to the world and its claims.<sup>22</sup> It was intended to close the avenue that led back to the former life. Once the monk had made his renunciation there was to be no looking back, a precept that was in accordance with the Lord's statement that those who put their hand to the plow and then looked back were unfit for the kingdom of heaven.<sup>23</sup> It was much better to have never made the *renuntiatio*, to have persisted in lukewarmness, than to have made a renunciation and subsequently returned to those things of the world that had been forsaken. The torment of the ultimate penalty (hell) awaited those who had pledged themselves to the gospel life, only to later renege on their sacred vows.<sup>24</sup>

Entry into the ascetic life was a grave step. It was not to be adopted without forethought and an accounting of the price that would be required. It was a costly endeavor, but ultimately one that would cultivate a character that emulated the great example of Christ. As shall be demonstrated, Cassian's version of the ascetic life began with the renunciation of all things that made a monk an individual.

## Elements of *Renuntiatio*

### Wealth and Property

Renunciation, in Cassian's thought, involved a number of items and attitudes that will be considered in the following sections. Leading the list was the absolute and complete renunciation of wealth and property.<sup>25</sup> No one, according to Cassian, was allowed to enter an Egyptian monastery until he or she had renounced all material possessions. Having waited the requisite ten days before the gates of the monastery (in order to test perseverance), the postulant was subjected to a detailed probe of his financial condition. This inquest ensured that not so much as a single coin from the postulant's former possessions remained to corrupt him.<sup>26</sup> A complete dispersal of wealth and property was required before the postulant would even be considered for admission into the monastery. *Renuntiatio* was not only turning away from a past life, but

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<sup>22</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.34-35.

<sup>23</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.36, citing Luke IX.62.

<sup>24</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.33.

<sup>25</sup>See now Driscoll (2001), 21-30 for Cassian's teacher, Evagrius Ponticus, on the same subject.

<sup>26</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.3.

laying a torch to the bridges that would sustain a retreat. Cassian was determined to remove fallback positions which could tempt a monk to fly back to a former life.

This renunciation of wealth signalled that the monk had abandoned all faith in the ability of material possessions to save him. There was, after all, no guarantee that he would gain admission into the monastery. A more pragmatic approach might have been to allow the monk to enter and then to dispose of his worldly goods after a trial period. This was not, however, Cassian's course of action. The monk who sought entry into the monastery must first place himself confidently into God's hands. Having renounced whatever security wealth could provide, the monk trusted that God would take care of him.

Renunciation of wealth was a great leap of faith. It was buttressed by several biblical texts, in which Jesus seemed to urge the step as a prerequisite for Christian discipleship.<sup>27</sup> The rich young ruler (Matt. XIX.22) who sought to follow Christ was told to renounce his wealth if he desired to be perfect. This was not a counsel that the young man could obey, and he left, saddened. The attachment of the rich to their possessions made their entry into the kingdom of God more difficult than the passage of a camel through the eye of a needle.<sup>28</sup>

These hard sayings of Jesus posed a problem for the early church: what was required of the rich in order to be saved? Were the sayings of Jesus to be understood literally? Was it impossible for a person to be wealthy and a Christian? One of the earliest answers to this question may be found in the second century work, *The Shepherd of Hermas*.<sup>29</sup> Here the rich and poor were cast in mutually supportive roles, both taking shelter under the wings of the church. According to the Shepherd, the rich were an elm tree that grew tall but bore no fruit. The poor were vines that only produced fruit when they were lifted from the earth. The role of the rich was to support the poor through their giving; the duty of the poor was to offer the fruit of their poverty (intercessory prayer) on behalf of the rich.<sup>30</sup> The affluent and the destitute were to enjoy a symbiotic relationship — each was necessary to the other's salvation.

Another well-known answer to this question was offered by Clement of Alexandria (d.

<sup>27</sup>See for instance Matt. XIX.16–30; Mark X.17–31; Luke XVIII.18–30. The priority of the poor over the wealthy is also suggested in the Magnificat (Luke I.53–54), and the Sermon on the Mount (Luke VI.20–25).

<sup>28</sup>Matt. XIX.24.

<sup>29</sup>Herm. *Sim.* II. Cf. McGuckin (1987), 6; Lane Fox (1986), 302.

<sup>30</sup>This view was also common among the Greek fathers (see Gordon (1989), 106–107); Leyerle (1994), 41–42 for Chrysostom.

215), who considered the problem of the wealthy believer in his work *Quis dives salvetur?* According to Clement, Jesus' words to the rich young man were spiritual and had not been intended to be understood literally.<sup>31</sup> The ruler was not to sell his possessions, but rather, to banish improper thoughts about those things he possessed.<sup>32</sup> The renunciation Jesus advocated was actually to be a stripping of the passions from the soul; the rich young ruler was to cultivate dispassion toward possessions. After all, if he gave his things away, what would remain to allow him to offer charity to the poor?<sup>33</sup> The possession of material wealth was a neutral act; what mattered was the character of one's thoughts about that wealth.<sup>34</sup>

The shifting of renunciation of wealth from a literal to a spiritual plane eased the way into the church for wealthy converts. Despite the calls for a literal interpretation of Christ's words by certain fringe groups,<sup>35</sup> the mainstream church did not make renunciation of wealth a prerequisite for Christianity. Indeed, to a large extent, the early church relied on the largesse of the elite families for the construction of buildings and other charitable ventures.<sup>36</sup> As a client of the aristocrats, the church benefited greatly by the concentration of wealth among an elite who were inclined to support the ongoing mission of the Church. Clement's spiritualizing of Christ's commands ensured that this comfortable relationship was not disturbed.<sup>37</sup>

Cassian displayed no interest in the question of the wealthy secular Christian. For the ascetic, however, Christ's words in Matt. XIX were to be understood as a literal injunction. There could be no ascetic life without the complete renunciation of all wealth and possessions. In advocating a literal interpretation of this text, Cassian created problems on several levels: including the legal, familial, and within the cultural context of Late Antique society itself.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Clem. *Q.d.s.* V.

<sup>32</sup>Clem. *Q.d.s.* XI.

<sup>33</sup>Clem. *Q.d.s.* XIII.

<sup>34</sup>Clem. *Q.d.s.* XIV.

<sup>35</sup>One such group was censured by the Synod of Gangra (345), in part for their requirement of total renunciation of wealth. Similarly, Pelagius (or one of his followers) had claimed that if the elite were to surrender their wealth, then all Christians would become equal and all would enjoy the same standard of living (*PeI.Div.* XII.1).

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Bobertz (1993b), 170–184 for a discussion of the role of the wealthy patron in the early church; Jones (1964a), 900–901 for the construction of *parochiae* or *dioceses* — churches built by someone other than a bishop, usually with an endowment of land to fund its ongoing operation. See also Davidson (2001), 38. On the advantages of cultivating the wealthy over the poor, see Lane Fox (1986), 291. For the problems posed by wealthy church patrons in the thought of John Chrysostom, see Leyerle (1994), 44–46.

<sup>37</sup>And now see McGuckin (1987), 12–13 who argues that while the fathers frequently castigated the misuse of wealth, they invariably avoid condemning the possession of wealth.

<sup>38</sup>For the question of Christian aristocrats, their various strategies for dealing with hereditary wealth, and the observation that disposing of one's assets might not have been as easy as expected, see Harries (1984).

The disposition of inherited wealth could be complicated by factors such as a poor market for property, tax liability, and the problem of what became of the men and women who worked the land after a sale.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the legal difficulties engendered by this renunciation, resistance from other family members might also complicate the step. Sulpicius Severus' father, for instance, reflects one instance of this familial disapproval. According to Paulinus, Sulpicius' mother-in-law had endorsed Sulpicius' decision to adopt an ascetic life after the death of her daughter. Sulpicius' father, who Paulinus claimed was left trapped in the nets of his possessions,<sup>40</sup> had evidently opposed this move.<sup>41</sup> While Paulinus was quick to tie Sulpicius' 'renunciation' to the biblical model of James and John leaving their father with his nets in order to follow Christ, one wonders where the line between renunciation and escape should be drawn. If Paulinus can be trusted and Sulpicius disobeyed his father's will in order to become an ascetic, then he might have put his inheritance at risk.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, he seems to have had a retreat available in the estate of his mother-in-law, Bassula, so it was not as if he was going to be thrust out in the world with nothing by disobeying his father. Consequently one wonders whether Sulpicius' 'renunciation' was a separation from the world or a tactic to escape the control of a domineering *paterfamilias*?<sup>43</sup> Sulpicius renounced an uncertain inheritance from his father, but he was able to replace it with the consolatory estate of his mother-in-law.

The objections of family members grew out of the idea among the elite class that aristocratic families must be continued at all costs.<sup>44</sup> Greatness and nobility were traits that flowed in one's blood; they could only persist if passed on through offspring.<sup>45</sup> The same applied to

<sup>39</sup>Trout (1999), 145. See *V.Mel.* XI for evidence that slaves might resist a sale to new owners when an aristocrat began to alienate estates (cf. Clark (1984), 101).

<sup>40</sup>Paul.*Ep.* V.6.

<sup>41</sup>Just as a *paterfamilias* could allow or deny a child's marriage (see Lassen (1997), 105), he could presumably also forbid ascetic renunciation. But now see Arjava (1998), 153 for the view that this power was largely symbolic, and Gardner (1993), 53 for the argument that while they may have been infrequently exercised, the rights of the *paterfamilias* remained a potent threat. Some evidence for this latter view may be drawn from the observation that Pinianus and Melania were not allowed to enter the ascetic life until her father was dying (*V.Mel.* VI-VII).

<sup>42</sup>See Arjava (1998), 154 for the argument that the threat of disinheritance remained the most effective control strategy for a *paterfamilias*; Shaw (1987), 21-25 for tensions along the father/son axis and the limited options available to a son in Roman culture.

<sup>43</sup>Arjava (1998), 148-149 for a son's absolute dependence on his father and inherited wealth in the absence of wage-paying alternatives.

<sup>44</sup>Clark (1984), 83.

<sup>45</sup>See Jones (1964b), 523-524 for the importance of heredity as a sign that a senatorial candidate was worthy of that honor.

the wealth that had been zealously guarded and accumulated over generations.<sup>46</sup> To allow a noble family to come to an end, while simultaneously dispersing the fruit of generations, was a grave cultural sin.<sup>47</sup> The pressure to preserve bloodline and inheritance is evident in the example of the younger Melania and her husband Pinianus. Melania had allegedly been forced into marriage by her father, Publicola.<sup>48</sup> Although she pleaded with her husband to allow her to remain a virgin within the marriage, Pinianus decreed that she must first produce an heir who would serve to continue the family name and inherit their property.<sup>49</sup>

Nor were the western fathers eager to see great families destroyed. Despite the panegyrics celebrating the renunciations of wealth made by members of the great Roman families, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome were united in stipulating that when giving alms, a person's first obligation was to family.<sup>50</sup> Thoughtless generosity was inappropriate, as Augustine made clear in his letter to Ecdicia, a noblewoman who had earned her husband's wrath by giving away a portion of her wealth to a band of disreputable monks.<sup>51</sup> Augustine and Jerome affirmed the importance of passing one's wealth onto one's heirs, thereby ensuring the continuation of the family line. For those who wondered how giving to the poor fit into this equation, both writers offered the solution of counting the poor as one member of the family and dividing the estate equally among the children, making the poor a co-inheritor with the legitimate children.<sup>52</sup>

Encouraged by the moderate voices of the western fathers, two strategies for the management of wealth emerged among those who were drawn to the ascetic life. The first course was for the Roman aristocrat to simply pass the bulk of his or her wealth on to those who stood next in the hereditary line. In most cases this premature transfer of wealth did not preclude the retention of some property for the ongoing maintenance of the aristocrat who had 'died to the world.'<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Cf. Jones (1964b), 554–557.

<sup>47</sup>And even in the case of less noble citizens, the loss of a family farm because there was no son to continue running it was considered disastrous. Cf. Shaw (1987), 19–20.

<sup>48</sup>*V.Mel.* I.

<sup>49</sup>*V.Mel.* I; *V.Mel.* III. Cf. Harries (1984), 65–66.

<sup>50</sup>Ramsey (1982), 233.

<sup>51</sup>*Aug.Ep.* CCLXII. See Cooper (1992), 158–159 for a discussion of this epistle.

<sup>52</sup>*Aug.Disc.* VIII.8; *Hier.Ep.* CXX.1. Cf. Ramsey (1982), 229–230.

<sup>53</sup>Although Gregory of Nyssa's biography of his sister, Macrina, suggests a slow progression from affluence to poverty, Cardman (2001), 48 is quite right to note that even at her personal nadir she was still living on her family estates. According to Gregory, she and her mother gave away *most* of their money to the younger members of the family (*Gr.Nyss.V.Macr.* X.3–4). Their subsequent lifestyle, while undoubtedly a reduction in comfort, certainly

This pattern may be observed in a number of cases. Jerome, for instance, noted that his patron (Paula) gave her money to deserving people, but she accomplished this through the careful management of her resources.<sup>54</sup> Her goal, according to Jerome was to exhaust her life and her material wealth at the same moment, leaving not a penny for her daughter and presuming on the charity of others to purchase her burial cloth.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, somewhat callously, Jerome exults at the fact that Paula died and left her daughter Eustochium a mountain of debt, which she could not hope to pay off by her own exertions.<sup>56</sup> All of this must be sifted carefully: while it might seem that Paula had deprived her heirs of her property, at another point Jerome does admit that she had previously passed on much of her wealth to her other children.<sup>57</sup> Eustochium seems to have been the only heir who received nothing from her mother.

Nor could it be said that Paula spent all of her money on the poor. Upon arriving in Bethlehem with Jerome, she embarked on an ambitious building program, and was forced to live in a 'miserable hostel' until the buildings she required (cells, monastic buildings, and a guest house) were constructed.<sup>58</sup> Despite the fact that Jerome claimed that this was all for the greater glory of God and would serve to make certain that if Joseph and Mary ever again visited Bethlehem they would have a place to stay,<sup>59</sup> one is struck by the fact that the monastic life could not have been practised in a miserable hostel.<sup>60</sup>

It is also intriguing that Jerome, despite his repeated directives to others concerning the renunciation of wealth, does not appear to have followed his own advice.<sup>61</sup> In a letter to Pammachius he revealed that he had despatched his brother, Paulinian, to the family estates in Stridon. There the younger man was to liquidate the family estates and bring the money to Jerome in Bethlehem. Unfortunately, this was less renunciation than redirection of assets.

could not be equated to the 'urban poor' (Cardman (2001), 48).

<sup>54</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.16.

<sup>55</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.15.

<sup>56</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.15.

<sup>57</sup>See now Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.5 for the admission that Paula had left much of her wealth to her children.

<sup>58</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.14.

<sup>59</sup>Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.14. Cf. Driver (1995), 58.

<sup>60</sup>Despite the younger Melania's spectacular renunciations, she still retained enough money to build 24 churches and monasteries on Mount Olivet (where she and Pinianus withdrew to live their mortified life). See Clark (1984), 116-119 for a description of these buildings. The construction of lavish buildings was one traditional way of demonstrating one's high position in the classical world (Leyerle (1994), 31; Patalagean (1977), 181-183).

<sup>61</sup>For the idea that Jerome's comments about the sacrifices made by the women he extolled was a rhetorical set piece, see Harries (1984), 55-56.

Jerome did not intend to renounce this wealth (possibly offering it to the poor or to the church in his home province), but rather intended to extract what capital he could from the family holdings so that the money could be used to support the Bethlehem building projects.<sup>62</sup>

A similar course of planned giving also underlies the story of Melania the Elder, who supported churches and monasteries for 37 years, selling off her property as she needed the money.<sup>63</sup> According to Palladius, she died just as she ran out of money.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Melania the Younger was said to have sold all of her estates in Spain, Aquitania, Tarragonia, and Gaul, but had retained those in Sicily, Campania, and Africa. These latter properties provided funding to support her monasteries.<sup>65</sup>

The same financial strategy is suggested by Jerome's panegyric to Pammachius, found in a letter theoretically aimed at consoling the senator over the loss of his wife. Following her death, Pammachius had renounced the world and entered the ascetic life.<sup>66</sup> Like Paula and Melania, Pammachius embarked on a program of controlled giving.<sup>67</sup> Whereas the aristocrats of Rome sponsored games and shows for the *plebs*, Pammachius gave games for the poor and shows to the indigent.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, he had begun to build a hospice at Portus which was larger than Jerome and Paula's foundation at Bethlehem.<sup>69</sup> The idea that Pammachius may have slowly dispersed his wealth over time is also suggested by the testimony of Palladius, who noted that Pammachius gave away some of his property, and left the rest to the poor upon his death.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>62</sup>Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.14. See Torjeson (1992), 44; 50 for building as a way of winning public acknowledgement of virtue.

<sup>63</sup>Harries (1984), 59 suggests that the majority of her wealth went to her son and legal heir, Publicola. Cf. Murphy (1947), 65–66.

<sup>64</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* LIV.2. See also the story of Olympias, the widow of Nebridius, the former prefect (*ἐπαρχων*) of Constantinople, who was said to have given all of her goods to the poor (Pall.*H.Laus.* LVI.2).

<sup>65</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* LXI.5; V.*Mel.* XX–XXII. A similar tale is offered about Verus (Pall.*H.Laus.* LXVI).

<sup>66</sup>Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.4.

<sup>67</sup>Jerome is a bit muddled on this point, at one point saying that Pammachius had given everything away, while at another implying a slow dispersal of wealth. That the latter probably represents what Jerome had in mind is suggested by Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.8 where he employed the standard biblical admonitions to sell everything and follow Christ, but then qualifies this by advocating discernment in giving — that is, giving only to those who are truly in need. This is then reinforced later, when discussing Pammachius' new guest house, by offering the example of Abraham as a model, a man who was wealthy but still personally offered hospitality to all who came to his door (Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.11). Jerome was not very consistent on this point, as is illustrated by his letter to Paulinus of Nola (Hier.*Ep.* LIII.11 which advocates a complete and immediate divestiture of wealth). For Paulinus and Jerome's correspondence, see Courcelle (1947), 250–280.

<sup>68</sup>Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.6.

<sup>69</sup>Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.11.

<sup>70</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* LXII. Cf. Harries (1984), 62 who notes that while living Pammachius did not reduce his holdings below the senatorial census.

Possession of wealth was justified by giving it away incrementally.<sup>71</sup>

A second variation for the disposition of wealth and property was to renounce riches on a spiritual plane, while simultaneously retaining control of them in the material world. The aristocrat became a custodian of the wealth, a regent for God. All things belonged to God; the aristocrat simply administered them on his behalf. This course seems to have been the paradigm for reconciling wealth and ascetic Christianity adopted by Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus of Nola. According to Paulinus, Sulpicius had actually signed his estate at Primulacium over to the church, but then continued to live there as the host of the house.<sup>72</sup> Paulinus drew a fine distinction for he noted that Sulpicius' 'forfeiture' of his estate was the spiritual equivalent of selling it.<sup>73</sup> This renunciation offered Sulpicius the advantage of ownership without mental enslavement to his estate. Sulpicius controlled and administered his estate on behalf of either the church (as Paulinus implied) or God. An interesting variation on this theme also emerges in Paulinus' letters to Aper and his wife Amanda. According to Paulinus, Aper had renounced all claim to wealth and property by placing the administration of those things in Amanda's hands. Therefore he was no longer bound by ties to material wealth and Amanda was doing a holy work by shielding Aper from these things.<sup>74</sup>

This spiritual renunciation of wealth was the backbone of Paulinus' thought.<sup>75</sup> The proper role of the ascetic aristocrat was to cultivate dispassion toward wealth, and to earn favor with God by giving charitably to the poor. Although a number of ascetic writers used Christ's injunction to the rich young ruler as the basis for their views on renunciation, Paulinus favored the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke XVI.19-31).<sup>76</sup> In this story, the rich ruler had scorned the beggar Lazarus who sat outside his gates; he failed to offer the beggar food or alms. When the pair died, Lazarus ended up in heaven while the rich ruler was consigned to

<sup>71</sup>Ramsey (1982), 239 noted that in western patristic thought, the most important justification of wealth was the giving of alms.

<sup>72</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XXIV.1-3.

<sup>73</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XXIV.1. Walsh (1967), 312 n. 6 states that there is little doubt that Sulpicius had signed his property over to the church. One wonders, however, why such an act would earn the consolatory letter that Paulinus sends him. Moreover there is the confusing statement in Paul.*Ep.* XXIV.3 where Paulinus claims that Sulpicius remains the 'apparent owner' of the estate, even though he has mentally detached himself from the claim to ownership.

<sup>74</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XLIV.4.

<sup>75</sup>See now Trout (1999), 133-159 for a complete discussion of Paulinus' reconciliation of wealth and renunciation.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. Trout (1999), 134-138.

hell. The rich ruler then begged Abraham (who seems to serve the same role that St. Peter would serve in later Christian popular thought: the gatekeeper in heaven) to send an emissary to his rich brothers so that they might be warned to behave charitably toward the poor and be admitted into heaven. This request was rejected by Abraham on the grounds that even a figure bringing a warning from the afterlife would not shake his hardhearted brothers.

Although this parable does not seem to offer much hope to the wealthy, Paulinus was able to extract theological justification for his lifestyle from it. The point of the story was not that the rich could not be saved, but rather that the rich ruler could have been saved had he fulfilled his proper role in the divine economy — that is, by using his riches to care for the poor.<sup>77</sup> In fact, according to Paulinus, the social divisions of rich and poor were created by God in order to furnish an opportunity for the rich to be charitable.<sup>78</sup> The two classes were intended to live in a symbiotic relationship, the rich supporting the poor and the poor nourishing the rich through their grateful prayers.<sup>79</sup> The possession of material wealth was not the ultimate criterion; the person's attitude toward that wealth was the crux of the issue. Consequently, Paulinus developed the idea that one needed to cultivate detachment from one's possessions. They were, after all the property of God. The role of the wealthy man or woman was to administer God's goods in his absence. This sentiment was echoed by Augustine, who noted that wealth, gold, silver, possessions, and servants were all good, if they were used to do good.<sup>80</sup>

These examples suggest strategies employed by western ascetics to reconcile their ascetic interests with their possession of wealth. While these men and women took seriously the injunction to give up their wealth, most interpreted the command in a less rigorous fashion than Cassian.<sup>81</sup> Although Cassian would differ from the Briton in other ways, on the issue of the renunciation of wealth, he demonstrated a great deal of sympathy for the position taken by Pelagius (or one of his close followers) in *De divitiis*. Both men argued for the fundamental

<sup>77</sup>Paul.Ep. XIII; Paul.Ep. XXV.

<sup>78</sup>Paul.Ep. XXXII.21.

<sup>79</sup>Paul.Ep. XXXIV.6-8. This idea, as noted above (pg. 156) was borrowed from Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas.

<sup>80</sup>Aug.Serm. XLVIII.8. This was not the belief of Augustine's arch-enemy Pelagius, who excoriated these attitudes as nothing more than rationalizations employed to support the status quo. Cf. Ramsey (1982), 255; Pearce (1962), 498.

<sup>81</sup>Harries (1984), 58.

incompatibility of Christianity and wealth.<sup>82</sup>

Apparently aware that many western ascetics were involved in a theoretical renunciation of wealth, Cassian placed the need for a total renunciation at the heart of his critique of the Gallic monks. The Gauls, he noted, had not made a renunciation, but to the contrary, were retaining their possessions.<sup>83</sup> In addition to the direct condemnation of this practice offered by Cassian in Books IV and VII of *De institutis*, it is also significant that when he later offered his account of the evolution of monks, he placed economics at the heart of the laxity that crept into the Apostolic church.<sup>84</sup> The members of that first church, observing the relaxed concessions offered to the Gentiles, decided that they could be Christians without renouncing their wealth and property (against the examples of the earliest members who sold all they had and laid the proceeds at the feet of the Apostles). They believed that they could follow Christ in faith, without literally fulfilling the command to sell everything and give it to the poor.<sup>85</sup>

Cassian would have nothing to do with this antinomian position. One walked either by trusting in the things of the world or by trusting in God. Economic laxity had destroyed the Apostolic church and it was one of the flaws undermining Gallic asceticism. As Cassian noted, one of the great shortfalls of the Gallic abbot (aside from the lack of experience discussed earlier) was the fact that he had not renounced his wealth and possessions. In Egypt, according to Cassian, no one was allowed to preside over a monastery before he had completely renounced all of his worldly possessions.<sup>86</sup> In fact, as noted above, in Egypt no one was even allowed to join a monastery until this renunciation of wealth and property had been accomplished.

The retention of wealth, especially money that had been stashed in a secret place, was like a bridge that led back to the former life. When things became difficult in the monastery (as Cassian assures his readers they would), the new monk would begin to recall that he had another option: he could abandon the ascetic life and return to his former existence. He could flee the battle and seek safety in the rear. As soon as any disturbance or difficulty arose, the

<sup>82</sup>It should be noted however, that Cassian's position on non-ascetic Christians is not as clearly stated; monks are his principal concern. The unknown writer of *De divitiis*, to the contrary, advocated a renunciation of wealth by all Christians. Cassian also shared the Pelagian view that wealth was the product of the rich having cheated the poor out of their money (*Cass.Coll.* I.10).

<sup>83</sup>Cf. *Cass.Inst.* II.3.

<sup>84</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>85</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XVIII.5.

<sup>86</sup>*Cass.Inst.* II.3.

knowledge that he had a fallback position would send him flying from the monastery like "a rock sent whirling from a sling."<sup>87</sup> Cassian would eliminate this line of retreat. The monk who knew that he had nothing held in reserve would be more likely to remain in the battle line. Moreover, by voluntarily stripping himself of all wealth and possessions, he had taken the first steps toward the emulation of Christ, who himself had no possessions or wealth to count his own.

The first step in the monastic life was to count the cost. If the renunciation of the security offered by wealth and possessions was too much to exchange for the possibility of spiritual perfection, then Cassian advised the seeker to stay away from the front. Quoting Deuteronomy XX.8, he noted that the man who was afraid of the fight was better off staying at home. At least that way his fear would not poison his fellow soldiers.<sup>88</sup> A double-minded man, one who had one foot in the world and one foot in the ascetic life, could not prosper.

Of course this was not the view, as has already been noted, of many of Cassian's contemporaries. These ascetics were not renouncing their wealth when entering the ascetic life. Cassian's view of this action could be summarized in the quote he attributes to St. Basil.<sup>89</sup> In Book VII of *De institutis* Cassian told the story of how a rich senator gave away most of his wealth and property, but held enough back to support himself in the ascetic life because he did not want to acquire true humility through renunciation and work. Basil, according to Cassian, confronted this senator with the words "You have spoiled Syncletius, the senator, and not made a monk."<sup>90</sup>

Those making a partial renunciation were also directly addressed in *De institutis* VII.16, where Cassian discussed the folly of people who bent Scripture to accommodate their own lust for money because of their inability to make a proper renunciation. They took Christ's

<sup>87</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.3: *velut funda rotante fugiturum*. This theme is also developed in Cass.*Inst.* VII.7, where a growing concern about where the money would come from should a monk need to flee a monastery is offered as one of the signs of a resurgent avarice.

<sup>88</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VII.15.

<sup>89</sup>This quote is not found in any of Basil's extant works. It is also interesting to note that this pericope was taken into the *Apothegmata patrum* under Cassian's name (*Apoth. Patr.* Cassian VII).

<sup>90</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VII.19: *Et senatorem, inquit, Syncletium perdidisti et monachum non fecisti*. There is some doubt about the reading here, as Gazet took Syncletium to be a transliteration of the Greek word *συγκλητικός*, and omitted it from his text while Petschenig rendered it as a proper name. This textual crux need not detain us here, and I have translated it based on the text found in Guy (1965), 320.

words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive,"<sup>91</sup> as a proof text for their view that they should retain their wealth in order to support themselves and to have something extra to give to those in need.<sup>92</sup> As has already been discussed above, this was exactly the course followed by Pammachius, Paula, Melania, and others. Unfortunately, concluded Cassian, these people were deceiving themselves. Ascetic life and retained wealth were incompatible. One either entered the ascetic life by completely renouncing everything, or one stepped off down the broad way that led to destruction.

The classic example of the destructiveness of a partial renunciation could be drawn (once again) from the stories of the Apostolic church. Cassian found here an excellent illustration of how God dealt with those who tried to keep a foot in both worlds. In the Book of Acts, the first believers were selling all that they had and giving the proceeds to the Apostolic church. Ananias and Sapphira also decided to sell a piece of property, but rather than giving all of the money to the church, they retained a portion of the proceeds for their own use.<sup>93</sup> Caught in their deceit when they presented part of the money to the Apostle Peter, they fell dead at the Apostle's feet.

This desire to either retain or acquire wealth is subsumed under the heading of 'covetousness' by Cassian. Those who made either a partial renunciation, or, once having entered the monastic life, began hoarding money, were guilty of the same sin that led to the death of Ananias and Sapphira. Ultimately they partook of the treachery that drove Judas Iscariot to his doom and eternal condemnation.<sup>94</sup> Cassian provided a descriptive analysis of the progress of covetousness once it had gripped a monk's heart in *De institutis* VII.7-11. The disease begins with the desire to have just a small amount of money to call one's own, progresses through the hoarding of wealth, leads the monk to flee from his monastery once his savings have grown large enough, and he ends up taking a woman into his domicile in order to keep his purse (which leads to other vices).<sup>95</sup> Ultimately this monk is cast into hell.

This entire unfortunate stream of events may be traced back to the desire to possess money.

<sup>91</sup> Acts. XX.35. This is Paul's paraphrase of Matt. X.8.

<sup>92</sup> Cass.*Inst.* VII.16.

<sup>93</sup> Acts V.11.

<sup>94</sup> Cass.*Inst.* VII.25.

<sup>95</sup> Cass.*Inst.* VII.7-11.

Not only did this debased hunger exercise an unfortunate influence on the individual monk, but it was also capable of destroying institutions. It was for this reason, according to Cassian, that the original apostolic church fell apart. When the believers stopped renouncing all that they owned, the church slipped into apostasy and tepidity.<sup>96</sup> Impiety was economic, and the great sin was the belief that one could ignore Christ's command to sell all one had and take up the cross.

This line of thinking is further reflected in Cassian's division of monks into four classes.<sup>97</sup> His first two classes, the coenobites and anchorites, were the true descendants of the apostolic church. The third class, the Sarabaites, traced their lineage back to Ananias and Sapphira.<sup>98</sup> Although Cassian's description of these monks largely echoes Jerome's description of the Remnuoth,<sup>99</sup> he diverged from this earlier text by locating the root of their contemptible lives in their failure to renounce their wealth. These men wanted to imitate, rather than enter into, the life of perfection. They wanted to be known as monks, but did not wish to embrace the discipline of monastic life, be subject to elders, or cultivate humility. They made a public profession of the ascetic life but continued to live in their own homes doing whatever pleased their own fancy.<sup>100</sup> Abba Pinufius (to whom Cassian attributed this conference) sealed this identification by noting that in other provinces (those outside Egypt) the Sarabaites were almost the only kind of monk to be found.<sup>101</sup>

Cassian's view of the monastic world can be divided along the fault line of renunciation of wealth. Those monks who had renounced all of their wealth and property were true monks; the rest who either retained or sought to acquire wealth, were the spiritual offspring of Ananias and Sapphira and could ultimately be expected to meet a similar doom. There is no flexibility to be discovered in Cassian's works. One either renounced all of one's wealth or one had not

<sup>96</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.5. In Cass. *Coll.* XII.2 he links this to avarice.

<sup>97</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.1-10.

<sup>98</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.7.

<sup>99</sup>Hier. *Ep.* XXII.34. Cassian does follow Jerome, however, in converting the names earlier writers (such as Pachomius and Athanasius) had employed to differentiate between ascetic models, into terms which separated monks based on theological distinctions. That is, the difference between the Remnuoth and the coenobites was not so much the organization of their monastery as the fact that Jerome characterized the former groups as being heretical (Goehring (1992), 36).

<sup>100</sup>The fourth class of monks were those who longed to flee the discipline and subjugation of the coenobium in order to become anchorites (Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.8).

<sup>101</sup>Cass. *Coll.* XVIII.7.

yet made a start in the ascetic life.

### Disposal of Wealth

Before concluding this section, a brief consideration needs to be made of another of Cassian's variations from contemporary thinking, namely the disposal of wealth. As it has been demonstrated, Cassian was extremely clear on the need to renounce all wealth before entering a monastery. Not so much as a single coin was allowed to stick to the postulant.<sup>102</sup> If the postulant was not to retain any of his secular wealth, what was to become of his worldly lucre?

Augustine's *Regula* provided one common answer to this problem. Once again the model of the Apostolic church provided a guideline for monastic life, as Augustine seems to suggest that postulants would sign over their wealth and property to the monastery. This is implied in his injunction that those who had possessions in the world should freely agree to contribute them to the common pool.<sup>103</sup> Those monks who have much to give are warned not to become vain for having offered a great deal to the monastery.<sup>104</sup> Nor was this gift to be a onetime event; Augustine states that if a monk received gifts from his relatives these should also be donated to the common pool.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, Hilary records that the treasury at Lérins was replenished by new recruits coming to the island.<sup>106</sup>

The sharing of a common pool of goods was also in effect in Martin's monastery, although it is not clear whether the monks donated their wealth to the monastery on seeking entrance. In his first description of Martin's monks, Sulpicius asserted that the monks called nothing their own, but rather held everything in common.<sup>107</sup> They were not allowed to buy or sell as (Sulpicius noted) other monks did. Those who had once lived as noblemen were now enjoying simple lives of poverty. The question of the disposition of wealth is never directly addressed. Nevertheless, it is quite probable, as Stancliffe asserts, that new monks contributed their possessions to the monastery. This source of 'income' was supplemented by a subsidy from the

<sup>102</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.3.

<sup>103</sup>Aug.*Reg.* I.4; Aug.*Mon.* XXXIII.

<sup>104</sup>Aug.*Reg.* I.7.

<sup>105</sup>Aug.*Reg.* V.3.

<sup>106</sup>Hil.*V.Hon.* XXI.

<sup>107</sup>Sulp.*V.Mart.* X.

church.<sup>108</sup>

Martin's alleged praise of the former nobleman Paulinus should not be accepted as a paradigm for the monks of Marmoutier. According to Martin, Paulinus sold everything he had and gave it to the poor before becoming an ascetic.<sup>109</sup> This passage must be interpreted with some caution as it does fuse a clear panegyric intent (praise for Paulinus) with Christ's model. Sulpicius seems to deliberately press Paulinus' *renuntiatio* into a biblical framework in order to propose an ideal for noble readers to emulate. Significant is the fact that neither Paulinus nor Sulpicius sold everything they had in order to literally fulfill Christ's command; Sulpicius retreated to a family estate, while Paulinus developed a pilgrimage center in Nola. Both retained control of these properties.<sup>110</sup>

It may be that Martin did require his monks to give away all of their possessions before joining his monastery. This view may also be supported by his actions when Lycontius offered a hundred pounds of silver to the monastery out of his gratitude for Martin praying for the healing of his household. According to Sulpicius, Martin's monks implored their leader to use some of this money to provide for their needs (they needed food and clothing). Martin refused and gave all of the silver to the poor. The church, according to Martin, was responsible for ensuring that the monks were fed and clothed.<sup>111</sup> If this statement can be taken as an accurate reflection of Martin's policy, then perhaps postulants came to the monastery having already made their renunciation and thereafter they relied on alms given by the church.

Augustine's rule seemed to assume that his monks would contribute their former wealth to a common pool; the policy at Martin's monastery was less clear. Cassian, on the other hand, was extremely explicit on the question of disposition of wealth: the monk must give away all of his wealth before he approached the monastery. He was, under no circumstances, allowed to offer his money as a gift to the monastery.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup>Stancliffe (1983), 26. The same thing is suggested by Augustine in his *De opere monachorum*, when he states that monks should do some manual labor to support the monastery, but then the remainder of their needs could be supplemented by alms (*Aug.Mon.* XIX). The external funding of monasteries is also implied in *Hier.Vigil.* XIII, where Jerome chastises Vigilantius for not wanting to send money to Jerusalem to support the saints who had given up everything to do the work of the Lord.

<sup>109</sup>*Sulp.V.Mart.* XXV.

<sup>110</sup>Also suggested by *Hier.Ep.* LIII.14 who advises Paulinus to get rid of everything at once rather than doling his money out slowly.

<sup>111</sup>*Sulp.Dial.* III.14.

<sup>112</sup>*Cass.Inst.* IV.4.

Cassian advanced two reasons for this directive: a). the postulant would have an exaggerated sense of his place in the monastery (viewing himself as a patron rather than a postulant)<sup>113</sup> and b). should the monk wish to leave the monastery at a later time, he might demand the return of the money he had pledged to the monastery.<sup>114</sup> If the postulant has divested himself of all of his wealth before seeking the monastery, neither of these cases would pose a problem.

With these stipulations, Cassian revealed a deeper level of experience than that displayed in the monastic regulations of Augustine. While Augustine was clearly bent on recreating the community of goods found in the Apostolic church,<sup>115</sup> his implementation of this ideal led to problems. These hidden tensions emerge in his protracted discussion of how those who have donated substantial wealth to the monastery were to consider themselves no better than those who had entered the monastery from less-privileged backgrounds.<sup>116</sup> A problem was created when the awareness of external social divisions was imported into the community. The great temptation of the formerly wealthy monk was to consider himself more important than the brother who had brought nothing to the monastery.

Cassian circumvented this problem by placing all of the brothers on an equal footing before they were even considered for admission into the monastery. Every monk was required to make a *renuntiatio*; no one was allowed to pass the gatekeeper while still retaining wealth or property. Nor would a monk be offered the opportunity to cultivate a sense of self-importance by believing that his contribution to the monastery sustained it in some manner.

The second problem that Cassian intended to defuse was the possibility that a monk might grow weary of the monastic life and seek to reclaim wealth he had donated to the monastic coffers. Again, as long as there was a fallback position, the monk had to wrestle with the temptation to return to an easier existence rather than enduring the difficult course that led to spiritual perfection. By refusing to allow the monk to contribute wealth to a monastery, Cassian closed this avenue of escape. The monk would not believe that the monastery was holding his wealth in trust (as it did his secular clothing) against the eventuality that he might one day return to the world.

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<sup>113</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.4.

<sup>114</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.4. Cf. Kinsella (1998), 205–206.

<sup>115</sup>*Acts* IV.32–37.

<sup>116</sup>Aug.*Reg.* I.7.

This policy also protected the monastery. Cassian noted that the Egyptian monasteries had learned through experience that the acceptance of wealth from a postulant was a bad idea.<sup>117</sup> Many of them had been placed in the unenviable position of having to deal with a lapsed monk who wanted his money back. By denying the initial gift, Cassian ensures that it will never have to be repaid.

### Possessions

Closely linked to the renunciation of wealth and property was Cassian's injunction that a monk must also renounce all possessions. The only things allowed a monk were his clothes (provided by the monastery) and a mat.<sup>118</sup> The postulant was expected to enter the monastery with nothing but the clothes he wore. When the elders were satisfied that the postulant had renounced wealth and property, he was brought before the assembled brothers and stripped of the clothes he had worn through the gates.<sup>119</sup> The abbot then reclothed the postulant in the habit of the monastery, admitting him as a novice. In losing his clothing, the postulant was literally stripped of the last of his possessions. The habit he wore was borrowed and would have to be returned if the monk chose to leave.<sup>120</sup> Like Christ, the novice no longer had anything that he could count his own.<sup>121</sup> The postulant was reduced to a fundamental equality with the other brothers in the *coenobium*. While the secular world might gauge social standing by wealth or birthright, within the monastery these indicators had been erased. All of the brothers, from the most-experienced man to the freshest novice were sheltered and fed out of the possessions of the monastery. In economic terms, all of the brothers were equals, all depended on the *largesse* of the community.

Nor would any of these brothers dare to regard anything as their own once they had joined the monastery. This virtue, Cassian stated, was one that he wished extended to those in the Gallic monasteries.<sup>122</sup> That it did not was suggested by his claim that in Egypt the use of the

<sup>117</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.4.

<sup>118</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.13.

<sup>119</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.5. These clothes were stored for safekeeping. Eventually, if the monk persevered in the monastery, a time would come when the clothes would be given to the poor (Cass.*Inst.* IV.6).

<sup>120</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.6.

<sup>121</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.5.

<sup>122</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.14.

adjective "my" was a grave sin that earned a monk punishment.<sup>123</sup> No Egyptian monk would think to label something his. Nor would he own a box or basket, or anything that could be secured with a seal.<sup>124</sup> Again there was an implied contrast with the monks of Gaul, who had not renounced their possessions, and possibly had locking boxes to secure their valuables.

For obvious reasons this is not something that western writers would brag about; nevertheless the story of Brictio, as related by Sulpicius might offer indirect confirmation of Cassian's charge. Although Brictio was said to have joined Martin's monastery with nothing, Sulpicius noted that he had become the owner of horses and slaves (including attractive girls).<sup>125</sup> The ownership of horses is significant; the high cost of the animals (20–25 *solidi* according to some legal documents)<sup>126</sup> placed them well outside the reach of all but the wealthy.<sup>127</sup> That Brictio owned horses implies a marked rise in social standing and wealth.

Sulpicius returned to the theme of upwardly mobile clerics in *Dialogi*, where Postumianus offered a diatribe on the unseemly conduct of the Gauls.<sup>128</sup> The archetypal ascetic, having received a little praise, let it go to his head; said to be a holy man, he starts to believe it; if gifts are sent to him, he believes that God is arranging to bestow wealth on him; if he attains power, he will consider himself an angel; if he is made a cleric, he obtains new, costly robes, a horse, and enters the social round. The connection of this condemnation to Brictio is not certain, but in view of Sulpicius' antipathy toward Brictio, it does not seem entirely farfetched.<sup>129</sup>

Sulpicius' condemnation was aimed at upwardly-mobile Gallic ascetics. His charge suggests the presence of some who not only failed to renounce their possessions, but were adding to them. If, as has been shown, these men were retaining their ancestral properties to serve as monasteries, then there is no reason to suspect that they would have felt any need to strip themselves of their possessions. Cassian's charges, especially his note about the locking boxes that could be sealed, have the ring of eyewitness observation about them.

<sup>123</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.13. See also Bas.*Reg.fus.* XXXII; Chrys.*Hom.* 1-18 in *I Tim.* XII; Chrys.*Hom.* in *I Cor.* X.3; Cf. Wilks (1962), 534.

<sup>124</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.13.

<sup>125</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* III.15.

<sup>126</sup>Arce (1997), 26.

<sup>127</sup>Arce (1997), 26 suggests that "owning horses was equivalent to what Symmachus defined as 'leaving (sic) a consular life.'" 'Leading' is surely the correct word here.

<sup>128</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.21.

<sup>129</sup>Compare Sulp.*Dial.* III.15, where Sulpicius reports Martin's words on Brictio: if Christ put up with Judas, why should I not endure Brictio (*si Christus Judam passum est, cur ego non patiar Brictionem*)?

Possessions are intimately bound to property and wealth in Cassian's thought. A proper *renuntiatio* required a literal and permanent separation from all material things, and indeed the cultivation of contempt for those treasures of earth.<sup>130</sup> Possessions were an anchor, an undesirable weight that could not be carried up the path that ascends to spiritual perfection. The monk who could not sever the chain was doomed to remain bound to the earth.

### Family Connections

The dissolution of all ties to the external world was absolutely integral to Cassian's thought, as the preceding sections concerning wealth and possessions have demonstrated. But Cassian did not limit a monk's *renuntiatio* to material ties. The monk must also break the ties of duty and obligation which bound him to his nuclear family.<sup>131</sup> This emerges in his admonition that a monk must renounce all of his family connections. As long as this link to the world beyond the walls of the monastery was in place, the monk remained in danger of being pulled out of the monastery. The bond arising from the accident of birth must be sundered and replaced by a web of social connections enclosed by the walls of the monastery.

Nowhere is this renunciation more graphically illustrated than in Cassian's story of the father and his young son who joined an Egyptian monastery. Normally, asserted Cassian, this arrangement would not be allowed, but the father (Patermutius) waited before the gates so persistently with his eight year old boy, that the monks finally relented and admitted the pair.<sup>132</sup> Patermutius and his son were immediately separated so that the father would not be inclined to think that he had retained at least one possession (his son) from the secular world. The abbot then decided to test Patermutius in order to see if any paternal feeling for the boy remained in him. He had the boy dressed in rags and ordered the other monks to slap and abuse the boy whenever his father was present. The boy's dirty cheeks, noted Cassian, were frequently washed with tears. When this harsh treatment failed to disturb the father's equanimity, the Abbot decided to take the test a step further. One day when he came upon the boy crying, he ordered Patermutius to seize his son and cast him in the river. Without a thought, Patermutius

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<sup>130</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.39.

<sup>131</sup>On the place of family in Late Antique society, see Shaw (1987), 3-51.

<sup>132</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.27. Cassian also mentions a boy and father in Cass.*Coll.* II.7.

grabbed his son, marched to the river and threw him into the water. Fortunately, through the foresight of the abbot, brothers had been stationed by the river in order to rescue the boy should Patermutius demonstrate the faith of an Abraham.<sup>133</sup>

While the major illustrative thrust of the story concerned the virtue of obedience, Cassian also seems intent on demonstrating how completely the ties of the secular world must be rejected. Patermutius is unmoved by the plight of his son because he no longer recognizes a familial connection to the boy. He regarded his son with the indifference he would accord any other brother. When the abbot ordered that the boy be subjected to blows in front of his father, Patermutius concluded that this discipline was for the boy's own good, and took no more interest in the action than he would take in the case of any other novice subjected to punishment. Patermutius had successfully broken his former bonds.<sup>134</sup>

As long as the familial bond was intact, there was a danger that the monk might be lured back into an involvement with the secular world. The demands and needs of a family might encourage the monk, who had begun to plow his field, to look back in longing.<sup>135</sup> The only sure and certain course was to renounce this involvement with those who had surrounded the monk in his former life. The negative renunciation of family connections is intended to allow the positive integration into a new community to yield fruit.<sup>136</sup> The monk is aided in this by the regulations of the *instituta Aegyptiorum*. Communication with the outside world was firmly discouraged. Necessary communication was strictly monitored. The monk was not permitted to speak to a family member unless an elder was present. Nor was the monk permitted to receive (or respond to) letters from the outside world. The transgression of these rules earned a swift punishment.<sup>137</sup>

Again, Cassian's attempt to wall off the world separates him from other western ascetic

<sup>133</sup> A contrast Cassian cannot resist (Cass.*Inst.* IV.28).

<sup>134</sup> An odd variant of this story may be found in Paulinus' description of how Melania had entrusted her son to guardians and eschewed contact with him so that she might love her son by neglecting him (Paul.*Ep.* XXIX.9).

<sup>135</sup> Cass.*Inst.* IV.36 (citing Luke IX.62). See also Cass.*Inst.* IV.39 where the renunciation of one's familial relationships is the beginning of the conversion to spiritual perfection and Cass.*Coll.* Pref. I.6, where he links the renunciation of family and interest in secular affairs to spiritual perfection. This theme is also advanced in Cass.*Coll.* I.2 and Cass.*Coll.* I.5. See also Pall.*H.Laus.* VI who argued that it was the devil who afflicted a monk with family cares.

<sup>136</sup> Now see Rousseau (1974), 113-117 for a discussion of this with respect to Pachomius.

<sup>137</sup> Cass.*Inst.* IV.16.

writers.<sup>138</sup> Augustine's *Regula*, for instance, does not explicitly state that the monk will be denied contact with family members. To the contrary, the rule which enjoins that gifts received from relatives must be shared with the entire monastery, suggests that Augustine's monks were not required to break off contact.<sup>139</sup> Jerome also deemed it permissible for the young Gallic monk Rusticus to continue to see his mother as often as he wished after he became an ascetic, just as long as she did not visit him accompanied by other women.<sup>140</sup> Sulpicius Severus continued to communicate with his mother-in-law Bassula,<sup>141</sup> and Paulinus received his cousin Melania and her entourage in Nola.<sup>142</sup>

For Cassian, the ideal monk remained within the cloister, walled off from the seductive concerns of the world that he had renounced.<sup>143</sup> This point was illustrated by the story of Abba Archebius, which is placed in Book V of *De institutis*. Cassian offered Archebius as a paradigm for the aristocrats he was trying to instruct, explicitly stating that the story would benefit the monks of Gaul and teach them to maintain both a rigorous continence and the most unspoiled form of love.<sup>144</sup> Archebius, according to Cassian, had been a nobleman before entering the ascetic life.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, scorning both wealthy family and the seductions of the world, the young Archebius had fled to a monastery. He spent the rest of his life in the monastery, never returning to his own village (which was four miles away) nor looking on the face of a woman. However, when his father died, Archebius learned that his mother had been left with a debt of one hundred *solidi*.<sup>146</sup> Although Archebius had renounced all claims to his father's wealth, when he heard that creditors were harassing his mother, he resolved to pay the debt for her. He subsequently took on three times his normal amount of work. Laboring night and day, he managed to earn enough money to pay her debt in a year.

This story might seem to suggest an inconsistency in Cassian's thought: if Archebius had

<sup>138</sup> Although it was more common in the east. Pachomius' *Regula*, which served as the model for much of the practices outlined in *De inst.* IV, also contained the idea that a monk must be prepared to sever family connections (Hier. *Reg. Pach.* XLIX).

<sup>139</sup> Aug. *Reg.* V.3.

<sup>140</sup> Hier. *Ep.* CXXV.7.

<sup>141</sup> Sulp. *Ep.* III.

<sup>142</sup> Paul. *Ep.* XXIX.

<sup>143</sup> Seductive also in that Cassian makes withdrawal from the world and its conversation a prerequisite to the battle for chastity (Cass. *Coll.* XII.15).

<sup>144</sup> Cass. *Inst.* V.38: *sincerissimum retinere dilectionis affectum*.

<sup>145</sup> Cass. *Inst.* V.38.

<sup>146</sup> Cass. *Inst.* V.38.

renounced his family ties, how did he know that his mother was besieged by creditors, and moreover, why would he care? On closer examination however, the rule Cassian laid out in Book IV seems to stand. Archebius is clearly said to never have seen a woman (including his mother) after entering his monastery. Since the monastery was quite close to his former village (four miles), news of his father's death and his mother's plight could have easily have reached him without any direct (or indirect) contact with his mother.<sup>147</sup>

Charity provides the context which explains this story. In the preceding chapter, Cassian had related how Archebius had given his cell to Germanus and Cassian when they had entered the desert.<sup>148</sup> The story of how he had relieved his mother's debt was offered as a further illustration of Archebius' great charity. Cassian explicitly stated that it was the desire to practice charity that led Archebius to relax the evangelical prohibition on interacting with one's family. He took his mother's debt upon himself because the injunction to practice charity took precedence over the injunction to have no interest or involvement in the affairs of his family. Indeed, as Cassian noted, when his father was alive and the family was prosperous, Archebius took no notice of them. It was only upon learning that his mother had fallen into great need that he sought to relieve her burden. Moreover, he was able to accomplish this relief without diminishing his monastic cursus — he was not drawn back into commerce with the world or with his family.

### External Contacts

The monk's horizons were to be reduced to the walls of the monastery. As Abba Pinufius stated in the oration that closes Book IV of *De institutis*, the beginning of salvation was a horror of the world.<sup>149</sup> The affairs and concerns of the secular world must cease to interest the monk. In fact, the monk was exhorted to consider himself dead to this world. The idea of this death was employed by Cassian when he explained the significance of the linen tunic the monks were to wear, the *colobium*. Since linen was used as a burial garment,<sup>150</sup> its use as

<sup>147</sup> Although of course Cassian does not say precisely how Archebius learned of his mother's dilemma.

<sup>148</sup> *Cass.Inst.* V.37.

<sup>149</sup> *Cass.Inst.* IV.39.

<sup>150</sup> Christ's body was wrapped in a linen cloth (*ὀθόνη*) before it was interred (John XIX.40; XX.5). That monks followed this practice is illustrated by the story of Melania, who wraps the monk Pambo in linen cloth and buries him following his death (*Pall.H.Laus.* X.5).

an undergarment constantly reminded the monk that he was metaphorically dead to the world and had been buried with Christ. Cassian reinforced this idea of a separation from the world by quoting Paul: "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."<sup>151</sup> Whereas the monastic girdle and robe were external signs of separation, symbols of renunciation aimed toward the external observer, the undergarment, the closest layer to the monk's flesh, was intended to remind him of the choice he had made: death to the world, life in God. The monk was to kill his members,<sup>152</sup> which were upon the earth.<sup>153</sup> The citation of this verse from Paul strengthens the proposition that a monk must eliminate those things in one's soul that belonged to the world. The monk had chosen death with Christ over the pleasures and concerns of the world.

This death to the world encompassed the renunciation of both family connections (as discussed above) as well as connections to former acquaintances who were still marooned in the world. The monk had entered a new society, one which was intended to stand apart from the world. All attention must be turned inward, focused on the quest for spiritual perfection. Insulation from the concerns of the world was provided by the walls of the monastery.<sup>154</sup> The monk no longer saw his former acquaintances — all contact with the outside world was screened by the abbot. Nor was the monk allowed to send or receive letters apart from the permission of the abbot. The monk was to enter a living death, and the first thing to be killed was his interest in events and people beyond the cloister.<sup>155</sup>

As most of the evidence for early western asceticism is contained in letters and literary works, it is easy to believe that a renunciation of contact with the world was not one of the defining characteristics of the western ascetic.<sup>156</sup> Chief among those who practised asceticism while retaining a lively interest in the world was the presbyter Jerome.<sup>157</sup> One need only

<sup>151</sup>Col. III.3.

<sup>152</sup>With the idea of putting to death the earthly pleasures the body (*membrum*) craves.

<sup>153</sup>Col. III.5.

<sup>154</sup>And this separation is suggested by the walls Pachomius erected around his monasteries, designed not to keep the monks in so much as to keep the world out.

<sup>155</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.16.

<sup>156</sup>Although this statement needs to be carefully qualified by noting that if there was a group practicing a renunciation of the world, we would know little about them. We know about Jerome, Paulinus, Sulpicius, et. al. precisely because they were so actively involved with the world. Once again, therefore, we are a victim of our sources. Cassian seems to be criticizing an outward-looking, worldly western asceticism, but we should not assume that this was the only kind of operation in Gaul at this time.

<sup>157</sup>See Rousscau (1998), 125–142 for Jerome as a correspondent.

think of the early letters he wrote from his 'cell' in Syria, where he passionately claimed that he had cut himself off from the affairs of the world, while simultaneously chastising his correspondents for the infrequency of their letters.<sup>158</sup> For Jerome, the letter was compensation for the physical absence of friends. Indeed the maintenance of relationships — an act practised by even the most barbaric of people — was a duty for those living in a more civilized age.<sup>159</sup>

Paulinus also spent a great amount of time establishing and maintaining contact with the world while ostensibly withdrawn from secular affairs at Nola. His corpus of letters reveals an intent to claim for his foundation, built around the martyr Felix's tomb, the status of one of the pre-eminent holy sites in the world.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, Paulinus often speaks of his couriers, men like Postumianus, Vigilantius, and Victor, who spent their time carrying his missives around the rim of the Mediterranean. This effort seems to have paid off as Nola did become one of the great stops on the pilgrim route. Paulinus had, as Mratschek notes, "absolutely no intention of isolating his monastery from the outside world."<sup>161</sup>

This cultivation of the world and literary self-promotion was not Cassian's view of the proper goal for a monk. It has already been noted that a monk under the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was to be punished for receiving or writing letters without the abbot's permission.<sup>162</sup> Cassian's ideal monk had renounced all interest in anything happening beyond the walls of the monastery. This point is well-illustrated by a story from Book V of *De institutis*. Here Cassian offered the example of a monk who, after 15 years in the desert, had received a large packet of letters from his home province of Pontus.<sup>163</sup> The monk contemplated the packet of letters for a short time, asking himself what passions and recollections of the past would be awoken if he was to open and read his letters. He also wondered how long, once the thoughts of his past had been stirred

<sup>158</sup>See for instance, *Hier.Ep.* VI; *Hier.Ep.* VII.2; *Hier.Ep.* VIII. Cf. Driver (1995), 49.

<sup>159</sup>*Hier.Ep.* VIII. The same might be said for Hilary of Arles, as Eucherius reports that Hilary begged to receive letters from Eucherius (*Euch.Laud.* III). The letter was the agent that supported the ties of *amicitia*, the idea of shared friendship that has been described as one of the most important bonds of the aristocracy (Mathisen (1993), 13). Similar themes emerge in Ausonius' chastisement of Paulinus for not answering three letters that had been sent to him (*Aus.Ep.* XXI). See also Conybeare (2000), 151.

<sup>160</sup>So Mratschek (2001), who has documented Paulinus' wide-ranging network of contacts and the attempt to create a major ascetic center at Nola. See also Lane Fox (1994), 136–139 for a discussion of public Christian letters.

<sup>161</sup>Mratschek (2001), 514. But see now the view of Conybeare (2000), 54–55 for the idea that the composition of Christian letters was a sacramental activity, an "outward and visible sign of the invisible connection in Christ between those who write and those who receive and read them" (55).

<sup>162</sup>*Cass.Inst.* IV.16.

<sup>163</sup>*Cass.Inst.* V.32.

back into life, it would take before they relapsed into silence and his long-cultivated peace of mind returned to him. Ultimately the monk judged that the claims of his past belonged to the past, and he burned the letters without even opening the packet to see who had written to him. As the flames consumed the letters, he was said to have cried "Away thoughts of the world from which I have fled."<sup>164</sup>

It is difficult to read this story and not wonder if Cassian had Jerome or Paulinus in mind when he wrote it. But even if there was no connection intended, the point of the story is extremely clear: involvement with the world was to be avoided by the monk as a distraction that would disrupt the spiritual quest. The monk had died to the world and no longer should take any interest in what happened outside his enclosed society. Likewise the monk would also sever the ties of *amicitia* which bound him in a web of secular relationships. Friendships could only occur between like-minded individuals who were pursuing the same spiritual goals with equal fervor.<sup>165</sup> This friendship presupposed renunciation of the world and the fragility of it seemed to suggest that it could only be enjoyed by brothers in the same monastery.<sup>166</sup> The social horizon for the monk was to be reduced to the monastery, to those brothers who also strove for spiritual perfection.

### Social Standing

If the monk has died to the world and entered a new society, then it makes sense that the conventions that the world used to arrange members in a social hierarchy might also be destroyed. Indeed, Cassian advocated a new standard for judging pre-eminence in his enclosed world: the monk's emulation of Christ. The conceptions of rank based on wealth and heredity which stratified the secular world did not apply in Cassian's monastery. Here background counted for nothing; a monk who entered one of the Egyptian monasteries was a novice, no different from any other novice. The former claims to power and pre-eminence were left at the front gate; sons of the great landowners were to be treated no differently than sons of beggars.

In Cassian's formulation, the inhabitants of the monastery were ordered by their progress

<sup>164</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.32. Of course this was quite a counter-cultural activity — see Conybeare (2000), 24 for a discussion of the requirement to respond to letters as an *officium*.

<sup>165</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVI.5. Cf. Chrys.*Sac.* I-6. I.3.

<sup>166</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVI.6.

toward spiritual perfection. This does not seem to have been the practise of most ascetic foundations reported in western sources, where social rank translated directly into ascetic standing. One interesting example of the transfer to an ascetic life without the concomitant loss of standing and authority may be drawn from Jerome's abundant praise of the Roman senator Pammachius. This prominent senator had renounced the secular world after his wife (Paulina) had died. Jerome wrote a belated letter of condolence to Pammachius two years after her death. Although this letter was supposed to be consolatory, its main agenda seems to have been to restore a strained relationship with the Roman aristocrat. It is a rather obsequious sample of Jerome's art, aimed more at ingratiation than comfort. Especially prominent in Jerome's panegyric is the idea that Pammachius had now become the leader of the ascetics who lived in Rome, the "commander in chief of all monks."<sup>167</sup> Although one must be careful not to read too much into Jerome's effusive, ingratiating prose, his letter does advance the view that social standing was transferable to the ascetic life. It was completely proper for a man who had been numbered among the secular elite to assume a leadership role when he entered the ascetic life. Pammachius did not start his life as a junior novice, but rather he is styled "the leader of all the monks in Rome." Even though this was an Hieronymian obsequy and may offer no accurate information about Pammachius' true status in the Roman ascetic community, Jerome's words suggest that he had no problem with elites retaining their status in their adopted ascetic lives. And indeed, as Jerome's letters make clear, Pammachius did continue to exercise a great deal of personal influence and authority on the course of ecclesiastical developments in Rome.<sup>168</sup>

One might also consider the foundations of Paulinus, Sulpicius Severus, Paula, and the two Melanias. In each of these cases, the patron of the monastery seems to have moved effortlessly into a leadership role, despite the fact that none of these people had received training under experienced ascetics. These men and women essentially 'purchased' their monasteries: they would have bought the land, paid for the construction of buildings, and equipped and supported those people who joined their foundations. They are examples of what Weber termed 'traditional authority' as opposed to the charismatic authority that enabled the poor Egyptian

<sup>167</sup>Hier.Ep. LXVI.4: *magnus in magnis, primus in primis monachorum*. Jerome restated this sentiment in a later passage (Hier.Ep. LXVI.11).

<sup>168</sup>Clark (1992), 27-28.

Abbas to draw followers to themselves.<sup>169</sup> The 'followers' of Paula and the Melanias were drawn from among their relatives, friends, and slaves.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, in the case of at least one monastery, leadership was passed on based on kinship (Eustochium inherited the leadership of the Bethlehem monastery after her mother died) rather than merit or suitability for the position.<sup>171</sup> The working assumption of these leaders seems to have been that a former preeminence in the world made them uniquely qualified to lead other ascetics. Social standing was preserved in their adopted ascetic life.<sup>172</sup> But this, as has been demonstrated, was anathema to Cassian.<sup>173</sup> The idea that an untrained ascetic could lead and guide other monks lay at the root of the Gallic problem.

There was only one measure of standing in Cassian's rule for ascetic life: Christ-likeness. All of the standards that the world used to classify people were left at the front gate. There was no place in his *instituta Aegyptiorum* for the maintenance of social divisions. One would not find the same social divisions that Jerome attributed to Paula's Bethlehem monastery,<sup>174</sup> or those divisions which may be deduced from the descriptions offered by Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus.<sup>175</sup>

Indeed, claimed Cassian, in Egypt they did not allow just anyone (and the implication here is anyone of rank) to found a monastery; the postulant must present himself to a monastery and begin at the bottom of the ascetic hierarchy. The aristocrat started at the same point as

<sup>169</sup>Weber (1968), 215 defines three pure types of authority: the rational which is based on a shared belief in law and those appointed to enforce it; the traditional, resting on forms that have been observed over long periods of time and centered on personal loyalty; and the charismatic, which is based on devotion to an exemplary or heroic person. Now see Clark (1986b), 215 who applies Weber's analysis to female ascetics and notes that the foundations of women like Paula and Melania were based on traditional authority.

<sup>170</sup>Clark (1986b), 215.

<sup>171</sup>Clark (1986b), 216–217.

<sup>172</sup>Although Clark (1995), 36–37 has suggested that ascetic renunciation, in the case of women, also meant a loss of social status, as Shaw notes, in the case of the two Melanias, the women did not retreat into obscurity with their profession, but indeed may have become even more prominent (Shaw (1995), 79). Cf. Jerome's assertion that Paula (who had been unknown while living as an aristocrat in Rome) was now, while living in obscurity in Bethlehem, known throughout the Empire and in the barbarian countries as well (Hier.Ep. CVIII.3).

<sup>173</sup>See Chapter II.

<sup>174</sup>In Jerome's tribute to Paula, he claimed that the women in her monastery were divided into three groups based on the rank they held in the outside world (Hier.Ep. CVIII.20). Although these women did not work or live together, in the spirit of egalitarianism, they did all meet together for the offices of prayer. Against this was the eastern example of Macrina, who (according to Gregory of Nyssa) manumitted her household slaves and treated them as equals, as well as admitted sisters from the lowest classes of society into her ascetic household (Gr.Nyss.V.Macr. XI; Gr.Nyss.V.Macr. XII) — see the discussion in Elm (1994), 92–93; Clark (1986b), 213.

<sup>175</sup>See discussion below, pg. 184.

the brother drawn from an impoverished background.<sup>176</sup> The renunciation of his wealth had changed his social position — he now shared the poverty of Christ along with all of his new brothers.<sup>177</sup> No one had anything to call his own, no wealth to distinguish him from his fellows.

Nor did divisions based on age apply. The secular world might give precedence and deference to older members of the society, but for Cassian, the only value of age was as a source of humility: the older postulants were to mourn the years they had wasted in the secular world.<sup>178</sup> In fact, in Cassian's new social order, it was quite likely that an older novice might find himself under the authority of someone much younger than himself.<sup>179</sup> In this case the older man was to submit to the younger, offering him the obedience appropriate to someone in a higher position. A sense of how awful this might be in secular terms is implicit in Sidonius Apollinarius' letter to Eutropius where he raised the haunting possibility that if Eutropius did not pursue higher offices, he might find himself standing while his juniors sat at the table, arguing in council.<sup>180</sup>

### Luxurious Living

Renunciation of the past also meant that the monk must separate himself from the small comforts offered by life. The context for Cassian's monasticism was not a Christianized form of the aristocratic ideal of *otium*, but rather an existence that simply sustained, rather than pampered the body. One of the first challenges of the novice was to forget the delights of his past life.<sup>181</sup> The ascetic life was not intended to foster "repose, carelessness or delights,"<sup>182</sup> but rather was the most difficult and demanding of roads.

Whereas in their past lives monks may have enjoyed the pleasures of the table, now they were reduced to rough fare. Cassian did not prescribe a set menu as he felt that one standard could not meet the nutritional needs of all monks. Physiological needs differed; what was possible for some was out of the reach of others. Older monks or the sick would not be able to

<sup>176</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.4.

<sup>177</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.5.

<sup>178</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>179</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>180</sup>Sid.*Ep.* I.6.4.

<sup>181</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>182</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.38.

survive on moistened beans, fresh vegetables, or dry bread.<sup>183</sup> Consequently he did not offer a universal menu for all, but rather placed the burden on the monk to distinguish between need and gluttony in his choice and quantity of food.<sup>184</sup>

Cassian does state that the Egyptian monks mainly consumed dried and uncooked food: the leaves from leeks, salt, olives, and a small fish.<sup>185</sup> Their greatest luxury, wrote Cassian, was to eat cherlock (an herb from the mustard family) that had been salted and soaked in water.<sup>186</sup> Adoption of this sparse diet was not to be expected of the Gauls, however, as the harsher climate made these nutritional guidelines impractical.<sup>187</sup> Nevertheless able-bodied Gallic monks were not to indulge themselves in the luxury of wine and meat, as this was a sign of gluttony.<sup>188</sup> The proper course was to eat (in strictest moderation and never to repletion) food which could be obtained easily and cheaply.<sup>189</sup>

That this course would not have appealed to a western ascetic is suggested by one of Paulinus' letters to Sulpicius Severus. In *Epistle XXIII*, Paulinus relates how Sulpicius' messenger, Victor, attempted to win the aristocrat over to a rougher fare. Paulinus claimed that Victor taught him how to make a simple gruel of meal and water.<sup>190</sup> Later in his letter, Paulinus noted that it was actually another servant, an old *rusticanus* that Paulinus had imported from the country, who helped Victor with the cooking.<sup>191</sup> This old man, long accustomed to such coarse fare, was said to be growing fat on Victor's cooking. Paulinus, himself the slave of the "haughty tastes of a senator,"<sup>192</sup> directed more appreciation toward the effort than the result.<sup>193</sup>

The cultured tastes of ex-aristocrats were also the subject of the concessions Augustine made in his rule. His monks were warned not to envy those who received more food, or better clothing, mattresses, and blankets. These monks, who had been drawn from more affluent

<sup>183</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.5. Compare the early food of Pachomius and his brother John who were said to subsist on two loaves of bread and a bit of salt each day (*V.Pach.Bo.* XIX). Cf. *Cass.Coll.* II.19 for Moses' recommendation.

<sup>184</sup>A subject that is treated at length in Book V of *De inst.* Cf. *Cass.Coll.* II.22.

<sup>185</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.22. See Clark (1993), 95-96 for the suggestion that someone from a poor background might go through life without ever eating cooked food. See North (1997), 505 for one instance of the Desert Fathers enjoying 'sweetmeats.'

<sup>186</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.11.

<sup>187</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.11.

<sup>188</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.6.

<sup>189</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.23.

<sup>190</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XXIII.6.

<sup>191</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XXIII.9.

<sup>192</sup>Paul.*Ep.* XXIII.6.

<sup>193</sup>Victor's creation is said to have emitted a strong, stinking vapor which filled Paulinus' room (*Paul.Ep.* XXIII.7).

backgrounds, were given these extra luxuries (stated Augustine) because their bodies would not tolerate the harsher regime imposed on the brothers who came from less-noble antecedents.<sup>194</sup> The right of the wealthy to enjoy a higher standard of living than the poor also emerges in Augustine's *Sermon LXI*. Here he notes that the rich should eat their luxurious food because having grown accustomed to it, they would become sick if they ate rougher fare. The rich were to consume luxuries, while the poor were to be given necessities.<sup>195</sup>

In the case of Paulinus, there is the sense that the noble ascetic has possibly reduced his luxurious standard of living, but he does not seem to be able to stomach the rough food of a Victor. It seems likely that he would have gravitated toward the moderate view expressed in Augustine's *Regula*. The Bishop of Hippo was quite pragmatic in his recognition of the difficulties faced by those accustomed to a luxurious existence. His allowance for different standards of living in the monastery (based on one's antecedents) does seem to have been a source of tension among the brothers.<sup>196</sup> While Augustine's recommendations are eminently pragmatic, they would tend to import social divisions into his monastery.

Cassian was the great equalizer. There was to be no hierarchy in the monastery based on a monk's previous life. Nor was there to be different food for different monks. All brothers would eat the food that was common to the monastery. The only possible variation was quantity and selection. And these variations were made as concessions to sustain life, not to palliate cultured tastes.

### *Servus Dei*

John Cassian offered a program of renunciation that must have seemed very radical in the context of the late Roman world. The unqualified renunciation of wealth and property, the severing of ties with family and friends, and the reduction of the living standard to a subsistence level must have been difficult for someone drawn from an elite background to accept. Yet one wonders if the renunciation that will be detailed in this section, Cassian's reduction of the monk to the status of a servant, might not have been the hardest renunciation of all. Cassian's

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<sup>194</sup>Aug.*Reg.* III.3-4.

<sup>195</sup>Aug.*Serm.* LXI.11-12. Cf. Ramsey (1982),234-235.

<sup>196</sup>As is implied by the directives to the poorer brothers not to begrudge the concessions made to the formerly wealthy brothers.

restructuring of the Roman social order involved one last great reversal: the free man would take on the role of a slave. How difficult would it have been for an elite Roman reader to contemplate the renunciation of his freedom? How hard would it have been for someone who had always been served to don the chains of a servant?<sup>197</sup>

The slave's role in antiquity was to carry out tasks set by a master. These tasks ranged from serving as physicians to working in the fields.<sup>198</sup> The slave had no claim to rights as an individual — at the end of the day he or she was nothing more than a master's property. Although the slave could hold property or possessions as a *peculium*, ultimately these things were also the property of the master.<sup>199</sup> Nor did slaves enjoy extensive protection under Roman law: the Theodosian Code stated that a master would not be held accountable if a punished slave died.<sup>200</sup> Slaves were property. There was a wide gulf between an aristocrat, who had perhaps the greatest amount of personal freedom in Roman society, and the man or woman with the words *fugitivus hic est* branded on their forehead. The idea that an aristocrat would willingly take up the yoke of servitude in a monastery was indeed a revolutionary concept.<sup>201</sup>

Cassian shows no sympathy for those who would face this reduction in status. All monks in the coenobium worked; all monks served each other; and all monks offered absolute, unquestioning obedience to those set over them.<sup>202</sup> In short, all monks were slaves, adopting the same quality of humble service that had characterized Christ. The fundamental division of persons in the classical world,<sup>203</sup> the distinction between free and slave, was destroyed; the servant, the served, and the free poor were conflated into a single class: *servi Dei*. Those who

<sup>197</sup>Fitzgerald (2000), 88–93; Bradley (2000), 110–111 for the parity between slaves and domestic animals in classical thought.

<sup>198</sup>Samson (1992), 220.

<sup>199</sup>Samson (1992), 221; Garnsey (1996), 34. A similar situation existed for sons and daughters who were still under the authority of a *paterfamilias*.

<sup>200</sup>*C.Th.* IX.12.1.

<sup>201</sup>Wes (1992), 257: "To exchange *libertas* for *servitus* is the most radical and, in the view of a Roman aristocrat, the most absurd step one can take." This may not have applied however to those from the poorer end of the social spectrum. As Garnsey (1996), 5 has suggested, many slaves were much better off than the great majority of the free poor (Cf. MacMullen (1974), 92). For a person drawn from this background, Cassian's monastery might have represented a substantial improvement.

<sup>202</sup>Garnsey (1996), 1 identifies three basic components in slavery: the slave is property; the owner's rights over the slave was complete; the slave was kinless, having been stripped of his or her former social identity. The need to separate a monk from his former social context has already been discussed above (see pg. 179) and this section will pursue the similarities between Garnsey's first two components and Cassian's monks. For the characterization of Macrina as a servant, see Elm (1994), 99.

<sup>203</sup>Garnsey (1996), 185.

had once ruled and been served now learned humility by working with their hands and serving others.

Somewhat unsurprisingly, this diminution of personal freedom does not seem to have characterized early western monasticism.<sup>204</sup> Nor were the divisions of social order rapidly breached. When describing the lives of the monks at Marmoutier, for instance, Sulpicius Severus was quite explicit in stating that Martin's monks practiced no trades, nor were they allowed to buy or sell.<sup>205</sup> Sulpicius indicated that Martin had forbidden the monks to engage in self-supporting crafts. "Let the Church feed and clothe us, so long as we do not seem to have earned anything for our own use."<sup>206</sup> The church's role in providing for the monks was also implied by the fact that a deacon (Cato) was said to be responsible for the management of the monastery's affairs, including the provision of food for the monks.<sup>207</sup> Again there was the sense in this statement that the details of providing daily bread were not suitable concerns for a monk. This would be handled by those who served the monastery. The monk's duty was to pray — let the church look after the secular affairs of providing food and clothing for the monks.<sup>208</sup>

The suggestion that others served the Marmoutier monks while they did no work is also implied by the story of the old man who was hired by the monastery to gather wood.<sup>209</sup> This man was killed by Satan, but his importance for this analysis was the fact that rather than gathering wood themselves, Martinian monks hired workers to do these jobs.<sup>210</sup> The only apparent exception to Martin's prohibition of work was that the younger monks were allowed

<sup>204</sup>Clark (1986a), 181.

<sup>205</sup>Sulp. *V. Mart.* X.

<sup>206</sup>Sulp. *Dial.* III.14.

<sup>207</sup>Sulp. *Dial.* III.10.

<sup>208</sup>Jerome advanced a similar argument in his attack on Vigilantius (who had opposed sending money from Gaul to support the monasteries in the Holy Land). Jerome claimed that since these men and women had renounced all, they were now owed a living by the church (*Hier. Vigil.* XIII).

This view was opposed by Augustine in his *De opere monachorum*, written to monks of Carthage who had ceased working in order to pray all the time. Despite Augustine's injunction that monks should do some work, it should be noted that he mitigates this for those drawn from an elite class who would not be accustomed to manual labor, and should therefore be given an administrative function in the monastery (*Aug. Mon.* XXXIII).

<sup>209</sup>Sulp. *V. Mart.* XXI.

<sup>210</sup>One might also point to the story related above (see pg. 172) concerning Briccio, who was brought up in Martin's monastery, but as a cleric owned horses and slaves, (including comely girls). Although Sulpicius' account is ambiguous about Briccio's status (is he a former monk who is now a cleric, or a monk-cleric who is still part of Martin's monastery), the story does suggest what is implied elsewhere, the presence of servants or slaves at Marmoutier.

to copy texts while the older monks prayed.<sup>211</sup>

The divisions embedded in Gallic asceticism become even more pronounced when attention is turned to the evidence for a social hierarchy at Sulpicius' foundation at Primuliacum. Paulinus of Nola's *Epistle XXIV* suggested that Sulpicius Severus was nothing more than one of many servants at Primuliacum, living as a fellow servant with the household slaves (*confamilulus vernularum*).<sup>212</sup> Does this mean that Sulpicius had freed his slaves? If so, it is curious that Paulinus still refers to them as slaves. Would it not be more accurate to refer to the manumitted slaves (if indeed that is what they were) as brothers or monks?<sup>213</sup>

Indeed, a close reading of the evidence suggests that Primuliacum tended toward a more traditional, Roman aristocratic model of estate management. While Sulpicius and Paulinus profess an equality among the brothers at Primuliacum, it is intriguing to note that the servants among the *servi Dei* were responsible for the work, while the elite *servi Dei* engaged in activities which bore a strong resemblance to the more traditional activities of an aristocrat who has withdrawn from the world (embracing a life of *otium*). One example may be drawn from Sulpicius' *Dialogi*. Here it is reported that while Gallus, Postumianus, and Sulpicius Severus were spinning tales about Martin (a quasi-literary activity), a family servant (*puer familiaris*) entered to report the arrival of the priest Refrigerius.<sup>214</sup> Evidently the servants were not part of these ascetic discussions. A similar phrase occurs in one of Sulpicius' *Epistles*. While deep in a dream/vision concerning Martin, a *puer familiaris* entered Sulpicius' 'cell' to tell him that men had arrived with the sad news of Martin's death.<sup>215</sup> Again one has the feeling that while the aristocrats were engaged in ascetic practices (talking, having visions) the *pueri* were busy with the same tasks that would have occupied their attention in a traditional Roman villa.

Quite possibly there were several layers of social stratification at Primuliacum. There was

<sup>211</sup>Sulp. *V. Mart.* X.

<sup>212</sup>Paul. *Ep.* XXIV.3.

<sup>213</sup>One possible explanation is that of the *paramone*, a Roman contract which manumitted the slave, but required the newly-freed person to continue in the role of a household servant (cf. Garnsey (1996), 34). See also Hopkins (1978), 141–152 who argued that the majority of manumitted slaves in antiquity were required to continue to serve their master until the death ended the relationship.

<sup>214</sup>Sulp. *Dial.* II.14. Sulpicius' use of the term *puer familiaris* to signify a servant or slave is suggested by a story in *Dialogi* III. Here, a *puer* from Avitianus' household brought a glass jar to be filled with oil blessed by Martin. Sometime later, a *puer familiaris* in the household upset the jar and it fell to the marble floor but did not break (Sulp. *Dial.* III.3).

<sup>215</sup>Sulp. *Ep.* II.

one division between the master of the estate, Sulpicius, and the *pueri familiaris*. Standing apart from these two clearly defined groups was a third class of brothers, the messenger corps that carried letters between Primuliacum and Nola.<sup>216</sup> One of the most highly praised of these couriers was a monk named Victor.<sup>217</sup> The subject of a lengthy panegyric by Paulinus,<sup>218</sup> Victor seems to have been a former soldier<sup>219</sup> who joined first Martin and Clarus,<sup>220</sup> and then Sulpicius. That Victor was not the equal of Sulpicius is implied by Paulinus' assertion that Sulpicius would want to hear how Victor had served Paulinus, "because your good portion is the good work of your servant."<sup>221</sup>

Upon reaching Nola for the first time in the year 400, Victor immediately took on the burden of serving Paulinus. Paulinus termed this service a "voluntary kindness" (*hoc voluntarium eius bonum*), and claimed to have accepted it hoping to gain merit for allowing himself to be served and in order to avoid hurting Victor's feelings.<sup>222</sup> Paulinus, it should be noted, frequently cultivated merit in this way. The aristocratic ascetic seems to have been well-served during his years at Nola.<sup>223</sup> His letter to Sulpicius describes Victor's ministrations at length: Victor is 'allowed' to wash Paulinus' body and feet, to anoint his limbs, and to clean his sandals.<sup>224</sup> At Paulinus' request (undoubtedly cultivating additional merit), Victor massaged the aristocrat's body with oil.<sup>225</sup> Victor also took charge of Paulinus' kitchen. As discussed above,<sup>226</sup> he prepared a traditional monastic meal for Paulinus which did not sit well in the cultured aristocrat's belly, but was quite well-received by the coarser servant, the *rusticanus* who helped with the cooking at Nola.<sup>227</sup> Victor also busied himself by procuring and grinding a large supply of meal for the monks of Nola.<sup>228</sup> Victor's final act was the cutting of Paulinus'

<sup>216</sup>Cf. Paul.Ep. XI.4. See also discussion in Conybeare (2000), 31–40 concerning the role and status of the letter carriers.

<sup>217</sup>See now Conybeare (2000), 37–40 on the role of these carriers in general and Victor in particular.

<sup>218</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.3–10.

<sup>219</sup>Paul.Ep. XXV.1. Cf. Walsh (1966), 302, n. 22.

<sup>220</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.3.

<sup>221</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.3: *quoniam portio tua est bonum familiaris tui*. Mratschek (2001), 522 suggests that Victor had originally been one of Clarus' companions, who after that priest's death, had attached himself to Sulpicius.

<sup>222</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.4.

<sup>223</sup>See Trout (1999), 146–148 for examples of Paulinus' *pueri* being sent on missions for Paulinus to his other estates, as well as for Paulinus' arrangements for the ongoing support of manumitted slaves.

<sup>224</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.4–5.

<sup>225</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.5.

<sup>226</sup>See pg. 183.

<sup>227</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.9.

<sup>228</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.8.

hair, a duty which Sulpicius had evidently commanded.<sup>229</sup>

Paulinus' presentation of Victor's service at Nola obscures Victor's status. Clearly he was not a former aristocrat; his practical knowledge — of cooking, milling, cleaning, and his ability to care for Paulinus' body — places him outside that stratum. His actions presuppose a non-aristocratic background, and although Paulinus connects each of Victor's actions with the pattern set by the greater servant (Christ), one wonders how voluntary Victor's service might have been. Would a servant arriving with letters for an aristocrat be allowed to take his ease while awaiting a return message, or would he have been expected to temporarily attach himself to the recipient of the messages, busying himself for the duration of his stay?<sup>230</sup>

On the other hand, there are some clues that Victor was something more than a common servant or slave; he is said to be a former soldier who had attached himself to Martin and Clarus. While he could have joined them in the capacity of a servant, Paulinus hinted at Victor's monastic status by alluding to the sheepskin he wore.<sup>231</sup> It may very well be that Victor occupied a middle zone between aristocrat and servant. Perhaps he was a *rusticanus* who had been taken into the community at Primuliacum, but was under obedience to his 'abbot' (Sulpicius Severus).

As has been demonstrated, there was certainly social stratification among the *servi Dei* at both Nola and Primuliacum. It is unlikely, despite the great degree of admiration that he professed for Victor, that an aristocrat like Paulinus would ever have stooped to accepting orders from the courier. Paulinus and Sulpicius may have intellectually acquiesced to the fundamental equality of all brothers in Christ, but on a practical level it seems clear that the old social order persisted among the brothers at both Primuliacum and Nola.

Nor was this unusual among the elite who had withdrawn from the world. Palladius hints at the same stratification in Melania the Younger's monastery when he noted that part of Melania's asceticism was to perform a portion of her female slaves' work. Although Melania had made these women fellow ascetics (*συνασκητρίαις*) it is significant that their work has not been sig-

<sup>229</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.10.

<sup>230</sup>Now see Mratschek (2001), 522 for the view that when a monk arrived at a monastery he would integrate himself into the community, taking on a share of the daily labors and duties. Again one is led to wonder if those visitors of a higher rank would have been expected to participate in the jobs that were normally assigned to the *pueri*? Cf. Conybeare (2000), 36–37.

<sup>231</sup>Paul.Ep. XXIII.3.

nificantly altered by their manumission.<sup>232</sup> Jerome (as noted above) stated that Paula's ascetic foundation had been divided into three sections based on class; each class was responsible for its own allotted tasks.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, Jerome also noted that if a woman from a noble background joined the monastery, she was not allowed to keep any attendant who had served her in her former household.<sup>234</sup> This attendant, whose mind could be fixed on the delights of a life forsaken, might through her conversation reawaken suppressed desires in the noble girl. While this salutary prohibition does circumvent one possibility, the rule might imply that a servant who had not been with the girl in the world might have been allowed.<sup>235</sup> The rule does not forbid attendants, *per se*, but rather attendants who had enjoyed a secular relationship with the noble girl.<sup>236</sup>

The references to servants in the sources for western asceticism tend to support the idea that traditional roles of served and servant were maintained within these foundations.<sup>237</sup> The paucity of these references should probably be attributed to the idea that slaves and attendants were part of the cultural landscape — unremarkable and barely worth mentioning — rather than the belief that these foundations lacked a toiling class. The references surveyed above suggest that the social stratification that marked the secular world persisted in the monastery. In fact it would have been remarkable had this not been the case: slavery was such a deeply ingrained cultural feature that even among Christians there was no serious challenge offered to

<sup>232</sup>Pall.*H.Laus.* LXI.6. Likewise Gregory of Nyssa noted that Macrina compelled her mother to live at the same level as her maids, but he does not say that the maids were set free from their tasks (Gr.Nyss.*V.Macr.* XI). Macrina does seem to have been serious in her desire to share the lot of her slaves — Elm (1994), 46 argues that by baking bread for her mother, Macrina took on a task that was reserved for slaves, a serious violation of existing social convention.

<sup>233</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.20.

<sup>234</sup>Hier.*Ep.* CVIII.20: *Si qua erat nobilis, non permittebatur de domo sua habere comitem.*

<sup>235</sup>As is not uncommon with Jerome, his recommendations vary with his audience. When he writes to the ex-senator Pammachius, for example, he attempts to goad the new ascetic on by alluding to the example of Paula and Eustochium who do all manner of domestic duties: lighting lamps, sweeping floors, cleaning vegetables. Jerome then asked a rhetorical question: "Do they do this because there are no servants for these duties? Goodness no! They do it to demonstrate that they can also outperform those in physical toil that they exceed in stature of mind" (Hier.*Ep.* LXVI.13). One receives the sense that the bulk of the domestic work in Paula's monasteries fell into the hands of the less-noble women, although the upper crust occasionally did some work in order to prove their superiority.

<sup>236</sup>And now see Clark (1993), 102 and Elm (1994), 38 for the conversion of entire households to asceticism, including the slaves.

<sup>237</sup>Macrina and her mother, Emmelia, were said to have manumitted their household servants after the death of Macrina's brother Naucratus (Gr.Nyss.*V.Macr.* XI). These former servants were then treated as equals, sharing the same home, as well as the same table for meals. See Elm (1994), 84–87 for a discussion of this manumission.

the institution until the seventeenth century.<sup>238</sup> If one enjoyed the fruits of their labors in the secular world, it is only natural to expect that they would continue to serve in the new ascetic life.

The radical nature of Cassian's admonition to service emerges when set against the preceding examples. Not only were the elite to give up their own servants, but they were actually supposed to become servants for others.<sup>239</sup> They were to humble themselves in emulation of Christ, who likewise had lowered himself to serve all mankind.<sup>240</sup> In Cassian's view the monk's emulation involved four characteristics: manual labor, serving others, offering absolute obedience to one's elders, and relinquishing control over his one's life and destiny. In short, the man or woman who entered the monastery was to become a slave, no longer free to do as he or she chose.

### Manual Labor

Those who would seek perfection through the vehicle of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* must embrace the discipline of manual labor.<sup>241</sup> Cassian's injunction, that all monks must work with their hands, is entirely within the Egyptian stream of thought. The *Apophthegmata patrum*, *Historia monachorum*, and *Historia Lausiaca* all present monks working in order to support themselves.<sup>242</sup> A monk worked for both practical and spiritual reasons.

The most obvious practical reason was economic: the monk who had renounced all of his worldly possessions required some form of support. Presuppositional for Cassian, as noted above,<sup>243</sup> was that the monk arrived at the gates of the monastery with nothing but the clothes he wore. In order to sustain life, it was necessary to engage in some form of work to meet the

<sup>238</sup>Which is not to say that some Christian writers did not oppose the institution of slavery during the patristic period. Gregory of Nyssa (*Gr.Nyss.Hom.Ecc.* IV) argued that slavery was wrong. John Chrysostom (*Chrys.Hom. in I Cor.* XL.6) stated that Christians should educate their slaves in a trade and then emancipate them. Cf. Gordon (1989), 108.

<sup>239</sup>This began with the monk's first duties in the monastery — his assignment to the guest house to wait upon the visitors to the monastery (*Cass.Inst.* IV.7).

<sup>240</sup>It is possible that Hilary of Arles was adapting Cassian when he described how Honoratus had become a slave to all for the sake of Christ (*Hil.V.Hon.* XVIII.2). This connection should not be pressed too far however, as it certainly goes back to Paul, who also identified himself as a servant of Christ (*Rom.* I.1).

<sup>241</sup>For the positive evaluation of manual labor by the early church see Hengel (1974), 60–64.

<sup>242</sup>A great number of references could be adduced here. Representative examples include: *Apophth.Patr.* Achilles V; *Apophth.Patr.* Isaiah V; *Hist.mon.* XVIII.1; *Pall.H.Laus.* VII.5.

<sup>243</sup>See pg. 164.

modest needs of the monk. Whereas Gallic monasteries were foundering because the monks refused to work,<sup>244</sup> Cassian's monastery was a self-supporting institution. Those who lived in one of Cassian's coenobia were expected to support the monastery through their work.<sup>245</sup>

Work was an unending round. If the monk was awake and not eating or at one of the corporate offices, he was expected to be working. The Egyptian monks worked so much that they were allowed to sit during the psalmody of the nocturnal offices in deference to their fatigue.<sup>246</sup> They sought out work that could be done throughout the day, and even during the hours of darkness when they kept their vigils.<sup>247</sup>

Through this grinding regime of toil the monk learned humility.<sup>248</sup> Soft hands and weak bodies that had never known the rigors of a servant's labor were to be habituated to ceaseless effort, so that the monk "will be able to forget both the arrogance and the delights of his past life and acquire humility of heart though the contrition [produced by] hard work."<sup>249</sup> Again there is the sense in Cassian that manual labor would produce humility simply because it was something so foreign to his readers. One would not imagine that an audience drawn from a less-elite background would have been dismayed or shocked by the proposition that they had to embrace manual labor. As a discipline for teaching humility,<sup>250</sup> manual labor would only seem salutatory for those who had never been required to exert themselves before becoming monks.

Work also served as an aid to prayer. Cassian presented manual labor as a means of anchoring a restless mind. The monk who sat idle in his cell was liable to either fall asleep or to have his thoughts slip away from prayer and become unproductive. Work kept the monk awake and served to keep his attention focused on the injunction to pray without ceasing.<sup>251</sup> So intertwined were manual labor and prayer, claimed Cassian, that it was difficult, in the case of the Egyptians, to decide if their spiritual perfection drove them to work so hard, or whether

<sup>244</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.23.

<sup>245</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.14.

<sup>246</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.12.

<sup>247</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.12.

<sup>248</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>249</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3: *et fastus vitae praeteritae possit, et delicias oblivisci, et humilitatem cordis, contritione laboris acquirere.*

<sup>250</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.10.

<sup>251</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.14; Cass.*Inst.* III.2.

because they spent so much time working, they had achieved spiritual perfection.<sup>252</sup>

Another spiritual benefit of work was its role in palliating one of the great vices of the monastic life, *acedia*. This vice, often referred to as 'the midday demon'<sup>253</sup> was the subject of Book X of *De institutis*. *Accedia* was the spirit of dejection and restlessness that made a monk want to do anything but concentrate on the task that was at hand. Time slows down and the monk finds himself going out of his cell to check the position of the sun. He contemplates setting off to visit the other brothers, or wonders why he receives no visitors.<sup>254</sup> The monk who succumbs to *acedia* ceases to make spiritual progress and slips into idleness or a dejected torpor.<sup>255</sup> Eventually he is driven by restlessness to seek the companionship of others. Snared by the midday demon, he is unable to return to the path of spiritual perfection and will soon leave the monastery.<sup>256</sup>

Work was Cassian's remedy for *acedia*. The monk must remain in his cell and fight off *acedia* through the discipline of ceaseless labor. Rather than going out of the cell to engage in gossip and idleness with those who had already lost the battle, the monk of the narrow way followed Paul's admonition to the Thessalonians: he minded his own business and worked with his hands to provide for his needs.<sup>257</sup> To relax from the ongoing discipline of work was to relax from the spiritual quest; progress came through perseverance.<sup>258</sup>

### Serving Others

The monk did not just work on his own behalf, however. Part of his charter was to grow in humility by offering service to others. Service was a fundamental method for conquering pride, one of the more important steps on the road to spiritual perfection. Cassian shared this conviction with Basil, who noted that without brothers, whose feet would a monk wash in order to imitate Christ's humble servanthood?<sup>259</sup> As has already been noted, in the western ascetic foundations (especially at Nola for which the best evidence may be examined) while

<sup>252</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.14.

<sup>253</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.1.

<sup>254</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.2.

<sup>255</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.6.

<sup>256</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.6.

<sup>257</sup>Cass.*Inst.* X.7, developing the ideas Paul suggested in I Thess. IV.11.

<sup>258</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.14.

<sup>259</sup>Bas.*Reg.fus.* VII.

all were said to be servants of God, some of the ascetics seemed to have embraced that state of servanthood more literally than others.<sup>260</sup>

Cassian disbanded the old social hierarchy; all monks were intended to serve. The central place of service in the monastic life was taught from the beginning of the monk's training. Cassian's novice was made to spend a year living under an elder who was responsible for the care of guests.<sup>261</sup> During this year the senior monk directed the novices and taught them the first principles of the monastic life. One of their duties was to serve the guests. Acting as servants, Cassian noted, the novices were initiated into the rudiments of humility.

Opportunities to act as a servant did not cease once the novice was admitted into the general community. In addition to the work that supported the monastery, the brothers took turns preparing meals for the other monks.<sup>262</sup> This duty was rotated among the monks on a weekly basis so that all of the brothers would have a turn.<sup>263</sup> Once again Cassian used service as a training ground for spiritual growth. The monks who had the duty of preparing food for their brothers performed their service with a zeal and humility that greatly exceeded what was offered by a slave to even the harshest master.<sup>264</sup> Indeed, the eastern monks were so eager to serve one another, that some of them rose in the night to perform these duties, even though it was not their turn, in order to relieve those who were on the rota for the week.<sup>265</sup>

This example of the eastern monks' zealous service was supplemented by a further instance of their devotion: according to Cassian, one week the monks in a certain monastery had run out of the firewood necessary to cook the communal meals. The abbot declared that until more firewood could be obtained, the monks of the community would have to subsist on dried and uncooked food. The monks who had the duty that week were dismayed because the shortage of wood interfered with their opportunity to serve. In response, they embarked on an even greater

<sup>260</sup> Again, one may think of the interaction between Victor and Paulinus (see pg. 187).

<sup>261</sup> Cassian identifies these guests as pilgrims and brethren from other monasteries in *Cass.Inst.* X.22. See similar structure in *V.Pach.Gr.* XXVIII.

<sup>262</sup> *Cass.Inst.* IV.19. Cassian thought this discipline was important enough to make a point of suggesting that it be adopted in Gaul (*Cass.Inst.* IV.22).

<sup>263</sup> *Cass.Inst.* IV.19. Cassian noted that the weekly rotation was used in Mesopotamia, Palestine, Cappadocia, and throughout the East. The weekly rota was not used in Egypt however, as the Egyptians typically ate only uncooked food and therefore no great labor was required to prepare the meals. Consequently, a single brother was charged with the duty of arranging for the simple dietary needs of the brethren (*Cass.Inst.* IV.22).

<sup>264</sup> *Cass.Inst.* IV.19.

<sup>265</sup> *Cass.Inst.* IV.19.

labor and spent their days roaming the desert (where wood was extremely scarce) collecting wind-driven stubble and brambles and bearing these odd bits back to the monastery so that they would have fuel for the cooking fires.<sup>266</sup> Even though the abbot's command had offered them an excuse to desist from service, these monks were not satisfied to be cheated out of the opportunity to cultivate humility through their service to others.<sup>267</sup>

### Obedience

There was more to servanthood than simply working and serving others. The cultivation of the virtue of obedience lay at the heart of Cassian's injunction that a monk must become like a servant. The monk must, without question or hesitation, do whatever was enjoined by his superiors. As Augustine noted, obedience was the matrix of virtues and the universal virtue.<sup>268</sup> While the idea of obedience was familiar to the slaves and servants of the Roman world,<sup>269</sup> one wonders how comfortable a concept this would have been for one of the ruling elites entering the ascetic life.<sup>270</sup>

For Cassian, however, the ascetic life was a surrender of self-will and self-centeredness, and this abnegation was facilitated by training in the positive virtue of obedience. This complete obedience and submission of will is one of the central themes of *De institutis* IV. Cassian argued that obedience was the primary virtue, and nothing was to be placed before it.<sup>271</sup> It made coenobitic life possible, and it was an absolute prerequisite for a leadership position.<sup>272</sup> The novice learned obedience from his earliest days in the monastery.

The novice's education in obedience began at the hands of the elder assigned to care for visitors to the monastery.<sup>273</sup> Once this probationary period was completed, the novice was

<sup>266</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.21.

<sup>267</sup>This thesis has already examined another one of Cassian's examples of the cultivation of humility through service (see pg. 59). Abba Pinufius abandoned his position of leadership in a large Egyptian monastery, so that he might cultivate humility by entering a Pachomian monastery as the lowest of novices. In this example, the service of others, especially when coupled to the self-abnegation suggested by Pinufius reduction of station, furthered the Abba's growth in humility (Cass.*Inst.* IV.30).

<sup>268</sup>Aug.*Psal.* LXXV.12.

<sup>269</sup>See Garnsey (1996), 9 for the idea that owners strove for absolute obedience from their slaves.

<sup>270</sup>Now see Chadwick (1985), 14 for discussion of the idea that *oboedientia* is a word from Christian, rather than secular classical literature.

<sup>271</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.12.

<sup>272</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.28.

<sup>273</sup>See pg. 194.

transferred into the hands of an overseer who took charge of the monk's education. The duty of this overseer, an elder who was gifted with special discernment for this task, was to teach the junior monk how to conquer self-will through the cultivation of obedience.

One method of teaching obedience was the selection of distasteful tasks for the novice.<sup>274</sup> In the case of a certain aristocrat who had joined an Egyptian monastery, this meant carrying ten baskets into a nearby village and selling them in the market. His superior made the further proviso that the ex-aristocrat was not to sell more than one basket to any single buyer, thereby lengthening the amount of time he would have to stand in the market hawking his wares.<sup>275</sup> Although having to perform the ignominious task of selling goods in a market alongside merchants must have been particularly mortifying for someone from a noble family,<sup>276</sup> this monk rose to the challenge and performed his task admirably. He demonstrated that he had exchanged consciousness of his former station with a desire to obtain the true nobility which is attained through obedience and the emulation of Christ.<sup>277</sup>

Not only must the new monk learn to obey his superiors, but he must also offer instant obedience without grumbling or questioning. Cassian illustrated the ideal of instant obedience with his example of literary interruptions. The Egyptian monks had cultivated obedience to such a high degree, that if a monk was summoned while writing, he would abandon his work without hesitation, lifting his stylus in the middle of a character stroke.<sup>278</sup>

Obedience was to become so deeply rooted in a monk that it would not be the result of a conscious decision. Cassian's ideal monk did not receive a command and then consider whether to obey; Cassian's monks obeyed instantly without questioning the commands they were given. Mental debate about commands would suggest that the monks were not completely obedient, but rather were placing faith in their own discernment rather than subordinating their will to that of their superiors.<sup>279</sup> The monk was taught to obey without hesitation, trusting that

<sup>274</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.8.

<sup>275</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.29.

<sup>276</sup>MacMullen (1974), 100.

<sup>277</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.29.

<sup>278</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.12. A similar story is told about Abba Athre who was summoned while cleaning a fish and left his work in the middle of a knife stroke (*Apophth.Patr.* Pistus I).

<sup>279</sup>Basil (*Bas.Reg.br.* CXIV), on the other hand, implies that commands ought to be weighed before they are obeyed. Commands that seem contrary to God's law are supposed to be rejected. Cassian's examples of instantaneous and unquestioning obedience seem to suggest that the disciple lacks the discernment to judge a command from an elder.

his elders knew what they were doing in issuing a command.<sup>280</sup> The monk was to treat each command as if it had been ordered by God, and to strive to fulfill it to the limit of the strength in his body.<sup>281</sup>

As was noted in an earlier chapter,<sup>282</sup> Cassian employed the same story about John of Lycopolis watering a dead stick as Sulpicius Severus had used in his *Dialogi*.<sup>283</sup> The difference between the stories was that Sulpicius had chosen to highlight the miraculous aspect (the stick had taken root and turned into a tree) but Cassian had focused on the monk's unquestioning obedience. John obeyed his elder without questioning the point of doing something absolutely ridiculous.

Cassian used another story about John to demonstrate the priority of obedience over possessions. He stated that some other Egyptian brothers, having heard about John, came to see his remarkable obedience for themselves. Asked to provide a test for the young monk, his abba ordered John to throw a precious vase of oil out of the window. This vase of oil was very expensive and dear to the monastery, as it supplied oil for the brothers and their visitors. According to Cassian, it was irreplaceable.<sup>284</sup> Yet, without hesitation, John snatched up the vase, flew up the stairs, and hurled it out of an open window, where it smashed on the rocks below. Again, it was the blind faith in his elder's command, not stopping to weigh costs or consequences, that was offered as a salutatory model for Gallic monks. Instant, unquestioning obedience to orders, no matter how irrational they might seem, was the cornerstone of Cassian's system.<sup>285</sup>

Another story about John's amazing obedience immediately follows the previous two examples. Once again, monks came to John's master, seeking a proof of John's obedience. This time the Abba instructed John to roll a rock over to him. Without thought or hesitation, John immediately began wrestling with a rock that was so large that several men would not have

<sup>280</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.41.

<sup>281</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.10.

<sup>282</sup>See pg. 110.

<sup>283</sup>Sulp.*Dial.* I.19. See the discussion pg. 110.

<sup>284</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.25: *etiam si pecunia subpedicaret, nihilominus perdita species inventiri repararique non posset.*

<sup>285</sup>This quality, which was to be preferred to possessions, also took priority over family members, as has already been noted (see pg. 173) in the story of the Abba Paternutius, who entered an Egyptian monastery with his son. When his abba ordered him to cast his son into the river, without thought or hesitation, he grabbed his son and threw him in (Cass.*Inst.* IV.27). Through this act of obedience, it was revealed that Paternutius had shown the great faith and obedience of an Abraham.

sufficed to shift it.<sup>286</sup> Even in the case of an absolute physical impossibility, John did not think to question his Abba's command.<sup>287</sup>

Ultimately, obedience took precedence over all other things, even life. This is illustrated by a story in *De institutis* V. Here Cassian related the story of two young monks who were charged to take some figs to an old monk who was sick. The pair set off into the desert with their figs, but midway to their destination, a thick fog rolled in and they became lost. After wandering for a time, the weakened young men eventually collapsed into the sand and perished. When their bodies were discovered by the other brothers, they found that they had not eaten any of the figs they carried, preferring to die rather than violate the command of their superiors.<sup>288</sup>

### The Renunciation of Control

Obedience teaches the monk that he no longer has any control over his own life and destiny. The monk was not his own maker, and consequently, rather than being a free agent, he had no basis for independent action.<sup>289</sup> Whereas he once moved with a degree of freedom through Late Antique society, charting his own course, he was now a slave to the monastery, free to make no decisions for himself. By joining the ascetic society, the monk was no longer an independent entity, but rather was someone consecrated to Christ.<sup>290</sup> He was no longer a free man; he had elected to wear the yoke of the slave. His physical needs were controlled by others: he was told when to eat, when to sleep, indeed he was not even allowed to come out of his cell without the explicit permission of his superior.<sup>291</sup> He relied on the monastery for food and clothing.<sup>292</sup> He was bound to do the will of his superior, instantly and without question, no matter how odd or distasteful the task set before him.<sup>293</sup>

<sup>286</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.26.

<sup>287</sup>Bas.*Reg.br.* CXIX states that if a monk thinks he cannot carry out an assigned task, he should submit his reasons for doubting to his master and await his judgment. This falls somewhat short of Cassian's command to instantaneous, unquestioning obedience. Benedict, likewise, would suggest that a brother should try to attempt an impossible task, but if it proved beyond him, he should try to gently reason with his elder in order to remove the obligation from his shoulders. Should this fail, the brother must trust in God's help and attempt to obey the order (Ben.*Reg.* LXVIII).

<sup>288</sup>Cass.*Inst.* V.40.

<sup>289</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>290</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.20.

<sup>291</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.10.

<sup>292</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.5.

<sup>293</sup>Cassian has nothing to say about who controls the superior, or indeed at what point one ceases to have to be a virtual slave to an elder.

Nor was the monastic slave allowed the refuge of mental independence. One of Cassian's important precepts is the command that junior monks are required to reveal their thoughts to an elder. This is intended to be therapeutic; the snares set by Satan are more easily avoided when the less-experienced monk reveals his inner state of mind to a discerning elder.<sup>294</sup> The practice is designed to be a protective measure for the novice.

A novice's mind was vulnerable as long as he retained private thoughts. The only sure defense was to completely open one's mind to an elder. All parts of the mind, all thoughts, no matter how disgusting or debased, must be submitted for inspection. Indeed, one of the most certain signs that a disciple had been seduced off the royal road was an unwillingness to confess his thoughts to an elder.<sup>295</sup> Satan cannot work in the broad light of day, exposed to the discernment of spiritually-advanced elders, but requires secrecy and the inner pride of self-sufficiency to lead a monk astray.

The process of confessing one's inner thoughts to an elder, coupled with an unquestioning obedience to whatever the elder might command regarding those thoughts, led to the acquisition of the greatest of the monastic virtues, humility.<sup>296</sup> Confession of thoughts required vulnerability, a willingness to bare one's soul before another and risk that person's negative judgment. Acquiescence to this heightened vulnerability was the monk's conscious admission of an inability to order his own life. Revelation and obedience signify the subordination of one will to another. Properly done, this subordination nourished humility, the realization that one did not stand at the center of affairs, but must defer in all things to those who were wiser and more spiritually advanced. Despite the salutary benefits of this self-disclosure, it should be noted that the practice also opens the doors to the last sanctuary of privacy left to the novice. Not even his thoughts are allowed to remain his own.<sup>297</sup>

Cassian's emphasis on obedience within the monastic community stands in diametric opposition to the self-directed monk. Keeping his own counsel and submitting only to his own leadership, this monk had already succumbed to the ascetic's most deadly foe: pride. Self-

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<sup>294</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.10; Cass.*Inst.* IV.39.

<sup>295</sup>Cass.*Coll.* II.11.

<sup>296</sup>See Casey (1998), 194 for the view that in Cassian, humility was the effect, rather than the cause of spiritual progress.

<sup>297</sup>See as a contrast Sen.*Ben.* III.20 for the view that the disgrace of slavery might be ameliorated to a certain extent by the knowledge that the mind remained free.

exaltation replaced self-abnegation. Presuming no one to be wiser or fitter than he to order his life, the self-directed ascetic strayed off toward destruction.

The didactic aim of the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was to reject one's desires and self-deluded thoughts, and replace these with a plan to foster identification with the great exemplar, Christ. Just as Christ had renounced the glory of heaven in order to make himself the servant of all mankind, doing not his own will but the will of the Father who sent him, so too was the monk to renounce his own self-centeredness and enter into willing service of those around him. In this way the monk became a servant of the great servant, taking up Christ's cross and following him.<sup>298</sup>

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The goal of Cassian's program of renunciation was to strip the monk of self-centered attachments and identities, removing anything that he could call his own. Anything which could be pointed to with pride, anything that could be pointed to as a distinction, was to be torn away. The monk under Cassian's program would not be allowed to cling to remnants of his former life, neither wealth, social position, nor even the freedom to make decisions for himself.

Having noted Cassian's disparagement of Gallic asceticism and the items he singles out for *renuntiatio*, what can be said about the ascetic he sought to address? The focus of Cassian's critique seems to suggest an audience that would primarily have been drawn from the elite strata of Gallic society. Cassian's charge that Gallic monasteries were being founded by (and based on the uninformed opinions of) anyone renouncing the world<sup>299</sup> would certainly seem to imply a person who possesses property. That is, one must have property in order to found a monastery. Property is also implied by Cassian's claim that possessions must be completely renounced by the man who wants to become a monk, and made explicit in the command that a monk relinquish his possessions no matter how well furnished he is with property and gifts. Again, a poor man is not going to be hampered by an abundance of possessions. This is

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<sup>298</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.34.

<sup>299</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

not to say that the poor man has nothing he cherished and would be reluctant to part with; covetousness, as Cassian noted, afflicted both the rich and the poor alike.<sup>300</sup> The general tone of Cassian's remarks on the subject, however, tend to support the idea that his target reader had much to give up.

Not only must the monk divest himself of property and possessions, but he must also accept the fact that he no longer wields power over others, nor in fact, even over himself. Whereas the aristocratic monk begins his ascetic life as an abbot, eager to require the observance of his own inventions, the true monk relinquishes all power over others and enters a monastery as the most junior of novices. His obedience to all trains the aristocrat in humility. It is this quality that is the proper basis for monastic leadership, an acquired trait rather than a birthright.<sup>301</sup>

The true monk also is trained to do the work that would normally have been reserved for servants in the Roman world. The man who may never have done an hour's worth of manual labor is compelled to work with his hands. He becomes an initiate in the unfamiliar mysteries of labor and sweat. He prepares food for himself and for others. His servants are dismissed with his property and wealth;<sup>302</sup> the former aristocrat now takes upon himself the role of the slave. Through this reversal of station, the first becomes last, the aristocrat learns humility.

The program offered in *De institutis* was designed to repudiate those aristocratic ascetics who had attempted to take up the monastic life without severing the ties and privileges accorded an aristocrat by Roman society. Cassian advocated a radical departure from what had been passing for asceticism among the Roman aristocratic class, the elimination of the artificial divisions of class and station that was the framework of the classical world. In its place he proposed a meritocracy, a monastic society based on Christ's precept that the last shall be first, and the servants shall be the leaders.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup>Cass.*Inst.* VI.22.

<sup>301</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.3.

<sup>302</sup>Although now see the story in Gregory of Nyssa's *Vita Macrinae*, in which, when his brother Naucratus entered into the ascetic life, he took nothing with him save his servant, Chrysapius, who would not be parted from Naucratus and vowed to enter the life with him (Gr.Nyss.*VMacr.* IX). Cassian's approval of this act would certainly have been contingent on Chrysapius' relationship to Naucratus after this point.

<sup>303</sup>As modeled for instance, in the washing of the disciples' feet (John XIII.3-18).

# Conclusion

You have summoned me, an unworthy man and the poorest in every respect, to a share of so great a work.<sup>1</sup>

So wrote John Cassian in the opening lines of *De institutis*. Self-deprecation was a common topos in ancient writing, and this should not be understood as an accurate assessment by Cassian of his own place in the developing ascetic scene of southeastern Gaul. Above all other things, *De institutis* was written by a man who seemed to harbor no doubt about his fitness to put a mark on the burgeoning western ascetic movement.

Cassian began developing influence at a local level in the province of Narbonensis Secunda, a province that was the object of a struggle between the bishoprics of Arles and Marseilles. His affiliation, as I have demonstrated, was with the ascetics who had taken up residence in the province, not with a possible ascetic project under Bishop Proculus of Marseilles. *De institutis* was initially aimed at those ascetics who were forming a monastery under the patronage of Bishop Castor. Yet, even as he wrote the first four books of *De institutis*, he seemed to have his eyes on a much wider sphere of action. Cassian's program of justification — for both himself and his work — was designed for a larger audience. This thesis has established the wider context for Cassian's works. Rather than an isolated, proto-Benedictine monk, Cassian has emerged as a player on a number of stages. We have seen him operating in an ecclesiastical sphere, entering into a dialogue with writers such as Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, and Rufinus on how the ascetic life should be conducted, and indeed, just what the true goals of that life should be. We have also found him to be well-placed in a classical Roman tradition, employing established rhetorical practices to win a hearing for his works. And finally, Cassian was also a

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<sup>1</sup>Cass. *Inst.* Pref.: *egenum me, omnique ex parte pauperrimum, ad communionem tanti operis dignaris accersire.*

social reformer, challenging the right of aristocrats to shape the monastic life into a form that did not significantly alter their lives.

*Experientia* was the rhetorical foundation for his project. The great problem with Gallic monasticism was that untrained ascetics had the temerity to establish monasteries without having had any experience in the ascetic life. This claim seems to fit a situation where the traditional Roman ideal of *otium* was being conflated with the ascetic life. Inexperienced men (like Sulpicius Severus) were withdrawing to their estates and forming 'monasteries.' They then imposed their fanciful guidelines for the ascetic life on whomever joined them, yielding nothing of value.

What these people failed to understand, according to Cassian, was that the true goal of the ascetic life was the cultivation of humility and the concomitant extirpation of pride and self-centeredness. The only way to achieve this goal was by submitting to the authority of a trained teacher. The idea that an untrained person could found a monastery with himself (or herself) as the leader was absolute anathema in Cassian's thought. Yet this singular act of pride was taking place in Gaul. The untrained leaders were responsible for the divergent practices, and ultimately, for the failure of their 'systems' to instill true monastic qualities in their disciples.

The ascetic life required a teacher. Moreover, it required a teacher who knew what he was doing. The only valid teacher for the Gauls was John Cassian, a man of *experientia*. His knowledge, forged in the deserts of Egypt, overshadowed the inexperienced leaders of Gallic monasteries, as well as the 'eloquent' (i.e. suspect) literary works of his contemporaries. Cassian's training as an Egyptian ascetic made him uniquely qualified to pass on an ascetic code to the western ascetics.

This code, the *instituta Aegyptiorum* had its roots set deeply in antiquity. Its roots lay in Old Testament prophets and the Apostolic Church. It preserved the original charisms of this church, ensuring that this fire still burned unquenched. The code had been developed by the first prescient fathers, and it had received a divine stamp of approval through the action of an angel. Consequently, the *instituta Aegyptiorum* was the standard for orthodox monasticism. It had been passed down through an unbroken line of masters and disciples and was still maintained inviolate in the Egyptian desert. As a normative, divinely sanctioned body of legislation, the

*instituta Aegyptiorum* resisted the novel formulations of charismatic, but untrained leaders.

The widening gyre of Cassian's dedications in his later works suggest that he must have enjoyed some measure of success in influencing the ascetic project in *Narbonensis Secunda*. Yet, external evidence for this influence is notably thin. Aside from the two monasteries attributed to Cassian by Gennadius, one does not read of a blossoming of Cassianic foundations throughout southern Gaul. This may be due to a paucity of sources for the ascetic project after Cassian. More likely however, is the idea that while Cassian's account of the theoretical (or inner) side of asceticism may have been well-received, his insistence on a literal renunciation (as detailed in chapter five) proved unpalatable for an ascetic project that seems to have grown largely out of a local elite.

In Cassian's formulation, the ascetic could not begin the long march toward spiritual perfection until anything that bound him or her to the secular world was renounced. The ties of money, possessions, family and friends must be severed. Nor was this to be a theoretical renunciation as practiced by a number of notable western ascetics. The monk was to die to the world, taking up the yoke of slavery in order to become a true *servus Dei*. This diminution in status, the idea that one might make a clean break with the world — and never expect to re-establish relations with, or exercise authority in, the secular realm again — does not seem to have fit with the expectations or goals of those members of the elite classes who were drawn to the ascetic life.

Consequently, while Cassian would have a readership among western ascetics, there do not seem to be any instances of monasteries organized around *De institutis* in the West. Despite Eucherius of Lyons' claim that Lérins had inherited the mantle of Egyptian asceticism,<sup>2</sup> there is very little evidence that Cassian made much of an impact there. In fact, as Lérins became one of the major training schools for an elite class that had episcopal aims, it could be argued that Cassian's most unique contribution — the need to renounce the claims of the secular world — failed to make an impact on western ascetics.

This is not to say that Cassian's ideas were completely ignored in the West. His thought would continue to color western ascetic practice, transmitted in mitigated form through the

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<sup>2</sup>Euch. *Laud.* XLII: *haec nunc habet sanctos senes illos qui divisit cellulis Aegyptios patres Gallis nostris intulerunt.*

works of his successors, legislators such as Eucherius and Benedict. Nevertheless, Cassian's lasting contribution was not institutional reform, but rather the injection of Evagrian teaching into the mainstream of western monastic thought. In this project, Cassian shared a common goal with his contemporary, Palladius. Both men wrote works that suggested that Evagrius' teaching (and indeed Origenistic thought) was the norm for Eastern ascetics.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptian Desert Fathers (at least in the writings of Palladius and Cassian) were unrepentant Origenists, although neither man would overtly label them as such. Nevertheless, by basing his *instituta Aegyptiorum* on the Origenistic teachings of Evagrius, Cassian ensured that his teacher's thought would live on in the western monastic stream.

\* \* \*

As noted in the Introduction, this thesis originally began as a commentary on *De institutis* I-IV. While the bulk of this thesis has used *De institutis* I-IV as a springboard for an examination of Cassian's place in the developing western ascetic scene, my work on the commentary revealed a very important textual question. This question concerns the authorship of a section of Book III of *De institutis*, which treats the diurnal monastic offices. In the following appendix, I will argue that this section is actually a later forgery. Since this question does not directly impact the arguments developed in the main body of this thesis, I have chosen to place it in an appendix. Nevertheless it is my hope that this work will be taken as an important contribution in its own right. These disputed chapters have been used by historians for the reconstruction of the development of Christian liturgy. If they prove to be later forgeries, then significant revisions will have to be made to this history.

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<sup>3</sup>Due to the constraints of space, this topic has not been properly explored here. Yet it is one that I hope to flesh out in the future.

# Appendix: Textual Problems in *De institutis* III

## Introduction

Cassian's *De Institutis* Book III, Chapter 4 poses a problem for liturgical historians which, despite the various explanations tendered, remains, in the words of Robert Taft, "the outstanding problem in the history of the formation of the Divine Office."<sup>1</sup> Chapters 4–6 are, according to another historian, "amongst the most problematic texts ever to confront the historian of monasticism."<sup>2</sup> The nature of the problem is mathematical — an apparent counting error has been made in *De institutis* III.4 where the monastic offices are tallied. The author of this chapter cites a line from a psalm of David (*Seven times in a day have I offered you praise on account of your just judgments*)<sup>3</sup> to justify a monastic cursus that consists of six offices.<sup>4</sup> A variety of ingenious theories have been proposed to reconcile this mistake, but none have won universal acceptance.

One solution that has found little support is Owen Chadwick's idea that chapters 4–6 of Book III are a later addition to *De institutis*.<sup>5</sup> Cassian did not write these chapters, but rather they were inserted by a writer who sought to justify later liturgical practices.<sup>6</sup> Should this

<sup>1</sup>Taft (1986), 191. Emphasis is his.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn (1990), 577.

<sup>3</sup>Ps. CXVIII.164: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi super iudicia iustitiae tuae.*

<sup>4</sup>Prior to this chapter, Cassian had prescribed two nocturnal offices — Vespers and Nocturns (*Cass.Inst.* II.6) — and three diurnal offices — Terce, Sext, and None (*Cass.Inst.* III.1).

<sup>5</sup>See Chadwick (1968), 76–77, and the discussion that follows.

<sup>6</sup>For a good overview of the practice of medieval forgery, see Brown (1988a). Nor was this practice strictly limited to the medieval period (see Rice (1985), 45–46 for an account of writers attributing their works to Jerome).

solution prove correct, then Cassian actually would have offered a five office cursus, rather than the six or seven that most liturgical historians attribute to him. The purpose of this appendix is to demonstrate that Chadwick's solution is both sound and quite likely the correct one. Moreover, in addition to the three chapters Chadwick singled out as suspect (4–6), there is considerable evidence that chapter 8 of Book III is also a later addition to Cassian's work.

This appendix will examine chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8 using a synthesis of traditional textual and new computer-based stylometric methodologies. The first half of this appendix will analyze the chapters contextually, placing them against the larger background of Cassian's work and then probing them for inconsistencies. The most egregious problem is not arithmetic, but rather that these chapters are devoted to the justification of a period of sleep after Nocturns. Cassian, as will be demonstrated, was intractably opposed to sleep after the morning office of prayer. Moreover, it will also be shown that outside of these chapters, there is no evidence in Cassian's work for a six or seven office cursus. On the other hand, there are numerous references to a five office cursus.

The contextual argument will then be supported by computer stylometry. Advances in both methodology and reliability have provided the researcher with a powerful new tool for assessing questions of authorship. A stylometric assessment of *De institutis* will provide further evidence that the chapters in question are not consistent with the rest of *De institutis* I–IV. The cumulative value of the evidence garnered through these two approaches suggests that Chadwick's conclusion about this material is correct. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and at least part of Chapter 8 are the work of a later hand. Although this might seem a minor point, its significance for the history of the development of liturgy cannot be overstated. Cassian is considered one of the few reliable witnesses to early liturgical developments. A demonstration that he only knew and recommended a five office cursus will require the revision of a number of liturgical studies,<sup>7</sup> and it will solve "the outstanding problem" in the history of the divine office.

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<sup>7</sup>Works such as Taft (1986) and Baumstark (1958).

## The Problem

The ostensible purpose of *De institutis* III.4 is to add a new office to the five offices that had been proposed in the earlier chapters of *De institutis*. These five offices (Nocturns, Terce, Sext, None, and Vespers) are secure in *De institutis*. The two nocturnal offices were established in *De institutis* II.6; likewise, the three diurnal offices (Terce, Sext, and None) are first specified in *De institutis* III.1. The problem begins in *De institutis* III.4, where a sixth office is proposed. According to the writer, the Gallic monks had adopted a morning office that had first been established in Palestine. Unfortunately, the Gauls were employing this office incorrectly: unlike the monks of Bethlehem, the Gallic monks were returning to their beds after celebrating this office.

What the Gauls did not understand, suggested the writer, was the *raison d'être* for this morning office. Prior to its creation, certain monks in Bethlehem had been accustomed to return to bed after the conclusion of Nocturns. Lost in their dreams, they had slumbered until summoned for the next office of prayer (Terce). The new morning office had been instituted to counter this problem. The office ensured that monks would be out of their beds early — and stay out of them for the rest of the day. The length of their post-Nocturns rest was sharply circumscribed. This had solved the problem in Palestine, but the office had not been correctly implemented in Gaul. Although the Gallic ascetics were using the new morning office, they were returning to bed following its completion, thereby defeating the office's rationale.<sup>8</sup>

With the addition of this new office (concludes the author of this text), the monks will offer praise to the Lord seven times a day, just like David. Nevertheless, only six offices have been clearly enumerated, despite the writer's claim to the contrary. Later western rules (the *Regula magistri* and *Regula Benedicti*) had eight offices. If these offices evolved out of Cassian's recommendations,<sup>9</sup> then which of these later offices did Cassian propose (Matins, Prime, or Compline), and where is the missing (seventh) office?

In the second edition of his *John Cassian*, Owen Chadwick outlined the two positions most scholars have adopted on this question.<sup>10</sup> The first option has Cassian proposing Nocturns,

<sup>8</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.5.1.

<sup>9</sup>De Vogüé (1971), 101–103.

<sup>10</sup>Chadwick (1968), 73–76.

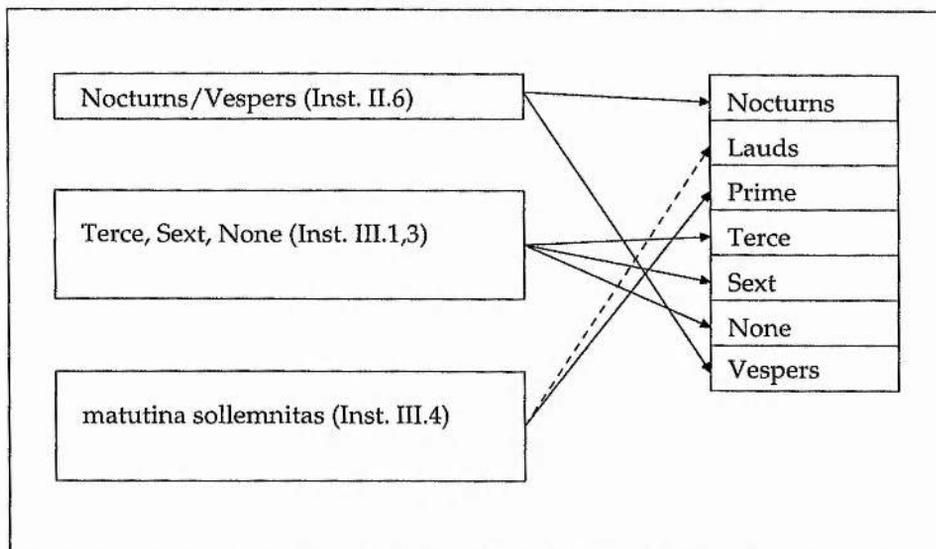


Figure 5.1: The First Proposal

Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, and Vespers (7 offices). Lauds immediately follows the end of Nocturns, a conclusion that might be substantiated by *De institutis* III.4.<sup>11</sup> This proposal has Cassian conflating Lauds and Nocturns in his description of the offices, but counting them separately when tallying them against David's prescription (v. 4). Cassian's new office was Prime, the office that signalled the start of the day's work.<sup>12</sup> The problem with this proposal, as Chadwick noted, is that one must assume that Cassian indiscriminately used the phrase *matutina sollemnitas* to refer to both Prime and Lauds.<sup>13</sup>

The second proposal takes the position that Cassian actually wrote about the introduction of Lauds in Bethlehem. The office of Prime was a later innovation, one Cassian knew nothing about. As Chadwick observed, although this solution fits the text better, the explanation still has a problem: the reader is left to find another office. Nocturns, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, and Vespers only add up to six offices. The advocates for the second proposal have turned to Book IV, where Cassian mentions the psalms a monk was supposed to say before retiring in the evening,<sup>14</sup> and found there a seventh office, Compline. Unfortunately this 'office' is not as

<sup>11</sup>Where the writer discussed the Palestinian morning office.

<sup>12</sup>Chadwick (1948), 178–182 originally backed this position against the work of Dom Jacques Froger. By 1968 he had significantly revised his view.

<sup>13</sup>Chadwick (1968), 74.

<sup>14</sup>Cass.*Inst.* IV.19.

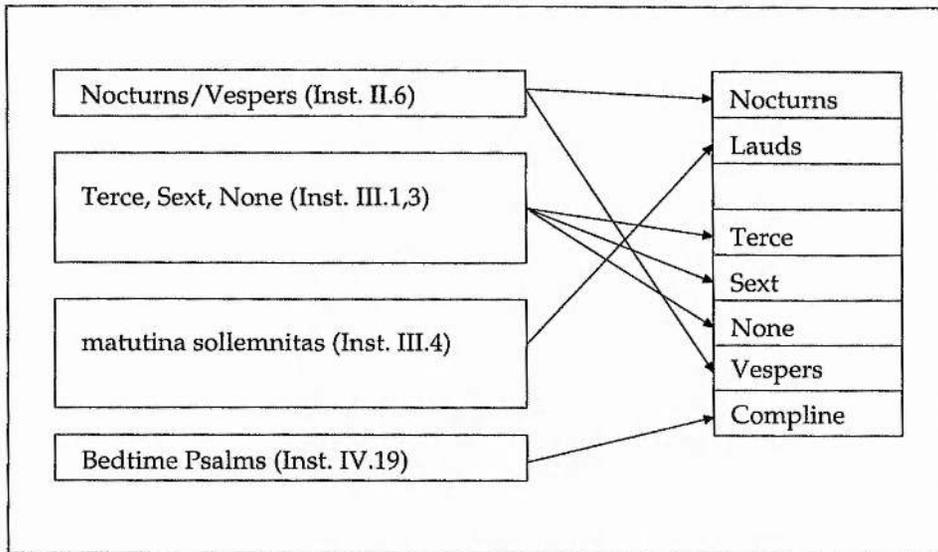


Figure 5.2: The Second Proposal

neatly signposted as its advocates might lead one to believe.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, its dislocation from the two books which describe the other six monastic offices is rather curious.

Neither of these explanations is entirely satisfactory. They both require a creative reading of Cassian's text and neither adequately account for the missing office. Chadwick's contribution to the debate was the theory that Chapters 4–6 were a later addition by an unknown revisionist who was trying to provide a precedent for a liturgical practice that had evolved sometime during the centuries which postdated Cassian.<sup>16</sup> As Chadwick argued, the lack of any manuscripts of *De institutis* earlier than the ninth century,<sup>17</sup> leaves ample time for an earlier copyist to tamper with the text. If an unknown monk wanted to create justification for a later monastic office, then an insertion into *De institutis* explaining where the new office originated would lend the imprimatur of antiquity to a new (or local) practice. These chapters would then be used to support a later monastery's practice of allowing monks to have a short rest after Nocturns.

Chadwick also observed that Book III flows more naturally if Chapters 4–6 are removed from the text. Cassian listed five offices at the end of Chapter 3. In Chapter 7, discussing

<sup>15</sup>Contra De Vogüé (1992), 101.

<sup>16</sup>Chadwick (1968), 76–77.

<sup>17</sup>We actually do have a sixth century palimpsest, (*Codex F-IV-I N.16*), but this only has fragments of Books IV, VI, VII and VIII.

the differences in penance exacted from those who are late to the diurnal or nocturnal offices, he only mentions three day offices (Terce, Sext, None) and refers to the nocturnal assemblies (Vespers and Nocturns), again for a total of five offices.

In fact there are no references to the mysterious offices 6 and 7 outside Chapters 4–6, and 8. Moreover, if we accept this block of text as inauthentic, then the problem of reconciling David's seven prayers with the monastic offices also vanishes. It is a mistake that is easily explained if the author who added these chapters lived at a time when a seven office cursus was the practice of his monastery. The mistake points to a later period than the one in which Cassian wrote.

Chadwick was not dogmatic about this third proposal, and advanced it with "hesitation."<sup>18</sup> He did not view it as "the most probable in the prevailing state of the evidence," but thought it ought to be kept in mind if "further evidence of the earlier manuscript tradition should come to light."<sup>19</sup>

This theory has engendered little debate. The only 'refutation' of it came in the course of a response made by Adalbert de Vogüé to a paper published by Marilyn Dunn, who had argued against de Vogüé's position that the *Regula Magistri* had been written before the *Regula Benedicti*.<sup>20</sup> Dunn argued that the case for the precedence of the Master was undermined by the theory that the offices of Prime and Compline were late liturgical developments.<sup>21</sup> In order to strengthen her argument, Dunn chose to follow Chadwick's suggestion that *De Institutis* III.4–6 was a later interpolation and that Cassian only advocated five offices.<sup>22</sup>

Two years later de Vogüé responded to Dunn's critique of his work. His rebuttal was aimed at defending his view that the Master had priority over Benedict rather than an examination of the question of interpolations in Cassian. Consequently, his response only addressed the question tangentially. He noted that the idea of a *septennium* went back to Eusebius who cited it in his exposition of Psalm 118, and consequently provided a precedent for Cassian; moreover,

<sup>18</sup>Chadwick (1968), 76.

<sup>19</sup>Chadwick (1968), 76–77.

<sup>20</sup>See Dunn (1990) and De Vogüé (1992).

<sup>21</sup>Adalbert de Vogüé has argued that the Master composed his rule ca. 500–525 (Dunn (1990), 579). Benedict then used this rule in writing his own rule (ca. 530–550). According to Dunn, Prime does not appear until Caesarius, who wrote his rule in 534, and Compline first appeared in Italy "in the 540s or 550s" (Dunn (1990), 578–580). Consequently, the *Regula Magistri* could not have the early date proposed by de Vogüé.

<sup>22</sup>Dunn (1990), 577–578.

the fact that the passage in Cassian was obscure did not suggest inauthenticity, as obscurity is "often the case with Cassian."<sup>23</sup> Cassian's new office is an "intentional ambiguity" which refers to both Prime and Lauds, and a "bedtime prayer which is none other than Compline, appears in the following book of *Institutes*."<sup>24</sup>

In fact de Vogüé offered nothing in his response that had not already been said by Chadwick, aside from accusing Cassian of obscurity and intentional ambiguity. Again, in view of de Vogüé's agenda (defending the priority of the anonymous Master), it is not surprising that Cassian was treated in such a cursory manner, although one might have hoped for some engagement with Chadwick's proposal.

## Contextual Issues

Surely one of the main factors shaping the theories about Cassian's office structure is the knowledge that both Benedict and the Master advanced an eight office cursus (Nocturns, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline). It is widely assumed that both Benedict and the Master appropriated this structure from Cassian. This is not necessarily the case. To

<sup>23</sup>De Vogüé (1992), 100-101.

<sup>24</sup>De Vogüé (1992), 101. Adalbert de Vogüé also sees Compline in the *Ordo monasterii*, II: *consuetudinarii psalmi ante somnum dicantur*.

Cassian's emphasis on an orderly presentation argues against the idea that *Cass.Inst.* IV.19 contains the missing (seventh) office of Compline. Cassian opens his two book exposition of the monastic office by stating that he was going to outline the most ancient arrangement (regarding the canonical offices) of the fathers for Castor's new monastery (*Cass.Inst.* II.2.5). Cassian's goal was standardization. He wrote to replace the variant Gallic practices with one clear *cursus* of monastic offices. The two proposals which purport to explain Cassian's "seven offices" fly in the face of the goals Cassian had stated, the line to which he closely hewed throughout his exposition of the offices (chapters 4-6, and 8 excepted). If there were two morning offices between Nocturns and Terce, Cassian would have felt bound to separate, explain, and justify them both at length (brevity not being one of Cassian's shortcomings). Similarly, even if Cassian had inadvertently omitted Compline in this book (and bungled his math) is it likely that he would pass over it with nothing more than "the brothers, gathering in one body for the chanting of the psalms, which they sing before rest from custom" (*Cass.Inst.* IV.19)? In his zeal to impose his own formulation on the Gauls, it seems more likely that Cassian would have offered a fuller exposition of the office. The mention of evening psalmody is so obscure in Book IV that it could just as easily be a reference to the Vespers psalmody, which was described in Book II.

The view that Cassian was an unsystematic writer has been advanced by a number of different writers, including Munz (1960), 1 and Rousseau (1975), 113 (although Rousseau softened this by defining unsystematic as allowing for an evolution of thought).

Chadwick noted that he had once thought Cassian was very unsystematic, "as unsystematic as is possible for the architect of a system," but had revised his opinion to suspect interpolations and rearrangements of Cassian's works by later copyists (Chadwick (1968), 43). Somewhat ironically, de Vogüé argued for the systematic quality of Cassian's exposition in his analysis of the structure of *Collationes* (de Vogüé (1979b)), and Pristas (1993) argued that Chadwick's characterization of *De inst.* V as disordered was not the case but rather reflected a highly structured arrangement.

the contrary, when the rules are compared it becomes evident that the structure advocated by the Master and Benedict owe more to the arrangement of Basil's *Regulae fusius* than Cassian.<sup>25</sup> Basil states that the monk must pray eight times each day: at dawn, the third, sixth, and ninth hours, at the end of the day, the beginning of the night, at midnight, and then again just before dawn. These eight times of prayer correspond to Benedict's eight monastic hours.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, both Basil and Benedict designate Vigils as the office that is one beyond the perfect *Septies dies*, and justify it with an appeal to Psalm 118.62.<sup>27</sup> Benedict and Basil also state that Psalm 90 is to be said at Compline, a practice that Cassian does not mention.<sup>28</sup>

Cassian's independence from Basil's prescription is demonstrated by noting the different proof texts used to justify the monastic offices:

Office	Bas. <i>Reg.Fus.</i> XXXVII	Cassian, <i>De.inst.</i> III.3
Lauds	Ps. 118.148	
Prime	Ps. 27.3; 5.2-3	
Terce	Ps. 51.10-12	Acts 2.14-18
Sext	Ps. 55.17; Ps. 91	Acts 10.13; Col. II.15
None	Acts 3.1	Acts 10.30; Acts 3.1
Vespers	Ps. 4.4	Ps. 140.2
Compline		
Nocturns/Vigils	Acts 16.25; Ps. 118.62	Ps. 118.147-148

The only clear overlap occurs where both Basil and Cassian use Acts 3.1 as a precedent for None. Ps. 118.148 provides a second point of contact for the two, but they differ in their use of the text; Basil assigns Ps 118.148 to the office after Nocturns and Cassian uses it as a justification for Nocturns. Rather than following Basil's structure of proof texts, Cassian grounds his exposition in other patristic writers, appropriating the defense of prayer times employed by Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian.

Clement of Alexandria was the earliest church writer to provide evidence for set prayers

<sup>25</sup>Bas.*Reg.fus.* XXXVII.

<sup>26</sup>Ben.*Reg.* XVI.

<sup>27</sup>Bas.*Reg.fus.* XXXVII; Ben.*Reg.* XVI.

<sup>28</sup>Bas.*Reg.fus.* XXXVII; Ben.*Reg.* XVIII.

at the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day.<sup>29</sup> As Clement noted, these hours were used by those who would limit their prayers to certain times of day, rather than praying, as the gnostic does, without ceasing.<sup>30</sup> While there is no need to see Clement as a direct source for Cassian, it is intriguing to note that Cassian does echo Clement's idea when he contrasts the less-fervent Gallic monks (who need to keep set times of prayer) with the Egyptians (who pray without ceasing).<sup>31</sup>

Origen follows Clement, asserting that while unceasing prayer should be the goal of all, a Christian should at the very least pray three times a day, following the example of Daniel.<sup>32</sup> Here is another point of contact with Cassian, who also uses the example of Daniel as a proof text for this prescription.<sup>33</sup> Another similarity can be found in their shared example of Peter praying on the roof at the sixth hour as a precedent for Sext.<sup>34</sup>

Cassian's justification of the three daily offices exhibits even stronger connections with Tertullian's *De Oratione*. In Chapter 25, Tertullian states that the observance of certain hours of prayer will be profitable for the believer, including those "common hours" which have been deemed more solemn (*solemniores*) in the Scriptures. These are the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Cassian and Tertullian both use the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to justify the third hour,<sup>35</sup> Peter's vision for the sixth,<sup>36</sup> and Peter and John praying in the Temple for the ninth hour.<sup>37</sup> They also justify the custom of three daily prayers by a reference to Daniel's practice.<sup>38</sup>

Tertullian noted that the injunction to pray at these times tended to be more of a good idea than a command. It would benefit the believer if he or she chose to pray at these hours, following them as if they were a law (*quasi lege*).<sup>39</sup> Keeping this law would then ensure that the Christian was torn away from the distractions of work or other duties in order to pray at certain times, a sentiment echoed by Cassian who believed that the Gauls needed the structure

<sup>29</sup>Clem.Str. VII.7. Cf. Taft (1986), 14.

<sup>30</sup>Clem.Str. VII.7.

<sup>31</sup>Cass.Inst. III.2.

<sup>32</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3; Or.Or. XXXII.

<sup>33</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3.

<sup>34</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3, Or.Or. XXXII.

<sup>35</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3; Tert.Or. XXV.

<sup>36</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3; Tert.Or. XXV.

<sup>37</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3; Tert.Or. XXV.

<sup>38</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3; Tert.Or. XXV.

<sup>39</sup>Tert.Or. XXV.

of daily offices to keep them from drifting away from the duty of prayer.<sup>40</sup>

Although all of the writers surveyed here deploy similar proof texts to justify the three daily offices, Cyprian's *De Dominica oratione* contains so many parallels with Cassian's work that it would be remarkable if this work was not the model for Cassian's exposition. Chapters 32–35, Cyprian's discussion of when a Christian should pray, is closer to Cassian than any other text. Both Cyprian and Cassian use Daniel as the justification for three daily offices,<sup>41</sup> the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the third hour,<sup>42</sup> and Peter's vision at the sixth.<sup>43</sup> The prayers of Peter and John at the Temple are omitted by Cyprian.

In addition to the common ground Cassian and Cyprian share with other writers, there are several other points where they cite the same texts in isolation from other writers. For instance, Cassian and Cyprian both place Cornelius in prayer at the ninth hour, and both highlight the angelic messenger who tells Cornelius that God had accepted the centurion's prayers.<sup>44</sup> Another feature that is distinctive in Cassian and Cyprian is their development of the Christological justification for prayer. Both writers point to Christ's crucifixion at the sixth hour as justification for prayer at that time.<sup>45</sup> Both Cassian and Cyprian develop the redemptive implications of Christ's crucifixion. Cassian states that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice to destroy the sins of the human race, taking on our debt, and thereby achieved victory over the powers and principalities.<sup>46</sup> Cyprian states that Christ washed away our sins with his blood in order to redeem us, and achieved a victory through his passion.<sup>47</sup> The two writers ground the significance of the sixth hour in Christ's liberating victory. Cyprian is content to note that the Lord's Passion stretched from the sixth to ninth hours, but Cassian presses this point further by detailing how

<sup>40</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.2.

<sup>41</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXIV.

<sup>42</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXIV.

<sup>43</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXIV.

<sup>44</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXII. It should be noted that Cyprian uses the example of Cornelius in a slightly different manner than Cassian: whereas Cassian stresses the time Cornelius received his vision (during prayer at the ninth hour, thus a justification for this hour of prayer), Cyprian offers Cornelius as an example of someone who offered an effectual prayer (which happened to be at the ninth hour). Cyprian's point is that the believer may not pray in a distracted manner, but being in the presence of God, must focus on his task (a theme later developed by Bas.*Reg.br.* CCI). This discussion of effectual prayer then leads directly into the hours for prayer, so if we are making a case for dependence, we could argue that it is there already in Cyprian, even though Cassian employed the verse in a slightly different manner.

<sup>45</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXIV.

<sup>46</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3.

<sup>47</sup>Cyp.*Dom.orat.* XXXIV.

Christ descended into hell in the ninth hour and set the captives free.<sup>48</sup>

Two points may be drawn from the preceding observations. The first is that despite the fact that Cassian was familiar with Basil's *Regulae*,<sup>49</sup> he chose to follow the line of argument developed by other ecclesiastical writers when justifying his monastic hours. The second point is that for Cyprian, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen, a Christian prayed three times during the day.

This is an important point; as noted above, the desire to see Cassian as the model for the *Regula Benedicti* and the *Regula Magistri*, coupled with some muddled information in *De institutis* III.4-8, is all that leads one to look for seven offices in Cassian. In fact the evidence is much stronger for a five office cursus.<sup>50</sup>

This evidence begins with Cassian's first reference to the offices maintained by the Gauls. In *De institutis* II.2, while making an unfavorable comment about the great variety to be found in the Gallic observances, Cassian noted that some of them (the Gauls) had thought it good, "during the daytime offices of prayers – that is, Terce, Sext, and None – to match the number of psalms to the hour in which the office was rendered."<sup>51</sup> There is no mention in this chapter of a fourth diurnal office. While Cassian's purpose at this point was not to detail the diurnal offices, it is noteworthy that a morning office is omitted from the list. It would have posed no problem to add the office of Prime if there had been one. This omission is repeated in *De institutis* III.1, where Cassian, having finished his exposition of the nocturnal offices, does take up the work

<sup>48</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3.

<sup>49</sup>At least Rufinus' translation/codification of the work. It is intriguing to note that Basil's description of the offices (Chapter XXXVII) was not translated by Rufinus. One wonders if the only text Cassian knew was the Rufinian translation.

<sup>50</sup>And now cf. *Hier.Ep.* XXII.37, in which Jerome notes that "everyone knows that the set hours for prayer are at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, at dawn and in the evening" (*horam tertiam, sextam, nonam, diluculum, quoque et vesperam nemo qui nesciat*). Other than moving Nocturns forward to dawn, Jerome's description overlaps perfectly with Cassian's recommendations. Unfortunately Jerome is not consistent in his recommendations. A later letter (*Hier.Ep.* CVII.9) to Lacta instructing her on how to raise her daughter as a holy virgin) does seem to have a six office cursus in mind: "She ought to become accustomed to rise in the night for prayers and psalms, to sing hymns in the morning, at Terce, Sext, and None to stand in the battle line as one of Christ's warriors, and when the time to light the lamp comes, to render the evening sacrifice" (*et assuescat exemplo ad orationes et Psalmos nocte consurgens; mane hymnos canere, Tertia, Sexta, Nona hora stare in acie quasi bellatricem Christi, accensaque lucernula reddere sacrificium verspertinum*). This recommendation is substantiated in the panegyric Jerome writes about Paula in his *Epistle* CVIII. Here, describing the offices kept in Paula's monastery he gives the following cursus: "In the morning, at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, in the evening, and in the middle of the night, they were singing through the Psalter" (*Mane, hora Tertia, Sexta, Nona, Vespere, noctis medio, per ordinem Psalterium cantabant*) *Hier.Ep.* CVIII.19. Similar advice is given to Demetrias in *Hier.Ep.* CXXX.15.

<sup>51</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.2: *Sunt quibus in ipsis quoque diurnis orationum officis, id est, Tertia, Sext, Nonaque id visum est...*

of detailing the diurnal offices: "Now the offices of Terce, Sext, and None, which follow the rule of the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia ought to be discussed by us."<sup>52</sup> Cassian had focused his attention on the diurnal offices, but again there was no mention of a fourth morning office.

As detailed above, in Chapter 3 of Book III, Cassian supported the offices of Terce, Sext, and None by drawing proof texts from the Bible for each of the offices. The parallels with Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian have already been noted, as has the fact that each of these writers wrote in support of the Christian practice of praying three times each day. Again, if Cassian had a fourth morning office in mind, why did he fail to mention it in any of these places, especially in Chapter 3 where he laid out the biblical support for his cursus?

The other significant point to be drawn from Chapter 3 is the fact that after Cassian justified the three diurnal offices, he retraced his steps and offered biblical justification for the two nocturnal offices proposed in Book II. Five offices are substantiated from the Bible in Chapter 3. Following this marshaling of proof texts, Cassian drew his chapter to a close with a summary justification. The parable of the vineyard owner (Matt. XX.1-6) was offered to support the five office cursus. According to Cassian, "he [the vineyard owner] is described as having assembled them in the first hour of the morning, the time that denotes our morning office, thereafter at the third, the sixth, and after this the ninth, to the latest, the eleventh, by which the hour of lamp-lighting is signified."<sup>53</sup>

One problem here might be the fact that Cassian has called the earliest of the offices (which would be Nocturns) a morning office (*matutinam nostram sollemnitatem*). In describing this office in Book II, he typically employed the adjective night (*nocturnus*).<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, in this chapter, it is only Cassian's choice of terms that clouds the issue. Although it would have been more convenient if Cassian had labeled the first office a "night office," his choice of words is intended to cement the correspondence with Matt. XX.1-6. This flexible use of language is also found in the earlier verses of this chapter where he linked the nocturnal offices to the

<sup>52</sup>Cass.Inst. III.1: *nunc de sollemnitatibus Tertiae, Sextae, Nonaeque secundum regulam monasteriorum Palaestinae, vel Mesopotamiae, nobis est disserendum.*

<sup>53</sup>Cass.Inst. III.3: *Ita enim et ille primo mane conduxisse describitur, quod tempus designat matutinam nostram sollemnitatem, dein tertia, inde sexta, post haec nona, ad extremum undecima, in qua lucernalis hora signatur.*

<sup>54</sup>See, for instance, Cass.Inst. II.4; Cass.Inst. II.6; Cass.Inst. II.13.

twice-daily Temple sacrifices.<sup>55</sup> Vespers corresponded to the evening sacrifice and was further substantiated by the proposition that Christ instituted the Eucharist in the evening (v. 23) and was himself offered as an evening sacrifice the next day (v. 23). Note that Cassian used the term *sacrificium vespertinum* rather loosely here: he had stated in verse 8 that Christ had been offered at the sixth hour and had penetrated Hell at the ninth hour (v. 17). These precise definitions of time are conflated in v. 23 under the term 'evening.' Cassian apparently uses evening as a catch all term to describe any time after the sixth hour.

The same flexibility of language is found in his justification of Nocturns. This office was subsumed under the category of a (*vespertinis*) office (v. 22), but when he discussed the two offices individually, Nocturns was labeled a *matutina* office (*sacrificia* in v. 22, *sollemnitatem* in v. 26). The Biblical precedent for this office was the fact that the Jews had offered a sacrifice in the morning (v. 22). But just as 'evening' was stretched to include the hours after Sext in the case of Christ's death, so too 'morning' was made to embrace all the hours before the first hour. The text of chapter 3 makes it clear that this *matutina vero sollemnitatem* does not refer to the new morning office established in Chapter 4, but rather is the office of Nocturns which had been presented in Book II.

Having noted that Cassian linked Nocturns to the Jewish morning Temple sacrifice, it should come as no surprise that he once again called it a morning office. Surely his point was not to specify a time for the office, but rather to make his analogy work (the vineyard owner went out five times during the course of a day to recruit workers for his harvest). Cassian's five offices (which correspond to the vineyard owner's recruiting trips) are Nocturns, Terce, Sext, None, and Vespers. Sealing this interpretation is the fact that the analogy would be shattered if Cassian had intended the morning office to be Prime, for that would have yielded six offices.

The next three chapters contain the problematic recommendations for a new morning office. If these chapters are skipped in order to pursue the current line of investigation, the next chapter that seems to have come from Cassian's pen is chapter 7, which contains the penalties that are meted out to those who come late to the offices. Once again, five offices are listed: Terce, Sext, and None (v. 1) and the night gatherings (Vespers and Nocturns are implied) in v.

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<sup>55</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Num. XXVIII.4.

2. The monk must arrive before the conclusion of the first psalm during the diurnal offices, or before the conclusion of the second psalm at night if he is to avoid the penalty for tardiness. The interpreter is left with two options at this point: either there are no penalties for late arrival to the new morning office, or, on balance a good deal more likely, Cassian did not prescribe a morning office.

Finally, in Chapter 11 of Book III, Cassian notes that on Sundays a special concession is granted the monks: the offices of Terce and Sext are conflated and replaced by an Eucharistic Mass that is celebrated before the noon meal. The point of this relaxation is to provide a break from the normal strict observance, so that the monks will look forward to Sundays. Cassian stated that the monks only have one service before lunch, the mass (*missa*).<sup>56</sup> Moreover, he claimed that this single office was the product of merging Terce and Sext. Once again there is no indication of a morning office. If there had been a morning office, the monks would have had two obligations to fulfill before lunch: the morning office and the Eucharistic Mass. Yet, Cassian indicated (*unam tantummodo missam*) that this was not the case.

### Chapters 4-6, and 8

As demonstrated in the preceding section, Cassian enumerated a five office cursus at five different points in *De institutis*. It has also been noted that outside of Chapters 4-6 and 8, there is nothing in Cassian's works that would suggest anything other than a five office cursus. This section will examine the substance of these dubious chapters. After a short rehearsal of their contents, the chapters will be probed to see if they yield any grounds to suspect their provenance.

The subject of Chapter 4 is the addition of a sixth office to the monastic cursus. In verse 2 of this chapter, the writer draws a contrast between the Bethlehem practice and the current situation in Gaul (where a morning office has also been adopted, following the Bethlehem model). The problem in Gaul, according to the writer, is that after this morning office, the monks were returning to their beds.

The Gallic monks have failed to understand the purpose of the morning office. It had been

<sup>56</sup>Cass.*Inst.* XI.1. On the problems of the *missa*, see the discussion below.

created to counter the problem of sleeping monks. Before the office had been adopted, certain monks in Bethlehem had been accustomed to return to bed after the conclusion of Nocturns. Lacking any incentive to get up, they stayed in bed until the next office of prayer (Terce). The new morning office was established to break up this period. By celebrating this office, the monks would not be able to stay in their beds until the third hour. Having explained the basis for this new office, the writer then notes that its addition fulfills the precept advanced in Psalm CXVIII.164. The monks will offer praises to the Lord seven times a day, just like David.

In Chapter 5, the writer turns his attention to the Gauls. According to the text, the Gauls had misunderstood the point of the new morning office. They were rushing through the office in anticipation of an opportunity of returning to bed one more time. This, the writer suggested, was a mistake, for reasons that had already been detailed in the preceding book.<sup>57</sup> The monks who return to sleep either lose the purity they have gained through prayer to the machinations of the devil, or they will be torpid and sluggish throughout the length of the day. The Egyptians, however, avoid this trap by extending their vigils all the way to dawn, when they begin work.

Chapter 6 concludes the writer's case for the morning office. He notes that although the elders in Bethlehem had added this office, it was not a novelty because they had not changed the order of psalmody. The hymns which are sung in the morning office, are sung by the Egyptians at the end of the Nocturns. These are: Psalms 148, 50, 60, and 89. The writer then makes a comment on secular liturgy, stating that Psalm 50 is also sung in the Italian churches in his day, a practice which he believes was derived from the Bethlehem cursus.

As has already been noted, Chapter 7 seems genuine. It simply offers the penances exacted for tardiness at either the diurnal or the nocturnal offices. Oddly, in view of the fact that the writer had just written three chapters in support of a new morning office, that office is not listed with Terce, Sext, and None in this chapter.

Chapter 8 seems to have been intended to expand a reference made in Chapter 4. Here the writer had noted the change made "especially on those days in which an extremely oppressive weariness was produced in those who celebrated the watches of the evening hours up until the neighborhood of dawn."<sup>58</sup> In this chapter the writer explains that reference by stipulating the

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<sup>57</sup> A reference to Cass.*Inst.* II.13.

<sup>58</sup> Cass.*Inst.* III.4: *in his praesertim diebus, quibus a vespertinis horis excubias usque ad aurorae viciniam cele-*

practices that guide the Sabbath vigil.

Every Friday evening the monks keep a watch through the night, which ends (in the winter) at the fourth cock crow, so that the monks may return to bed for two hours before rising to celebrate the morning office. This concession is granted so that the monks may take a little sleep and thereby have energy for the work of the following day. The body is otherwise unable to function, and will be overburdened with weariness if it is denied this rest. A period of sleep that is as short as even a single hour will preserve all the good that was won by staying awake through the night. Stretching the vigil all the way to dawn is considered an irrational act. A three part office is prescribed, and the monks are allowed to sit during the office to alleviate weariness.

### The Problem of Sleep

The common thread uniting Chapters 4, 5, and the first six verses of Chapter 8 is the provision of a special time of sleep for the monk after the office of Nocturns (or an all-night vigil in the case of Chapter 8). Unfortunately, this provision would seem to be contraindicated by the sharp warnings contained against post-Nocturns sleep in *De institutis* II.13, a chapter that forbade the practice of returning to sleep.

These warnings are actually an extension of a theme that closed Chapter 12. Cassian had concluded his discussion of Nocturns by noting that after the prayers were finished, the monks returned to their cells where they did not relax into sleep, but rather remained awake and prayed until dawn. At this time, they began their day's work.<sup>59</sup>

Chapter 13 opened with a statement of just how serious the issue of sleep is for Cassian: "if we desire perfection, then we must agree to diligently observe the same practice."<sup>60</sup> The practice (as noted above) is that of staying awake after Nocturns. Although Cassian had stated in a number of places that he was going to water down the stricter Egyptian observance for the weaker Gauls,<sup>61</sup> he does not show any signs of compromising on the issue of a morning rest in

*brantibus nascebatur onerosior lassitudo.*

<sup>59</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.12.

<sup>60</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.13: *quod nos quoque si perfectioni studemus, eadem diligentia convenit observare.*

<sup>61</sup>Indeed, the three diurnal offices are a modification for Gauls of the more pristine two office Egyptian system (Cass.*Inst.* III.2).

## Book II.

Two reasons are advanced to support the practice of a post-Nocturns watch. The first is that sleep lowers a monk's defenses. All the good accrued to a monk by celebrating Nocturns can easily be dispersed by the devil who will poison a monk's mind with nocturnal illusions. Consequently, the monk is better off to remain awake after Nocturns, guarding his thoughts against the attacks of a jealous enemy.<sup>62</sup>

The second reason is that the desire to snatch more sleep is actually a form of spiritual sloth. It makes a monk lazy, and engenders a torpor that will blunt his acuity for the rest of the day. The true monk resists the demands of sleep, just as he fights his other carnal urges. A similar line of reasoning may be found in Basil's directives concerning sleep. The Cappadocian Father saw the desire for excessive sleep as a symptom of spiritual sickness. The monk who was lazy in his devotion to the pursuit of God would inevitably discover sleep stealing up on him.<sup>63</sup> A craving for sleep was a sign of spiritual sloth. The soul could make no progress toward God while the body dozed. Sleep was so opposed to the monastic quest that a monk should be grateful when he received the summons from the monk whose duty it was to wake the brothers for prayer.<sup>64</sup>

Sleep has an interesting (and perhaps under-studied) place in the accounts of Egyptian monasticism. Victory over the need to sleep was as pivotal an ascetic discipline as fasting. The Egyptian sources contain stories about the ascetic battle against sleep, and the greatest of the fathers are portrayed as having limited its claim on their lives. One representative account concerns the famous monk Arsenius. Daniel (his disciple) reported that Arsenius' usual custom was to pass the entire night without sleeping, and when morning came, would say to sleep, "Come here wicked servant" and then sleep for an hour.<sup>65</sup>

The goal of the monk was an ascent to God, transcending the bodily needs which bound him to the material world. The incredible feats of asceticism described in the sources — the unceasing prayer, prolonged fasting, meager fare, and sleepless vigils — were designed to

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<sup>62</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.13.

<sup>63</sup>Bas.*Reg.br.* XXXII.

<sup>64</sup>Bas.*Reg.br.* XLIII.

<sup>65</sup>Apophth.*Patr.* Arsenius XIV. Arsenius also asserts that a monk only requires an hour of sleep every night if "he is a good fighter" (Apophth.*Patr.* Arsenius XV).

demonstrate how completely the masters of asceticism had shifted their lives into the spiritual plane. They were imitators of the angels, those spiritual beings who neither ate nor slept, but rather spent all of their time engaged in the unceasing worship of God.<sup>66</sup>

The conflict between sleep and the angelic life was illustrated in Palladius' account of his ascetic instructor Dorotheus. Palladius claimed that he never saw Dorotheus lay down on a mat to sleep.<sup>67</sup> To the contrary, Dorotheus' custom was to stay awake all night, praying and weaving palm ropes. Palladius, wanting to know if this had always been the old man's practice, questioned Dorotheus' other disciples about the master. These men averred that Dorotheus had never voluntarily taken a rest, but slept only when overpowered by drowsiness. Sometimes his treacherous foe would seize him while eating, and food would fall out of his mouth as Dorotheus slipped into an uneasy slumber. On one occasion Palladius tried to convince his master to lay down for a rest, and Dorotheus replied, "If you succeed in persuading angels to sleep, then you will also persuade the zealous man."<sup>68</sup>

These stories offer a context for the views Cassian expressed about sleep. His recommendations in *De institutis* II.13 were firmly rooted in the Egyptian ethos. Sleep was a barrier to spiritual progress. It was a form of spiritual sloth and represented a dangerous time when the enemy could pollute the unguarded mind. Cassian's identification with this view is also confirmed with a story drawn from Book VI of *De institutis*. Here he recounts an instance when he was caught sleeping after the evening office (*vespertina sollempnitate*) by Abba Theodore. "Oh John," said the old man sadly, "How many at this hour are conversing with God and embracing him to themselves and retaining his company? Yet you are cheated out of such great glory, lost in the stupor of sleep."<sup>69</sup> Time lost in sleep was time stolen by Satan, time in which the monk made no spiritual progress. This proposition is also substantiated in *Collationes*, where Cassian notes that three, or at the most, four hours of sleep were all that a monk required.<sup>70</sup>

The writer of the *De institutis* III.4-6; 8 does not seem to share this view of sleep. To the

<sup>66</sup>1 Kg. XXII.19; Ps. CIII.20; Ps. CXLVIII.2; Mt. XXIV.36; Lk. XV.10; Rev. V.11-12;

<sup>67</sup>See also *Apophth.Patr.* Bessarion VI, where the old man claims to have slept standing or sitting for 14 years.

<sup>68</sup>*Pall.H.Laus.* II.3. See also *Apophth.Patr.* Poemon CLXXXV, where the old man claims that he cannot do without food, clothing, or sleep, but he can restrict his dependence on these things. A similar emphasis on limiting the bodily need for sleep may be found in *Apophth.Patr.* Sarmatas III.

<sup>69</sup>*Cass.Inst.* V.35: *quanti, inquit, O Iohannes, hora hac Deo conloquantur eumque in semet ipsis amplectuntur ac retinent: et tu fraudaris tanto lumine, inerti sopore resolutus?*

<sup>70</sup>*Cass.Coll.* XII.15; *Cass.Coll.* XIII.6.

contrary, sleep was a necessity, something a monk needs if he is to function during the day rather than a seductive pleasure that impeded spiritual growth. Sleep snatched between the end of Nocturns and the beginning of the new morning office is permissible; sleep must be taken at the end of the sabbath vigil if the monk is to avoid torpor and weariness in the next day (advice that is diametrically opposed to what was offered in *De institutis* II.13). Clearly a very different frame of reference undergirds the recommendations of *De institutis* III.4-6;8.

The disputed chapters contradict Cassian's earlier statements. *De institutis* III.5 is a reworking of *De institutis* II.13, but a reworking that reaches a different conclusion.<sup>71</sup> Where Cassian had condemned the practice of returning to bed after Nocturns, the writer of this chapter states that the unlawful practice was to return to bed after the new morning office – the resumption of sleep after Nocturns was fine. No attempt is made to reconcile this new directive with what had been offered in *De institutis* II.13.

Another contradiction of *De institutis* II.13 may be found in Chapter 8. Rather than contributing to torpor, the writer claims that the extra period of sleep is necessary to avoid slug-

<sup>71</sup>In fact, certain key phrases in *Cass.Inst.* III.5 seem to have been copied from Book II. The opening clause of verse 3 may be the only original thought the writer had, and this is nothing more than a citation of Cassian's earlier sentence in Book II: *Quod omnimodis fieri non oportet, sicut in superiore libello describentes Aegyptiorum synaxim plenius exposuimus.*

The next clause advances the first reason for avoiding morning sleep: *ne purificationem nostram confessione supplicii et antelucanis orationibus adquisitam.* This clause marks the start of the dependence on *Cass.Inst.* II.13: *Prima ne forte purificationem nostram nocturnis psalmis et orationibus adquisitam.*

The next clause (*vel emergens quaedam redundantia unorum naturalium polluat*) is also problematic. In fact Cassian had not written about the problem of the nocturnal emissions to this point. This is a discussion which will not be fully explored until *Cass.Coll.* XII.7. This chapter contains the following phrase: *per soporem caro eius vel redundantiam superflui humoris expellat, conditionem modumque naturae certissime deprehendit, et ita cum expergefactus invenerit carnem suam post longa tempora se inscio atque ignorante pollutam.* One possible explanation for this phrase is that the writer of this text, familiar with Cassian's later work on nocturnal emissions, thought that this is a danger Cassian would have brought out in his discussion. Nevertheless, Cassian had not mentioned this problem up to this point. The inclusion of this statement might actually point to the same sort of carelessness which led to a miscounting of offices in the preceding chapter. Of course it is also possible, if these verses are by Cassian, that he knew he was going to write about this problem at a later date and simply anticipated his later work.

The next clause lists the illusions stirred up by the devil as potential polluters of purity during sleep: *vel inlusio corrumpat inimici.* This brings us back to the reasons Cassian had listed for the dangers of sleep in *Cass.Inst.* II.13: *invidus inimicus... quadam somni inlusione contaminet.*

The next danger, that the restoration of sleep itself can cool spiritual fervor: *vel certe intercedens etiam puri ac simplicis somni refectio interrumpat spiritus nostri fervorem* is matched by another phrase from *Cass.Inst.* II.13: *intercedens etiam purus sopor.* This can lead to a spiritual torpor that will stretch throughout the day: *ac tepefactus somni torpore per totum diei spatium inertes deinceps ignavosque traducat,* another phrase paralleled by *segnemque torporem inferens menti, per totum diei spatium vigorem eius obtundat.*

Line 4 of this Chapter follows the thought of *Cass.Inst.* II.13, although it does not contain the strong verbal parallels found in line 3. Both lines state that after the completion of Nocturns (*missa canonica* in this verse, *orationum canonicarum* in II.13), the Egyptians do not return to sleep, but rather prolong their private prayers to daybreak. At this time they begin the day's work.

gishness throughout the rest of the day.<sup>72</sup> The period of sleep after the long vigil is not a time of spiritual danger, but rather is required if the monk is to function at peak efficiency over the next day. This inconsistency is followed in the next chapter (9), by an argument which would seem to oppose this practice. Here Cassian noted that the Sabbath vigil was observed to commemorate Christ's crucifixion. On the night that Christ was crucified, the distraught disciples watched throughout the entire night, *granting no rest of sleep to their eyes*.<sup>73</sup> Because of this precedent, a special office was appointed to commemorate this night on a weekly basis, and it is kept *in the same way*, to this day, throughout the East.<sup>74</sup> The disciples did not return to their beds after the vigil — they granted no rest of sleep to their eyes. If the monks celebrated the office in the same way, as Cassian asserted that they did, then clearly they would not be allowed to return to their beds at the conclusion of the Sabbath vigil.

### **Benedict and the Master**

It was noted above that modern interpretations of Cassian's cursus are skewed by the fact that both Benedict and the Master recommend an arrangement of eight offices. It was also suggested that the first step in an unbiased examination of Cassian would be to stop viewing Cassian through the window of these later developments and consider the cursus he proposed based on the evidence that may be drawn from his work. This has been the burden of the preceding sections of this appendix.

Nevertheless, there are some interesting observations to be drawn from an examination of the later rules: Benedict, unlike the Master, but very much like Cassian, does not allow his monks to return to bed after Nocturns. "In the time remaining after Vigils, those who need to learn some of the Psalter or readings should study them."<sup>75</sup> Benedict, like Cassian, believed that the period following Vigils was to be employed constructively, not wasted in sleep.

This advice stands in stark contrast to that offered by the anonymous Master,

Furthermore, we have said to join the Nocturns with the Matins after cockcrow

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<sup>72</sup>Cass.Inst. III.8.

<sup>73</sup>Cass.Inst. III.9: *nullatenus quietis somnum suis oculis indulgentes.*

<sup>74</sup>Cass.Inst. III.9: *in hodiernum diem per universum Orientem similiter observatur.*

<sup>75</sup>Ben.Reg. VIII.

so that the brothers, now refreshed by a long sleep, may go through both Offices attentively, then, after paying the divine debt of Matins, the brothers who so wish need have no qualms about going back to bed until Prime. Thus, rid entirely of drowsiness during these hours and then fully restored, they may begin work unencumbered after Prime, as we are shown by what is written about St. Helenus when it says: 'He used to take a rest after Matins'.<sup>76</sup>

Adalbert de Vogüé's demonstration that Benedict used the Master's rule in formulating his own work has been widely accepted for more than 25 years.<sup>77</sup> If, as has been suggested, Benedict relied on the Master, what does his deviation from the Master on the issue of post-Nocturns sleep suggest? One wonders if he might not be looking back to an earlier text, perhaps Cassian's unaltered text which offered an extensive justification for not returning to bed after Nocturns.

It should also be noted that the disputed chapters in Cassian broadly correspond to the Master's views on sleep (as expressed in the quote above). The brothers should have no qualms about returning to sleep, according to the Master. There is apparently no danger of satanic pollution. Moreover, the extra period of sleep ensures that the monk will be rested for the work of the day that follows, a sentiment that corresponds to *De institutis* III.5 and III.8, and contradicts *De institutis* II.13.

Another point may be drawn from the Master's legislation: according to the Master, the proper time for the Nocturns office was determined seasonally in relationship to the cockcrow (*cantum pullorum*).<sup>78</sup> Benedict, on the other hand, placed Nocturns at the eighth hour of the night.<sup>79</sup> In this, Benedict is much closer to Cassian, who in *De institutis* II.17, stated that the monks are summoned to Nocturns by a monk who remains awake all night, praying and keeping track of the time by the movement of the stars until the appropriate hour arrives. Astronomy, not agriculture, was the basis for starting the office.

In fact, a search of all of Cassian's works (*De institutis*, *Collationes*, and *De incarnatione*.)

<sup>76</sup>*Reg.Mast.* XXXIII.15-18, trans. Eberle.

<sup>77</sup>Although not universally accepted. See now the objections raised by Marilyn Dunn: Dunn (1990) and Dunn (1992), as well as the response to these arguments from de Vogüé (1992).

<sup>78</sup>*Reg.Mast.* XXXIII, passim.

<sup>79</sup>*Ben.Reg.* VIII.

for references to roosters reveals that a similar term (*gallorum cantum*) is used in only 4 places: three times in *De institutis*, and once in *Collationes*. The single use of the term in *Collationes* comes in a discussion attributed to Abba Theonas, in which the old man ties the beginning of Easter (and the cessation of a fast) to the cock's crow at dawn.<sup>80</sup>

The three uses of the term in *De institutis* all occur in the disputed chapters of Book III. In *De institutis* III.5, the writer states that the Egyptians are accustomed to rise, "even before the cocks' crow" (*etiam ante gallorum cantum*) in order to participate in Nocturns. In *De institutis* III.6, the writer notes that the Nocturns are customarily ended after the cocks' crow (*post gallorum cantum*). Finally, in *De institutis* III.8, the elders are said to limit the Nocturns to the fourth cocks' crow (*quartum gallorum cantum*) during the winter months so that the monks can get more sleep.

Cassian's undisputed chapters and Benedict agree in the assignment of the start of Nocturns to an hour of the night. The disputed chapters and the Master both measure time by the cock's crow. Again there is the suggestion of Benedict agreeing with Cassian against the Master. These correspondences between the *Regula Magistri* and Cassian's disputed chapters (against the correspondences between Benedict and the undisputed Cassianic text) provide the basis for an extremely tentative suggestion about the provenance of the changes made to Cassian's work. Perhaps the text was changed in sixth century Italy, in the same monastic milieu that produced the Master's work.

While speculative, the proposal that Chapters 4-6; 8 were inserted in an Italian monastery also has the merit of making sense of the odd sentence which closes Chapter 6, in which the writer stated that in this day, Psalm 50 is used in all the churches throughout Italy.<sup>81</sup> It is not immediately apparent why Gallic monks would be persuaded to adopt a practice based on its universal use in Italian churches. On the other hand, this sentence certainly can be read as an unconscious slip by a later Italian writer working in an Italian context.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup>Cass.Coll. XXI.25.

<sup>81</sup>Cass.Inst. III.6: *denique per Italiam hodieque consummatiss matutinis hymnis quinquagesimus psalmus in universis ecclesiis canitur.*

<sup>82</sup>The same sort of slip has already been noted in the numbering of the monastic offices.

## Suspect Words

The presence of a rooster in Cassian's disputed chapters is suspicious. In concluding the contextual analysis of these chapters, it should also be noted that there are two other terms that strike one as anachronistic insertions rather than genuine Cassianic prose. These words are *missa* and *hymnus*.

*Missa* is the most problematic of the pair. In later centuries the Church used the word to signify the Eucharistic Mass, but this was a gradual transformation of meaning which had only begun to be adopted in Cassian's time.<sup>83</sup> The earliest term the church used for the Eucharist was the "Lord's Supper" (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*).<sup>84</sup> In the first century, this ceremony came to be called the *εὐχαριστία*.<sup>85</sup> In the Latin West, writers used the terms *oblatio* and *sacrificium* to describe this event.<sup>86</sup> According to Jungmann, *oblatio* was the standard name for the mass. This did not begin to change until the sixth century.<sup>87</sup>

*Missa* from the Latin verb *mitto* originally meant 'sending out or sending away.' In late Latin it signified the dismissal from a service.<sup>88</sup> This service was not necessarily ecclesiastical as the term was also used to describe people leaving law courts. St. Avitus of Vienne (ca. 500) noted that the *missa* was pronounced in the churches and in the palaces or praetor's courts when the people were sent away from the event.<sup>89</sup>

The one time Cassian employs the word in *Collationes*, it serves as a participle ("sent").<sup>90</sup> A similar use may be found in the single instance of the word in *De incarnatione*.<sup>91</sup> The limited usage of *missa* in these two lengthy texts might suggest that Cassian did not use the term very often in his writing, but to the contrary, the word occurs ten times in *De institutis*.

<sup>83</sup>For the connection between *missa* and the Eucharistic Mass see Jungmann (1959), 129–133; Brunner (1967), 414.

<sup>84</sup>I Cor. XI.20.

<sup>85</sup>See for instance, *Didache*, IX.1: *περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, οὕτως εὐχαριστήσατε*. This play on words is then followed by the ritual for receiving the wine and the bread.

<sup>86</sup>Jungmann (1959), 130.

<sup>87</sup>Jungmann (1959), 130.

<sup>88</sup>See Isid.*Etym.* VI.19.4: *Missa, tempore sacrificii, est quando catechumeni foras mittuntur*. See also Eg.*Iter.* XXIV.3 who describes the end of the mixed morning service in Constantinople (monks, virgins, and laity) as a *missa*.

<sup>89</sup>Avit.*Ep.* I: *in ecclesiis palatiisque sive praetoriis, missa fieri pronuntiat, cum populus ab observatione dimittitur*.

<sup>90</sup>Cass.*Coll.* XVIII.16.

<sup>91</sup>Cass.*Inc.* VII.11.

In five of these instances, he uses the term in the way just described, to signify dismissal from some event.<sup>92</sup>

Of the other five occurrences of this word in *De institutis*, one seems to refer to the Eucharistic Mass, and the other four to monastic offices. In Chapter 11 of Book III, Cassian states that on Sunday, only one Mass is celebrated before lunch.<sup>93</sup> The connection between *missa* and the Eucharist was not well-established by the time Cassian wrote, although Ambrose had used the term in this connection.<sup>94</sup> Since Cassian was referring to the service where the monks received communion, it may be possible that the term was coming into use at this time.<sup>95</sup> Such a usage is rare in late-fourth and early-fifth century writers, but Ambrose did offer a precedent for it.

The other four occurrences of *missa* in *De institutis* are very peculiar. It is apparent from the context in which these terms appear that *missa* is intended to mean 'office.' Significantly, all four of these occurrences are in disputed passages.<sup>96</sup> What makes this term stand out even further, is that *sollemnitatis* is the word Cassian normally uses for 'office.'<sup>97</sup> The sudden appearance of the *missa* in *De institutis* III.4–8 is suspicious. This sense of disquiet is further heightened by the observation that there is another place where *missa* occurs in *De institutis*, a place that is almost certainly the work of a later hand: *missa* appears, meaning 'office,' in some of the chapter headings which have been inserted into the extant manuscripts of *De institutis*. The chapter title for Book II, Chapter 13, for instance reads *Quare post missam nocturnam dormire non oporteat*.<sup>98</sup> Somewhat significantly, the chapter itself does not use the word *missa*. Nor does Book II, Chapter 15, which carries a similar title.<sup>99</sup>

In these titles, which were added by a later hand,<sup>100</sup> *missa* has been inserted as an anachro-

<sup>92</sup>In Cassian's classic story on vainglory, the elder claims that he had arrived just as the younger monk was dismissing his imaginary catechumen *Modo, inquiens, veni, quando tu missam catechumenis celebrabas* (Cass.*Inst.* XI.16 (two instances in this chapter)). Also in Cass.*Inst.* II.7; Cass.*Inst.* III.3; Cass.*Inst.* VII.27.

<sup>93</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.11.

<sup>94</sup>Ambr.*Ep.* V.33.

<sup>95</sup>Of course it is equally possible that a later copyist altered whatever term Cassian might have selected to *missa*.

<sup>96</sup>Cass.*Inst.* III.5; Cass.*Inst.* III.6; Cass.*Inst.* III.8 (twice).

<sup>97</sup>A short list from just the undisputed chapters of Book III would include: Cass.*Inst.* III.1; III.2.3; III.3.1; III.7.1; III.9.2; III.9.3. Considerably more could be adduced from Book II.

<sup>98</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.13.

<sup>99</sup>Cass.*Inst.* II.15: *Qua lege modestiae post orationum missam unusquisque ad suam cellulam redeat, et cui subdatur increpationi is qui aliter fecerit.*

<sup>100</sup>In the course of producing his critical edition, J. C. Guy consulted the oldest extant manuscript of *De institutis*. This manuscript, a sixth century palimpsest, is located in the Biblioteca nazionale de Turin, *Codex F-IV-1*

nism. It was not Cassian's term, but one inserted by a later writer at a time when the monastic office was called a *missa*. If this conjecture holds, then the view that III.4-6;8 are also the work of a later hand is further strengthened by the presence of this word in them.

Another word which may be significant is the word *hymnus*. Despite the fact that Cassian writes extensively about the office and psalmody, the word *hymnus* only occurs four times in Cassian's works. Two of these occurrences are in the disputed Chapter 6 (III.6.2 and III.6.4). Another occurrence is to be found in Chapter 19 of Book IV. The final use of the word is in *Collationes XXI.26*, where it is used in reference to men (the context suggests that they are not monks) who, upon rising, offer the first fruits of their day to the Lord by singing hymns, praying, or hurrying to church. Although there is an obvious parallel between the worldly men who rise and sing hymns before embarking on the day's business, and monks engaged in the office of Nocturns, Cassian is discussing the monastic offices in this chapter. He uses the word *hymnus* simply to describe something that Christians sing, rather than as a term that is broadly equivalent to monastic psalmody (as it is used in our disputed chapters). The *hymnus* plays no part in his other discussions of the monastic offices. Once again, the curious use of a term that would gain currency in later usage is suspicious.

### A Statistical Investigation of Chadwick's Proposal

As noted above,<sup>101</sup> Chadwick's explanation for the problems found in Chapters 4-6 were advanced with some hesitation. He suggested that without a new manuscript find to corroborate his view, the theory would have to remain tenuous. The preceding sections of this appendix have considered the place of these chapters within the overarching context of Cassian's work. As has been demonstrated, there are good contextual reasons to doubt the Cassianic authorship of these chapters.

Although there have been no new manuscript finds to cast fresh light on this question, the

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*N.16*. This partial work contains fragments of Books IV.40-41, VI.1, and VII.30-VIII.1. Guy noted that while this manuscript did not add anything significant to the later texts, it did support a hypothesis advanced by Petschenig, that the book and chapter headings we find in most manuscripts were added by a later hand. Petschenig had suspected this possibility based on the absence of the headings in his oldest manuscript, *Casinensis Rescriptus 295*. The absence of these headings in *Codex F-IV-1 N.16* led Guy to support Petschenig's view that the headings were a seventh century addition for the convenience of later readers (Guy (1965), 14).

<sup>101</sup>See pg. 208.

past 33 years have witnessed the development of computer-based, statistical methodologies for the determination of authorship. One of the best of these methods, an application of multivariate statistics, was developed by John Burrows and described in a series of papers in the early 1990s. This method allows a researcher to distinguish between the works of different authors, and in the absence of a new manuscript find, may be employed to shed new light on the question of the disputed chapters in *De institutis*.

### A Statistical Approach

The quest for a statistical methodology that would allow researchers to solve questions of authorship dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Modern stylometry began with the suggestion of Augustus de Morgan (in 1851) that the average length of words in a text might be used to discriminate between authors. This average was attained by dividing the total number of characters found in a text by the number of words in the text. While this suggestion seems reasonable (some authors habitually use polysyllabic words while others employ simpler and shorter words), it did not prove to be a credible methodology. Years after making this suggestion, it was demonstrated that the average word length of texts often varied by genre. Consequently, different works by the same author could yield varying average word lengths, an observation that invalidated this test for authorship attribution.

The next step forward came in 1938 when statistician G. Udney Yule studied sentence length distributions in the writings of various authors. He discovered that authors tended to write a consistent mix of sentence lengths, which given a large enough sample, could be quantified. The distribution of sentences provided an authorial fingerprint which could be used to suggest authorship. This principle was illustrated through a comparison of the sentence lengths in works of two authors (Thomas à Kempis and Jean Charlier de Gerson) who had been suggested as the authors of the anonymous *Imitation of Christ*. Yule calculated the sentence length distributions for the known works of both authors, and then compared these distributions to the distribution for *The Imitation of Christ*. Yule concluded that à Kempis was more likely to have been the author of the work than Gerson.<sup>102</sup> A further refinement to this approach was to be

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<sup>102</sup>Yule (1938), 377.

found in W. C. Wake's study of sentence length in Greek authors. Building on the work of Yule, Wake's research revealed that Greek authors tended to write sentences that fell into certain patterns of sentence distributions, which could be used to differentiate between authors.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, this technique was not completely reliable; one of its great problems (especially with unpunctuated classical texts) was the definition of exactly what a sentence was. Moreover, the technique also suffered when making comparisons across different genres.

The next great leap forward in statistical methodology was the landmark study of the *Federalist Papers* conducted by Moesteller and Wallace. The *Federalist Papers* are a collection of treatises that had been published before the American Revolutionary War, urging the colonists to seek independence from Britain. The works had been published anonymously under the pseudonym 'Publius.' Two days before his death in a duel with Aaron Burr (1804), Alexander Hamilton left a list that revealed the names of the three authors who had contributed to the collection. The three authors were Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison. Several years after Hamilton's death, one of Madison's friends challenged this list, stating that Madison had actually written some of the papers that Hamilton had claimed as his own. As a result of this counterclaim, the authorship of 12 of the *Federalist Papers* was disputed, and the question of correct attribution exercised literary critics and historians for the next century.

Moesteller and Wallace decided to use computer stylometry to settle the attribution problem. Their approach was to develop a list of 70 function words that were present in each of the tracts of the *Federalist Papers*. They defined a function word as one that holds a sentence together: articles, prepositions, pronouns, and other particles. These words are found in all forms of writing; their frequency of use is not likely to vary between genres or works in which different subjects are treated. From this list of function words, Moesteller and Wallace then identified words that proved useful in discriminating between Madison and Hamilton's undisputed works. By analyzing the relative frequencies of these discriminators in the 12 disputed papers, Moesteller and Wallace demonstrated that Madison had actually written the unattributed papers.<sup>104</sup>

The next major advance in stylometric studies came in 1987, when John Burrows began to

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<sup>103</sup>Wake (1957), 345.

<sup>104</sup>A detailed description of this project may be found in Francis (1966).

publish a series of papers describing a new, multivariate technique for authorship analysis.<sup>105</sup> Burrow's technique represents the closest that statisticians and textual critics have come to finding the 'holy grail' of authorship attribution tools, and is now "the standard first port-of-call for attributional problems in stylometry."<sup>106</sup>

The fundamental premise underlying the methodology of Moesteller, Wallace, and Burrows, is the idea that authors tend to use certain words at constant rates. The Burrows Method exploits this tendency in a manner that is more mathematically sophisticated than the method employed by Moesteller and Wallace. The Burrows Method projects text samples into multi-dimensional space and groups them by their proximity to one another in this space. A brief illustration of this concept may prove helpful.

For instance, consider the case where an analyst wishes to compare three text samples. Each sample is 1,000 words long. A fairly crude way to judge the similarity between the samples would be to compare the frequency of a single word across the three texts. If the texts were in English, one could count and compare the instances of the word 'and.' Let it be supposed, (somewhat arbitrarily) that 'and' occurs 11 times in the first text sample, 21 times in the second, and 23 times in the third. These three data points can be plotted on a single line as shown in Figure 5.3. In this univariate representation of the three texts it is evident that text 2 and text 3 are more alike than text 1 and either text 2 or text 3.

A second variable may be added to the graph. Here the occurrences of the word 'but' will be counted for each text. Perhaps the word 'but' occurs 15 times in text 1, 30 times in text 2, and 28 times in text 3. This bivariate data can be plotted on two axes of the graph (Figure 5.4). The frequency of the word 'and' is plotted on the x-axis and the frequency of the word 'but' is displayed on the y-axis. Again by visual inspection it is clear that text 2 and text 3 are more similar to each other than they are to text one.

An initial foray into multivariate space is made with the addition of a third word, 'the.' In this case the word 'the' occurs 8, 19, and 27 times respectively. The frequency of this third word is now plotted on the z-axis of the graph yielding a representation in three-dimensional space (Figure 5.5). Once again text 2 and text 3 are more alike than either sample 1 and 2 or 1

<sup>105</sup>See Burrows (1992) for a complete description of his technique.

<sup>106</sup>Holmes (1998), 114. Holmes also cites a number of studies which have employed the technique.

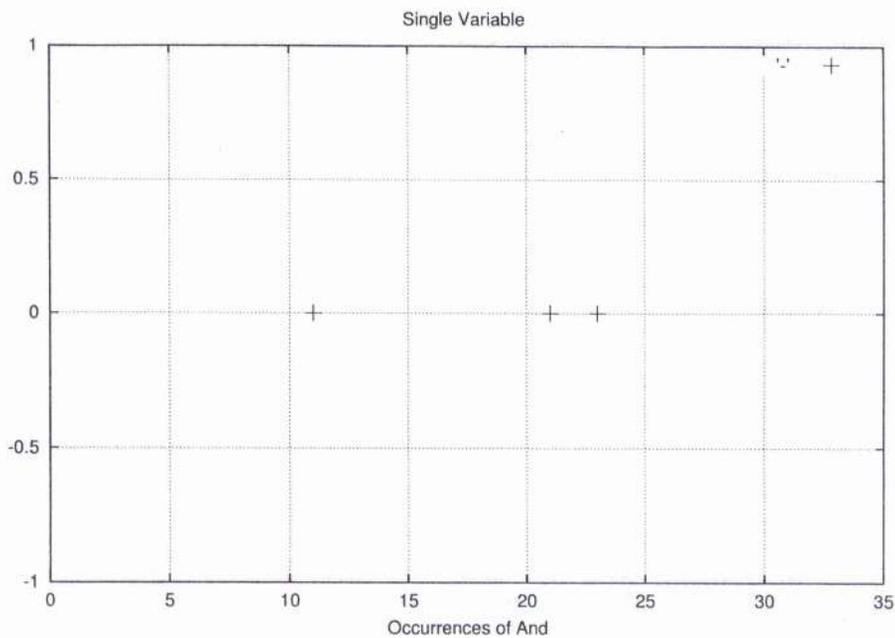


Figure 5.3: Univariate Representation of Three Texts

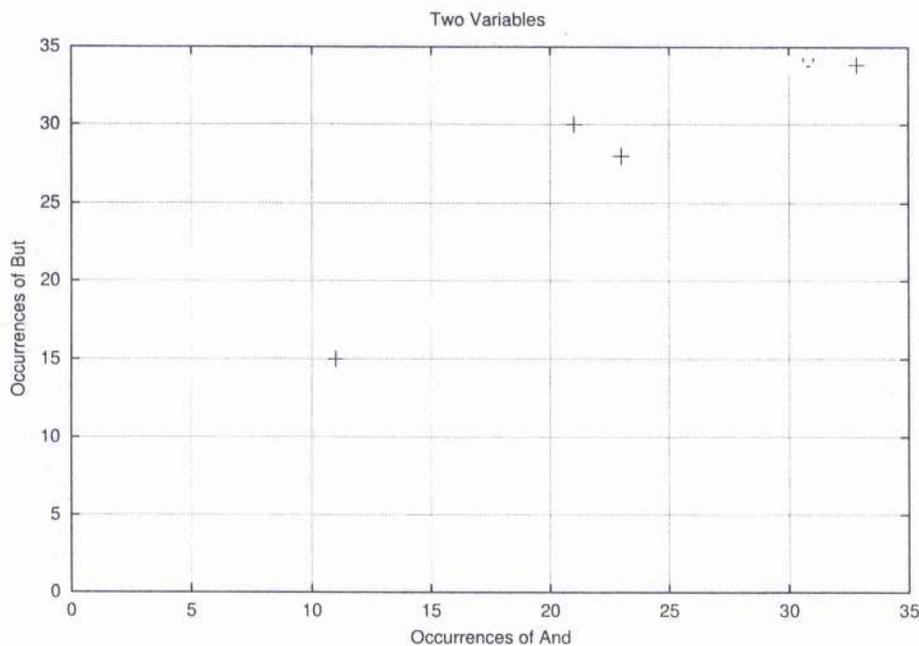


Figure 5.4: Bivariate Representation of 'And' and 'But'

and 3. Additional words may be added to the list indefinitely; unfortunately once the number passes beyond three words, the human ability to visualize the additional dimensions fails.

Nevertheless using Euclidean distance formulas, the multivariate distances between points may still be measured mathematically. This is the fundamental principle concept underlying the Burrows Method: the similarity of text samples projected in multidimensional space.

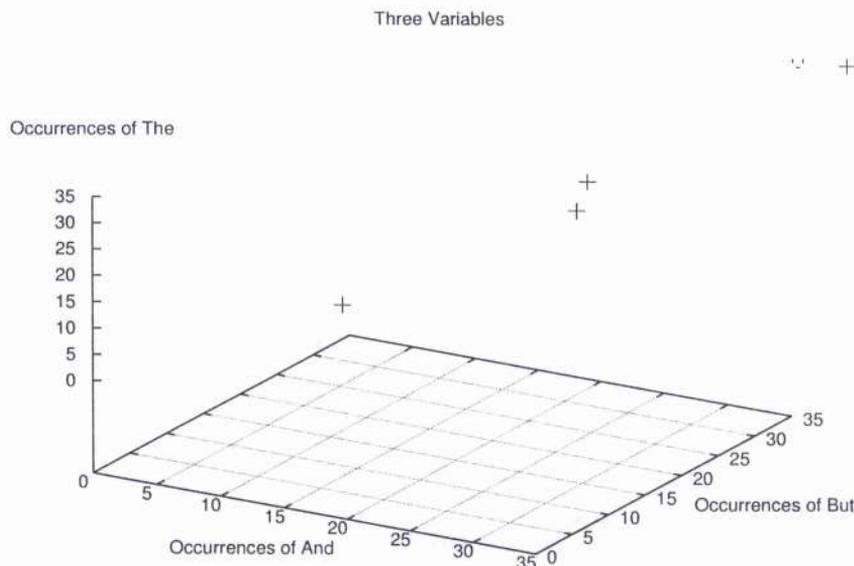


Figure 5.5: Multivariate Representation of 'And,' 'But,' and 'The'

In order to conduct an analysis of one or more texts using the Burrows Method, the subject texts are divided into blocks of a consistent length.<sup>107</sup> In the following examples, each text has been divided into blocks that are 1,000 words long. All of the words in the sample texts are then counted by the computer, and a list of the most common words, sorted in descending order by frequency, is produced. Table 5.1 shows the 50 most common words in *De institutis* I-IV.

Assuming that these words are suitable for use in the analysis,<sup>108</sup> the computer is then in-

<sup>107</sup>As a general rule of thumb, the longer these blocks the better the procedure seems to work, as small aberrations are smoothed out over the course of a longer text. In the study of *De inst.* I-IV, 1,000 word text blocks were used. This length was selected because the questionable text sample (*De inst.* III.4-6;8) totals 1,017 words. The Burrows Method, as will be demonstrated below, is able to separate samples of known authors, even with blocks this small.

<sup>108</sup>It has been my practice to eliminate words that are context sensitive from consideration when conducting a study of this type. Context sensitive words would include nouns, most adjectives, and most verbs. These types of words are often related to the subject matter of the text under consideration. If, for instance, one text used the adjective Roman frequently, while another text used the adjective Greek, the differences observed between the two texts would not necessarily imply a different author as much as they would imply a different subject matter. A better evaluation of authorship is produced when the words that depend largely on the subject of a text are removed. What

Word	Based on Number of Occurrences
et	287
in	264
non	199
vel	178
ad	160
ut	155
ac	137
quae	115
cum	100
est, sed, quod, qui, per, etiam	99-90
de, si, quam, atque, ab, ne, pro	89-60
a, ita, nec, eius, quoque, ex, hoc, secundum, enim, quidem, haec, se	59-40
his, eum, nos, quibus, quo, velut, usque, esse, id, huius, post, sunt	39-30
scilicet, ea, hac, nisi	29-20

Table 5.1: The Most Common Words in *De institutis* I-IV

structured to tally the number of times each of these words occurs in each 1,000 word text block. The resulting data matrix is standardized for each word in the list (converting the frequency scores for each word into standard units with a mean of zero), and a principal components analysis is conducted on the table.<sup>109</sup> The two primary principal components are then extracted, and each text block is plotted on a two dimensional graph.<sup>110</sup>

The next series of charts demonstrate the results of the Burrows Method. In Figure 5.6, Cassian's *De institutis* I-IV has been plotted with Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis*.

The points that represent 1,000 word segments of *De institutis* lay at the left hand side of remains are the structural words, those words which occur no matter what subject is treated. Of course it should also be noted that it is quite rare for a context sensitive word to make the top 50 word list, as these words are usually crowded out by the more common structural words.

Table 5.1 shows the 50 words used in the following studies of *De institutis* I-IV.

<sup>109</sup>The reader who is interested in a deeper discussion of the statistical methodology underlying the Burrows Method is encouraged to consult Burrows (1992). Multivariate data is transformed into a two dimensional representation using principal components analysis, and the programs I have designed to perform this analysis are based on an algorithm found in Bolch and Huang (1974), 39-40. Another description of principal components analysis may be found in Manly (1986), 59-71.

<sup>110</sup>Holmes describes the process this way: "Principal components analysis is a standard technique in multivariate statistical data analysis. It aims to transform the observed variable to a new set of variables which are uncorrelated and arranged in decreasing order of importance. These new variables, or components, are linear combinations of the original variables, and it is hoped that the first few variables will account for most of the variation of the original data, thereby reducing the dimensionality of the problem. Typically the data are plotted in the space of the first two components, enabling a two-dimensional graph to portray the configuration of the data in multivariate space. No mathematical assumptions are necessary; the data 'speaks for itself'. Clusterings of points, each representing a sampled text, are clearly visible, as are outliers which do not conform to any pattern." Holmes (1998). 113.



Cass Inst.I-IV; Hier.V.Hil.; Sulp.Dial. [50:1000]

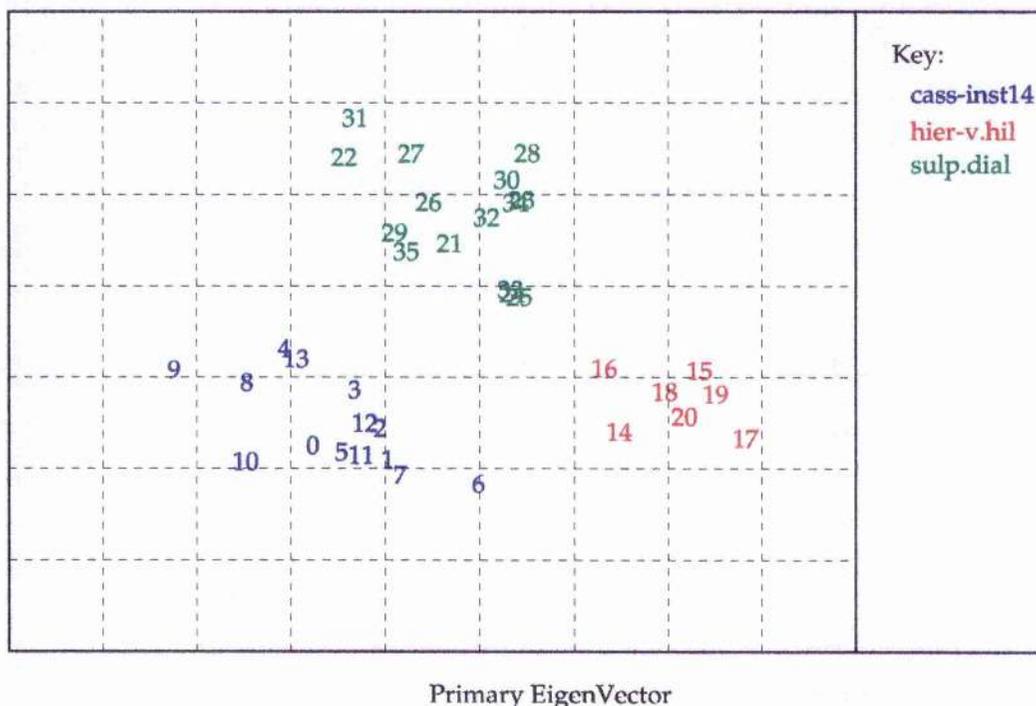


Figure 5.8: Cassian, Sulpicius, and Jerome

Each of these charts was processed in an identical manner, and each demonstrate that the Burrows Method is able to separate texts by different authors, based on the relative frequencies of the fifty most common words in the texts.<sup>111</sup>

The earlier consideration of the theoretical basis for the Burrows method (see pp. 233–235) discussed how texts might be separated based the relative frequencies of one, two, or three words. The Burrows method groups texts based on their similarity across a fifty-dimensional spectrum. This space is then reduced through principal components analysis to create the two-dimensional charts seen here. The points plotted on the chart are the product of two equations which consist of 50 variables representing each words and their weighted coefficients. A scaled loading chart may be produced which arranges the words by their assigned coefficients and

<sup>111</sup> Although only three examples have been offered here, further comparisons between Cassian and other Latin authors have been made. In this writer's experience, the Burrows Method has yet to fail to separate works by known different authors. The technique has been confirmed by a number of independent studies (see for instance Holmes and Forsyth (1995) and Tweedie et al. (1998)). Tweedie, et. al., commenting on the technique states "The 'Burrows Technique' as it has come to be called, appears to be a proven and powerful tool in authorship studies" (Tweedie et al. (1998), 78).



analysis, Cassian seems to prefer 'ac' while Jerome regularly utilizes 'et'. This is an important stylistic difference between the two writers. A scaled loading chart allows the analyst to readily identify these important variations.

Having established the usefulness of the Burrows Method in separating texts, attention may now be focused on Cassian's work. Figure 5.10 shows a plot for Cassian, *De institutis* I-IV by itself. Most of the data points are grouped in a cluster centered on the chart. Two points, however, stand as outliers to this main group. One point (labeled '13') is located near the top of the chart; the second outlier (labeled '6') has been placed near the left edge of the chart.

Cass.Inst.I-IV [50:1000]

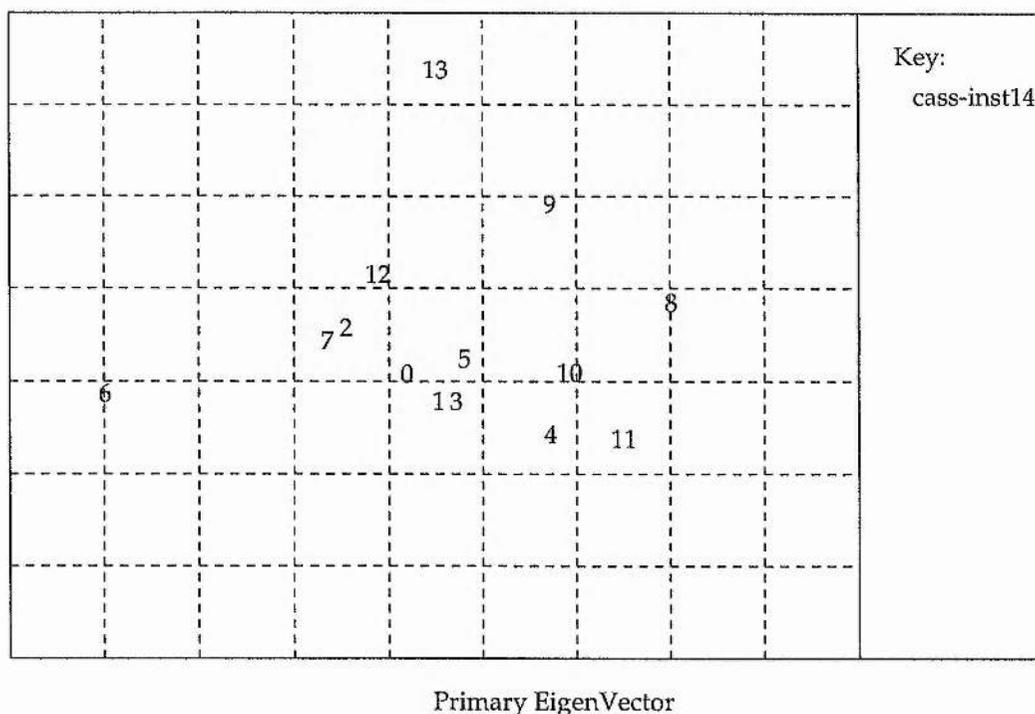


Figure 5.10: Cassian *De inst.* I-IV

The first outlier is the text block which runs from *De institutis* IV.34 to the end of Book IV. This section contains a speech that was delivered by Abba Pinufius on the occasion of the reception of a young novice into Pinufius' monastery. Two points need to be made about this text block. The first point is that variation along the x-axis of this chart (the axis that displays the primary Eigenvector) is more significant than variation along the y-axis (which

records the secondary Eigenvector). The primary Eigenvector in a Burrows Chart is always the Eigenvector that produces the largest range of data variation. Consequently, Point 13 is not as significant a variation as Point 6. Nevertheless, there is still some variation there, and one wonders if this was not related to a change in an author's style when trying to reproduce a speech.<sup>112</sup>

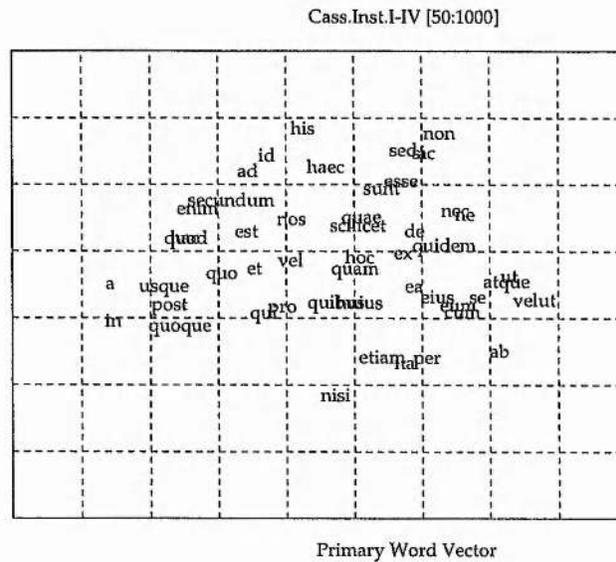
The variation displayed in the case of Point 6 is not explained as easily. This data segment consists of 1,000 words that begin near the end of *De institutis* III.3 and run to the beginning of III.8. These are the chapters that this appendix has argued are later interpolations. What the Burrows Method suggests, is that there is something quite different about these suspect chapters. They are isolated from the main cluster, a trait that has been shown to signal authorship differences.

Of course this is not in any sense 'proof' that these chapters are by a different author. The Burrows Method is nothing more than an indicator of variations in word usage over a large subject array. Nevertheless, it is striking that the analysis by the Burrows Method supports the more traditional textual analysis made in the preceding sections. These chapters do display a marked and demonstrable variation from the other chapters in *De institutis*.

The differences between Block 6 and the rest of *De institutis* I-IV can be investigated with the scaled loading plot. Figure 5.11 shows the contributions each word makes to the separation found in *De institutis* I-IV.

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<sup>112</sup>This is an intriguing possibility and clearly further research is needed into the statistical effects of reported speeches in an author's work.

Figure 5.11: Scaled Loading Plot: Cassian *De inst.* I-IV

At the left edge of the plot (corresponding to the displacement noted for Point 6), are five words that are making a large contribution to this separation: the prepositions *a*, *in*, and *post*, and the adverbs *quoque* and *usque*. Table 5.2 compares the frequencies of these words in Chapters 4–8 to the rest of *De institutis*, as well as to Cassian's other works.

Word	<i>Inst.</i> III.4-8	<i>Inst.</i> Ave	<i>Coll.</i> Ave	<i>De Inc.</i> Ave	All Works Ave.	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
a	6	3.55	4.30	5.41	4.34	1	7	1.77
in	24	17.77	16.89	25.82	18.65	10	31	4.9
quoque	5	3.46	2.82	1.59	2.74	0	7	1.77
post	9	1.45	.98	1.35	1.14	0	6	1.8
usque	11	1.12	.46	.15	.54	0	3	1.92

Table 5.2: Frequencies of Selected Words

This table highlights Cassian's use of these five words in his works. Column 1 contains the word and column 2 lists the number of times this word occurs in *De institutis* III.4-8.<sup>113</sup> Columns 3-5 contain averages for the number of times each word occurs (per 1,000 words) in *De institutis*, *Collationes*, and *De incarnatione*. Column 6 contains an average for all of

<sup>113</sup>All of the word frequency averages are given in number of occurrences per 1,000 words. *De inst.* 3.4-8 actually contains 1,017 words. As the difference between a standardized value (a rate for 1,000 words) and the displayed value is negligible, the actual word counts for this block will be used for ease of discussion. The standardized values for the five words are: 5.8997 (*a*), 23.5988 (*in*), 4.9164 (*quoque*), 8.84955 (*post*), and 10.816 (*usque*).

Cassian's works. Columns 7 and 8 contain the range for the word in *De institutis* (the fewest and greatest number of times the word is used in a block of 1,000 words).<sup>114</sup> The final column contains the standard deviation for each word in *De institutis*,<sup>115</sup> a measure of the spread of the data observations around the mean.

Although the scaled loading plot has indicated that the words *a*, *in*, and *quoque* are large contributors to the variation shown on the chart, in the case of *De institutis* III.4-8, the values are not that extreme. In a normal distribution, it would be expected that 84% of all the data points would fall within 1 Z score of the mean. The first three words in Table 5.2 all have Z scores of less than 2.00.<sup>116</sup> Each of the readings could be attributed to the random variation that occurs in a normal distribution.

The same can not be said about the preposition *post* and the adverb *usque*. The Z score for *post* is 4.19, and the Z score for *usque* is 5.15. Each of these values would be termed statistically significant, and it is extraordinarily unlikely that they are the product of simple random variation. This observation is strengthened by an examination of the range for these words. Within *De institutis*, *post* never occurs more than 6 times in a 1,000 word block. On average, *post* only occurs 1.45 times every 1,000 words in *De institutis*, .98 times for every 1,000 words in *Collationes*, and 1.35 times in every 1,000 words in *De incarnatione*. These statistics suggest that Cassian was not in the habit of using *post* in his writing. Yet, in the disputed chapters, the word occurs 9 times.

The adverb *usque* demonstrates an even more dramatic quality. This word never occurs more than 3 times in a 1,000 word block in any of Cassian's writings. It occurs, on average, 1.12 times per 1,000 word block in *De institutis*, .46 times for every 1,000 words in *Collationes*, and .15 times in every 1,000 words in *De incarnatione*. Yet in the 1,017 word block that covers Chapters 4-8, the word occurs 11 times. The Z score of 5.15 suggests that this text sample was not drawn from the same population that produced the other text samples.

<sup>114</sup>*De inst.* III.4-8 was not used in calculating the range.

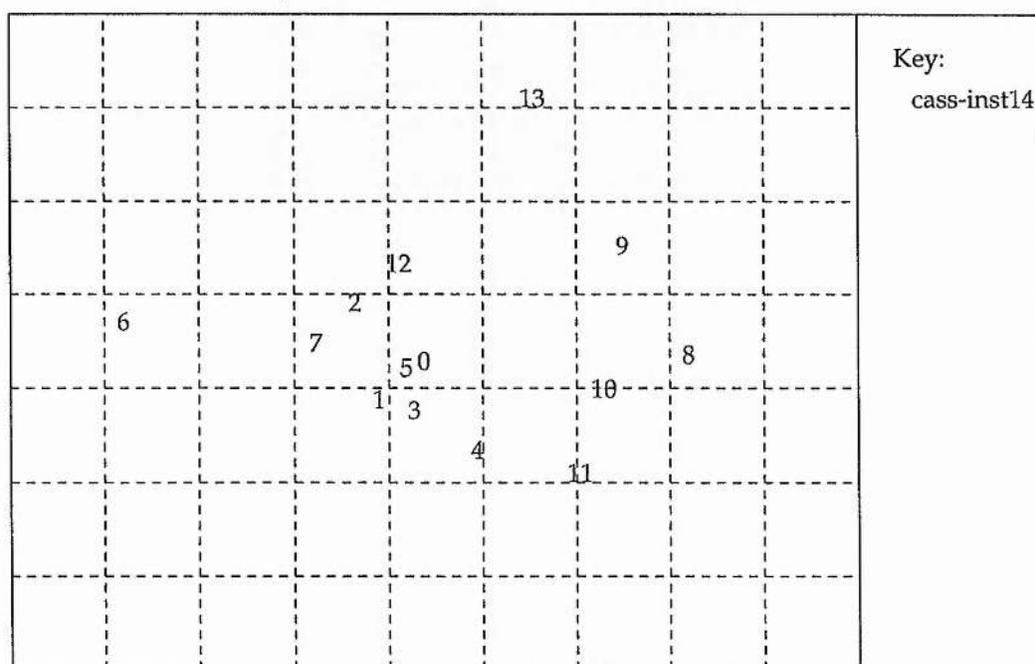
<sup>115</sup>Based on the samples in all of *De institutis*.

<sup>116</sup>The Z scores for *a*, *in*, and *quoque* are 1.4, 1.27, and .87. A Z score is calculated by subtracting the reading from the average and dividing this difference by the standard deviation. 84.13% of all Z scores in a normal distribution should be 1.00 or less; 97.72% of all Z scores should be 2.00 or less; 99.87% of all Z scores will be less than 3.00. Data points that deviate from the mean by a Z score that is greater than 3.00 are thought unlikely to be the result of simple random variation.

If one is going to argue that Cassian wrote *De institutis* III.4–6, 8, then some explanation will have to be offered for the unusual frequency of *usque* and *post* in these chapters. In all of Cassian's other works, he never used *usque* more than 3 times in any given 1,000 word block of text, and on average, he only used the word once in every 2,000 words (or .54 times per 1,000 words). Based on his normal usage of the word *usque*, it is extremely unlikely that Cassian wrote these chapters.

Although the unprecedented density of *usque* and *post* tend to heighten the feeling that something is not quite right with these chapters, it must be noted that the Burrows Method does not depend on the frequency of these two words alone. In fact, if *usque* and *post* are removed from consideration (ignored as if they were context-sensitive nouns) the suspect chapters still separate from the main cluster, as may be seen in fig. 5.12.

Cass.Inst.I-IV [50:1000]



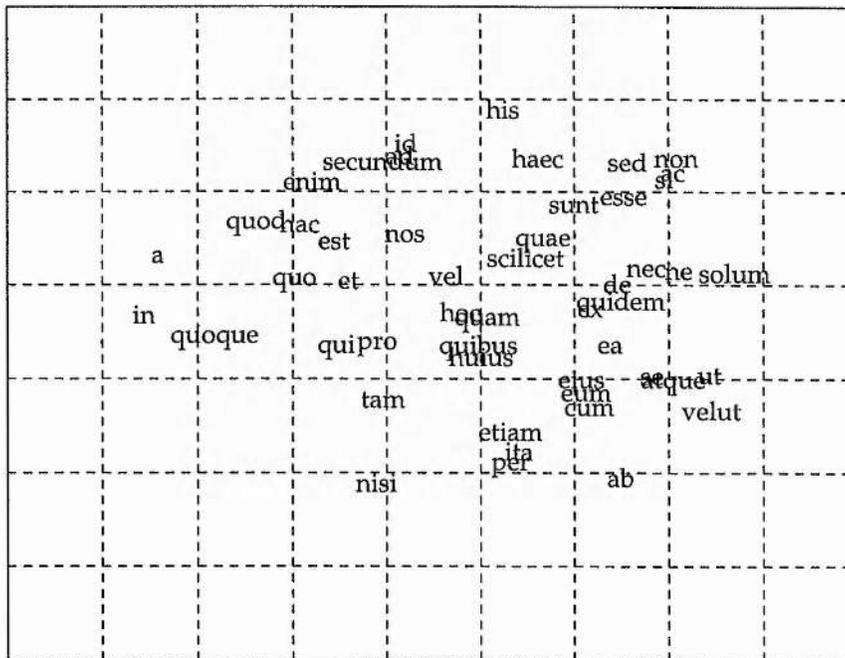
Primary EigenVector

Figure 5.12: Cassian *De inst.* I-IV, omitting *usque* and *post*

As the scaled loading chart (fig. 5.13) demonstrates, even when the effects of *usque* and *post* are factored out, the different usages of other words continue to separate the suspect

chapters from the main body of *De institutis* I–IV. In this case the influence of *a*, *in*, and *quoque* pull the texts apart, as does the relative absence of words that Cassian normally uses such as *solum* and *velut*. While the differences in *usque* and *post* are the dramatic variations, these chapters appear as an outlier to the main cluster because they vary across a wide spectrum of words. The Burrows Plot has demonstrated that the chapters that make up *De institutis* III.4–8 are statistically different from the rest of *De institutis*.

Cass.Inst.I-IV [50:1000]



Primary Word Vector

Figure 5.13: Scaled Loading Plot: Cassian *De inst.* I-IV, omitting *usque* and *post*

\* \* \*

The apposite judgment of David Holmes bears repeating at this juncture,

The evidence brought forward here should not be regarded as superseding that of the more traditional kind. In attribution of authorship, stylometric evidence

must be weighed in the balance along with that provided by more conventional scholarship. Stylometry does, however, have a role to play despite the suspicions of those who mistrust the application of statistical and computing techniques to literature and the analysis of texts.

The way forward in problems of authorship lies in a combination of statistical techniques with more orthodox methods. If the computer reveals unusual, quantifiable properties in a text, it is for the scholar in the field concerned to identify the features which are producing these effects.<sup>117</sup>

The approach to Cassian's *De institutis* III.4-6;8 in this appendix has been to combine a stylo-metric textual analysis with an analysis of the passage using more traditional methods. It has been argued that these chapters do not fit into the contextual background for them supplied by the surrounding text. Cassian had argued emphatically against monks returning to sleep after the end of Nocturns. This view had been explicitly expressed in Book II of *De institutis*, and was entirely consistent with the teachings of the Egyptian Desert Fathers that have been reported in other sources. Nevertheless, the writer of *De institutis* III.4-6, 8 stated that there was nothing wrong with this practice, and indeed the monk must return to bed after the Sabbath Vigil if he was to remain awake the next day.

Cassian was also very consistent in his tallying of the offices that made up the monastic cursus. At five different points (including immediately before and after the disputed chapters) he listed five offices of prayer. Nowhere, outside of *De institutis* III.4-6;8 can a certain reference to a sixth or seventh office be found.

Finally, it has also been suggested that the use of the word *missa* is an anachronism, and the suspicion engendered by this word's use in the questionable chapters is heightened when one notes that it also occurs (as a reference to the monastic office) in titles that were inserted at a later date into *De institutis*. A possible connection of these chapters with the Italian monastic milieu of the sixth century Master has also been suggested; moreover, it has been observed that at certain points (most notably in the issue of a return to sleep after Nocturns) Benedict and the undisputed chapters of Cassian agree against the Master.

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<sup>117</sup>Holmes (1992), 118-119.

And finally, an analysis using a proven statistical method has disclosed the fact that these chapters are demonstrably different in terms of word usage from the rest of *De institutis* I-IV. The author of these passages relies heavily on the terms *usque* and *post*, words which are found rarely in any of Cassian's other writings. When these words are removed from consideration, these chapters still exhibit variation, which suggests that it is unlikely that they were written from John Cassian.

The collective mass of these observations provide a firm foundation for doubting the Cassianic authorship of these chapters. While this contention may not be proved with complete certainty, enough objections to the text have been proffered to substantiate grounds for doubt. Chadwick's 'hesitation' about his theory, while judicious, seems less necessary in the face of this new research.

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