

# Cassian in Syria?: The Evidence of Innocent I

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## Abstract

In the late fourth and early fifth centuries we are informed of the activities of Cassian by Palladius in his defence of John Chrysostom and by Innocent I, both with regard to the exile of John Chrysostom in 404 and with regard to the reconciliation between the churches of Rome and Antioch in 414. Do these three instances refer to the same person and is that person John Cassian? In this paper it is argued that Palladius does indeed refer to John Cassian and so does Innocent I in his comments about the exile of John Chrysostom. However, the individual involved in the reconciliation between Antioch and Rome is to be seen as a different person, contrary to the opinion of several scholars. This becomes evident through a close reading of Innocent I's *Epistulae* 19 and 20.

## Keywords

John Cassian – John Chrysostom – Innocent I – Palladius – Melitian schism

One of the arguments advanced by Philip Rousseau is that while a chronology for John Cassian's life may be impossible to reconstruct firmly it is not an unimportant task for the scholar to grapple with the issues involved, for whatever may be gleaned assists us in knowing what influenced his thinking and writing.<sup>1</sup> Providing a historical context in which to read anyone's writings is valuable. Of particular concern for John Cassian is the decade or so between

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<sup>1</sup> P. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford, 2010) 169-172.

when he left Constantinople in 404 and when he appeared in Gaul about 415. Where was he and what was he doing? This is important to address in order to situate him within the complex networks of relationships involving the major churches of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch that played such a major part in shaping ecclesiastical affairs of the time.

There are several pieces of evidence available to reconstruct an outline of John Cassian during that time, but scholars have produced remarkably divergent accounts of his activities. We have information in Gennadius' *De uiris illustribus* about the author of *Institutiones* and *Conlationes* who was ordained a deacon in Constantinople by John Chrysostom and became a presbyter in Marseille (ancient Massalia).<sup>2</sup> John Cassian himself reveals that he was with German in Bethlehem and Egypt as a monk and that he was ordained, although he does not say that it was in Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> John Cassian would describe himself later as a disciple of Chrysostom.<sup>4</sup> We have evidence in Palladius'

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- 2 Gennadius, *De uir. illus.* 62 (E.C. Richardson, *Hieronymus: Liber de uiris inlustribus; Gennadius: Liber de uiris inlustribus*, Texte und Untersuchungen 14 [Leipzig, 1896]. 82): *Cassianus, natione Scytha, Constantinopolim a Iohanne Magno episcopo diaconus ordinatus, apud Massiliam presbyter* . . . On Gennadius see Tracy Keefer Seiler, "Gennadus of Marseille's *De uiris inlustribus* and John Cassian," *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 3 (2007) 307-326. On Gennadius' statement that Cassian was Scythian see K. Smolak, "Skytische Schriftsteller in der lateinischen Literatur der Spätantike," in V. Gjuzelev and R. Pillinger (eds), *Das Christentum in Bulgarien und auf der übrigen Balkanhalbinsel in der Spätantike und im frühen Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Bulgarica* 5 (Vienna, 1987) 23-29; K. Zelzer, "Cassianus natione Scytha, ein Südgallier," *Wiener Studien* 104 (1991) 161-168; and K.S. Frank, "John Cassian on John Cassian," *Studia Patristica* 33, ed. E.A. Livingstone, papers presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford 1995 (Leuven, 1997) 418-433, at 422-426, who argue from statements within John Cassian's writings that he was from southern Gaul and that Gennadius' reference should be taken to John Cassian's stay in the monastery at Scetis in Egypt. Cf. H.-I. Marrou, "Jean Cassien à Marseille," *Revue du moyen âge latin* 1 (1945) 5-26; and T. Damian, "Some Critical Considerations and New Arguments Reviewing the Problem of St. John Cassian's Birthplace," *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (1990) 149-170.
- 3 See Cassian, *Coll.* 17 (CSEL 13,463-500), for his justification for why he failed to fulfil his promise to stay only for a short time in Egypt and return to Bethlehem. On John Cassian's time in Egypt see A. Jakab, "L'Égypte chrétienne au temps de Jean Cassien," in C. Badilita and A. Jakab (eds), *Jean Cassien entre l'Orient et l'Occident: actes du colloque international: Bucharest, 27-28 septembre 2001* (Paris, 2003) 1-14. On his ordination see Cassian, *Inst.* 11,18 (CSEL 17,203); idem, *Coll.* 1,1 (CSEL 13,7); 16,1 (CSEL 13,439).
- 4 Cassian, *De incarn.* 7,30 (CSEL 17,388-389). See C. Broc, "Jean Cassien, 'disciple' de Jean Chrysostome," in C. Badilita and A. Jakab (eds), *Jean Cassien entre l'Orient et l'Occident: actes du colloque international: Bucharest, 27-28 septembre 2001* (Paris, 2003) 33-47. P. Tzamalikos, *The Real Cassian Revisited: Monastic Life, Greek Paideia, and Origenism in the Sixth Century*, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 112 (Leiden and Boston, 2012) 96, does not consider *De*

*Dialogus* of German the presbyter and Cassian the deacon bringing a letter from the clergy of Constantinople to Innocent I, bishop of Rome between 402 and 417, asserting that John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople recently exiled in 404 for the second time, was not guilty of the charges of embezzlement that had led to his deposition.<sup>5</sup> We have a letter from Innocent I to the clergy of Constantinople from October 404, preserved in Sozomen's *Historia ecclesiastica*, urging patience in the eastern capital, affirming John Chrysostom's innocence, decrying the lack of formal procedure and accusation, and the need for an ecumenical council to determine whether or not canons of the Council of Nicaea had been violated and whether the canons under which John had been found guilty were in fact Nicene. It acknowledges that Innocent had received the information from the Constantinopolitan clergy through German and Cassian.<sup>6</sup> We have two letters of Innocent I to Alexander, bishop of Antioch from about 413 onwards, in which Cassian is mentioned as being instrumental in negotiating the reconciliation between the churches of Rome and Antioch, where the relationship, still strained as a result of the Melitian schism in Antioch, had been severed because of the exile of John Chrysostom.<sup>7</sup>

The problem for scholars has been constructing a single account into which all this evidence is inserted and which maintains a consistency of character for Cassian and a logical chronology amidst all the competing networks of relationships surrounding the exile of John Chrysostom. This paper argues that a single narrative cannot be derived from the evidence and that the only realistic solution is to propose two Cassians: one who came from Constantinople to Rome and who ended up in Gaul (deriving from Gennadius, Palladius, and

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*incarn.* to have been written by the same person who wrote the rest of Cassian's works and on 53 doubts if this work could have been written by John Cassian of Marseille.

- 5 Palladius, *Dial.* 3,83-96 (SC 341,76-78): Μετὰ τὸν Παλλάδιον Γερμανὸς πρεσβύτερος ἄμα Κασσιανῶ διακόνῳ τῶν Ἰωάννου, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς, ἐπιδόντες γράμματα παντὸς τοῦ κλήρου Ἰωάννου ὅπου γράφουσι βίαν καὶ τυραννίδα ὑπομεμενηκένα αὐτῶν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. . . . One must disagree with Seiler, "Gennadius of Marseille," 311, that John Chrysostom sent Cassian and German to Rome.
- 6 Innocent I, *Ep.* 7,1 (PL 20,501 = P. Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Clement I usque ad Innocentium III* 1 [Paris, 1721], col. 795) = JK 294 = Sozomen, *H.E.* 8,26,7-19 (GCS n.F. 4,385-387) = Nicephorus Callistus 13,32 (PG 146,1031) = [John Chrysostom], *Ep. ad Innoc.* 4 (PG 52,537-538): . . . ἄτινα διὰ Γερμανοῦ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ Κασσιανοῦ τοῦ διακόνου ἀπεστάλαχτε . . .
- 7 Innocent I, *Ep.* 19 (PL 20,540-542 = Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, cols 843-846) = JK 305; and 20 (PL 20,846-848 = Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, cols 846-848) = JK 306.

the letter of Innocent I in Sozomen) and another (deriving from the two other letters of Innocent I) who was a presbyter of Antioch.<sup>8</sup> In other words, I am going to demonstrate that John Cassian never went to Syria (or at least that we have no evidence that he did) and that Innocent I referred to two different Cassians. In order to reach this conclusion I shall begin by rehearsing the competing narratives for a chronology of John Cassian in these years as presented in modern scholarship in order to show the nature of the problem, as these scholars have pointed to the weaknesses in the presentations of their predecessors. From there I shall consider the evidence of the Cassian in Antioch not from the perspective of scholars focusing on John Cassian but from that of one interested in Innocent I. This fresh angle will make apparent my contention that the Cassian of Innocent's *Epistulae* 19 and 20 must have been a local Antiochene presbyter.

#### Disagreement among Modern Scholars about Cassian between 404 and 416

Among the first to offer the synoptic version of John Cassian out of all the evidence mentioned above was the seventeenth-century Jansenist historian Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*.<sup>9</sup> This was followed by Pierre Coustant in his 1721 edition of early papal letters.<sup>10</sup> More recently Henri-Irénée Marrou and Élie Griffé reasserted this argument, that after delivering the letter from Constantinople to Rome and returning to Constantinople with the reply late in 404, Cassian subsequently ended up in Antioch after Alexander was elected bishop in 413, where he was ordained presbyter and then sent to Rome to negotiate the re-establishment of communion between the two churches.<sup>11</sup> A few

8 Both these Cassians are to be distinguished from Cassian the Sabaite, a sixth-century monk. Tzamalikos, *The Real Cassian Revisited*, 50-51, alleges in his revolutionary work that the biography of Cassian in Gennadius is really about the Sabaite not about John Cassian, and that it is a later interpolation in the work of Gennadius. He seems unaware of any Cassian in Antioch. He doubts that the individual in Marseille wrote the works commonly accepts as his, and that they nearly all were written in Greek in the sixth century.

9 L.-S. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, vol. 10 (Paris, 1705) 653 and vol. 14 (Paris, 1709) 174.

10 Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, col. 845.

11 Marrou, "Jean Cassien à Marseille," 18-19; É. Griffé, "Cassien a-t-il été prêtre d'Antioche?," *Bulletin de la littérature ecclésiastique* 55 (1954) 240-244, at 241, and É. Griffé, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*, vol. 3: *La cité chrétienne* (Paris, 1965) 342.

years later he ended up in Marseille. While Marrou thought that Cassian spent the intervening years back in Bethlehem, Griffe left the years unaccounted for but has Cassian ordained a presbyter in Antioch, for the letter bearer from Alexander to Rome who was named Cassian was certainly a presbyter. Thus the evidence in Gennadius about the place of Cassian's presbyteral ordination is dismissed.

Rather than have Cassian return East some scholars have suggested that John Cassian remained in Rome, where he was ordained presbyter. This would explain a connection between him and Leo, the future bishop of Rome (440-461), as mentioned in Gennadius, but also ignore Gennadius' evidence that he was ordained presbyter in Marseille. This is the position taken by Edgar Gibson, the translator of Cassian in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series, although with suitable caveats.<sup>12</sup> In the article by M. Cappuyns, Cassian became a Roman presbyter whom Innocent consulted and used as an expert on eastern affairs in his negotiations with Alexander of Antioch, although he had never visited there. He has him staying in Rome at least a decade so that he could befriend the young Leo.<sup>13</sup> Owen Chadwick also believed that Cassian stayed on in Rome after delivering the letter from Constantinople.<sup>14</sup> Karl Suso Frank also had Cassian stay on in Rome for only about six years, consequently downplaying the connection with Leo.<sup>15</sup> However, he is more sceptical about Cassian's involvement while in Rome with negotiations involving Antioch.<sup>16</sup> In a recent article Seiler suggests that Cassian remained in Rome for up to a decade before moving to Marseille where he was ordained presbyter. Reference to Innocent's letters to Alexander of Antioch is not discussed at all.<sup>17</sup> She has pointed to the fact that Gennadius was very much influenced by the thoughts of Cassian and might have been a monk in the monastery in Marseille founded by Cassian.<sup>18</sup> It was possible for Cassian to remain in Rome, so the argument in these modern authors runs, because the letter from Innocent preserved in Sozomen, while acknowledging that he had received information from the Constantinopolitan clergy via German and Cassian is not specific in reporting who bore Innocent's

12 Edgar C.S. Gibson, "The Works of John Cassian: Translated with Prolegomena, Prefaces, and Notes," in P. Schaff and H. Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 11: *Sulpitius Severus, Vincent of Lerins, John Cassian* (Buffalo, 1894) 188.

13 M. Cappuyns, "Cassien," in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, vol. 11 (Turnhout, 1949) 1319-1348, at 1326.

14 O. Chadwick, *John Cassian* (Cambridge, 21968) 32.

15 Frank, "John Cassian on John Cassian," 419-420.

16 Frank, "John Cassian on John Cassian," 420-421.

17 Seiler, "Gennadius of Marseille," 311.

18 Seiler, "Gennadius of Marseille," 310.

reply. This would mean that it was possible for them to have remained in Rome (fearful of a return to Constantinople) and for Innocent presumably to have sent one of his own clergy to Constantinople carrying his response.

This is not the way Philip Rousseau reads the evidence. He accepts Palladius, that Cassian and German went from Constantinople to Rome with the letter from the local clergy. However, he is not of the opinion that Cassian remained in Rome but has him and German carry to reply back to Constantinople. However, given the anti-Chrysostom feeling sweeping the eastern capital, he argues that it is unlikely that they would have remained in Constantinople. He also thinks Marrou's suggestion that Cassian returned to Bethlehem unlikely given the negative impression he had of the place after his first visit there and lack of reference to him in Jerome. Rousseau thinks Antioch is the likely place given some reference to the location in his later *De incarnatione*. He was then sent to Rome again as detailed in the other letters of Innocent I as someone experienced in dealing with the West.<sup>19</sup> Following Griffé, Rousseau suggests that Gennadius did not in fact say that Cassian was ordained presbyter in Marseille but rather came as presbyter to Marseille and founded two monasteries (*apud Massiliam presbyter condidit duo monasteria*).<sup>20</sup> In line with Marrou, Rousseau thinks he travelled with Lazarus, the deposed bishop of Aix-en-Provence, to Gaul.<sup>21</sup> Steven Driver is inclined to this view and thinks that the idea that Cassian was in the East between 404 and 416 is intriguing.<sup>22</sup>

In Columba Stewart's reconstruction the possibility that Cassian returned to Constantinople is mentioned,<sup>23</sup> although he is more inclined to the view that

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19 Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 173-174.

20 Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 174, n. 30.

21 Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 174; and Marrou, "Jean Cassien à Marseille," 22. On the deposition of Lazarus see G.D. Dunn, "Zosimus and the Gallic Churches," in W. Mayer and B. Neil (eds), *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 121 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 169-185, at 175-176.

22 S.D. Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture*, *Studies in Medieval History and Culture* 8 (New York and London, 2002) 17-19, thinks it reasonable to suppose that John Cassian returned to Constantinople, but he is less convinced about the need to identify John Cassian with the Antiochene Cassian, although he does see merits in the argument. He is quick to point out that we simply do not know definitively.

23 Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 14-15, considers it possible that Cassian and German returned to Constantinople with the embassy from Honorius to Arcadius, although I would think that the reply to the clergy of Constantinople was sent from Rome about spring 405 (R. Delmaire, "Les 'lettres d'exil' de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 25 [1991] 71-180, at 85-86, thinks about summer 405), while that embassy left Rome up to a year later (Delmaire, "Les 'lettres d'exil';"

he remained in Rome. The Cassian mentioned in connection with Innocent's letters to Alexander is referred to by Stewart and identified as the same individual, although he admits the link is uncertain, but rather than follow Griffe's notion that Cassian went to Antioch, Stewart has him remain in Rome, for as a supporter of Chrysostom Cassian would not have been welcomed in Antioch before 413.<sup>24</sup> In this scenario Cassian was consulted in Rome by Innocent as an expert on eastern affairs. Stewart is following Cappuyns in this. As well, Stewart concludes that we hear nothing more about German from early 405 after his trip to Rome.

Cristian Gaspar also rejects the view of Griffe, Rousseau, and Driver that Cassian went to Syria by arguing that there is no evidence that John Cassian was ever in Syria since his writings reflect Egyptian monasticism, which rejected the Syrian model of ascetical living.<sup>25</sup>

One hundred years ago Eduard Schwartz suggested that the Cassian in Innocent's two letters to Alexander was a presbyter of Antioch and that he was a different person than John Cassian.<sup>26</sup> This is the position adopted in this paper, which shall be argued below on the basis of a closer examination of the letters of Innocent to Alexander.

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89; and; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, "The Fall of John Chrysostom," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 29 [1985] 1-31, at 30). There is no evidence in Palladius, contrary to Stewart, that the embassy was carrying letters to the exiled John Chrysostom. The letters of Innocent that the embassy was carrying were the ones he had written at the end of the western synod, calling for a joint East-West synod to be held, which included a letter to Anysius of Thessaloniki (Palladius, *Dial.* 4,1-20 [SC 341,84-86]). Stewart is wrong on 150, n. 116, when he says that Rousseau, Marrou, and Griffe say that German and Cassian returned to Constantinople with this embassy; these authors say that they returned on their own with *Ep.* 7 from Innocent. The idea that Cassian was ordained presbyter in Rome is supported by B. Ramsay, "Cassian, John," in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1999) 134, without mention of the Cassian in Innocent's letter.

24 R.J. Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2007) 3, thinks it possible that Cassian went to Antioch, citing Stewart as his source, despite the fact that Stewart does not locate John Cassian ever being in Antioch, instead having him remain in Rome where Innocent consulted him.

25 C. Gaspar, "Cassian's Syrian Monastic Contemporaries," in C. Badilita and A. Jakab (eds), *Jean Cassien entre l'Orient et l'Occident: actes du colloque international: Bucharest, 27-28 septembre 2001* (Paris, 2003) 15-32.

26 E. Schwartz, "Cassian und Nestorius," in *Konzilstudien. 1. Cassian und Nestorius. 2. Über echte und unechte Schriften des Bischofs Proklos von Konstantinopel*, Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Strassburg, Bd 20 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1914), 1-17, at 2, n. 1.

As we can see from these accounts, there are several divergent opinions about what Cassian was doing between when he arrived in Rome late in 404 and when he appeared in Marseille at about the end of 416. The problem to solve is what John Cassian (and German for that matter) did after they visited Rome on the exiled John Chrysostom's behalf. An examination of the networks of friendships will reveal, it will be argued, that Stewart is right that it is hardly likely that Cassian would have spent any time in Antioch during these years. However, a better reading of Innocent's letters to Alexander of Antioch will reveal, contrary to Stewart, that the Cassian mentioned in them was not someone living in Rome but had been sent from Antioch. If both these points are accepted as true then we must conclude that the Cassian mentioned in Innocent's letters to Alexander was not the same person as the deacon who visited Rome in 404.

### Cassian in the Network of Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom

We may deal with one objection to my position quickly at the start of this section. Although he himself refers to having been in Syria in his writings a couple of times, which would seem to discredit my argument that he was never in Syria, Cassian's references are in fact not to Syria but to Bethlehem.<sup>27</sup> On this basis, we have no evidence from Cassian himself that he ever was in Syria.

Part of the reason Cassian had left Egypt about 400 was because of the hostility of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, to the Origenist monks (the "Tall" monks).<sup>28</sup> As Stewart points out, Cassian depended heavily on Origen, though political reasons necessitated keeping this hidden in his writings.<sup>29</sup> It is little wonder John Cassian was a supporter of John Chrysostom given they were both on the receiving end of hostility from Theophilus, in part because of Chrysostom's support for the Origenist monks.<sup>30</sup> In 403 we know that German

27 Cassian, *Coll.* 11,1 (CSEL 13,314); and 19,1,3 (CSEL 13,535).

28 Socrates, *H.E.* 6,7,11-31 (GCS n.F. 1,323-324); Sozomen, *H.E.* 8,11-12 (GCS n.F. 4,363-366); Palladius, *Dial.* 6,118-139 (SC 341,138-140).

29 Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 36.

30 Palladius, *Dial.* 2,22-33 (SC 342,70) (= John Chrysostom, *Ep. ad Innoc.* 1 [PG 52,530] = [Innocent I], *Ep.* 4); 4,80-83 (341,94); 6,30-33 (SC 341,128); 7,61-136 (SC 341,148-154); 8,36-39 (SC 341,158-160); Socrates, *H.E.* 6,5,10-11 (GCS n.F. 1,317); 6,9 (GCS n.F. 1,326-327); Sozomen, *H.E.* 8,2,16 (GCS n.F. 4,352); 8,13 (GCS n.F. 4,366-367). On the hostility from various factions, which led to John Chrysostom's exile, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, "Enemies and Friends of John Chrysostom," in A. Moffatt (ed.), *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Byzantina Australiensia 5 (Canberra, 1984) 85-111; Liebeschuetz, "The



was part of the group who took a reply to Theophilus when the bishop of Constantinople was summoned to appear before the bishop of Alexandria at the Synod of the Oak.<sup>31</sup> The next year, there is no doubting that the Cassian and German of Palladius were the same individuals as the Cassian and German of Innocent's letter preserved in Sozomen. The recent challenge of Panayiotis Tzamalikos to the identity of John Cassian of Marseille and his relationship with the sixth-century Cassian the Sabaite can be bracketed to some extent for our purposes. If there is any correlation between the fifth-century Cassian utilized by the interpolator of the story into Gennadius (accepting Tzamalikos) and Palladius' Cassian and the Cassian of Innocent's letter in Sozomen, the question here is about whether this is the same Cassian who becomes involved in the dialogue between Rome and Antioch as revealed in Innocent's later letters, to which we turn below.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of John's second exile, and the role played by Porphyry of Antioch, who in 404 succeeded Flavian as bishop (instead of Constantius, John's preferred candidate)<sup>33</sup> at the instigation of Acacius of Beroea, a leading opponent of John, and was installed with undue haste,<sup>34</sup> communion between Rome and Antioch was broken off for the second time in living memory.<sup>35</sup> It was also broken off with Alexandria and Constantinople, due in no small measure to the treatment received by a delegation of western clergy sent by Emperor

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Fall of John Chrysostom," 1-31; W. Mayer, "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress: The Destruction of Eudoxia's Reputation," in H.A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot, 2006) 205-213; and J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and Empire* (Oxford, 2011) 231-247.

31 Palladius, *Dial.* 8,166 (SC 341,172).

32 Tzamalikos, *The Real Cassian*, 142, seems to suggest that both his Cassians, the fifth-century Scythian and the sixth-century monk at Mar-Saba (ancient Laura at St Sabas) had a friend called German. He never makes this point clearly, but it would explain some of the ease for the conflation of the two individuals as one.

33 John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 221 (PG 52,732-733).

34 Palladius, *Dial.* 16,90-109 (SC 341,310-312).

35 Palladius, *Dial.* 16,16-18 (SC 341,302). On the first break between Rome and Antioch, because of the Melitian schism, see K. McCarthy Spoerl, "The Schism at Antioch since Cavallera," in M.R. Barnes and D.H. Williams (eds), *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflict* (Edinburgh, 1993) 101-26; and R. Ward, "The Schism at Antioch," (PhD diss., King's College, London, 2003). On the second schism and its relationship with the first see G.D. Dunn, "The Roman Response to the Ecclesiastical Crises in the Antiochene Church in the Late-Fourth and Early-Fifth Centuries," in D.C. Sim and P. Allen (eds), *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature: Thematic Studies from the Centre for Early Christian Studies*, Library of New Testament Studies 445 (London, 2012) 112-28.

Honorius in 406 to Constantinople to urge his imperial brother Arcadius to agree to call a universal synod of western and eastern bishops to discuss John Chrysostom.<sup>36</sup> Innocent was a staunch defender of John Chrysostom as the legitimate bishop of Constantinople.<sup>37</sup>

It was not until about early 414 that the relationship between Rome and Antioch was restored through the efforts of Alexander,<sup>38</sup> Porphyry's successor, through his envoy Cassian, to whose overtures Innocent responded by sending *Epistulae* 19 and 20 to Alexander and *Epistula* 21 to Acacius of Beroea (although Cassian is not mentioned in the last of these letters).<sup>39</sup> On this basis one must agree with Stewart that Antioch would hardly have been a suitable place for a clerical supporter of John Chrysostom to move for the decade between 404 and 414 given the hostility of Porphyry, who certainly would not have ordained him a presbyter there. Given the personal history there must have been also between that Cassian who had gone to Rome and Acacius, it is hardly likely that Cassian would have been the best person to negotiate with Alexander if that involved negotiating with Acacius as well. One cannot see the Cassian in Antioch as the same person as the Cassian who had been in Constantinople and had gone to Rome.

If we accept Gennadius, John Cassian came to Marseille as a presbyter.<sup>40</sup> It is possible, and makes best sense of the scant evidence we have, that after delivering his financial report to Rome Cassian and German returned only briefly to Constantinople, with John Cassian moving to Marseille not long after, which is probably where he was ordained presbyter. I do not consider it likely that he remained long in the East after 404, either in Constantinople, Antioch, Bethlehem or anywhere else. This would mean that he travelled to Gaul as early as 405 and therefore independently of Lazarus.

36 Palladius, *Dial.* 4,1-68 (SC 341,84-92); 20,433-439 (SC 341,430-432); Sozomen, *H.E.* 8,28,1-2 (GCS n.F. 4,388-389); and Theodoret, *H.E.* 5,34,11 (GCS n.F. 5,336-337).

37 See G.D. Dunn, "Roman Primacy in the Correspondence Between Innocent I and John Chrysostom," in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo*, XXXIII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 6-8 maggio 2004, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 93/2 (Rome, 2005) 687-698; and idem, "The Date of Innocent I's *Epistula* 12 and the Second Exile of John Chrysostom," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005) 155-170.

38 Theodoret, *H.E.* 5,35,3-4 (GCS n.F. 5,337) asserts that it was Alexander who took steps to heal both schisms.

39 Innocent I, *Ep.* 21 (PL 20,543-544 = Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, col. 847) = JK 307.

40 Gennadius, *De uir. illus.* 62 (TU 14,82). Tzamalikos, *The Real Cassian*, 55-58, is highly critical of the notion that any Cassian ever was in Marseille.

### Who is the Cassian in Innocent's Letters to Alexander?

So who then is the Cassian mentioned in Innocent's letters to Alexander? Innocent writes, with regard to those clerical supporters of Paulinus of Antioch who left there because of the Melitian schism and had relocated in Italy, that:

... because our fellow presbyter Cassian said that it would be agreeable to Your Dignity, if on my advice they were reckoned to lead the order of clerical office in your city, I have concluded on account of your goodwill and aforementioned promises that they be included among the other priests and ministers who are in the city, most cherished brother.<sup>41</sup>

Could he have been a Roman presbyter sent by Innocent to negotiate with Antioch or even the Cassian from Constantinople who had settled in Rome who was consulted as an eastern expert? I think not. Here I wish to deal with the possibility raised by Stewart that this Cassian was consulted in Rome about Alexander's offer, since it is asserted that "nothing conclusively identifies him [Cassian] as a priest of Antioch itself."<sup>42</sup> Stewart's implication is that this is one and the same Cassian. While he is right that Innocent's evidence is not explicit, it is argued here that it is nonetheless conclusive and against the two options just raised. My response comes from asking the question in a more explicit fashion about who took the initiative in the reconciliation between Rome and Antioch. Those who have considered the question of the identification of this Cassian have been scholars interested principally in John Cassian. What has been lacking is a consideration of the evidence from the perspective of Innocent I, the author of the letters, and a lack of close attention to the events surrounding the reconciliation between Rome and Antioch. Such a perspective is offered here. From it, the conclusion is reached that the Cassian mentioned in these two letters of Innocent was indeed a local Antiochene presbyter.

Since Theodoret informs us that it was Alexander's initiative to heal the divisions within the Antiochene church, it would be natural to assume that it was he who made the first move to restore the relationship with Rome. This is the impression one has when reading Innocent's letter, when he wrote about

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41 Innocent I, *Ep.* 19.1 (PL 20.541): ... *quia noster compresbyter Cassianus gratum dixit tuae fore dignationi, si meo consilio in ciuitate uestra clericatus ordinem ducere censerentur; statui propter beneuolentiam tuam, promissaque memorati, ut inter caeteros sacerdotes ministrosque qui in ciuitate sunt, annumerentur, frater charissime.*

42 Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 15.

“the resultant outcome itself from your efforts.”<sup>43</sup> Innocent has examined what Alexander had sent him, which adds to the sense that it was the bishop of Antioch who took the initiative.

If we accept that, then it suggests quite strongly that this Cassian was a presbyter of Antioch and that he had come from Antioch bearing Alexander’s letter. The other possibility, as a modification of Stewart, would be that Cassian was a Roman presbyter (the John Cassian) sent to Antioch to wait for Alexander to make the first move. I think this highly unlikely, especially since there was no real evidence that Alexander was inclined to do anything before he actually did it. That this Cassian was able to negotiate with Innocent about what would be acceptable to Antioch with regard to the status of the refugee clerics in Italy,<sup>44</sup> reinforces the impression that Cassian is Antiochene, and moreover, that he is no mere letter-bearer, but one entrusted with discretion to engage in some further negotiation. This is hardly something Alexander would have entrusted to Cassian if the latter were Roman, and hardly something that John Cassian, if he had stayed in Rome since 404, off the scene for a decade, would have been able to do on Alexander’s behalf, since he would hardly have known Alexander and would hardly count as an expert on Antiochene affairs if he had never been there. If the one who brought a letter was usually the one to take back any response, then it all but rules out this Cassian being a presbyter of Rome.<sup>45</sup> Even though Innocent’s more personal letter to Alexander, *Epistula* 20, indicates that returning to Antioch, at Cassian’s request, would be Paul, Nicholas, and Peter, a presbyter, deacon, and subdeacon, this does not exclude Cassian returning with them to Antioch (which is the likely inference to be drawn from the letter), particularly if we understand these three to be clergy of

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43 Innocent I, *Ep.* 19,1 (PL 20,540-541): *Successumque ipsum ideo praestitum tuis laboribus . . .*

44 Innocent I, *Ep.* 19,1 (PL 20,541). Who were those . . . *qui in Italia merita clericatus acceperunt . . .*? We know they were members of the community in Antioch who supported Paulinus and then Evagrius as legitimate bishops in Antioch (in opposition to those who supported Melitius and then Flavian) and had gone into exile in Italy. The question is whether they were clergy at the time of their exile or had been ordained in exile. The first is the more likely interpretation from the Latin.

45 See C. Sotinel, “How Were Bishops Informed? Information Transmission across the Adriatic Sea in Late Antiquity,” in L. Ellis and F.L. Kidner (eds), *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot, 2004) 63-71; and A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, series 4, number 55 (Cambridge, 2003).

Rome.<sup>46</sup> While Cassian could return to Antioch and inform his bishop of the success of his negotiations, it would be the Roman delegation that would present Rome's formal acceptance of Alexander's offer to the Antiochene bishop in person (and confirm that Alexander would indeed accept what Cassian had accepted on his behalf). One may suppose that if Alexander used this Antiochene presbyter Cassian as his envoy, that the latter was a presbyter in the Melitian faction of the church of Antioch, ordained possibly by Porphyry, or more likely by Flavian, or even by Melitius himself, depending upon how senior Cassian was. Given the importance of the occasion (the restoration of communion between two of the major churches of the Christian world), one would expect Alexander's envoy to have been a senior and experienced cleric in Antioch.

One other point merits comment. Stewart says that we know nothing of what happened to John Cassian's companion German after they went to Rome.<sup>47</sup> However, we know that Innocent sent a letter to Aurelius of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo Regius. It was delivered by German, a presbyter who was making a return (*recursus*) to Africa.<sup>48</sup> We may speculate that both John Cassian and German carried Innocent's *Epistula* 7 back to Constantinople, but that neither of them stayed there long. On the basis of Innocent's comments it would appear that German was based in Africa. While it is speculative to identify the German of Palladius and Innocent's letter in Sozomen with the German in Innocent's letter to Africa, there is nothing to prevent such an identification, as I have argued there is with identifying the Cassian of Palladius and Innocent in Sozomen with the Cassian in Innocent's letters to Alexander. Unlike Syria, Africa would have been a safe haven for supporters of John Chrysostom. Coustant thinks that German could have been sent to Africa by Innocent in 405 or after to inform the Africans of the situation in Constantinople.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps, more probably in my opinion, German made his way from Constantinople to Africa independently while John Cassian headed to Gaul. Why the two would have separated remains an unanswered question. We know from a canon of the Carthaginian synod of 13 June, 407, that the

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46 Innocent I, *Ep.* 20 (PL 20,543): *Voluit enim compresbyter noster Cassianus, hanc amicitiarum nostrarum paginulam per compresbyterum nostrum Paulum, Nicolaum diaconum, et Petrum subdiaconum filios nostros, quasi primitias pacis nostrae conscribi.*

47 Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 15.

48 Innocent I, *Ep.* 10 (PL 20,511-513 = Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, cols 807-808) = JK 297.

49 Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, col. 796.

Africans were aware of the deterioration in the relationship between Rome and Alexandria and resolved to write to Rome to encourage reconciliation.<sup>50</sup> It is possible that German, who had personal knowledge of this matter, by now based in Africa, was chosen to bear such a letter to Rome, and that *Epistula* 10 was a personal note from Innocent to Aurelius and Augustine in response to that letter. There is no reason to believe that this presbyter German is the same person as the bishop German, one of the addressees of the African synodal letter in 416 from Carthage to Rome, although it is not beyond the realms of possibility.<sup>51</sup> German is listed towards the end of the group, indicating that he would have been a relatively new bishop.

### Conclusion

Thus, I would disagree with Tillemont, Coustant, Marrou, Griffé, Rousseau, and Driver that Cassian went to Antioch and was Alexander's envoy to Rome (because that Cassian is most unlikely ever to have gone to Antioch after John Chrysostom's final exile and Porphyry's election in Antioch, and the continuing presence of Acacius in Beroea). Further, I also reject Stewart's inclination to see John Cassian as having become a Roman presbyter whom Innocent consulted about Alexander. I also reject any possibility that this Cassian (or any Cassian for that matter) was Innocent's envoy to Alexander when the latter became bishop in Antioch. A proper reading of the brief evidence in Innocent's letters to Alexander in a broader context indicates that that Cassian had come to Rome from Antioch. The only conclusion that seems reasonable to draw from the evidence is that there were two Cassians: one, the Cassian who was a deacon of Constantinople (and visited Rome as indicated in Palladius and Innocent's letter in Sozomen) and then became a presbyter of Marseille (perhaps heading to Gaul as early as the beginning of 405),<sup>52</sup> with his friend German moving to Africa, and the other, an otherwise unknown presbyter of Antioch who took a letter to Rome and Innocent's replies (*Epistulae* 19 and 20) to Antioch, which healed that new schism between those two churches.<sup>53</sup>

50 *Reg. eccl. Carthag. excerpta* 101 (CCL 149,217).

51 Augustine, *Ep.* 175.pref. (NBA 22,842) = [Innocent I], *Ep.* 26 (PL 20,564 = Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, col. 867).

52 His familiarity with Leo (Cassian, *De incarn.* 1.pref. [CSEL 17.235]) naturally came later than 404-414, but does not have to be part of a single extended stay in Rome.

53 Driver, *John Cassian*, p. 114, also doubts they were one and the same, but does not investigate it.

Thus, the old argument of Schwartz is adopted here, because we have concentrated on looking at the question of Cassian's identity from Innocent's perspective. Of course, Tzamalikos' recent work has made this even more complicated because of his argument that what Gennadius tells us of Cassian is in fact about a Palestinian monk of the sixth-century who was responsible for most of the writing traditionally attributed to John Cassian. Leaving that aside, it is Innocent I whose evidence, read in the context of the network of episcopal friendships and rivalries of the early fifth century, reveals that we have no evidence that John Cassian was ever in Antioch in Syria.