

# An Ancient Commentary on the Book of Revelation

This is a new critical edition, with translation and commentary, of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, which were falsely attributed to Origen a century ago. These comments include extensive sections from Didymus the Blind’s lost Commentary on the Apocalypse from the fourth century, and therefore counter the prevailing belief that Oecumenius’ sixth-century commentary was the most ancient. Professor Tzamalikos argues that their author was in fact Cassian the Sabaite, an erudite monk and abbot at the monastery of Sabas, the Great Laura, in Palestine, who was different from the Latin author John Cassian, who allegedly lived a century or so before the real Cassian. The *Scholia* attest to the tension between the imperial Christian orthodoxy of the sixth century and certain monastic circles, which drew freely on Hellenic ideas, as well as those of alleged ‘heretics’. They show that Hellenism was a vigorous force during this period and inspired not only pagan intellectuals, but also influential Christian quarters.

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P. Tzamalikos  
Frontmatter  
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# An Ancient Commentary on the Book of Revelation

A critical edition of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*

P. TZAMALIKOS



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*For my beloved daughters  
Maritsa and Leto*

Σαφήνεια δὲ ἀναντίρρητος περὶ τούτων γέγονεν ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν τῆς  
Ἀποκαλύψεως τοῦ Ἰωάννου καὶ τῆς πρὸς Ῥωμαίους Παύλου ἐπιστολῆς.

Indisputable clarity concerning these issues was established in the  
Commentaries on the Revelation of John and Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

Didymus, *Commentarii in Zachariam*, 3.73.

*The weight of this sad time we must obey,  
speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.*

William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

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PREFACE

When I set out to do this research, I never imagined that in order for this book to be published, two books had to be written to support its results. These books were published a short while before the present volume. They are, as it were, its siblings and the two pedestals that make it possible to establish definitively the authorship of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, which Adolf Harnack attributed hastily, and erroneously, to Origen a century ago. Codex 573, of the Meteora monastery of Metamorphosis (the Great Meteoron) was discovered in 1908, and it is the sole manuscript that preserves these Scholia. Harnack received them from a Greek theologian in July 1911, and it took him only a couple of months to determine that their author was Origen. It was a time when German authorities of the day pronounced their oracles, and everyone had to comply unquestioningly (as happens today, when they teach the rest of Europe lessons of economic decorum and of the proper organization of life). But Harnack’s research was quite inadequate: it ignored philosophical sources altogether, and sought to detect ‘similar words’ in Origen in order to establish that this was a work of the Alexandrian, while considering too small a number of early Christian theologians. For all the presumed weight of his authority, however, never did this attribution enjoy unanimous acceptance by scholars. As a result, this document, which is pregnant with information about early Christianity as well as about the exigencies of sixth-century life, remained an ‘orphan’, of which scholarship made nothing.

As early as 1986, and then in 1991, in *The Concept of Time in Origen*, I wrote: ‘As regards other works of Origen, we have reservations about the authenticity of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*. Not so much because there is not any testimony that he ever wrote any comment on the Apocalypse; but because to anyone who is familiar with his thousands of pages in Greek, this text seems unlike him and alien to his style. We have no reason to make this point one of dispute whatever. For, as far as our topic is concerned, of what is stated in that work there is nothing to appeal to, or to dispute.’

Although the Scholia contain detectable quotations from authors supposedly as different from each other as

Clement of Alexandria and Theodoret, it was clear that there was a third party that put them all in order, while he added to this collection his own independent comments. In order to find out who this person was, I had to take the Meteora Codex in my hands and see that this is not simply a manuscript classified under a certain number. This is ‘The Book of Cassian’, which also contains other works of his, alongside texts that were of interest to him, and they were as different from each other as a text by Cyril of Alexandria and a set of mathematical rules about how to determine a leap-year. It is a personal companion of Cassian. But Cassian who?

The reply to this question resulted in the two volumes that have now been published. First, the edition volume, *A Newly Discovered Greek Father, Cassian the Sabaite Eclipsed by John Cassian of Marseilles*. Second, the monograph, *The Real Cassian Revisited, Monastic Life, Greek Paideia, and Origenism in the Sixth Century*.

By the time I was granted access to the codex in 2008, and following my research since 2006, I had reached the conclusion that the *Scholia in Apocalypsin* were a compilation by an Antiochene, who probably was Theodoret of Cyrrhus heavily quoting from the lost Commentary on the Apocalypse by Didymus the Blind, as well as from his own work on the Book of Paralipomenon (= Chronicles), plus a portion from Clement of Alexandria, while constantly having in mind Origen’s works. It turned out that the author was Cassian, yet not the one known from Latin literature, namely John Cassian, but *another* Cassian: a Sabaite monk, who was the spiritual offspring of the great Antiochene doctors (Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus) and of St Sabas himself. An intellectual of Antiochene extraction, who was born in Scythopolis c. 470 and died an abbot of the renowned Laura of Sabas on 20 July AD 548. Cassian was a Sabaite monk and an intellectual of profound erudition. He was the fifth abbot of the Laura of Sabas, indeed a spiritual child educated by Sabas himself. He spent some years of his life living at the monastery of the Akoimetoι, in Constantinople, and took part as a representative of the Laura of Sabas in the Local Synod of Constantinople in 536.

The text of Cassian is a genuine part of an uninterrupted chain of Greek writings with technical terms and striking parallels to earlier Greek authors, in both language and concepts. The distinctive characteristic of Cassian's Greek terminology is unfailingly present, advising posterity about the real author of his texts. This manuscript as a whole was copied from a 9th-century precise copy of a 6th-century codex belonging to Cassian himself, and my comparative studies have shown that the transcription took place at the scriptorium of the Laura of Sabas. The Codex was copied by a monk called Theodosius (as well as one or two other anonymous monks), and the critical apparatus to the Scholia shows that the accompanying text of Revelation which Cassian used was one of Antiochene/Syrian provenance.

When Cassian the Sabaite wrote the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, his main source was Didymus' commentary on the same scriptural book. It then hardly comes as a surprise that these *Scholia* are anonymous. For neither does this work have any title, nor is its author indicated in the header. There is only a series of passages of the Apocalypse, with each of them followed by a comment. The dominating figure underlying them is Didymus, a *persona non grata* during the 540s, a fact which could immediately put Cassian at risk. In addition, however, the Scholia are the fruit of an amazingly rich library which was studied by Cassian. He availed himself of not only orthodox theologians and the acceptable Philo, but also an impressive abundance of pagan writers, including sixth-century ones such as Simplicius, Damascius, and John Philoponus. This was precisely the 'universal' spirit of the monastic community of the Akoimatoi in the sixth century. Following his Origenistic sympathies, Cassian made extensive use of the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Didymus, in order to make up his mind as to whether the Apocalypse should be regarded as a canonical book. That Didymus was condemned in 553 clearly shows that his theological views were current among certain monastic circles, such as the Origenists in Palestine and the monastery of Akoimatoi in the capital. How could Cassian possibly have divulged this source of his amidst an environment where controversy was raging over Origen, Didymus, and Evagrius?

On account of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, when we now speak of 'the most ancient commentary on the Apocalypse', we must go back two more centuries,

compared to what has been thought heretofore. For it is currently believed that Oecumenius' Commentary on the Apocalypse, written during the 540s, is 'the most ancient commentary on the Apocalypse' extant. Cassian, however, has preserved for us a very large part of Didymus' own Commentary on the Apocalypse, which was written two centuries before Oecumenius set out to write his own Commentary, indeed almost simultaneously with Cassian writing his own compilation of the Scholia.

The Scholia testify to Christian influence upon Neoplatonism. Either Simplicius or Damascius, or both, were converted to Christianity by the end of their lives and were in contact with the Akoimetan community, who cherished the Antiochene spirit. It is possible that Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite might have been either Simplicius or Damascius himself. In contrast to the Alexandrian tendency to Platonism, Cassian built on Aristotelism. Many of Origen's catena-fragments are probably the fruit of the Sabaite and Akoimetan monks' reception of Origen's thought. Consequently, Antioch emerges as the true heir to Origen's intellectual and textual concerns.

The sixth century has yet many secrets to reveal. During that period, the tension, as well as interplay, between Hellenism and Christianity was at its height. It turns out that at that time Hellenism was not dead, not even moribund, despite Justinian's oppressive policies against Greek philosophers. Cassian's writings reveal the tension between the imperial Christian orthodoxy of the sixth century and certain monastic circles, which drew freely on the Hellenic lore, as well as on those whom the Catholic Church condemned as 'heretics'. For all the tension between the imperial policies and Greek *paideia*, Hellenism was a vigorous force during the sixth century, and it inspired not only pagan intellectuals, but also influential Christian quarters. Certain monastic communities, such as the (mainly Antiochene) Akoimatoi of Constantinople, were an oasis of open-mindedness, notwithstanding the oppressive policies of Justinian. Cassian the Sabaite emerges as a vigorous representative of this mindset and as an erudite Aristotelian, who drew freely on both the Hellenic and Christian lore, including doctrines that had been styled 'heresy' by imperial orthodoxy, such as Origenism, Monophysitism, and Nestorianism.

My heartfelt thanks are expressed to senior editor and fine scholar Michael Sharp. During a process that

had crucial scientific ramifications and unexpected shifts, he managed to be supportive and sympathetic, while at the same time being an impeccable professional. This handling of things seems to me a kind of art, which, although not always easy to grasp, is in fact, I suppose, as English as a cup of tea. I also thank the production team, especially the production manager Elizabeth Davey and assistant editor Elizabeth Spicer. I am also grateful to Andrew Dyck, my copy editor at Cambridge University Press, for his patient reading and suggestions, which improved the manuscript.

I am grateful to my wife Eleni for her tolerance of my interminable hours of work in my study, and her steadfast support and care of the family during my endless travels.

I dedicate this book to my beloved adolescent daughters, Maritsa and Leto. This is the least I can do, as an expression of gratitude to this endless source of support, affection, and inspiration, to my beloved girls who guide me through the mysteries of Being, of Life, of Love.

P. T.

EXORDIUM

The *Scholia in Apocalypsin* are the fruit of the turbulence of the sixth century, by an author that was educated in the Antiochene mindset and had some Nestorian tendencies along with Origenistic sympathies, whatever ‘Origenism’ may have meant in the sixth century. The aim is to sanction the Book of Revelation as an authoritative, that is canonical, one, by evincing its concurrence with the entire scriptural message.

Their author was Cassian, a monk and abbot at the monastery of Sabas, the Great Laura, in Palestine. My assertion is that he was a different person from the Latin author John Cassian, who allegedly lived a century or so before the real Cassian. The texts included in Codex 573 of the Monastery of Metamorphosis at the Meteora rock-complex are only a small part of all of this author’s production, which is lost in the vast corpus currently circulating under the designation ‘spuria’. Cassian the Sabaite’s writings were ascribed to ancient champions of orthodoxy, such as Athanasius, Chrysostom, Basil of Caesarea, and others. This is an author heretofore virtually non-existent, an author who had somehow to be resurrected and be granted by argument the credit he deserves. With reference to Christian authors, during and following the fifth century, the designation ‘Nestorian’ is tantamount to ‘Aristotelian’. For it was the Nestorians who cultivated studies on Aristotle at the School of Edessa and its successor, the School of Nisibis, thus creating an important channel for Aristotle to be transmitted to Persia, as well as to the Arab world.

The Scholia are comments by Cassian extensively culling from Didymus’ lost Commentary on the Apocalypse, and also include verbatim portions excerpted from Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus. All of them are coupled with analyses of his own, drawing on a variety of identifiable authors, but are couched in his own phraseology wherever necessary.

Cassian clearly wished to see Revelation disentangled from prolonged dissension and unanimously sanctioned as a canonical book. Yet he sought to secure canonicity not in order to appease the powerful guardians of orthodoxy of his day, or as acceptance of what might be thought to be sheer daemonology in

disguise. His method was to demonstrate that simple and trenchant ideas of the canonical books of scripture are also present in the apocalyptic text.

A considerable number of the founding fathers of Christianity had sanctioned the Book. There are explicit statements by some of them, while we can trace the views of others into testimonies by third parties. Cassian wrote during a time when post-Nicene Christianity had moulded and taught by argument the essentials of its beliefs about the Trinitarian God and the world. He did not actually canvass any subtler or more reflective theories produced by the debates of his own era, such as the inconclusive Christological controversy, which allowed little room for the dispassionate critical study that an already controversial book (Revelation) required. Rather, he opted to establish that the text is orthodox on rather old issues, such as Arianism, Gnosticism, Docetism, which nevertheless were not out of date: as late as during the fifth century, Theodoret of Cyrrhus had striven to convert to orthodoxy not only Macedonians, but also Marcionites and Arians; and during Justinian’s reign the Arianizing Goths were a real menace to the empire.

Although heavily drawing on Didymus (that is, an Alexandrian), Cassian’s first Scholion makes his own Antiochene identity plain, by entertaining the notion of not simply God, but of Christ himself being δεσπότης (‘Lord’). Although Rev. 1:1 actually refers to the ‘servants of God’, not to those ‘of Christ’, in Scholion I Cassian seized this opportunity to expound the notion of one being ‘a servant of Christ’. The term δεσπότης is accorded to God, but here ‘God’ clearly means Christ. No doubt it takes a leap by this commentator in order to embark on such a line of interpretation, yet this is an illuminating leap, since it reveals Antiochene priorities and concerns. Before Cassian had written those notes, Theodoret had dared overcome monotheistic and Monarchian qualifications by applying the term δεσπότης to Christ unreservedly, thus not allowing his human nature to either detain or qualify the Second Person’s eternal properties. The Council of Ephesus revisited and confirmed this approach by endorsing this relentless Trinitarianism advanced by Theodoret. The term

δεσπότης accorded to Christ encapsulates a concept which in essence is nothing more than a Nicene one, even though earlier theologians were slow (perhaps out of an abundance of caution) to use such a bold term. It was the imposing personality of Theodoret that made the term δεσπότης for Christ a recurring motif in the vocabulary and the distinctive mark which this characteristically Antiochene concept makes at the outset of the Scholia is by no means accidental. Cassian's aim is clear, though not stated explicitly therein. Ephesus was in fact not only the battleground for the rival personalities of Theodoret and Cyril, but this antagonism was seen at the time as one between two different Christological approaches, however subtly the disagreement was put. Nestorius was condemned unanimously, but this does not mean that all of those who condemned his alleged views were actually in agreement on all other issues. Theodoret had a balanced view of Christ's divinity and humanity. On the other hand, Cyril spoke of 'Christ' while tacitly and wilfully allowing the notion to be almost synonymous with 'God the Logos'. His obsession with the term θεοτόκος was due to this implicit identification rather than to his concern to safeguard the *communicatio idiomatum*, which means licence to apply human characteristics to Christ considered to be God (e.g. 'God was born') and, vice versa, to apply divine characteristics to Christ considered to be man. Cyril's viewpoint can be summarized in his opinion that Jesus was not actually *subject* to the human condition: it was the Logos who had willingly acquiesced to his subjection to the laws determining human existence.<sup>1</sup> This was in effect an opinion that any Alexandrian could allow, though only implicitly. In that case, the idea of Christ's 'one action' is bound to be that of the Logos, which of course smacks of Eutycheanism. It is quite telling that the proverbial Cyrillian metaphor of the incarnate Logos being the 'fire' that transforms 'wood' into its own 'glory' was fully upheld by the Monophysite champion Severus of Antioch: he was quick to employ this in order to condemn not those who confessed the properties of the natures of which the one Christ consists, but those who separate the properties and apportion them to each nature apart, in other words, the Tome of Leo.

It is indicative of Theodoret's brilliance that on the one hand he argued for the need to consider Christ both divine and human at the same time, while on the other he laid immense stress on the notion δεσπότης Χριστός ('Lord Christ'). This was actually an innovation since the tradition made 'Lord' a designation for 'God' in general ever since the times of Isaiah,<sup>2</sup> but the idea had some basis in the New Testament,<sup>3</sup> however much this had been overlooked by earlier authors. Theodoret was cautious nevertheless: he took care to warn against underscoring 'either of' Christ's 'natures' (ἐκατέραν φύσιν) and urged his audience always to consider 'the [nature] which [Christ] assumed as well as the one which was assumed' (καὶ τὴν λαβοῦσαν καὶ τὴν ληφθεῖσαν).<sup>4</sup>

The exegeses of several Scholia are Alexandrian (they were taken up from Didymus, after all), but even in such cases the rendering has an Antiochene colour, such as Christ styled δεσπότης, or John the Evangelist designated θεολόγος. In effect this method reflects the open-minded spirit of the Akoimetoι during the sixth century. This is therefore a case of an eminent Antiochene author taking advantage of the Alexandrian wisdom. This case also shows the crudeness of the typical schematization dividing the two schools by means of an iron curtain. Several points in the Scholia induced scholars who reflected on them a century ago to presume that they were written by a certain scholar of the Alexandrian school. But this impression stemmed from the fact that Didymus' commentary was heavily quoted. The reality is that it was Cassian who quoted Didymus, and Scholion I is virtually the colophon pointing to the writer's spiritual identity since it staunchly advances a distinctive Antiochene approach.

For all the heavy quotation from Didymus's work, Cassian's train of thought is subtly different but clearly distinct from that of Didymus. Salient features of Theodoret's thought are present in this text: the epithet θεολόγος is applied to John the Evangelist, which Didymus never did. The exegesis purporting to reconcile two contradictory passages in 2 Kings and 1 Paralipomenon is also illuminating. Didymus had identified the 'wrath of God' with 'inflicted punishments'. Theodoret and Cassian stand out by rendering

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Severus, *Ep.* 1, quoted on p. 95.  
<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 3:1; 10:33; Prov. 29:25; Job 5:8; Wisdom of Solomon 6:7; 8:3; *et passim*.  
<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4:4. Which made Rev. 6:10 concur with Scripture.  
<sup>4</sup> Theodoret, *Eranistes*, p. 114, quoted on p. 25.



the ‘wrath of God’ not as the ‘punishments’ inflicted upon sinners (which was the hackneyed interpretation), but as ‘the devil’ himself, which is the interpretation coined by Origen. This interpretation was helpful to him in order to resolve such difficult points of scripture as the apparent conflict between 2 Kings 24:1 and 1 Paralipomenon 21:1. The reference to this teaching of his in Scholion XXX is indeed the sole point where the author appears to speak of himself in the first person: ‘as we have taught’ (ὡς ἐδιδάξαμεν, discussed in EN XXXli). But this person is Theodoret, whose analysis Cassian quotes word for word, which he had also done in Scholion V, quoting Clement of Alexandria to the letter. This notwithstanding, the characteristic colloquial Greek at certain points reveals that Didymus’ text is being quoted through simple peculiarities in composite words (συνκατάβασις for συγκατάβασις in Scholion XV, συνβαδίζων for συμβαδίζων in Scholion XX, λημφθέντες for ληφθέντες in Scholion XXIX). Didymus is also the author who distinctively uses the adjective ἀδιάδοχος in relation to the New Testament being ‘unsurpassed’.

Definitive orthodox doctrines were conveniently taken up by Cassian and adapted to his own outlook and purpose. There was no need for new reasoning. Arguments against idolatry and polytheism, which are called for by the apocalyptic text itself, were already available since the times of Clement of Alexandria. Had the issue of the canonicity of Revelation been entangled in the theological parlance of his day, this could have been enmeshed in a fatal storm. What therefore might appear to be an amateurish or trivial theological approach in those Scholia is in fact part of the author’s method in order to get his message across without stumping his audience with contemporary sixth-century dilemmas. The question was only the consistency of the Apocalypse with scripture: what this text had to say, had already been said by both Testaments alike. The Scholia are therefore a conspectus drawing on both Testaments. This is persuasively demonstrated as a text which conveys the same theology as canonical writings do.

Cassian presented his thought with an unblased and tolerant open-mindedness. As a man who had spent a considerable period of his time at Constantinople, he wished to address all the different streams of doctrine, regardless of specific local sentiments or philosophical priorities. He was already a cosmopolitan in this

respect. His masters, St Sabas and Theodosius the Coenobiarch had taught him the value of the Cappadocians and Cassian is indeed all too devoted a student of Gregory of Nyssa. Leontius of Byzantium had taught him the values of the thought of Origen, as well as of Didymus and Evagrius, without disregarding Clement of Alexandria as an erudite forerunner. Yet Cassian was for the most part the spiritual offspring of Antioch, of which the roots were such theologians as Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, whereas Theodoret of Cyrrhus was its flower and shining star.

If the Scholia have something important to tell us beyond their specific theological message, this is the lesson that the difference of approach between Antioch and Alexandria was not a rift, still less a chasm. We should therefore consider that the two schools coexisted in Cassian’s mind and heart in a constructive way that modern thought has only recently begun to allow for as a possibility. In order to explore this relation between the two schools, no personality is more suitable to follow than Theodoret of Cyrrhus. So far, we have been accustomed to consider him to be the last great scholar of Late Antiquity. It may turn out that his tradition lasted for one more century, through such gifted men as Cassian the Sabaite.

A brief summary concerning Cassian’s identity is called for at this point.

My initial impression was that my engagement with the Scholia on the Apocalypse would last for only a few months. In fact, I was eager to finish this interlude as soon as possible, in order to satisfy a long-time curiosity of mine regarding this pseudo-Origenist work, and then go ahead with other projects, on which my research had already been conducted. Had I not come across the Codex of Meteora (which is an early ninth-century manuscript and the sole one containing this commentary on the Apocalypse), I would have concluded that the anonymous text is a series of comments by Theodoret. However, once I was eventually granted access to the Codex itself, it became plain that the author was Cassian, the Sabaite monk and abbot, who turned out to be not the figment currently known as ‘John Cassian’, but a different and heretofore eclipsed author.

The *peripeteia* began once I had (out of mere curiosity) read the rest of the Codex, indeed its very beginning. The colophon has it that this Codex is ‘The

Book of monk Cassian’ and later hands over the centuries wrote the same indication at difference points; on the last page of the Codex, a later hand wrote, ‘By Monk Cassian’. Folios 1r–118v contain works ascribed to Cassian. Each of them is indicated through specific titles *beyond the colophon*, which makes this colophon a clear indication of the owner of this book, actually a book copied from an older one that was a *personal companion* of Cassian himself.

To my amazement, philological analysis of those texts immediately showed an author abundantly drawing on specific eminent authors, not only Christian, but also Classical and Late Antique ones. On the other hand, there is a current and long-standing tradition that claims Cassian to have been a *Latin* author and any Greek text ascribed to him to be only a Greek *translation* of an *Epitome*, of which no manuscript exists. Despite desperate efforts, never has any Latin manuscript of this *Epitome* been traced anywhere – actually this has never existed at all, as I myself claim and other scholars suspected, but they lacked the ancient manuscripts which could establish the point.

There is a vast literature about the ‘Latin’ ‘John Cassian’ to whom an entire corpus of Latin texts has been attributed. They are now shown to be simply the product of interpolation and extensive medieval forgery. The Vienna Corpus of Latin authors (1898) ascribed extensive Latin works to this ‘John Cassian’, who is currently considered to be ‘the father of Western monasticism’; he is also claimed to have been the source of Benedict’s Rule (end of the seventh century) and of the Benedictine Order itself. It is also Cassian who is acclaimed as ‘the sole Latin author included in the collection known as *Philocalia*’.

Some of the authors that Cassian appears to have dealt with are the most brilliant Christian minds. They happen to be the same ones that were officially condemned by the episcopal Church: Origen, Didymus the Blind, Evagrius, John Philoponus, whereas Theodoret escaped this fate only at the very last moment. It seems that what is currently known as the history of doctrine is only the history of episcopal decisions: the ‘right doctrine’ that has come down to us is what came from the pulpit, by bishops who had always had an open ear and eye to mundane imperial politics.

The critical development that turns all Cassian scholarship upside down and exposes and frustrates the medieval forgery involving his name are the dis-

covery of the *Scholia in Apocalypsin*. They provide the grounds for a fresh approach coupled with publication of the rest of Cassian’s texts found in the Meteora Codex. These texts show the author drawing abundantly on Classical and Late Antique pagan (Greek and Oriental) literature. I should have thought that there may have been specific persons who might have cared to obliterate this Meteora Codex over the centuries, had the ‘secret’ contained therein (*viz.* the testimony inherent in the Scholia themselves) been made known. Fortunately, this codex was discovered only in 1908 and has remained concealed in the monastery of Great Meteoron (Metamorphosis) ever since. What the colophon ‘Book of monk Cassian’ really suggests was not noticed, and no one cared to study the *implications* of these texts.

Establishing the existence of a new author is a very serious proposition. That objections will arise is only to be expected. But my claim supported by argument is that ‘Cassian’ was in fact a *Greek* writer from Palestine and the ‘Latin author’ of Romania who came to be called ‘John Cassian’ (although no Greek manuscript has it so) is simply a figment produced by medieval forgery.

It is not therefore simply a case of an author appearing for the first time, which would perhaps be a case of limited interest. It is a case of an author argued to be the *real* historical person in antithesis to the current literature about ‘John Cassian’. I do not see any serious reason why the real Cassian, the man who inspired St Benedict should have been baptized a *Latin*, and yet this has been the case.

Therefore, this is the phenomenon of an author taken *instead of another*, which involves a direct challenge to an entire stream of scholarship and to long-standing allegations about the origins of Western monasticism. I cannot see, however, why this truth could do any harm to the *inspiration* of those foundations. Nor do I see why the *auctoritas vetustatis* of Western monasticism (desperately sought in the seventh century and afterwards, until today) would be compromised if the real Cassian is identified as a Greek author, as he really was.

I realize that this is a proposition that could appear challenging to many scholars, especially those who have specific allegiances. I have neither allegiances nor commitments, and, as I have declared in previous books, I only wish to be an accurate scholar. Which is why I felt that no room for controversy should be left or allowed. It is not just about a theoretical ‘question of

authorship'; it is about the *real* existence of an eclipsed author instead of a figment.

Beyond this, we come upon the real Cassian as a scholar of immense Greek *paideia*, whereas the phantasmal 'John Cassian' is known to have had hardly any knowledge of Greek at all. Consequently, we experience the tension inherent in those texts – the tension between Justinian's imperial 'Christian faith' during the first half of the sixth century and a large group of highly erudite Antiochene intellectuals, namely the monks of the Monastery of the Akoimetoï, who had established a spiritual colony of Antioch in the heart of Constantinople.

Even though the community was persecuted by Justinian in the early 530s, it was the Akoimetoï who cherished the thought of such 'condemned' intellectuals as Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodorus of Tarsus, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Evagrius, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Nestorius, alongside Homer, the three Athenian tragic poets, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucian, Demosthenes, Hyperides, Pindar, Isocrates, Galen, Posidonius, and an immense host of other Greek intellectuals down to Proclus, Damascius, and Simplicius, all of whom I identify one by one by means of patient perusal of the texts and concrete references.

*This is why the Scholia are anonymous:* amidst Justinian's caesaropapism of the 530s and 540s, their author Cassian could never have cited the names of the 'heretics' on whom he had drawn so heavily. For it is only the visible peak of the iceberg that Cassian availed himself of Didymus' lost Commentary on the Apocalypse, which can now be largely reconstructed, thus dating the 'most ancient known' commentary on the Apocalypse two centuries earlier: he also drew on such supposedly different authors as Origen and Theodoret (a *persona non grata* at the time), not to mention pagan ones. The anonymity of the collection

actually shows the Akoimetan spirit aspiring to cherish the patrimony bequeathed to them by both Alexandria and Antioch alike, including such 'daemonized' authors as Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severus of Antioch (the Monophysite doctor), and Nestorius. No less does the way this collection is presented illustrate the clandestine (yet all too real) interplay between Hellenism and the imperial Christianity during Justinian's reign. However different (and sometimes hostile to each other) those personalities appear in histories of doctrine, what is unique about the Antiochene Akoimetoï and Cassian himself is that they sought a *synthesis*, which has its contemporary parallel in the synthesis by Neoplatonist Aristotelian commentators arguing that the difference between Plato and Aristotle was not so sharp as previous centuries had taken this to have been. This collection of comments, therefore, discloses critical facets of the Byzantine sixth-century social, political, and intellectual world, and casts new light on the backlash of this period which (though generally accepted today) has yet to be explored.

We should bear in mind that Cassian's texts occur as follows: folios 1r–118v: texts of Cassian (with the name of the author indicated in headers *beyond* the colophon itself), folios 245v–290r: *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, with Cassian as their author indicated on folio 290r by a later hand, as 'the Book of Cassian'. The relevance of those texts in terms of philology has been expounded in the aforementioned books of mine reinstating the real Cassian.

During the distressing decades of the 530s and 540s, Cassian resolved that he should 'obey the weight of his sad time, and speak what he felt, not what he ought to say'. He cherished this text as his personal companion, which came down to us as the Metamorphosis-Codex 573. He deserves a fair hearing, and now the time for this has come.



ABBREVIATIONS

General

ACO	E. Schwartz, <i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
An.(M)	Andreas of Caesarea, <i>Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , J. P. Migne edition
An.(S)	Andreas of Caesarea, <i>Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , J. Schmid edition
Ar.	Arethas of Caesarea
COT	P. Tzamalikos, <i>Origen: Cosmology and Ontology of Time</i>
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
H.	A. Harnack
M.	Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (critical apparatus to the text of Revelation)
N–A.	Nestle–Aland, <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i>
NDGF	P. Tzamalikos, <i>A Newly Discovered Greek Father, Cassian the Sabaite, Eclipsed by John Cassian of Marseilles</i>
O.	Oecumenius, <i>Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , ed. H.C. Hoskier
O.(G)	<i>Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , ed. Marc De Groote
PG.	J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (volume, page, line)
PHE	P. Tzamalikos, <i>Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology</i>
PL	Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
RCR	P. Tzamalikos, <i>The Real Cassian Revisited, Monastic Life, Greek Paideia, and Origenism in the Sixth Century</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> (volume, page, verse)
T.	C. H. Turner
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
2329	The full text of Book of Revelation in Meteora-Codex 574
2551	The passages from Book of Revelation accompanying the <i>Scholia in Apocalypsin</i> , in Meteora-Codex 574

All Authors

<i>commEccl</i>	<i>Commentarii in Ecclesiasten</i>
<i>commJob</i>	<i>Commentarii in Job</i>
<i>commPs</i>	<i>Commentarii in Psalmos</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>

Origen

<i>adnotGen</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Genesim</i>
<i>adnotJos</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Josuam</i>
<i>Cant</i>	<i>Libri x in Canticum Canticorum (fragmenta)</i>
<i>Cels</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>comm1Cor</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Epistulam I ad Corinthios</i>
<i>commEph</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Epistulam ad Ephesios</i>
<i>commEx</i>	<i>Fragmentum ex Commentariis in Exodum</i>
<i>commGen</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Genesim</i>
<i>commJohn</i>	<i>Commentarii in Joannem</i>

<i>commLuc</i>	<i>Scholia in Lucam (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28)</i>
<i>commMatt</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri 10–17</i>
<i>commProv</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Proverbia</i>
<i>deOr</i>	<i>De Oratione</i>
<i>Dial</i>	<i>Dialogus cum Heraclide</i>
<i>epAfr</i>	<i>Epistola ad Africanum</i>
<i>excPs</i>	<i>Excerpta in Psalmos</i>
<i>exhMar</i>	<i>Exhortatio ad Martyrium</i>
<i>expProv</i>	<i>Expositio in Proverbia</i>
<i>frEz</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Ezechielem</i>
<i>frJer</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Jeremiam</i>
<i>frJohn</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>frLam</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Lamentationes</i>
<i>frLuc</i>	<i>Fragmenta 1–112 in Lucam</i>
<i>frMatt</i>	<i>Commentariorum series 1–145 in Matthaeum</i>
<i>frOs</i>	<i>In Oseam</i>
<i>frProv</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Proverbia</i>
<i>frPs</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Psalmos 1–150</i>
<i>homEx</i>	<i>Homiliae in Exodum</i>
<i>homGen</i>	<i>Homiliae 1–16 in Genesim</i>
<i>homJer</i>	<i>In Jeremiam (homiliae 12–20)</i>
<i>homJob</i>	<i>Homiliae in Job</i>
<i>homJos</i>	<i>Homiliae in Josuam</i>
<i>homLev</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>
<i>homLuc</i>	<i>Homiliae in Lucam</i>
<i>JesNav</i>	<i>In Jesu Nave Homiliae xxvi</i>
<i>Princ</i>	<i>De Principiis (P. Koetschau)</i>
<i>schCant</i>	<i>Scholia in Canticum Canticorum</i>
<i>schMatt</i>	<i>Scholia in Matthaeum</i>
<i>selDeut</i>	<i>Selecta in Deuteronomium</i>
<i>selEx</i>	<i>Selecta in Exodum</i>
<i>selEz</i>	<i>Selecta in Ezechielem</i>
<i>selGen</i>	<i>Selecta in Genesim</i>
<i>selJos</i>	<i>Selecta in Josuam</i>
<i>selNum</i>	<i>Selecta in Numeros</i>
<i>selPs</i>	<i>Selecta in Psalmos</i>

Didymus

<i>commEccl</i>	<i>Commentarii in Ecclesiasten</i>
<i>commJob</i>	<i>Commentarii in Job</i>
<i>commPs</i>	<i>Commentarii in Psalmos</i>
<i>commZacch</i>	<i>In Zachariam</i>
<i>frPs(al)</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Psalmos altera</i>

Eusebius

<i>commPs</i>	<i>Commentaria in Psalmos</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Demonstratio Evangelica</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>

Theodoret

<i>commIs</i>	<i>Commentarius in Isaiam</i>
<i>De Providentia</i>	<i>De Providentia Orationes Decem</i>
<i>intDan</i>	<i>Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetæ</i>
<i>intPaulXIV</i>	<i>Interpretatio in XIV Epistulas Sancti Pauli</i>
<i>intProphXII</i>	<i>Interpretatio in XII Prophetas Minores</i>

Cyril of Alexandria

<i>commProphXII</i>	<i>Commentarius in XII Prophetas</i>
<i>De Adoratione</i>	<i>De Adoratione in Spiritu et Veritate</i>
<i>expPs</i>	<i>Explanatio in Psalmos</i>
<i>GlaphPent</i>	<i>Glaphyrorum in Pentateuchum</i>
<i>In Isaiam</i>	<i>Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam</i>
<i>In Sanctum Joannem</i>	<i>Commentarii in Joannem</i>

Theodore of Mopsuestia

<i>commProphXII</i>	<i>Commentarius in XII Prophetas</i>
<i>expPs</i>	<i>Explanatio in Psalmos</i>

Pseudo-Justin or Pseudo-Theodoret

<i>QetR</i>	<i>Quaestiones et Responsiones</i>
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Epiphanius of Salamis

<i>Panarion</i>	<i>Panarion (Adversus Haereses)</i>
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Cassian the Sabaite

<i>Const</i>	<i>Ad Castorem Episcopum De Canonicis Occidentalis et Aegyptionis Coenobiorum Constitutionibus</i>
<i>De Panareto</i>	<i>Ad Leontium Hegumenum Contributio Sereni Abbatis De Panareto</i>
<i>DT</i>	<i>De Trinitate (Pseudo-Didymus = Cassian the Sabaite)</i>
<i>OctoVit</i>	<i>Ad Castorem Episcopum De Octo Vitiis Cogitationibus</i>
<i>ScetPatr</i>	<i>Ad Leontium Hegumenum De Scetae Sanctorum Patrum</i>
<i>SerenPrim</i>	<i>Ad Leontium Hegumenum Contributio Sereni Abbatis Prima</i>

Psalms are numbered after LXX.