“Go, Sell Your Possessions, and Give to the Poor . . ., Follow Me”: The Significance of the Ideal of Radical Poverty in John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435)

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emmanuel College and the Historical Department of the Toronto School of Theology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael’s College

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Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

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2016

Abstract

*De institutis* and *Collationes patrum* were written by John Cassian in early fifth-century Gaul. They are traditionally regarded as the documents which introduced the Eastern monastic tradition to the West. The theme of radical poverty is repeated throughout his writings in an intentional way. However, scholarship has paid little attention to this and what it means in Cassian’s spiritual theology.

In this dissertation, I first locate Cassian within the early fifth-century Gallic monastic context. I argue that Cassian’s emphasis on literal poverty is based on his observation and diagnosis of Gallic monastic practices. Next, I analyze poverty in the writings associated with Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius who are Cassian’s major influences. In spite of their differences, they arrive at a similar idea about poverty: radical poverty helps remove avarice and the removal of avarice is necessary for inner purification. These ascetic writings show an optimistic attitude towards overcoming human covetousness. However, the Gallic situation
leads Cassian to reflect on human weakness. He comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to use money without passion. For Cassian, true renunciation entails governing avarice through the constant process of giving up material goods and wealth. Therefore, radical poverty must be repeated throughout monastic life.

Consequently, Cassian’s contextualized understanding of poverty makes his doctrines of the virtues, vices, and puritas cordis unique. Unlike Evagrius, he never says that puritas cordis can be achieved by the perfect mastery of the virtues. Rather, the experience of puritas cordis, which is temporary, is expressed through the process of cultivating the primary virtues: renunciation, obedience, and humility. In this way, Cassian’s attitude towards wealth and poverty may be regarded as a particular ascetic response to the influx of wealth into late-antique Christianity.
Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

Title Page..........................................................................................................................i
Abstract..........................................................................................................................ii
Acknowledgement.........................................................................................................iv
Table of Contents...........................................................................................................vi
Abbreviations................................................................................................................viii

Introduction.....................................................................................................................1
  1. Research on John Cassian as a Creative Transmitter between Eastern and Western
    Monasticism, His Gallic Context, and View of Radical Poverty: Status
    Quaestionis...............................................................................................................1
  2. Thesis Statement, the Place of Radical Poverty in De institutis and Collationes
    patrum, Methodology, and Procedure. .................................................................14

Chapter 1: The Gallic Background of John Cassian on Radical Poverty: Gallic Monk-Bishops
and Their Views of Radical Poverty in Early Fifth-Century Gaul........................................24
  1. Aristocrats and Church in Early Fifth-Century Gaul.............................................28
  2. Aristocratic Monk-Bishops’ Views on Radical Poverty: The Ascetic Poverty of
    Gallic Monastic Forerunners, Martin of Tours, Paulinus of Nola, and Honoratus
    of Arles.................................................................................................................42
  3. John Cassian’s Diagnosis of Gallic Monastic Poverty.........................................50

Chapter 2: The Influence of Egyptian Monasticism on John Cassian’s Radical Poverty......58
  1. Antony of Egypt on Radical Poverty.................................................................65
  2. Pachomius on Radical Poverty..........................................................................75
  3. Evagrius Ponticus on Radical Poverty.............................................................89
    3.1. Prerequisites for Understanding the Distinctiveness of Evagrian Poverty:
        the Monastic Scheme and Eight Thoughts (λογίζμοι) ..........................90
    3.2. The Meaning of Radical Poverty for Evagrius Ponticus.........................93

Chapter 3: The Ideal of Radical Poverty in John Cassian and Its Implications...................99
  1. Radical Poverty in Cassian’s Monastic Texts....................................................104
1.1. Radical Poverty in the First, Fourth, and Twelfth Books of De institutis and Twenty-Fourth Conference.................................................................104
1.2. Radical Poverty in Supplemental Texts, the Seventh Book of De institutis, the Third Conference, and Three Fragments: De institutis 2.5.1, Collationes 18.5, and 21.30.................................................................110

2. Cassian’s Radical Poverty and Its Implications for His Monastic Scheme.......115
   2.1. Wealth, Avarice and the Fallen Human Condition..........................115
   2.2. The Relationship between Radical Poverty and Monastic Perfection:
       Mutual Dependence between Daily Disciplines, Virtues, and Puritas Cordis.................................................................134

Conclusion.............................................................................................................155

Bibliography...........................................................................................................161
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Magazine/Book Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>ABR</td>
<td>American Benedictine Review</td>
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<td>ACW</td>
<td>Ancient Christian Writers</td>
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<td>AS</td>
<td>Augustinian Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRHE</td>
<td>Bibliothèque de la Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Church History</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCO</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</td>
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<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</td>
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<td>CSQ</td>
<td>Cistercian Studies Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>The Downside Review</td>
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<td>FOTC</td>
<td>The Fathers of the Church</td>
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<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>JECS</td>
<td>Journal of Early Christian Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEH</td>
<td>The Journal of Ecclesiastical History</td>
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<td>JLA</td>
<td>Journal of Late Antiquity</td>
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<td>JRS</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Studies</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<td>LCL</td>
<td>Loeb Classical Library</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>Monastic Studies</td>
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<td>NPNF</td>
<td>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>Patrologiae Cursus Completus Series Graeca</td>
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<td>Patrologiae Cursus Completus Series Latina. Supplementum</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
<td>Popular Patristic Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>Revue d’Ascétique et de Mystique</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTAM</td>
<td>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</td>
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<td>Sources chrétiennes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Subsidia Hagiographica</td>
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<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
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<td>SM</td>
<td>Studia Monastica</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Studia Patristica</td>
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Introduction

1. Research on John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435) as a Creative Transmitter between Eastern and Western Monasticism, His Gallic Context, and View of Radical Poverty: Status Quaestionis

The aim of this study is to examine John Cassian’s attitudes toward poverty as reflected in his ascetic writings, De institutis and Collationes patrum. Early Christians had their own views on wealth and poverty since Clement of Alexandria (ca. 160–ca. 215) first discussed the relationship between wealth and salvation in a systematic way.\(^1\) Clement, in his treatise, Quis Dives Salvetur, believes that wealthy people can achieve salvation if they can remove their desire for wealth and use it for charity.\(^2\) Thus, for him, the story of Jesus and the rich young man (Mk 10:17–31) is not about the perfect divestment of wealth, but about attaining a passionless attitude towards wealth and using it for public charitable works. Directly or indirectly, Clement’s ideas influenced many post-Constantinian Christian writers.

My study will attempt to show how John Cassian creates a unique perspective by reflecting upon his personal experience of Eastern monasticism and his observation of Western Gallic monasticism. Scholarship has suggested that in his early years, Cassian devoted himself to a spiritual odyssey and with his friend, Germanus, made a pilgrimage to Palestine and Egypt.\(^3\) He left Egypt for Constantinople around 399/400. He was then

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ordained as a deacon by John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407) and went to Rome around 404 before going on to southern Gaul.

Gennadius of Massilia says that Cassian spent the rest of his life promoting monasticism—establishing monasteries and writing three books—two ascetic books, De institutis and Collationes patrum and one expository book, De incarnatione Christi Contra Nestorium in Massilia.\(^4\) Though recent scholarship doubts that Cassian worked in Massilia,\(^5\) it is generally accepted that he arrived there in “the middle to late 410’s”\(^6\) and remained there for the rest of his life.

In Gaul, Cassian observed the monastic culture. Based on his observations, he tried to bring Egyptian practices, rules, and teachings to his Gallic readers.\(^7\) Indeed, Cassian’s monastic writings were initiated by the request of Castor, the bishop of Apt, who was eager to establish his monastery based upon Egyptian monasticism.\(^8\) In his writings, Cassian does not simply introduce the Egyptian institutes, but criticizes Gallic monasticism and makes an attempt to reform it. Further, based on this, he adjusts the order and primacy of Egyptian monastic practice to cater to his Gallic audience.

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\(^5\) Richard Goodrich, through his careful reading of prefaces of De institutis and Collationes patrum, believes that the placement of Cassian’s ascetic writings must not be limited to Massilia. Based on the common practice of his day, Cassian’s ascetic writings would have been dedicated to Proculus, the bishop of Massilia if in fact he wrote his books in Massilia. Thus, it might be that they were composed in the Castor’s region (Castor being the dedicatee of Cassian’s writings) (Richard Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007], 211–234).

\(^6\) Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 16.


\(^8\) *De institutis* Praef. 2–3.
Even though information about Cassian and his life is thin, some historical sources such as Gennadius’ *De uiris illustribus*, and *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* of Palladius (ca. 365–425) prove that Cassian was associated with the Eastern church, particularly John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), the bishop of Constantinople who ordained Cassian as a deacon and had him visit Rome. Gennadius also writes that Cassian stayed with the Egyptian desert fathers.

Even though Cassian’s relationship with the Eastern Church is generally accepted, *De uiris illustribus* and *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* do not show how Cassian spent his time in Egyptian desert. The only documentation we have of this is through Cassian’s own writings. Elements of his spiritual journey are scattered throughout his writings. Cassian tells the reader that he and Germanus (his friend) left his first monastery near the Cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem for Egypt. Upon his arrival in Thennesus, he developed deep relationships with Egyptian monks who mainly practiced in the Nile Delta (at Thennesus, Thmuis, Panephysis, and Diolcos), Scetis and Kellia. While staying in Egypt, he was influenced by the Origenist monks such as Paphnutius and Evagrius Ponticus (345–399). According to Cassian, Paphnutius, who rejected Anthropomorphism, accepted Cassian and Germanus in his ascetic group.

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10 *De uiris illustribus* 62.


12 *De institutis* 3.4.1, 4.31.


14 The desert fathers are mainly indicated in the first part of *Collationes patrum*. Moses (conferences 1 and 2), Paphnutius (3), Daniel (4), Sarapion (5), Serenus (7–8), and Isaac (9–10) lived in Scetis. Cassian’s encounter with abbas Theodore (6) took place in Kellia. The second part of *Collationes patrum* (11–17) is based on the teachings of abbas living in Panephysis near the eastern Nile Delta. For the detailed information about Cassian’s sojourn of Egypt, see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 7–12, 133–140.
Anthropomorphism was condemned by Theophilus of Alexandria (?–412) in 399. Though Cassian’s impression of Evagrius is never, specifically, mentioned in his writings, it is not difficult to find the basic spiritual theology of Evagrius who was the first to systematize Egyptian spirituality based on the teachings of Origen (ca. 185–ca. 251). Further, the Origenist controversy, which was stirred by Theophilus’ condemnation of Anthropomorphism, culminated in a riot by Egyptian ascetic Anthropomophites and their rejection of Origen’s books. This in turn caused Origenist monastic circles to leave the Egyptian desert.\(^1\) Scholarship has agreed that the bitter quarrel between Origenists and counter-Origenists forced Cassian to leave Egypt for Constantinople around 403–404.\(^2\)

However, in spite of Cassian’s strong attachment to Egyptian monasticism, scholars have wondered if his ascetic literature is more than a simple attempt to report about Egyptian monasticism as it existed.\(^3\) Even though he does not reject Cassian’s sojourn in Egypt, Guy

\(^{15}\) For the nature of Anthropomorphism, Theophilus’s disapproval of Anthropomorphism, and Egyptian monks’ attitude toward his condemnation, see *Collationes*, 10.2.2–10.5.3.


\(^{17}\) Socrates says that Theophilus was inclined to agree with the Origenists and supported Origenist monks until 399 when he sent his paschal letter which included his condemnation of Anthropomorphism. However, after the riot of the monks of Scetis, Theophilus suddenly changed his position though the reason is not known. Afterward, he sided with Jerome and Epiphanius; was hostile towards Isidore, the Tall Brothers, and Origenist monks in Nitria; and was connected to the tragedy of Chrysostom (Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiasica* 6.7, 10 ed. G. C. Hansen, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte, New Series, 1 [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995]). To be sure, as Elizabeth Clark notes, the controversy was never a simple affair. The debate was the result of the complex network of relationships between Origenists (Rufinus of Aquileia and John of Jerusalem), anti-Origenists (Jerome and Epiphanius of Salamius), and their many patrons. Many of Evagrius’ writings were at the center of the controversy (Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992], 11–193).


asserts that Cassian was not interested in presenting the literal accounts of Egyptian monks. Rather he intended to bring his spiritual theology based on the monastic scheme of Evagrius by reworking his direct experience with Egyptian monks and, at times, creating stories. In other words, Cassian’s theological ideas, shaped by the cenobitic and anchoritic rules and conversations with Egyptian abbas, are reflected in his ascetic literature. Indeed, the identities of most of Cassian’s abbas are very obscure. As a result, Guy claims that in *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum*, we find Cassian’s creative theological reflections, not a true representation of fourth-century Egyptian monasticism.

Though he is critical of scholars who assert that all of Cassian’s accounts of Egypt are fabrications, Owen Chadwick suggests that readers must bear in mind that Cassian used stories and concepts found in sources like *Apophthegmata patrum*. Thus, his accounts do not always provide “an authentic presentation of moral and ascetic ideals practiced in Egypt” and “the substance of the teaching of fifteen individual hermits.”

Based on Guy’s hypothesis, K. Suso Frank attempts to reconstruct the life of Cassian while being mindful that all Cassian’s description of Egypt do not necessarily come from direct experience. Peter Munz also recognizes that theological concerns (not conveying Egyptian monasticism) are reflected in Cassian’s ascetic writings. Thus, rather than articulating the relationship between Egyptian monastic rules and Cassian, he focuses on how Cassian’s main theological subjects (Christian life, the battle against evil vices, and monastic

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perfection) are associated with the thoughts of Origen to which Evagrius was indebted.²⁵

De Vogüé no longer looks to Cassian’s literature to find Cassian’s experience of Egyptian monasticism. Through his close analysis of the first four books of *De institutis*, he tries to demonstrate how Cassian accepts and alters broad sources including Eastern and Western monastic writings as well as Lower and Upper Egyptian ascetic sources.²⁶ Further, de Vogüé and Pristas examine how Cassian arranges his spiritual theology in a systematic way by showing how the complex themes in *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum* are interrelated.²⁷ Particularly, de Vogüé claims that “the first conferences (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 21)” mainly deal with the goals (*puritas cordis*, charity, and unceasing contemplation) of the Evagrian monastic odyssey as the spiritual end of Cassian’s theology.²⁸

By keeping his readers mindful of their monastic aims, Cassian attempts to bind together many separate and unorganized subjects in the conferences. Pristas applies de Vogüé’s structural analysis to the arrangement of *De institutis*. She concentrates on the significance of ascetic renunciation as the first step of monastic pedagogy found in four focal points: Books 1 (the introduction of the first part of *De institutis*), 4 (between Books 1 to 4 and 5 to 12), and 12 (the conclusion of its second part) and Conference 24 (the conclusion of *Collationes patrum*).

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²⁷ Stewart’s and Driver’s attempt to find an inner systematic structure of *Collationes patrum* must be not ignored. Stewart suggests that Cassian’s use of Scripture plays a significant role in solving the problem of Cassian’s structure and its arrangement is spiral (Columba Stewart, “John Cassian on Unceasing Prayer,” MS 15 [1984]: 159–177; Columba Stewart, “Scripture and Contemplation in the Monastic Spiritual Theology of John Cassian,” SP 25 [1993]: 457–461). Driver is also helpful regarding Cassian’s structure. He says that Cassian believes his audience is not aware of Egyptian monastic practices and decides to make them familiar with the Egyptian experience by creating the structure recalling the teaching of abbas (Steven D. Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* [New York: Routledge, 2002], 65–120).

She claims that De institutis and Collationes patrum are bound together by the emphasis on the initial step, the renunciation of wealth.

Consequently, the analyses of these two scholars support the opinion that Cassian is not simply describing Egyptian circumstances, but providing spiritual theology to the Gauls. Cassian tries to articulate the Evagrian ascetic scheme (moving from the practical stage, through puritas cordis to the contemplative stage) and pays special attention to the importance of daily disciplines including radical poverty. In a relatively recent monograph on John Cassian, Cassian the Monk, Stewart identifies key themes of Cassian's theology such as: the virtue of chastity, interpretation of the Bible, and the relationship between Scripture and prayer.

As illustrated above, Cassian scholarship seems to agree that Cassian never simply transmitted Egyptian monastic practices to Western Gallic monasticism. Scholars seem to

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believe that his true intention was to introduce his spiritual theology to Gallic monasticism. To be sure, his theology does not merely repeat that of Evagrius. As de Vogüé demonstrates, Cassian enters into conversation with countless ascetic sources in order to develop his own particular theology. An essential standard through which Cassian reconstructs his materials, including his direct Egyptian experience and his particular theological aspects, is his observation of Gallic monasticism. In other words, his judgment of the Gallic ascetic context inspires him to create monastic pedagogical writings which pay special attention to the practical stage of Evagrius’ ascetic programme (ascetic disciplines and their relations to virtues and *puritas cordis*). Cassian does not care if his readers are abbots or long-time trained monks in monasteries. In his eyes, they are all postulants who must learn the authentic and orthodox monastic map.\(^\text{32}\) Needless to say, his understanding of the Gallic situation coupled with his attempt to reform it plays a significant role in Cassian’s ascetic literature.

However, Cassian scholars have not been much concerned with this relationship. Through his analyses of Cassian’s relationship with the Gallic monk-bishops, Rousseau suggests that Cassian was thrown into the middle of “the struggle among ascetics in southern Gaul to extricate themselves from more rigorous traditions and to set themselves an ascetic task more suited to their social and pastoral aspirations.”\(^\text{33}\) Goodrich, in his recent work, *Contextualizing Cassian*, has developed the study of context in Cassian’s works.\(^\text{34}\) He reminds us that our understanding of Cassian rests upon a proper understanding of the social world of early fifth-century Roman Gaul. While writing his ascetic treatises, Cassian noticed


\(^{34}\) Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 17.
a unique feature of the Gallic Church, “the aristocratization of the Church in Gaul.” Noble status gradually came to be a prerequisite for ascetic life and episcopal office. According to Goodrich, Cassian’s writings show Cassian’s diagnosis of Gallic monasticism and his plans for reforming it. Gallic ascetics must be aware of the systematic and authoritative institutes of Egypt and begin again with absolute renunciation.

In his 2012 study, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*, Brown accepts Goodrich’s argument that Cassian’s main concern came from “the gentlemanly attitude toward wealth that had characterized the monks of Gaul.” He also suggests that for Cassian scholars, who have attempted to locate Cassian’s works in the Gallic social context, there seems to be a consensus of opinion about the social and religious background of *De institutio* and *Collationes patrum*. That is, Massilia was a haven which had not been harmed by the barbarian invasions of 405 to 406 or by civil war in regions of Gaul and Spain. In this growing crisis, Christian churchmen and monks began to assemble at Massilia. A particular group of the upper-class converts to the ascetic life gathered together in the monastery of Lérins near Massilia which was established by Honoratus of Arles. This noble-class then


36 Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 8–64.

37 Ibid., 117–150.


39 Ibid., 412.
moved from the monastery to the episcopate or to the priesthood in “Arles, Marseilles [Massilia] or the little cities of the Alpes Maritimes and the valley of the Rhone.”

Recent scholarship suggests that Cassian, after arriving at Massilia, witnessed a maze of monastic ideals and clerical ambition among aristocratic converts. His monastic works reveal that there were distinctive Gallic ecclesiastical and ascetic circumstances, which were very distant from his experience in Egyptian monasteries. Cassian, thus, challenged the ascetic lifestyle of the Gallic upper-class converts. He attempted to bring to their attention his unique teachings on Egyptian monasticism. Here the repeated emphasis on the monastic renunciation of wealth as the absolute prerequisite for true monastic life is never unintentional.

A serious examination of Cassian’s views on poverty has not come into the spotlight, as other theological topics have. However, some scholars have touched on topics related to the renunciation of wealth. For instance, de Vogüé briefly mentions that renunciation is a unique criterion for distinguishing a monastic community from the local church. He suggests that Cassian envisages renunciation as being divided into chastity, physical poverty, and obedience; these elements are the *abrenuntiatio prima*. Kinsella writes that the meaning of renunciation found in the seventh book is to create a perfect balance between renouncing all possessions and all anxiety. Newhauser examines how Cassian interprets Evagrius’

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40 Ibid., 412.

41 Cassian repeats the significance of literal and radical renunciation throughout *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum (De institutis)* 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 2.5.1, 4.1–4, 4.10, 4.13–15, 4.23, 4.32–43, 7.1–2, 7.7–19, 7.21, 7.25–30, 12.25–27, 12.32; *Collationes* 3.6.1, 3.7.5, 3.9, 4.20–21, 5.8, 10.8–10, 14.2, 18.5, 21.30, 24.1–2, 24.24, 24.26).


concepts of avarice to Gallic readers. However, these studies are fragmentary and limited. They have never addressed the fact that radical poverty, for Cassian, is a most significant subject. In addition, Cassian scholars have not identified which sources to use in order to develop Cassian’s understanding of poverty and how his understanding of poverty is located throughout his writings. Consequently, we do not have a deep knowledge of how radical poverty is associated with Cassian’s main spiritual theology. The following dissertation will examine this neglected theme in the research of Cassian’s ascetic literature.

Although scholarship has shown little interest in Cassian’s attitude toward poverty, avarice, and wealth, the study of poverty and wealth in early Christianity has recently come into the spotlight by the works of Hamman, Hengel, Countryman, and McGuckin, and González. Early studies on wealth and poverty were influenced by interest in social justice, liberation theology, and the dialogue between sociology and economics; the main concern was with how early Christians considered the origin, significance, and use of wealth. González, especially, provides an informative theological summary of the representative Christians’ (from New Testament to Augustine) understanding of wealth. Current scholars like Peter Brown and Susan Holman have begun to examine how early Christian bishops developed their positions on poverty, reflecting their socio-economic conditions, and how they then created the Christian way of helping the poor.


46 Susan R. Holman, The Hungry Are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Peter Brown, Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 2002); Peter Brown, Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD. Brown and Holman
Particularly, in his two recent and perceptive books, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (2002) and *Through the Eye of a Needle* (2012), Brown claims that the influx of wealth into the western church was caused by the conversion of the rich upper classes between 350 and 550, which in turn led western Christians to ask the question of how to manage wealth. Christian bishops, he argues, decided that wealth must be used for the poor above all else. This was in direct contrast to traditional Roman culture which viewed displays of civic patriotism and entertainment for citizens as the proper use for wealth. While *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* makes the aforementioned argument by analyzing the Eastern and Western representative bishops’ attitudes, *Through the Eye of a Needle* shows a far more vivid and detailed view of western Christian responses to wealth.

Brown deals comprehensively with ascetic attitudes toward wealth as found in Paulinus, John Cassian and the Lérins community. He also looks at the influence of ascetic ideals as reflected by Christian bishops in Late Antiquity and in the writings of Jerome on the use of money. Another impressive recent study of early Christian views on wealth and have a similar hypothesis that late fourth-century Christian bishops began to bring the poor to the attention of Roman society. However, while Brown uses various sources from the fourth century through the fifth; Holman focuses on the implication of the poor as reflected in the sermons of Cappadocian bishops (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus). In addition, for an informative presentation on the problems in approaching poverty and a new approach to poverty, see Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, and Wendy Mayer, eds., *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), 15–34.

47 Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, 1–44; Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 1–90. To be sure, some scholars have criticized Brown’s hypothesis. Osborn asks if “the detailed scholarship” of late antique thought and society really supports Brown’s arguments that late-antique Christian bishops were mainly interested in helping the poor. He suggests that Brown does not carefully look at sources coming from the “sixth-century” West and “the Eastern Empire” (Geraint Osborn, review of *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* by Peter Brown JRS 93 [2003]: 414–415). Finn argues that relief for the poor was not a unique factor for making episcopal power increase (Richard Finn, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice 313–450* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006]). Also, Samuel Rubenson criticizes *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, because Brown did not mention early ascetics’ influence on the discourse of the nature of poverty, relief for the poor, and almsgiving (Samuel Rubenson, “Power and Politics of Poverty in Early Monasticism,” in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church: Poverty and Riches*, eds. Geoffrey D. Dunn, David Luckensmeyer, and Lawrence Cross [Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2009], 108–109).

48 Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 208–240, 259–272, 411–432. Before Brown’s presentation, Caner analyzed various and complex sources coming from Syria, Constantinople, Egypt, Southern Gaul, and North Africa in order to examine the social implication and theological motivations of wandering
poverty, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (2008), edited by Susan Holman, focuses on the proper Christian responses to the cause of poverty, the use of wealth, the practice of charity, and equality through the use of late-antique Eastern ascetic and patristic sources.  

In this way, scholars are reconstructing a more practical and vivid response to poverty through deep reflection on the socio-economic world of Late Antiquity. They have taken the first step toward looking into how ascetic attitudes toward wealth and poverty are interrelated with Christian bishops and the process of creating a Christian discourse on the nature of poverty, charity, and wealth. However, my project on the significance of poverty in Cassian’s theological scheme will not focus on an examination of poverty based on socio-economic considerations. Rather, my main interest will be a theological analysis of an ascetic attitude toward wealth, poverty, and avarice. I will argue that Cassian’s understanding of poverty was influenced by his contemporary ecclesiastical thinkers as well as Egyptian and Gallic monks within the context of the Gallic social and political world. In this regard, my dissertation attempts to provide a new implication regarding John Cassian’s concept of poverty. His is a unique ascetic voice that has been ignored, not only by scholars of poverty and wealth in early Christianity, but also by Cassian scholars.

ascetics as a practice of voluntary poverty with its own principles, aims, and priorities (Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002], 19–242).

2. Thesis Statement, the Place of Radical Poverty in the Structure of *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum*, Methodology, and Procedure

As indicated above, the primary concern of my dissertation is to examine what renunciation of wealth means to John Cassian. The proper meaning of the renunciation of wealth is a subject that is scattered and repeated throughout his ascetic literature. The first book (the introduction of the first part), the fourth book (the medium between the first and second parts), and the twelfth book (the conclusion of the second part) in *De institutis* and twenty-fourth conference (the conclusion of *Collationes patrum*) deal with the significance of renunciation as the first step of monastic life and the most defining quality of a monk. In addition to the aforementioned texts, radical poverty is regarded as an important key for understanding avarice as one of the eight principal vices (the seventh book), the three-fold implications of renunciation (the third conference), and the relationship between the Jerusalem Church and its decline (the second book and eighteenth and twentyfirst conferences).^{50}

*De institutis* consists of a single preface and twelve books and *Collationes patrum* is divided into three parts (Conferences 1–10, 11–17, and 18–24) which have three distinctive prefaces. The twelve books of *De institutis* deal with two topics: ascetical daily discipline in cenobitic circumstance (Books 1–4) and the nature of the eight principal vices and how to remedy them (Books 5–12). The first volume attempts to illustrate how Cassian dedicated himself to showing Gallic monks that the ultimate achievement of cenobitic life can be found through the authentic practice of psalmody and prayer. In addition, he warns his readers that without perfect renunciation, avarice will disturb the monastic process.

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At first glance, *Collationes patrum*, which is comprised of three main parts, seems to be a broad and complex composition filled with different themes. However, as the previous section indicated, each of the three parts has its own smaller thematic units, or conferences. The units are arranged as follows: 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8 and 9–10 in the first part, 11–13, 14–15, and 16–17 in the second part, 18–20, 21–23, and 24 in the third part.51 Here, while “the first conferences (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 21)” remind the reader of the goals of monastic life, puritas cordis (purity of heart), charity, and unceasing contemplation, “the second conferences—the rest of the conferences” generally articulate the means for attaining its goals in various contexts.52 In proving the relationship between the conferences in *Collationes patrum*, de Vogüé claims that the thematic unity within “the first conferences” binds all the conferences together.

For instance, the first conference explains monastic goals. The monastic goals are divided into the immediate goal (*destinatio*), puritas cordis, and the ultimate end (*finis*), regnum Dei, achieved by attaining puritas cordis.53 The first conference tells us that puritas cordis is acquired by removing the vices, attaining the perfect love for God in “a perfect and utterly clean heart”54 and divine contemplation, “attached to divine things and to God.”55 Further, all these things are synonymous.56 Though these goals may not be completely achieved in this life,57 monks must strive for them by focusing on daily ascetic disciplines such as fasts, vigils, labour, prayer, and reading Scripture.58 Without ascetic disciplines,

52 Ibid., 105–121.
53 *Collationes* 1.2.1, 1.4.3-4.
54 *Collationes* 1.6.3, 1.7.1, 1.11.
55 *Collationes* 1.8.1-2.
56 *Collationes* 1.7.2, 1.11.1-2.
57 *Collationes* 1.10.3, 1.13.1.
58 *Collationes* 1.7.1, 1.17.2.
monks can neither be free from carnal thoughts nor anticipate the divine realities in this life.\textsuperscript{59} As a result, the first conference mainly asserts that the monks’ daily practice is not separated from his monastic purpose. The rest of “the first conferences” repeat these monastic goals.

In the third conference, \textit{puritas cordis} and divine contemplation are not different from three-fold renunciation— despising “all the wealth and resources of the world,” rejecting “the erstwhile behavior, vices, and affections of soul and body,” and calling “our mind away from everything that is present and visible.”\textsuperscript{60} While in the fifth conference, the monastic goals are met by removing the causes of the eight \textit{vitia}, in the ninth conference, monastic goals are attained by unceasing prayer, which is achieved when “the mind has been established in tranquility and has been freed from the bonds of every fleshly passion.”\textsuperscript{61} Thus, unceasing prayer is nothing less than the goal of monasticism. The eleventh conference, as the beginning of the second part, returns to perfect charity, one of the monastic goals, which is not well presented in the first part of \textit{Collationes patrum}.\textsuperscript{62} In the fourteenth conference, spiritual knowledge regarded as divine contemplation, perfection in love, and \textit{puritas cordis} can be gained by “maintaining the diligence in reading” of Scripture and the purification of passions.\textsuperscript{63} The eighteenth conference, the beginning of the third part, mainly deals with the Apostolic Church as the origin of Egyptian monasticism and its decline. The Apostolic Church is described as the place where monastic goals are fully embodied according to the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Collationes} 1.7.1, 1.17.2.
\item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{Collationes} 3.6.1.
\item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{Collationes} 9.6.5 (SC 54:46–47): “Cumque mens tali fuerit transquillitate fundata uel ab omnium carnalium passionum nexibus absoluta. . . apostolum illud inplebit: \textit{Sine intermissione orate}.”
\item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{Collationes} 11.7.1–11.15.
\item \textsuperscript{63} \textit{Collationes} 14.9.1–14.10.4.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
guidance of Apostles. The twenty-first conference explores fasting by which “purity of heart and body” and “a peaceful mind reconciled to its Creator” can be attained.64

Through such thematic unity, Cassian makes clear his monastic goals—\textit{puritas cordis}, charity, and contemplation. As indicated above, monastic practice is not split into daily ascetic practices. That is, the structure of \textit{Collationes patrum} reminds us that the end is in the ascetical disciplines.

However, Cassian claims that his two works are not separate. In the preface of the first part (1–10) of \textit{Collationes patrum}, he indicates the relationship between his two ascetic writings:

Consequently, let us proceed from the external and visible life of the monks, which we have summarized in the previous books [\textit{De institutis}], to the invisible, and from the practice of the canonical prayer of the inner man, and from the practice of canonical prayers let our discourse arise to the unceasing nature of that perpetual prayer which the Apostle commands. Thus the person who has read the previous work and is worthy of the name of that spiritual Jacob because of the supplanting of the carnal vices may now—taking up not so much my own institutes as those of the fathers and passing over to the deserts and as it were the dignity of Israel, thanks to an insight into the divine purity—be also similarly taught what must be observed at this summit of perfection.65

This says that the two works are meant to be read together. “The external and visible life of the monks” or \textit{πρακτική} by Cassian, are deepened and advanced by the twenty-four conferences as “the invisible character of the inner monk.”66

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64 \textit{Collationes} 21.16.2.

65 \textit{Collationes} 1Praef. 5 (ACW 57:30; SC 42:75): “Proinde ab exteriore ac uisibili monachorum cultu quem prioribus digessimus libris, ad inuisibilem interioris hominis habitum transeamus, et de canonicaoru orationum modo ad illius quam apostolus praecipit orationis perpetuae iugitatem ascendat eloquium, ut quisquis iam superioris operis lectione Iacob illius intelligibilis nomen carnalium uitorum subplantatione promeruit, nunc etiam non tam mea quam patrum instituta suscipliens diuinae iam puritatis intuitu ad meruit et ut ita dixerim dignitatem transiens Israhelis, quid in hoc quoque perfectionis culmine debet obseruare similiter instruatur.” As for the references to the three prefaces of Cassian’s \textit{Collationes patrum}, I will use the form 1Praef. (for the Preface to conferences 1–10), 2Praef. (conferences 11–17), and 3Praef. (conferences 18–24).

66 \textit{Collationes} 1Praef. 5; Pristas, “The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,”15–133.
Exactly how are *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum* bound together? As indicated above, four crucial points seem to connect the two monastic books: Books 1, 4, 12 of *De institutis* and Conference 24. They return again and again to the essential question offered by the first book: Who is a true monk? Or how can a true monk be formed? The answer to both questions is the same: renunciation of the world and inner passions. In this way, the four focal points seem to connect the thematic structures by reminding us that renunciation is a prerequisite to ascetic aims.

As will be discussed in the next Chapters, the implications of Cassian’s radical poverty, as suggested in the crucial parts dealing with monastic poverty, are as follows: 1) Cassian’s definition of true renunciation calls for monks to give up possessions at the initial stage of monastic life and maintain a self-sufficient life thereafter. Cassian traces the primary principles of radical poverty to the Egyptian desert fathers and idealizes them throughout his writings. For monks, this is the first step on the path to inner purification, 2) the emphasis on radical poverty is justified by examples of biblical figures so that it is the only way to follow the ideal of the Jerusalem Church, 3) based on human weakness, true renunciation requires unceasing effort (for both external and internal purification) throughout life. A remarkable feature of Cassian’s poverty is the requirement for physical poverty as the first step of monastic life and its continuity. Of course, apart from the four focal points, the nature of Cassian’s poverty is repeated and supplemented in the second and seventh books and the third, eighteenth, and twenty-first conferences.

Here important sources are found: biographies and rules of Egyptian desert monks and monastic theological expositions like *Vita Antonii*, Pachomian rules, *Vitae Pachomii*, and Evagrian works (*Practicus*, *De octo spiritibus malitiae*, *De malignis cogitationibus* and so on). For Cassian, only Egyptian cenobitic and anchoritic monasticism are authentic because
they descended from the Jerusalem Church.\footnote{De institutis 2.5.1; Collationes 18.5, 21.30.} Thus, it is natural for him to refer to historical documents associated with Egyptian monasticism.

Based on Egyptian sources, Cassian claims that perfect divestment of wealth, living a self-sufficient economic life, and the systematic pursuit of internal purity are necessary components of Egyptian poverty. To be sure, the reality of Egyptian monastic poverty is somewhat different. Cassian seems to recognize that even Egyptian desert groups had failed to keep radical poverty. To sidestep this, Cassian amplifies radical poverty as mentioned in \textit{Vita Antonii} and Pachomian materials and reinterprets the monastic scheme emphasizing internal purification.

The repetition of and emphasis on his idealized version of Egyptian radical poverty have everything to do with Cassian’s observation and diagnosis of Gallic monasticism. The preface of \textit{De institutis} shows us that in Gallic monasteries, there had been a lack of authentic Egyptian monastic practices and teachings.\footnote{De institutis Praef. 5, 7.} He observes that Gallic divergent rules and practices were established by “the arbitrary decision” of Gallic monks and did not correspond to the rules Cassian had experienced in Egypt.\footnote{De institutis Praef. 8.} Therefore, Gallic monks had not begun with the perfect renunciation of wealth. Instead, they brought money and possessions with them into the monastery and even maintained former private property.\footnote{De institutis 4.15.1.} They were also not self sufficient, had fallen into laziness, and were even prone to vice:

This is why in these regions we do not see any established monasteries with such a throng of brothers, because, inasmuch as they are not supported by the proceeds of their own toil, they cannot remain in them constantly. And even if sufficient provisions can somehow be supplied them through another person’s generosity, still the pleasure that they take in idleness and their wandering hearts do not allow them to

\footnote{De institutis 2.5.1; Collationes 18.5, 21.30.}
remain for very long in one spot. This is at the origin of the holy saying that comes from the ancient fathers of Egypt, that a monk who is working is struck by one demon, whereas an idler is destroyed by innumerable spirits.\textsuperscript{71}

As a result, Gallic ascetics could not follow the path to ascetic perfection.

However, it is not clear which Gallic monastic communities Cassian was writing about. There are some hints in the prefaces of \textit{De institutis} and \textit{Collationes patrum} showing that Cassian’s concern about Gallic monasticism was not restricted to the southern region of Gaul,\textsuperscript{72} but also included northern Gaul.\textsuperscript{73} To provide a little context, according to Friedrich Prinz, late antique Gallic monasticism was under the influence of two large monastic movements: the northern monasteries centering on Martin of Tours (ca.316–ca.397), Paulinus of Nola (354–431), and Sulpicius Severus (ca. 360–ca. 420), and the southern (Rhone) monasteries emanating from Honoratus of Arles (ca. 350–429) and his Lérinian followers.\textsuperscript{74} Therefore, Cassian’s rejection of the Martinian (northern) monastic tendency to focus on miraculous stories\textsuperscript{75} illustrates his concern for Gallic monasticism as a whole.

Reflecting upon Egyptian ideas of poverty within the Gallic monastic context helped

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{De institutis} 10.2.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{De institutis} were composed at the request of Castor, bishop of Julia Apta, who wanted to build a monastery in his region, the northwestern part of Massilia (\textit{De institutis Praef.} 2). The first series of \textit{Collationes patrum} (1–10) was dedicated to Castor’s brother, Leontius (ca. 400–ca. 432), bishop of Fréjus, and Helladius, perhaps the bishop of Arles before Honoratus (\textit{Collationes 1Praef.} 2). The second series of \textit{Collationes patrum} (11 to 17) was dedicated to Honoratus, the founder of the Lérinian ascetic community and the bishop of Arles and Eucherius, a Lérinian monk and bishop of Lyons (\textit{Collationes 2Praef.} 1). Its third part (18 to 24) was dedicated to four monks living on the Stoechadic islands near Massilia: three monks, Jovinian, Minervius, and Leontius, we know nothing about and the fourth, Theodore, bishop of Fréjus (\textit{Collationes 3Praef.} 1; Stewart, \textit{Cassian the Monk}, 18). In this way, the prefaces show us that Cassian was deeply involved with the monk-bishops of Lérins Island and the Rhone valley.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{De institutis Praef.} 8; Stewart, \textit{Cassian the Monk}, 17.

\textsuperscript{74} Prinz, \textit{Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich}, 19–93. To be sure, Conrad Leyser claims that such a division between Tours and Lérins monasticism was not apparent in the early fifth century when Cassian arrived. Even if Prinz’s study proves that there were two distinct monastic tendencies that provided for the development of aristocratic monk-bishops in late antique Gaul, Leyser maintains that extant historical sources are much too limited to make such a division. What the surviving materials suggest is that the context of Gallic ascetics was “more chaotic than we conventionally assume” (Conrad Leyser, \textit{Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great} [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 42).

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{De institutis} Praef. 8; Stewart, \textit{Cassian the Monk}, 17.
Cassian to create his own views of poverty. As indicated above, he accepts the basic understanding of Egyptian monastic poverty. However, Cassian's observation of the monastic practices in Gaul leads him to assert that human covetousness is never easily conquered. As a result, the monks must reject even trivial material goods throughout their lives. He views the fallen human soul as "sick" and though its will is not fully destroyed, it is always feeble under the challenge of inner desires. Cassian hesitates to say that full renunciation can be completely attained in this life. Avarice infects all material goods. The object gives rise to the desire. True renunciation is the continual process of fighting for external poverty and controlling the inner desire for wealth. Therefore, Cassian repeats his call for radical poverty as the initial step in monastic life again and again.

His attitude towards poverty plays a significant role in making his monastic program—influenced by Evagrius—reciprocal. In other words, at first glance, he provides a progressive monastic journey: moving from the practical and moral life involving the three virtues (renunciation, obedience, and humility) and the eight principle *vitia*, through *puritas cordis*, then to the contemplative life. However, reflecting upon the problems of Gallic monasticism, Cassian attempts to reconcile Evagrian theoretical ideas with Gallic practices. He simplifies the process to articulate the ultimate end attained by the contemplative stage and presents the interrelationship between the virtues and *puritas cordis*. Cassian's practical stage focuses on the process of achieving the ascetic virtues (renunciation, obedience, and humility). According to Cassian, from renunciation, obedience and humility flow. By working toward the three virtues, monks participate in moments of *puritas cordis* (perfect charity, divine contemplation, or tranquility of heart). However, given human frailty, renunciation is temporary and must be repeated. Thus, the success and failure of achieving the other virtues must be also repeated. The ascetic ideal is bound to daily discipline and is
expressed through the virtues. In this way, Cassian reminds us that monastic life is a ceaseless struggle.

Consequently, Cassian's views of poverty make his spiritual theology different not only from that of Evagrius, but also from the flexible theologies of Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Basil of Caesarea (330–379), John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), and Augustine (354–430).

In order to clarify the aforementioned thesis of my dissertation, in Chapter One, I will locate John Cassian in the early fifth-century Gallic church and monasticism. I will survey and analyze the proper primary and secondary materials in order to determine how Cassian’s monastic literature stands in context. There are many surviving documents related to Gallic ascetic groups (in the north and in the south). They report the movement of aristocrats away from the earthly life to the more noble vocation of the church. By accepting ascetic devotion and ecclesiastical leadership, noble men believed that they would become heavenly mediators, working with God on behalf of their community. But their aristocratic life style was not completely abandoned. They neither separated from the world nor renounced their wealth. They used their wealth to focus on ascetic practice, correspond with their Christian friends, welcome aristocratic guests, and distribute money for patronage. Finally, after leaving their monastery, they became bishops and intervened in worldly business.

The first part of Chapter One will briefly present what caused aristocrats to enter the monasteries and to hold ecclesiastical leadership. Further, the first part of Chapter One will analyze the meaning of ascetic devotion especially found in the writings related to Martin of Tours, Paulinus of Nola, and Honoratus of Arles. The second part of Chapter One will

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76 For example, Vita Martini, Chronica, and Dialogi of Sulpicius Severus, Epistulae and Carmina of Paulinus of Nola (ca. 354–431), Sermo de vita sancti Honorati of Hilary of Arles (ca. 401–449), and De laude Eremi and Epistola paraenetica de contemptu mundi of Eucherius of Lyons (?–ca. 449).

analyze how radical poverty can be understood based on the views of Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus (and their communities). It will also analyze Cassian’s critique and diagnosis of the fifth-century Gallic monasticism.

Chapter Two is concerned with Cassian’s sources on poverty; at times, confusing mixture of Scripture and Eastern and Western asceticism. However, it will show that Cassian’s main influences were Antony (ca. 251–356), Pachomius (ca. 292–346), and Evagrius (ca. 345–399). In addition, in Chapter Two, I will identify the basic concepts of poverty which Cassian wants to bring to the Gauls.

Chapters One and Two set the stage for Chapter Three which deals with the implications of Cassian’s radical poverty in his spiritual theological scheme. By comparing his poverty with the views of Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Augustine as well as the Egyptians’ and by analyzing renunciation of wealth as found in the Books and Conferences, Chapter Three will articulate the meaning of Cassian’s radical poverty developed within the Gallic context. I will also discuss how poverty is associated with other themes such as the monastic programme (practical and contemplative stages), the virtues, the eight principal vitia, and puritas cordis. In so doing, I will demonstrate that radical poverty plays a significant role in understanding Cassian’s spiritual theology as reflected in De institutis and Collationes patrum.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main points suggested in the dissertation. In addition, it presents the implications of what is found through the study of radical poverty as reflected in De institutis and Collationes patrum.
Chapter 1

The Gallic Background of John Cassian on Radical Poverty:
Gallic Monk-Bishops and Their Views of Radical Poverty in Early Fifth-Century Gaul

Chapter One explores the socio-political changes of fifth-century Gaul, its impact on local ecclesiastical and ascetic circumstances, and the way in which influential ascetic monks—Martin of Tours, Paulinus of Nola, and Honoratus of Arles—developed an understanding of radical poverty in the Gallic context. Chapter One will then present Cassian’s observation of Gallic monastic practices and the monks’ understanding of poverty.

As indicated in the Introduction, Cassian observed monasticism throughout Gaul. In the preface of De institutis, Cassian writes that “men of outstanding character” (such as Jerome and Basil) had put forth divergent rules.1 Due to their questionable experience with Egyptian monasticism,2 the existing institutes did not realize the apostolic and simple life of Egyptian monasticism.3 The second book of De institutis shows how Gallic monks lacked the orthodox, universal, and coherent practices of nocturnal prayer and psalmody as found in the Egyptian tradition.4 To make matters worse, many Gallic monks fell into laziness and could not resist temptation.5 He concludes that Gallic monasticism had not brought about ascetic perfection or even improvement.

According to Cassian, the problem stems from the absence of authentic and systematic Egyptian teachings and practices, which would lead monks into orthodoxy step-

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1 De institutis Praef. 5.
2 De institutis Praef. 7.
3 De institutis Praef. 3, 5, 7, 8.
4 De institutis 2.2.1, 2.7.1, 2.8.
5 De institutis 10.23.
by-step from the initial renunciation, through the proper process to a perfect end. Specifically, the monks had not begun their monastic life properly by renouncing their wealth and financial resources. He asserts that all the monks must begin by abandoning their “former possessions.” Passing over this initial step caused monks to be absorbed in their own desires, especially, avarice and pride. Consequently, they could not cope with the monastic disciplines. Without this “good beginning”, there cannot be a good process or a good monastic end. Gallic monasticism had disregarded this simple but essential truth.

Needless to say, Cassian’s criticism of Gallic monasticism is not unrelated to the socio-political changes of early fifth century Gaul which caused “the aristocratization of the Church in Gaul.” In other words, the nobility gradually chose to be monks and bishops in the rapidly changing world.

Upon Cassian’s arrival at Massilia, civil war and the invasion of barbarian groups caused turmoil. Germanic tribes—the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans—crossed the Rhine near Mainz in 406, sacking Mainz, Trier, Cologne, Rheims, and as far west as Aquitaine, the richest region of Gaul. Constantine III (?–411) was proclaimed emperor by the armies of

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6 In the fourth Book of De institutis and first and fourteenth conferences, we can see Cassian’s systematic monastic scheme based on Evagrian concepts. As will be explained in the last section, Cassian often emphasized the clear monastic journey, beginning from external poverty ending with the achievement of internal poverty: that is, removing inner vices. In so doing, we can see a significant clue to what Cassian’s critique of Gallic monasticism is. That is, they did not have a clear and authentic monastic map. Particularly, they had failed the foremost beginning, radical poverty so that they were never able to proceed toward monastic perfection.

7 De institutis 4.15.1 (ACW 58:85).
8 De institutis 4.3.1 (ACW 58:80).
9 De institutis 4.3.1–4.4 (ACW 58:79–80).
10 We need to remember that Roman aristocracy was fluid. Fifth-century Gallic aristocrats may be regarded as “the entire Gallo-Roman privileged classes,” that is, not only the empire-wide class of the super rich, that is, multi-provincial aristocrats like Paulinus of Nola, but also the nobles of Gallic local cities who held land and power only in their province. Obviously the ancient definition of a noble as “an elite group within Roman senate” was being lost in late antique Gaul (F. D. Gillard, “Senatorial Bishops in the Fourth Century,” HTR 77 [1984]: 153–175).
Britain in 406. In order to establish himself as an authentic emperor of the West, he attacked Italy the next year. Rome was sacked by Alaric (ca. 370–410) in 410. During the invasion and settlement of the Barbarians, native Gallic aristocrats began to withdraw into monasteries and to accept ecclesiastical leadership in order to maintain their wealth and standing in the community. Cassian challenged the ascetic lifestyle which the Gallic upper-class converts had established, especially in relation to monastic renunciation. In order to explore the significance of radical poverty as reflected in Cassian’s *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum*, it is useful to examine how these changes impacted Gallic asceticism and ecclesiastical leadership.

A two-fold approach is required: first, social changes and the attitudes of the upper class toward that transition, and second, the primary factors which caused nobility to become Christian ascetics and ecclesiastical leaders. This will provide the context in which Cassian composed his writings. In order to examine the issues, I will accept the hypotheses of Ralph Mathisen and Martin Heinzelmann. In *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*, Heinzelmann, through tomb inscriptions and biographical data of Gallic bishops, argues that Gallic bishops came from Roman noble families and thus had a tendency to regard episcopal office as an extension of social privilege. In *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul*, Ralph Mathisen develops Heinzelmann’s argument. He concludes that the early fifth-century nobility began to reinterpret their traditional aristocratic status. In particular, the noble came to value ecclesiastical offices much more highly. This new understanding of the traditional values led many Gallic aristocrats to become ascetics and bishops. In this context, for aristocratic monk-

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bishops, the privilege of episcopal office allowed them to protect their possessions and power. As late-antique scholarship suggests, this can be understood as a significant strategy for their survival in a transitional world.\(^\text{13}\)

However, in spite of the significance of his perceptive analyses, unlike Heinzelmann,\(^\text{14}\) Mathisen disregards religious devotion as a motive for monastic conversion. The extraordinary monastic conversions of Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus must not be ignored. Records show their faithfulness and the sincerity of their ascetic conversions motivated by an inner encounter with Jesus. Consequently, many monk-bishops may have been inspired by the ascetic devotion of these prominent monk-bishops.

However, as Mathisen indicates, the ascetic literature of the time also suggests that monk-bishops can be considered “heavenly aristocrats.” This means that they keep their position even in heaven and can intercede with God on behalf of their communities and citizens. Thus, it is natural for them to have a greater reputation and more honour than other elite men. Indeed, given the tumultuous situation of the day, the position of the monk-bishop became much more desirable, compared to the position of temporal aristocrat.

The Gallic ascetic documents say that though the aristocrats changed their position, they did not give up their previous lifestyles. And their (and their communities’) view of radical poverty is not clear. Therefore, to show the role of poverty in Gallic aristocratic asceticism, I will pay special attention to the views of monastic poverty of Martin, Paulinus, Honoratus and their followers.

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\(^{14}\) Heinzelmann deals with ascetic ideal of Gallic aristocrats, considering how their asceticism is related to the traditional Roman values and ethic (Heinzelmann, *Bischofherrschaft in Gallen*, 185–210).
1. Aristocrats and Church in Early Fifth-Century Gaul

As Bury observed in his *History of the Later Roman Empire,*\(^\text{15}\) there were important historical events that may have influenced the life and work of Cassian: the invasion of Vandals, Sueves, and Alans (406–407),\(^\text{16}\) the usurpation of Constantine III in Britain and Gaul and his fall (406–411),\(^\text{17}\) the advance of the Visigoths under Athaulf into Gaul and the ensuing struggle to gain control of the western empire against other barbarians in Gaul and Spain (412–422),\(^\text{18}\) and Aëtius’ victory over the Visigoths near Arles and the Franks in northern Gaul (430–432). According to traditional political history, the appearance of the barbarians and their local usurpation as new sovereign powers brought about immediate and direct change in the social world throughout all of Gaul. Successive waves of barbarian invasions in Gaul began to reshape the appearance of the Roman imperial system. There is no doubt that they had a massive impact on the stability and complexion of the Roman Empire. Traditionally, there has been agreement among historians that fifth-century Gaul was in a whirlpool of socio-political strife.

However, for the last few decades, many historians have minimized the socio-political

\(^{15}\) Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire,* 185–211.

\(^{16}\) On December 31, 406, they crossed over the frozen Rhine River into northern Gaul. The most prominent among them were the Vandals, made up of two main groups, the Asdings and the Siling. The Vandals advanced across Gaul without hesitation and numerous towns and cities fell into their hands. There were fears for a time that they might cross the Channel and enter Britain, but instead they turned to the south and made for the Pyrenees and Spain. Much of the Gallic countryside was conquered. A large proportion of the Vandals had nominally been converted to Christianity. They embraced a homoian Arian faith, and they remained deeply committed to this position (Jerome, *Epistulae* 123 ed. Isidore Hilberg, CSEL 56.1 [Vienna: Tempsky, 1996]; W. H. Fremantle, trans., *Jerome: Letters and Select Works,* NPNF 1/6 [1893; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994], 230–238; Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire,* 185–186; Heather, “Why Did the Barbarians Cross the Rhine?,” 3–4).

\(^{17}\) Constantine III crossed to Gaul in 407, pinned the barbarian invaders down in northern Gaul, and then moved quickly to invade Italy. He extended his rule to Spain in 408 (Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire,* 188–194; Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* 284–602, 185–187).

\(^{18}\) As the successor of Alaric, a Gothic commander, Athaulf led his Goths into Gaul in 412. Eventually, they were given fertile land in the Garonne Valley in Aquitania from Toulouse to Bordeaux, which satisfied them at last in their lengthy quest for economic self-sufficiency (Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire,* 185–211).
change brought about by the barbarians. Liebeschuetz criticizes the traditional view that the depopulation of cities was caused by barbarian invasion and civil wars by looking at new evidence and pointing out differences within the region. In other words, consulting only written accounts creates an incomplete and fragmentary picture. Archeological evidence reveals that in northern Gaul (though threatened by German tribes), many existing cities did not disappear, and in the south commercial centers like Massilia were thriving. Based on this, scholars have attempted to clarify the social, economic, cultural and ideological complexity and diversity of late-antique Gaul. Consequently, they claim that fifth-century Gallic society was not seriously threatened by the barbarian invasion.

Despite this current scholarship, we cannot say that the Gallic upper classes were not shaken by socio-political crises. Rather, surviving documents show that the Gallic elite felt

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fear and apprehension for their safety and fortune. Many aristocrats, already sensitive to the gradual decline of the Roman administration, felt the reduction of their traditional offices. Further, they thought that new barbarian rulers did not properly support the existing upper classes’ privileges.\(^{23}\)

In his *Epistula* written to Ageruchia, an upper-class Gallic woman, Jerome shows how Gallic aristocrats viewed the barbarian invasion and settlement:

Savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun all parts of Gaul. The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, had been laid waste by hordes of Quadi, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alans, Gepids, Herules, Saxons, Burgundians, Alemanni and—alas! For the commonwealth! —even Pannonians . . . . The once noble city of Moguntiacum has been captured and destroyed. In its church many thousands have been massacred. The people of Vangium after standing a long siege have been extirpated. The powerful city of Rheims, the Ambiani, the Altrebatae, the Belgians on the skirts of the world, Tournay, Spires, and Strasburg have fallen to Germany: while the provinces of Aquitaine and of the Nine Nations, of Lyons and of Narbonne are with the exception of a few cities one universal scene of desolation. And those which the sword spares without, famine ravages within. I cannot speak without tears of Toulouse which has been kept from falling hitherto by the merits of its reverend bishop Exuperius.\(^{24}\)

Jerome used the barbarian invasion of Gaul to show Ageruchia that the time of the antichrist as reflected in Mt 24:19 was near.\(^{25}\) Thus, we do not need to accept his narrative of the barbarian violence literally. But we can easily see how the Gallic privileged felt in the face of the barbarian invasion. Jerome’s *Epistula* illustrates many of the miseries such as the destruction, desolation, and siege of powerful cities that Gallic aristocrats witnessed.

\(^{23}\) Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul*, x; as for Gallic Aristocrats and Church in the fifth-century Gaul as a significant context of Cassian in Gaul, I am much indebted to the creative writings of the modern scholars of the field: Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court AD 364–425*; Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*; Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul*; Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*.

\(^{24}\) *Epistulae* 123.16 (NPNF 6:236–237).

\(^{25}\) *Epistulae* 123.16.
The shock and terror of the Gallic nobility is also well reported by direct witness, the Gallic noble Salvian of Marseilles (ca. 400–ca. 480). In the sixth book of *De gubernatione Dei*, Salvian reveals the effects of the Barbarians on Gallic nobility:

... [I]n the cities of Gaul almost all the more excellent men have been made worse by their misfortunes. Indeed, I myself have seen at Trier men, noble in birth and elevated in dignity, who, though already despoiled and plundered, were actually less ruined in property than in morality. Though they were despoiled and stripped, some thing of their property still remained to them, but nothing whatsoever of self-restraint.26

Despite the effectiveness of Roman control throughout the fifth century, socio-political power began to be handed over to local leaders. In this context, Gallic Churches gradually became the center of cultural and administrative controls for local cities.27 Gallic nobles regularly had been accepted into Christian ascetic life and episcopal office. An early example is given in the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus, a well-educated Gallo-Roman noble from Aquitaine, friend of Paulinus of Nola, and a monk:

This must be regarded as all the more remarkable, in that many of the monks were thought to be nobles who, after a far different upbringing, had constrained themselves to such practices of humility and patience. A number of them we later saw as bishops. And what city or what church would not have wished for itself a bishop from Martin’s monastery?28

Another example, Honoratus should be mentioned. He was a man from a high ranking consular family in central Gaul and founded the Lérinian monastery in 400.29 Many Lérinian

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27 In order to bring attention to the importance of the rise of Gallic Christianity which incorporated the roles of traditional aristocratic lifestyle and classical culture with ecclesiastical work, Van Dam takes Germanus of Auxerre and Salvian of Marseilles as examples (Van Dam, “The Pirenne Thesis and Fifth-Century Gaul,” 326–330; Harries, “Christianity and the City in Late Roman Gaul,” 77-98; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, 161–167; Ian N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* [London: Pearson Education, 1994], 20–32).


29 As for Lérinian monasticism and Lérinian aristocratic monk-bishops, see Griffe, *La Gaul chrétienne*
monks, including Honoratus, Hilary of Arles (ca. 403–449), Faustus of Riez (405/410–495) and Eucherius of Lyons (?–ca. 449), became bishops in southern Gaul.

Heinzelmann and Mathisen have been concerned with why and how aristocrats dedicated themselves to ascetical and episcopal lives. They take into consideration how the Gallic aristocrats incorporated their traditional noble criteria into Christian ideals, maintaining their Roman socio-political privileges and cultural identification. Heinzelmann pays special attention to the socio-political cause for the increase of Christian aristocratic bishops in fifth-and-sixth-century Gaul. He argues that even if the conversion of the Gallic aristocrats to Christianity can be shown as an historical pinnacle in Late Antiquity, the traditional aristocratic criteria, which had been canonized since the Roman Republic, were still valid for the aristocratic bishops. Thus, the Gallic aristocrats began to find ways to secure their noble status in the Gallic episcopate. In order to investigate the issue above, Mathisen uses documents such as letters, sermons, biographies, and law codes written by Gallic authors from the late fourth to the early sixth centuries. In so doing, he develops Heinzelmann’s hypothesis in more detail by clarifying how the aristocrats incorporated their traditional roles and ideals into Christian clerical life.

Mathisen indicates that during the declining Roman rule, Gallic aristocrats were dispossessed of the opportunity to enhance their careers and they therefore established a new plan for their ambitions by participating in episcopal office. The *Epistulae* of Sidonius

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Apollinaris (ca. 430–ca. 480) support Mathisen’s claim. Sidonius was of noble descent, his father and grandfather being prefects of the pretorium of the Gauls, and he became the bishop of the Arveni (Clermont in Auvergne) around 470.33 In his Epistula written to Ecdicius, Sidonius describes how the nobility had struggled to secure their lives in a growing crisis:

Every counsel of hope or of despair we are prepared to risk with you [Ecdicius] in our midst, with you as our leader. If the state [Roman imperial government] has neither strength nor soldiers, if (as report has it) the Emperor Anthemius has no resources, then our nobility has resolved under your guidance its country or its hair.34

Here Sidonius says that there were two main choices of many Gallic aristocrats overcoming the difficult times: dimittere patriam (escaping from their homeland) or dimittere capillos (shaving their heads, that is, becoming a monk or cleric). Sidonius goes on to explains why dimittere capillos, that is, finding their havens in monasteries or churches, was important to Gallic nobility:

[A] greeting to you [Ferreolus] could now be more fittingly appended to a list of bishops than senators and deeming it more proper for you to be placed among the perfected saints of Christ than among the perfects of Valentinian [Valentinianus III, 425–455]. . . . When a public festival provides a banquet the last guest at the first table ranks before the first guest at the second table; so beyond question, according to the view of the best men, the humblest ecclesiastic ranks above the most exalted secular dignitary.35

Even if his description is not a universal for Gallic noble men, we can suppose that it is true that some of the aristocrats gradually came to regard religious leadership as a heavenly aristocratic duty to be performed with authority and privilege. Roman aristocrats had been traditionally called the boni or the optimi. Here the boni means those who met all or most of

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the aristocratic criteria such as “good ancestry, wealth and property, social connections, good character, and a classical education.” However, the Epistulae of Sidonius show that Gallic nobles understood the *boni* as those who pursue heavenly honours above and beyond secular reputation and nobility.

Consequently, Mathisen defines such a reinterpretation of the criteria as an active “strategy for survival” made by aristocrats. In this era, both strong central power and local political power were dwindling. The survival of Gallic local cities gradually came to depend on a strong and effective ecclesiastical leader. Gallo-Roman aristocratic bishops became powerful because they were viewed as the true successors of the Roman imperial officials. For these reasons, as both Heinzelmann and Mathisen suggest, aristocratic monk-bishops held their authoritative ecclesiastical positions without losing their existing privilege, authority, and identity.

Sulpicius Severus, in his *Chronica*, writes a concise history from Creation to the early fifth century. He says that in contrast to the pure faith motivation of bishops during the period of the martyrs (Diocletian [ca. 240–316] and Maximian [ca. 250–310]), Gallic episcopal office began to be occupied by secular ambition:

[U]nder the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, a most bitter persecution which, for ten continuous years, wasted the people of God. At this period, almost the whole was stained with the sacred blood of the martyrs. In fact, they vied with each other in rushing upon these glorious struggles and martyrdom by glorious death was then much more keenly sought after than bishoprics are now attempted to be got by

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38 Ibid., 305–308; For another source on episcopal roles in late antique Gaul, see Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, 161–167; Jill Harries, “Christianity and the City in Late Roman Gaul,” 82–96.
wicked ambition.\textsuperscript{40} Sulpicius’ account seems to support the hypotheses of Heinzelmann and Mathisen. However, the motivation of Gallic nobility, as seen in Sidonius’ \textit{Epistulae}, cannot be simply restricted to their ambitious strategies for maintaining privilege. Mathisen attempts to make a clear argument about the use of clerical offices as the aristocrats’ strategic choice for survival.

However, the simplicity of his well-ordered argument raises problems. Unfortunately, he is not much concerned with the diverse contexts and intentions of the Gallic documents, especially of the ecclesiastical writers: Martin of Tours, Paulinus of Nola, and Honoratus of Arles. Gallic ascetic writings provide another significant motivational element: pure commitment to Christian ideals (giving up secular noble status, giving alms to the poor, and enhancing missionary work). As Gallic monastic forefathers, their lives act as an important motivation for the ascetic conversion of the noble.\textsuperscript{41}

The success of the \textit{Vita Martini} and the example of the rapid abandonment of the secular world by Paulinus, a senatorial aristocrat, paved the way for the conversion of Gallic aristocrats.\textsuperscript{42} Sulpicius Severus (ca. 363–425) began to write the \textit{Vita Martini} around 396 in order to present Martin as an illustrious ascetic and authoritative bishop to ascetic converts.\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Chronica} 2.32.2 (SC 441:298; NPNF 2/11:112): “Diocletiano et Maximiano imperantibus acerbissima persecutio exorta, quae per decem continuos annos plebem Dei depopulata est. qua tempestate omnis fere sacro martyrum cruore orbis infectus est; quippe certatim gloriosa in certamina ruebatur multoque avidius tum martyria gloriosis mortibus quaerebantur, quam nunc episcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur.”
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Van Dam, \textit{Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul}, 115–140. For Martin, regarded as the ascetic founder of Gallican Church, Paulinus of Nola, Sulpicius Severus, Honoratus of Arles, and other fifth-century monk-bishops, their commitment to Christianity was generally to embrace the ascetic life. See Joseph T. Lienhard, \textit{Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism} (Cologne and Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1977), 30–51, 82–110; M. A. Wes, “Crisis and Conversion in Fifth-century Gaul: Aristocrats and Ascetics between ‘Horizontality’ and ‘Verticality’,” in \textit{Fifth-century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?}, 252–263.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Van Dam and Salzman indicate that Martin’s conversion must be mentioned when we discuss the causes of conversion for Gallic aristocrats (Van Dam, \textit{Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul}, 116; Michele R. Salzman, \textit{The Making of Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire} [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002], 89–90).
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Sulpicius was an ascetic convert who renounced his noble life. He abandoned his rights to his father’s property and the wealth gained through his marriage, and he sold his possessions to help the poor. What is interesting is that he kept one estate (Primuliacum, west of Toulouse) for his own use, though he transferred
He defended ascetic circles in Gaul and justified the ascetic life. Therefore, in the *Vita Martini*, Sulpicius describes Martin’s conversion to asceticism and pursuit of ascetic devotion.

According to the *Vita*, Martin’s conversion began with an encounter with Jesus, as a beggar, with whom he shared his garment:

When night had come and he was deep in sleep, Martin beheld Christ, clothed in that part of his own cloak with which he had covered the pauper. He was bidden to look attentively upon the Lord and to recognize the garment he had given. And soon, to the throng of angels standing about, he heard Jesus saying in a clear voice: “Martin, still a catechumen, has covered me with this cloak.” The Lord, in declaring that it was He who had been clothed in the person of the pauper, was truly mindful of His own words uttered long ago: “As long as you did it to one of these my least, you did it to me.” Further, to strengthen the evidence of such a good deed, He deigned to show Himself in the very garment the pauper had received.\(^{44}\)

Martin then decided to be baptized and began his spiritual journey pursuing *imitatio Christi*. To be sure, the *Vita* does not suggest that his ascetic odyssey was easy and comfortable. He was exiled from his hometown and had to take refuge on an island called Gallinaria because of his opposition to the Arians.\(^{45}\) Finally, he was warmly welcomed by Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 300–ca. 368) and founded his own monastery near Poitiers.\(^{46}\) Sulpicius suggests to his readers that one of Martin’s ultimate concerns was to follow Jesus in the poor (ascetic) way.


\(^{44}\) *Vita Martini* 3.3–4 (FOTC 7:107–108).

\(^{45}\) *Vita Martini* 6.5.

\(^{46}\) *Vita Martini* 7.1.
In the *Vita Martini*, Sulpicius notes Martin’s desire to maintain an ascetic life outside the bounds of Tours after he had become a bishop:

> It is not within our power to describe the quality and grandeur of Martin’s life, once he had assumed the office of bishop. What he had been before, he firmly continued to be. There was the same humility in his heart, the same poverty in his dress. Lacking nothing in authority and grace, he fulfilled the dignity of a bishop, yet did not abandon the virtuous resolve of a monk. So, for a while he used a cell attached to the church. *Then, unable to bear up under the distraction caused by throngs of visitors, he set up for himself a monastery some two miles outside the city* [emphasis added].

Sulpicius praises the marvelous achievements of Martin which rest on his previous monastic vocation. There may be no doubt that whoever was inspired by the *Vita Martini* to become an ascetic would attempt to follow the ascetic model of Martin: renunciation of the world, voluntary poverty, charity, and the acceptance of the office of bishop as the process of a spiritual journey.

In addition to Martin of Tours in the *Vita*, another exemplary model is Paulinus of Nola. In fact, Sulpicius Severus introduces Paulinus and tries to honour him along with Martin in the *Vita Martini*. Sulpicius describes Paulinus as “a man whose example was destined to be very powerful (*magni vir postmodum futurus exempli*).” He also reports that Martin, in his conversation with Sulpicius, recognized Paulinus as an outstanding example of an ascetic who abandoned worldly desires. Through such rhetoric, it is suggested in an indirect way that Paulinus’ renunciation of secular values and wealth and his acceptance of the ascetic life were inspired by Martin of Tours.

Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus, a Gallic senatorial aristocrat, born in Bordeaux in

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50 *Vita Martini* 25.4.
the early 350s, left Italy where he had served as Suffect Consul and Governor of Campania under Gratian (359–383). He returned to his native Bordeaux in order to enjoy his retreat to the countryside (otium ruris) around 383.\(^{51}\) Between staying in the Gallic countryside and his departure through Gaul and Spain for Nola, Italy, in the late spring of 395, he experienced momentous changes in his life: he became associated with Martin of Tours, he was baptized by Delphinus of Bordeaux (?–403), and he renounced his property and secular lifestyle around 393.\(^{52}\) During this period, he changed from a secular bonus to an exemplary Christian ascetic. In his poems 10 and 11, sent to Ausonius (ca. 310–ca. 394) after his renunciation, one finds what the abandonment of earthly things and the adoption of an ascetic life mean to Paulinus. Paulinus, begging Ausonius not to condemn his ascetic conversion, attempts to explain who Christian ascetics are and what they pursue:

[T]here are some who have as celibates adopted Christ and follow this form of life. It is not through lack of mental resource or barbaric habits that they choose to live in uninhabited places. They turn towards the stars on high and look to God. They concentrate on the vision of God and the depths of truth. Freed from empty occupations, they love the leisure prescribed by Christ and their own love of salvation, and they loathe the din of public affairs, the bustle of business, and all the activity that is hostile to God’s gifts. In hope and faith they follow God, for there is the guarantee of a reward which the Creator will certainly bestow on those who do not despair, provided that the present world and its empty possessions are not their master and their glowing minds reject things visible to win what is invisible, attaining the secret realms of heaven.\(^{53}\)

Paulinus confesses that he was so eager to follow the way of Christ that he became ashamed of his own life, for he was still dwelling “in pleasant surroundings, lodging on the pleasant


\(^{52}\) Ibid., 53–77.

shore of a luxuriant coast.” Eventually, he came to be willing to renounce the secular world:
“A mind strengthened by divine power experiences no sensitive shame, and the fame which I
spurn in this world is restored to me at Christ’s adjudication.”

Trout claims that the ascetic conversion of Paulinus and his ecclesiastical work as
bishop of Nola were most deeply inspired by Martin of Tours, though the ascetic influence of
Therasia (his devout wife), Victricius of Vienne, and Ambrose of Milan cannot be
overlooked. Martin had cured Paulinus’ eye malady, a miracle that caused Paulinus to
respect the bishop of Tours. He even called Martin to his deathbed. More importantly,
however, Paulinus found a blueprint for the Christian life in Martin, who showed that
monastic renunciation could be successfully married to episcopal office.

There is little doubt that as monk-bishops, Martin and Paulinus inspired many Gauls,
particularly nobles, to pursue personal ascetic devotion and its realization in their local
communities. Van Dam notes how significant “the juxtaposition of these two portraits” was
for establishing ecclesiastical leadership in the local communities of late antique Gaul:

The implications of the juxtaposition of these two portraits go further. . . . Although
Martin had been, in almost every possible way, a “outsider” to Gallic society, his
career demonstrates how Christian communities and their leaders appropriated the
ideology and relationships of secular society. As a result, Christianity became more
appealing to local aristocrats. . . . Paulinus of Nola is one example of an “insider” to
Gallic society who ostensibly discarded these traditional perquisites in order to
become a convert, a monk, and finally a bishop in Italy. Elsewhere in Gaul we begin
to see the same transformation as local aristocrats, whether they first had a civil career
or not, entered the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

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54 Carmina 10.181 (CSEL 30:32; ACW 40:63).
56 Trout, Paulinus of Nola, 61–62.
57 Ibid., 63.
58 Van Dam, Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul, 116.
Finally, Honoratus of Arles needs to be mentioned. He established a southern Gallic ascetic centre by building a monumental monastery on the small island of Lérins. He may have come from “well-placed local families, attached to the little ‘senate’—the town councils—of his city.”

According to Hilary of Arles (ca. 401–ca. 449), Honoratus’ kinsman and disciple, in *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*, the young Honoratus converted to ascetic Christianity and left his hometown for a spiritual journey around the Mediterranean before he arrived at Lérins. There Honoratus provided a refuge to those who longed for the inner life of the desert.

However, the end of his spiritual odyssey was not simply to establish a monastic community. As an ascetic monk, Honoratus became bishop of Arles around 426. His example of accepting both ascetic life and episcopal office was followed by many aristocratic monk-bishops. According to Rosemarie Nürnberg, the conversion of Honoratus and his followers to asceticism and their desire for realizing ascetical ideals in the secular world provided the foundation and justification for increasing episcopal power in the social world of late antique Gaul. In other words, it is “Liebe zu Gott” and “sehnsuchtsvolle Suche nach Christus” that led Honoratus and his monks into “Liebe zur Wüste.” However, for the Lérinians, “Liebe zu Gott” is not completed only by pursuing ascetic virtues in monastic cells. The Lérinian monks must proceed toward “Liebe zum Nächsten” in order to achieve love of God. Their socially motivated charitable activities in their bishoprics emanated from such an ascetic ideal. In this way, in the midst of a changing social world that brought about serious threats

59 Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 422.
62 Ibid., 102–103.
63 Ibid., 127–139.
to their survival and privileges, Gallic nobility could choose the way of ascetic devotion, following the models of their Gallic monastic forefathers.

Through a close reading of the ascetic literature associated with Martin and Honoratus, we can suppose along with Mathisen that that the religious devotion to ascetic and ecclesiastical works represents the vocation of the “heavenly aristocrat.” Thus, in the mind of the authors, it is natural that the career of the monk-bishop receives the highest honour and reputation of all the aristocrats of the world. Further, in Sulpicius’ accounts of the life of Martin (Dialogi), we find that heavenly status is considered nobler than any earthly office. Sulpicius writes about Martin’s attempt to visit the emperor Valentinian (321–375). Valentinian did not want to see Martin. The emperor was then surrounded by the fire of the divine power, which forced Valentinian to welcome Martin and to give “consent to everything before he was asked.” To Sulpicius, Martin, as a bishop, was more powerful than the emperor. In addition, Sulpicius reports that the prefect Vincentius always respected Martin so that “he often asked Martin to have him for dinner in his monastery” when Vincentius visited the city of Tours.

Sulpicius does not hesitate to regard the heavenly aristocrats as “the Apostles and the Prophets” and the ones who “went beyond human nature.” Here Sulpicius wants to show his readers that the life of a monk-bishop is to go beyond human nature and to intercede with God on behalf of their community and citizens.

Hilary depicts Honoratus as a heavenly aristocrat respected by all men. According to the Sermo de vita sancti Honorati, after renouncing the world and establishing his monastery,

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64 Dialogi 2.5 (FOTC 7:210).
65 Dialogi 1.25.
66 Dialogi 2.5.
67 Dialogi 2.4.
Honoratus continued his relationships with the aristocrats in southern Gaul. In the accounts of the death of Honoratus, Hilary says that “the high public officials (the prefect and ex-prefects) began to flock to him” and to hear his last sermon about the meaningless of worldly pleasure and the importance of heavenly life.\textsuperscript{68} He passed away around the highest men of the province. Hilary also indicates that the holy life of his master was being respected and honoured by even the elite men and finally became even higher by “his patronage in heaven.”\textsuperscript{69}

For scholars of late antiquity, as we have seen, the appearance of the Gallic aristocratic monk-bishop has been regarded as a remarkable feature of this transitional time. Heinzelmann and Mathisen have developed an argument that in the face of the crisis, the aristocrats accommodated themselves to the new circumstances by regarding clerical offices as the more valuable duties of the \textit{boni}. Particularly the ecclesiastical monastic literature show us that the ascetic devotion to an encounter with Christ and following his life is a significant motive for aristocratic conversion facing the changing crisis. However, perhaps, the idea of imitating Christ and becoming heavenly aristocrats need not deprive them of enjoying glory in this world was an important motivation for fifth-century Gauls to become monk-bishops.

\textbf{2. Aristocratic Monk-Bishops’ Views on Radical Poverty: The Ascetic Poverty of Gallic Monastic Forerunners, Martin of Tours, Paulinus of Nola, and Honoratus of Arles}

How can Gallic monks’ monastic poverty be understood? Sulpicius, in his \textit{Dialogi}, notes an important characteristic of Gallic monasticism as reflected in the life of Martin. Unlike the radically isolated hermits of Egyptian monasticism, Martin was surrounded by

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Sermo de vita sancti Honorati} 32.

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Sermo de vita sancti Honorati} 35.
“the thronging community of men.” According to Sulpicius, Martin’s ascetic life is more honorable than that of his Egyptian counterparts because he maintained ascetic virtue and perfection in the midst of human community. As previously mentioned, Gallic ascetics thought of themselves as heavenly noblemen, who could intercede with God on behalf of their cities as well as their monastic communities. In this regard, their attitude towards monastic renunciation is quite different from that of the Egyptian desert fathers. In Gaul, renunciation was not simply the process of continuous inner purification performed on the basis of radical poverty, perfect separation from worldly duties, affairs, and friends, and rigorous rules. Rather, monk-bishops retained their existing possessions, money, and properties. Further, they managed financial resources donated by individual supporters and the church. The resources were used for ascetic life including the study of Christian doctrines, writing literature, assisting guests and the poor, and solving various problems in their bishoprics. To sum up, for Gallic monks, radical poverty is not about giving up material wealth, but about putting that wealth to good use.

To understand Martin’s attitude towards radical poverty, we need to read the Vita Martini and Dialogi of Sulpicius with a critical eye. It is possible that the Vita Martini was composed to defend Martin and his Gallic ascetic followers against attacks by the majority of the Gallo-Roman episcopate. Fontaine suggests that the Vita of Sulpicius is an apology for Martin and his followers:

La Vita veut à la fois défendre et convaincre. Elle est le dernier et sans doute le meilleur plaidoyer d’un avocat converti à l’ascétisme et d’un orateur converti à la biographie édifiante. Même s’il se réduit aux dimensions d’une narratio démesurée, si l’argumentation n’y figure que comme un accompagnement discret et fragmentaire

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70 Dialogi 1.24.
71 Dialogi 1.24.
72 Dialogi 3.12 (FOTC 7:241).
du récit, on conviendra qu’il donne une assez haute idée de l’éloquence dans la Gaule romaine du IVe siècle.\textsuperscript{73}

To maximize its apologetic purpose, Martin as depicted in the \textit{Vita} is idealized by drawing special attention to the ascetic virtues Martin and his community had, but his adversaries lacked.\textsuperscript{74} Thus, Sulpicius attempts to show Martin’s poverty as perfect.

According to the \textit{Vita}, the ascetic conversion of Martin began through an encounter with Jesus as a beggar.\textsuperscript{75} Sulpicius uses this story to tell his readers to follow Jesus in poverty, that is, to retain a humble life, even in episcopal office. In the second of the \textit{Dialogi}, Martin’s humble life is described by his disciple, Gallus:

Martin never used the bishop’s chair. In fact, no one ever saw him use it in the church proper. In this he was unlike a certain bishop whom, to my embarrassment, I recently saw seated high on a towering throne, not unlike an emperor’s tribunal. All this while, Martin sat on a rustic bench of the kind that slaves use.\textsuperscript{76}

In spite of accepting the episcopate, the Martin of the \textit{Vita} kept “the same humility in his heart, the same poverty in his dress”\textsuperscript{77} as a monk. Martin in his mind and life was never far from the poor monk. Martin rejected a “towering throne” and concentrated only on his duty, not on his privilege.

Did Martin’s renunciation mean physical poverty of possessions and the maintenance of poverty as a principle in his community? In the third \textit{Dialogus} and the \textit{Vita}, there is a hint at Martin’s attitude towards wealth. When a Christian named Lycontius asked Martin to help his servants and family suffering from a severe epidemic, Martin prayed and fasted for seven days until the household recovered. Lycontius, then, brought a hundred pounds of silver to

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\textsuperscript{73} Sulpicius Severus, \textit{Vita Martini}, SC 133, 83–84.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Vita Martini} 3.3–4.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Dialogi} 2.1.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Vita Martini} 10.1 (SC133:272; FOTC 7:117).
\end{flushright}
the bishop. However, Martin did not use the money for his monastery. Instead, he accepted the money to ransom captives.

Before the bullion crossed the threshold of the monastery, he at once designated it to be used in ransoming captives. Some of the brothers suggested to him that a part of the sum be reserved to meet monastery expenses: the whole community, they said was badly off as regards food, and many lacked clothing. To this Martin replied: ‘It is for the Church to feed and clothe us, so long as we are seen seeking nothing for our own use.’

Sulpicius does his best to emphasize Martin’s humility and poverty by making the statement: “The blessed man neither rejected nor accepted [his money].” The Dialogi reveal two clues. First, Martin decided to use the money for the “ransoms of captives.” Second, he recognized that his monastery could be supported by the Church of Tours for which Martin was responsible. The two accounts say that Martin never rejected any donation from outsiders, and he thought that wealth could be used for public works.

Chapter 10 of the Vita, further, clarifies the Martin’s attitude toward poverty. The monastery was established very near the city of Tours. It was located close enough for Martin to be involved in ecclesiastical duties at any time. In Martin’s monastery, the principle of common ownership which might be reflected in Acts 4 is applied to all the monks. The rule of Martin’s monastery is also similar to that of Egyptian cenobitic monasticism found in the Pachomian rule introduced by Jerome.

Unlike the Egyptian cenobites, the Vita has no mention of noble monks renouncing

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78 Dialogi 3.14.
80 Vita Martini 10.
81 Vita Martini 10.6 (SC 133:274; FOTC 7:117): “Nemo ibi quicquam proprium habebat.”
82 Jerome, Regula S. Pachomii, Praecepta, 81 ed. Armand Boon (Louvain: Bureaux de la revue, 1932); Armand Veilleux, trans., The Rules of Saint Pachomius (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 2:159: “In his house and cell, no one shall have anything except what is prescribed for all together by the law of the monastery.”
their existing wealth and working for their own survival. Perhaps, as I said above, their income was also supplemented by the church of Tours. As Clare Stancliffe observes, Martin’s disciples did not perform manual work for their survival.\textsuperscript{84} Rather, their primary task in the monastery was to copy manuscripts:

No art was practiced there except that of the copyist and to this work only the more youthful were assigned; the elders had their time free for prayer. Rarely was anyone found outside his own cell, except when they came together at the place of prayer.\textsuperscript{85} Stancliffe, through a detailed study of the \textit{Vita}, suggests that Martin’s community hired peasants to take care of some of the physically demanding tasks.\textsuperscript{86} As a result, the monastic life shown in the \textit{Vita} allows us to suppose that the poverty experienced by Martin and his ascetic disciples was far from radical poverty. The life of impoverishment portrayed in the \textit{Vita} did not entail giving up all possessions and maintaining a self-sufficient life. Here wealth and possessions may be understood as something that can be used to aid ascetic work without financial worry. Rather, the life of Martin presented in the \textit{Vita} emphasizes the image of a humble bishop who kept away from all kinds of privileges and devoted himself to ascetic practices. According to Sulpicius, Martin’s attitude toward ascetic life inspired his aristocratic friend, Paulinus.

Paulinus’ understanding of renunciation is not much different from that of Martin. Based on surviving documents, Paulinus’ biography resembles Martin’s: he gave up the traditional aristocratic world in which he had pursued pleasure and fame, to become a monk-bishop in Nola. Paulinus praised by Martin and Sulpicius was convinced that “an eternal

\textsuperscript{84} Stancliffe, \textit{St. Martin and His Hagiographer}, 26.

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Vita Martini} 10.6–7.

\textsuperscript{86} Stancliffe, \textit{St. Martin and His Hagiographer}, 26. Stancliffe pays attention to the description of the \textit{Vita} that Martin’s monks had “a peasant, hired to haul wood in a cart.” (\textit{Vita Martini} 21). It proves that they often depended on the labours of peasants living around their monastery for their survival.
reward is in prospect which man purchases by sustaining losses in this world.” As soon as he arrived at Nola, Paulinus considered himself a monk and dedicated himself to turning the region of Nola into a pilgrimage centre for the cult of St. Felix. Using his own wealth, Paulinus built a two-storey complex as a monasterium and a glorious new church near Felix’s tomb. In his monasterium, the second floor was occupied by him and his ascetic followers and the ground floor was designated for pilgrims and the sick. There he wore monastic garb and took only one meal a day according to the order of fasting at Nola. With respect to total poverty, although he publicly renounced his substantial property, no evidence is found, in either his Epistulae or Carmina, that Paulinus performed any manual work for his own self-sufficiency.

As Goodrich indicates, for Paulinus, coming from the Roman aristocratic class, monastic renunciation fundamentally means abandoning one’s wealth for earning favour with God. In spite of his declaration that he had completely sold his property and had given charitably to the poor, it is clear that Paulinus spent much wealth promoting the cult of St. Felix. Perhaps Paulinus justified the way he used his money because he spent it on things directly pertaining to the work of God. Obviously, Paulinus, in his Epistula ad Pammachium, citing the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, thinks that using wealth in a manner acceptable to God is more important than not having the riches themselves:

In short, you should know that it is not riches but men’s use of them which is blameworthy or acceptable to God. To realize this, read how the holy fathers

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87 Carmina 10. 278 (CSEL 30:37; ACW 40:67).
88 Carmina 28.
90 Epistulae 23.8. As for the monastic life of Paulinus, see Lienhard, Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism, 70–81.
91 Lienhard, Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism, 78.
92 Goodrich, Contextualizing Cassian, 166.
Abraham and Job became dear to God by use of their wealth [emphasis added]. Indeed, in that Gospel in which the rich man in hell who despised Lazarus goes unnamed, we note that the rich Joseph of Arimathea is cited by name.\(^{93}\)

In this way, for Paulinus, the ultimate criterion of ascetic poverty is the ascetic’s attitude toward wealth. Here we can see Martin’s view of monastic poverty in Paulinus: the good use of money, taking care of the poor, fostering Christianity, and maintaining ascetic disciplines without worrying about earning a living.\(^{94}\)

Peter Brown notes the importance of Paulinus’ Roman aristocratic background. In his version of ascetic poverty, Paulinus disowns his aristocratic privileges by choosing not to make use of the relationships that allowed him to enjoy life in the Roman upper-class.\(^{95}\)

Brown notes that when Paulinus decided to commit to the ascetic life, his renunciation was characterized by separating himself from his aristocratic lifestyle and with making himself as humble as an ordinary person.

As a final example, in the *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*, Hilary of Arles tells us how monastic renunciation was understood by Honoratus and the Lérinian monks. Based on Mt 19:21 (If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me), the Lérinian monastery required the renunciation of wealth by anyone wishing to enter into the community.\(^{96}\) But, Honoratus enjoyed frequent visits from aristocratic guests. Hilary does not hide the fact that “great was the care that he [Honoratus] had amid all this for strangers and guests.”\(^{97}\) They were given all they needed so that they felt comfortable. Of course, the riches provided by his aristocratic


\(^{94}\) Stancliffe and Trout suggests that such a modification of poverty came from the mix of Christian ascetic poverty and Roman aristocratic tradition of withdrawal from public affairs to enjoy leisure for higher pursuits (Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*, 20–29; Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 78–103,133–159).

\(^{95}\) Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 216–221.

\(^{96}\) *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati* 20.

\(^{97}\) *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati* 20 (FOTC 15:378).
disciples and “the throngs that rushed to him” made everything possible.\textsuperscript{98} As for the money that the monks brought to him, some of it was used for the community, the rest reserved for the needy and the poor.\textsuperscript{99} In addition, Vincent of Lérins, a monk and the author of \textit{Commonitorium}, described the Lérinian monastery as the best place to reflect and compose Christian literature without distraction, for it was “far from the masses that overcrowd large cities.”\textsuperscript{100} The monastery provided proper and stable accommodation to anyone who wanted to study there. Here we can see that Honoratus and his community understood renunciation as the use of wealth for good purposes.

There are common elements in these Gallic monks’ understanding of monastic poverty though the contexts are different. Their monasteries were not fully isolated places. Financial donations and the retention of existing wealth were accepted and used to concentrate on keeping ascetic customs, writing Christian literature, welcoming guests, giving alms and solving problems emerging from the communities and bishoprics. They believed that it was not necessary for their wealth to be abandoned, but that it should be used for Christian works.

As McGinn indicates, unlike the East, Western monasticism had a clear “tendency toward an urban and often a clerical setting and its close connection with aristocratic and episcopal sponsorship.”\textsuperscript{101} Of course, monastic customs were deeply influenced by the aforementioned Gallic archetypal monk-bishops. However, Dennis Trout, a recent biographer of Paulinus, maintains that the Gallic attitudes toward monastic poverty can be associated

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Sermo de vita sancti Honorati} 20 (FOTC 15:379).
\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Sermo de vita sancti Honorati} 20–21.
\textsuperscript{100} Vincent, \textit{Commonitorium} 1.3 ed. R. Demeulenaere, CCSL 64 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985); Rudolph E. Morris, trans., \textit{Commonitories} FOTC 7 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1949), 268.
with a version of the Roman aristocratic practice called the *otium ruris* (aristocratic retreat to the countryside). The *otium* was not simply idle leisure. *Otium ruris* generally meant a retreat from public affairs to rural villas for spiritual and philosophical reflection.

From the fourth century, Western aristocratic monk-bishops began to conflate Eastern asceticism with their existing custom of the *otium*. Instead of reflecting upon philosophical subjects in their rural villas, Christian noblemen built monasteries near their bishoprics to cultivate ascetic virtues. According to Trout, Paulinus accepted the Christian ascetic life as *otium* for Christ. As mentioned above, Paulinus continued to live from the revenues of his estates for many years and to support his monastery and church. Trout calls Paulinus’ attitude toward poverty as “salvation economics,” which means that all property can be used for holy and charitable aims. Here we can find that Paulinus’ notion of poverty is not far from Martin, Sulpicius, Honoratus, and Vincent’s understandings of renunciation as the good use of wealth, not literal poverty.

### 3. John Cassian’s Diagnosis of Gallic Monastic Poverty

Cassian describes the monastic poverty of the Gallic aristocrats:

This is why in these regions we do not see any established monasteries with such a throng of brothers, because, inasmuch as they are not supported by the proceeds of their own toil, they cannot remain in them constantly. And even if sufficient provisions can somehow be supplied them through another person’s generosity, still the pleasure that they take in idleness and their wandering hearts do not allow them to

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remain for very long in one spot.\textsuperscript{106}

According to Cassian, Gallic monks did not give up their financial resources and they benefited from donations by their churches and supporters. This practice of renunciation is far from the orthodox Egyptian monastic practices. As will be explained in the next chapter, he clarifies the nature and application of the Egyptian institutes with an Evagrian monastic trajectory:

From compunction of heart there proceeds renunciation—that is, the being deprived of and the contempt of all possessions. From this deprivation humility is begotten. From humility is generated the dying of desire. When desire has died all the vices are uprooted and wither away. Once the vices have been expelled the virtues bear fruit and grow. When virtue abounds purity of heart is acquired. With purity of heart the perfection of apostolic love is possessed.\textsuperscript{107}

His ascetic scheme is described in more detail in \textit{Collationes patrum}. In the first conference, the two goals of monastic life are mentioned through the guise of Moses: “The end of our profession, as we have said, is the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven; but the goal or \textit{scopos} is purity of heart without which it is impossible for anyone to reach that end.”\textsuperscript{108} Here Cassian claims that \textit{puritas cordis} (purity of heart) and \textit{regnum Dei} (Kingdom of God) are required for ascetic perfection. More precisely, the ultimate end (\textit{telos, finis}) is \textit{regnum Dei}. \textit{Puritas cordis} is the immediate goal (\textit{scopos or destinatio}) as preparation for \textit{regnum Dei}. Just as the farmers constantly cultivate their soil by plowing for the raising of crops, so the monks should keep \textit{destinatio}—purity of heart—in their minds so that they can succeed in

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{De institutis} 10.23; In \textit{Collationes} 24.12.1–4, Cassian, through the mouth of Abraham, says that monks must not be supported by their wealth and others’ charity.


\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Collationes} 1.4.3 (SC 42:81; ACW 57:43): “Finis quidem nostrae professionis ut diximus regnum dei seu regnum caelorum est, destinatio uero, id est scopos, puritas cordis, sine qua ad illum finem impossibile est quempiam peruenire.”
attaining the *finis* as “a rich harvest and an abundant crop.”\(^{109}\) The monks can take “the most direct route” by identifying the *destinatio* and *finis*.\(^{110}\) However, for Cassian, there is no doubt that without the *destinatio*, no monk can achieve *regnum Dei*.\(^{111}\) Of course, as the last chapter of the fourth book points out, *puritas cordis* and *regnum Dei* can only be completed by traveling from “the contempt of all possessions” through humility to the death of “all the vices” in the soul.

Needless to say, practicing the first step of the Egyptian monastic path is far more important than simply knowing it. Cassian pays special attention to the real renunciation of wealth and its result. Cassian asserts that without radical poverty, a monk never proceeds toward “humility,” “the dying of desire and all the vices,” “purity of heart,” and “the perfection of apostolic love.” Here radical poverty is the essential beginning for monks and must be preserved throughout their monastic lives. If a monk hesitates to give up his possessions, he will yield to the temptation of money; he will desire to take up the things which he has renounced; he will worry about his family; he will turn to “the base and the earthly lusts and pursuits of this world”; finally, he will not be able to complete the ascetic virtues and perfection.\(^{112}\) Even though it is one of the eight principal vices which Cassian presents in the fifth to twelfth books of *De institutis* and the fifth conference, he regards avarice as “the root of all vices, sprouting the shoots of many vices (*Malorum omnium efficitur radix, multiplices fruticans fomites uitiorum*).”\(^{113}\) This is because the vice of avarice causes the softening of Jesus’ strict edict, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you have

\(^{109}\) Collationes 1.2.1.

\(^{110}\) Collationes 1.4.4.

\(^{111}\) Collationes 1.5.2.

\(^{112}\) De institutis 4.36.1.

\(^{113}\) De institutis 7.2 (SC 109:294; ACW 58:171).
and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me (Si uis perfectus esse, uade uende omnia quae habes et da pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in caelo, et ueni sequere me Mt 19:21).”

According to Cassian, the love of money brings out two serious problems. First, by weakening radical renunciation, it causes the individual monk to be afraid to be “stripped of earthly goods.” Thus, he does not give up the worries of the world. Instead, he becomes “a person of double heart.” Monks with a double heart cannot continue to work for monastic perfection. Rather than seeking the humility of Christ, they begin to deceive themselves and justify their disobedience. In the end, their monastic vocation is destroyed. Second, the love of money does not only lead an individual monk to the brink of ruin, but it also draws his brothers away from their monastic journeys and weakens their faith and causes them to be ashamed of radical poverty. Without completely abandoning physical possessions, no one can cultivate the internal poverty that frees one from “all the vices” and allows one to continue on the monastic journey with a single mind, that of obedience and humility. In this, he hints that the disordered circumstances of Gallic monasticism came from a faulty beginning. They never truly practiced radical poverty.

Cassian judges that Gallic monks, who had begun without perfect renunciation, could not help but to fall into avarice and to store up possessions even in their cenobium:

Although we live in cenobia, cared for and provided for by an abba, we go around with our own keys and, utterly oblivious of shaming and disgracing our profession, are not even embarrassed to wear rings openly on our fingers with which we can seal items that have been stored away. In this respect not even chests or baskets, nor indeed coffers or closets, are enough to safeguard what we have collected and held onto since we left the world. We sometimes get so inflamed over the littlest and most

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114 De institutis 7.16 (SC 109:314; ACW 58:177).
115 De institutis 7.15.2.
116 De institutis 7.15.1–3.
insignificant things, when we claim them as our own, that, if someone dares so much as to touch one of them with his finger, we are filled with such anger against him as to be unable to keep our inner outrage from oral expression and even from bodily reaction.\textsuperscript{117}

In the fourth conference, through Abba Daniel, Cassian more clearly describes the lifestyle of the avaricious Gallic monks:

[I]t is obvious that they have altered nothing of their former sins and behavior with the sole exception of their rank and their worldly attire. For they love to acquire money which they did not have before, and in fact they do not get rid of what they had or—what is sadder still—they even want to get more with the excuse that, as they insist, it is right that they should always support their family or the brothers with it. Or else they hoard it under the pretext of establishing a community, which they presume that they would be able to found as if they were abbas. If ever they sought truthfully for the way of perfection, they would strive to achieve this with all their strength—namely, having stripped themselves not only of money. . . . What happens on the contrary, however, is that in striving to attain a high place among the brothers they never submit to the elders.\textsuperscript{118}

According to Cassian, they did not pursue ascetic regimes or bring about ascetic virtue and inner advancement.\textsuperscript{119}

Apart from imperfect poverty, Cassian also observes that there were no authentic and universal rules which could lead Gallic monks to monastic perfection:

For we have found that many persons in different places – following their own ideas and possessing, as the Apostle [Paul] says, ‘a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge’—have established different models and rules for themselves in this matter.\textsuperscript{120}

Cassian notes that the varying rules have caused Gallic monks to fall into disorder, for they are not dependent on a single true practice. In order to show the difference between Egyptian

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{De institutis} 4.15.1.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Collationes} 4.20.1–2.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{De institutis} 4.2.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{De institutis} 2.2.1 (SC 109:58; ACW 58:37): “Multos namque per alias conperimus regions pro captu mentis suae, habentes quidem ut ait Apostolus zelum Dei, sed non secundum scientiam, super hac reduieros typos ac regulas sibimet constituisse.”
and Gallic practices, Cassian pays attention to the rules of psalms and prayers. As will be explained later, Cassian believes that chaotic and diverse rules of prayers and psalms were the reason Gallic aristocratic monks had failed to achieve true monastic life and inner perfection.

One of the most important examples is the comparison between the twelve psalms of Cassian’s Egyptian institutes and the various nighttime chants of psalms in Gaul:

Some, for example, have thought that each night they should say twenty or thirty psalms and that these should be drawn out with the singing of antiphons and the addition of certain melodies, while others have tried to exceed that number and a few have opted for eighteen. We know that in this way different canons have been established in different places and we have seen nearly as many models and rules being used as we have seen monasteries and cells.\(^\text{121}\) Cassian concludes that only their immediate and inexperienced zeal had created such different practices.

Another example of how Gallic monasticism differed from universal practice can be found in the method used by the Gauls to chant their psalms. The psalmody of the Gauls is characterized by quick chanting and the monks lie prostrate upon the ground at the end, while Egyptian monks do not hurry and keep standing for a period of time, praying.\(^\text{122}\) In addition, Cassian says that all Gallic monks “get up and sing aloud the Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit” (\textit{Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto}) between each psalm and prayer. This Gallic practice is compared to the silence practiced by Egyptian monks:

\(^{121}\) \textit{De institutis} 2.2.1 (SC 109:58; ACW 58:37): “Quidam enim uicenos seu tricenos psalmos et hos ipsos antiphonarum protelatos melodiis et adunctione quarundam modulationum debere dici singulis noctibus censuerunt, alii etiam hunc modum excedere temptauerunt, nonnulli decem et octo. Atque in hunc modum diuersis in locis diuersum canonem cognouimus institutum totque propemodum typos ac regulas uidimus usurpatas, quot etiam monasteria cellasque conspeximus.”

\(^{122}\) \textit{De institutis} 2.7.1.
“When the psalm has been finished by the one singing, while all are silent, the prayer follows.”

Egyptian monks keep extreme silence even after prayer:

There is no spitting, no annoying clearing of throats, no noisy coughing, no sleepy yawning emitted from gaping and wide-open mouths, no groans and not even any sighs to disturb those in attendance. No sound is heard other than the priest concluding the prayer.

The comparison between Egyptian silence and Gallic noisy disorder may suggest that the Gallics (which were established by individual ideas and “whim,” not by the authentic Egyptian tradition) had failed to perform authentic prayers and psalms.

Cassian asserts that true prayer can be only practiced when the soul is in its natural state. As will be indicated in the next chapters, the natural state of the soul is its original state where the inner *vitía* (passions or desires) have been eliminated, and this is *puritas cordis* (the immediate aim of monastic life). Analyzing *De oratione* by Evagrius helps us understand why Cassian articulates the rules of prayer and psalms. In *De oratione*, Evagrius distinguishes psalms from prayer: “Psalmody belongs to multiform wisdom; prayer is the prelude to immaterial and non-multiform knowledge.” Here we can see that the Evagrian theological scheme permeates the relationship between psalms and prayers. *De oratione* notes the special role psalms play in controlling the inner *vitía*: allowing the monk to achieve ἀπάθεια and to proceed to the next step (contemplation of the physical world beyond practical life). As will be discussed in Chapter Two which deals with Evagrius’ monastic programs, the practical life leads to the contemplative life, a monk’s practical life is only

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123 *De institutis* 2.8.
124 *De institutis* 2.10.1.
125 *Collationes* 9.3.4.
completed by removing evil λογίσμοι and attaining ἀπάθεια. Through ἀπάθεια, he proceeds to
the contemplative step which is divided into the knowledge of created things (“multiform”) and the knowledge of “the immaterial and non-multiform,” God. Thus, Evagrius claims that psalms provide an essential tool for completing the practical life (ἀπάθεια). However, prayer is the ultimate goal—namely, divine contemplation. Cassian maintains that the recitation of psalms is inseparable from prayer and prayer must be continually practiced even with manual labour.

If my examination of the relationship between psalms and prayer is correct, we can suppose that by explaining the divergent and unsettled practices of psalms and prayer in the existing Gallic daily life, Cassian is pointing out to the aristocratic monks that Gallic monasticism had failed to bring about the true ascetical life and spiritual perfection.

To sum up, Cassian criticizes the Gallic attitude towards poverty. Because of imperfect renunciation, Gallic monks had fallen into covetousness and failed to cultivate ascetic virtues. Consequently, their practice of renunciation never brought about the inner ascetic perfection. Therefore, it was urgent that they begin their monastic life with radical and literal poverty in order to overcome avarice and to restore true psalms and prayers, that is, puritas cordis. Of course, the reformation of Gallic monasticism is based on the Egyptian ideal of radical poverty and its systematic monastic schemes. Therefore, to deepen our understanding of Cassian’s poverty, the next two chapters will focus on the following two points: first, Cassian’s conception of Egyptian monasticism and poverty, and second, Cassian’s unique understanding of poverty based on both the Gallic monastic context and Egyptian monasticism.
Chapter 2

The Influence of Egyptian Monasticism on John Cassian’s Radical Poverty

The aim of Chapter Two is to examine how radical poverty in Egyptian monasticism is understood by John Cassian. In the preface of *De institutis*, Cassian makes the purpose for his monastic writings clear: to establish Eastern and especially Egyptian institutes in Gallic monasticism. Egyptian institutes (Aegyptiorum instituta), always used in the plural in Cassian’s monastic works, can be regarded as “a collective term for the teachings, customs, and structures of monastic life” and include both cenobitic and anchoritic rules, practices and teachings performed in Egypt. Thus, it is legitimate to assume that Cassian’s understanding of monastic poverty is never separated from the Egyptian monastic tradition and, therefore, from its teachings of ascetic renunciation.

In order to clarify the nature of poverty in Egyptian monasticism, I will focus on three Egyptian monks (Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius). They are Cassian’s primary sources for his understanding of radical poverty, though not exclusive. They are fundamental to Cassian because they form his understanding of Egyptian monasticism. According to Cassian, Egyptian monasticism had its origin in the apostolic tradition, was represented by two authentic forms (cenobitic and anchoritic), and had a theologically systematic expression of

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1 *De institutis* Praef. 3 (SC 109:24): “In prouincia siquidem coenobiorum experti Orientalium maximeque Aegyptiorum uolens instituta fundari, cum sis ipse cunctius uirtutibus scientiaque perfectus et uniuersis ita refertus diuitius spiritualibus, ut perfectionem quaerentibus satis abundeque non modo tuus sermo, sed etiam sola uita sufficiat ad exemplum, me quoque elinguem et pauperem sermone atque scientia, ut aliquid ad explementum tui desiderii de inopia sensus mei conferam poscis, praecipisque ut instituta monasteriorum, quae per Aegyptum ac Palaestinam custodiri conspeximus, ita ut ibi nobis a patribus tradita sunt quamuis imperito digeram stilo.”

2 Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 29.

3 *De institutis* Praef. 7.

4 De Vogüé demonstrates that Cassian synthesizes various eastern ascetic writings in order to develop his monastic ideas (Adalbert de Vogüé, “Les sources des quatre premiers livres des Institutions de Jean Cassien,” SM 27 [1985]: 241–311).
the monastic journey.⁵

First, the most fundamental to Cassian’s understanding of Egyptian monasticism and its poverty was that Egyptian monasticism had been faithful to the apostolic tradition. In the second book, eighteenth and twenty-first conferences, he attempts to connect the Jerusalem Church in Acts 4 with the Egyptian Desert Fathers.⁶ He maintains that the original Apostolic Church retained apostolic perfection based on the words of Jesus, that is, the complete renunciation of economic possessions and commonality of wealth as the prerequisite for following Christ. However, this Church began to be divorced from the ideal apostolic life, after deciding to become flexible for Roman pagans.⁷ Here, unlike the author of Acts who views the Apostles’ Council as a remarkable event for the expansion of Christianity into the pagan world, Cassian understands the council as the beginning of the decline in the purity of the early church. In Cassian’s view, there has been only one Christian group which kept the absolute standard of economic piety and made the rule more rigorous: the Egyptian monks.⁸ The Egyptian desert monks renounced the laxity of the secular world and preserved “the discipline which came from the disciples who removed themselves from contamination.”⁹ For Cassian, the history of Egyptian monasticism shows that radical poverty seems to be the indispensable criterion of true Christianity and authentic monasticism. As de Vogüé says, Cassian is the first to connect the pure poverty of the first Christians to the Apostles’ Council

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⁵ For an overview of Cassian’s perception of the Egyptian monasticism, see Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture*, 24–39. Driver found the following concerning Cassian’s understanding of Egyptian monasticism: first, “a strong division between native Coptic and foreign Greek monks in Egypt; second, only two legitimate forms of monastic life practiced in Egypt”; third, “sophisticated theological expressions of the monastic vocation.” I basically accept his opinion about Cassian’s Egypt. But through my reading of De institutis and Collationes patrum, I attempt to rearrange the three features of Egyptian monasticism particularly related to its monastic poverty as found in Cassian’s works.

⁶ *De institutis* 2.5.1; *Collationes* 18.5, 21.30.

⁷ *Collationes* 18.5.2.

⁸ *De institutis* 2.5.1–3; *Collationes* 18.5.3–4.

⁹ *Collationes* 18.5.3–4 (SC 64:15–16; ACW 57:638); *De institutis* 2.5.1–3 (SC 109: 64–66; ACW 58:39–40).
and Egyptian monasticism. He makes the connection because he wants to emphasize the orthodoxy of Egyptian monasticism.

Second, Cassian claims that the two main branches, the cenobites and anchorites, are derived from the apostolic origin of Egyptian monasticism. Only these two monastic forms are legitimately practiced in Egypt, because they have preserved the tradition of the perfect apostolic life, including radical renunciation. Cassian is aware of various instructions and teachings sprouting from communal and solitary forms of renunciation. On the one hand, the cenobites who “live together in a community” are guided by “the judgement of one elder.” Because they do manual labour together in a cenobium, the communal life causes monks not to worry about making a living. They submit themselves to an abba and cultivate obedience and humility. On the other hand, the anchorites are those who excelled in the virtues of obedience and humility practiced by the cenobitic way and later withdrew into solitary life in the desert. The anchoritic monks are free from “all external contacts” and “every material concern.” They are dedicated to struggling against inner demons to become filled with “divine meditation and spiritual theoria.” For Cassian, cenobitic and anchoritic ways are regarded as the two-fold teachings of Egyptian monasticism which lead monks to monastic perfection. For example, De institutis, focusing on the cenobitic life, deals with cenobitic

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11 Collatines 18.5.4–6.4.
12 Collationes 18.4.1–6. Here Cassian claims that two kinds of monks have upheld apostolic life so that they are “very good.”
13 Collationes 18.4.2 (SC 64:14).
14 Collationes 19.6.1–6.
15 Collationes 18.4.2, 18.6.1.
16 Collationes 19.4.1 (SC 64:41; ACW 57:671).
17 Collationes 19.4.1 (SC 64:41; ACW 57:671).
18 Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 30–31; Markus, The End of Ancient Christianity, 181–97; Driver, John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture, 91–103.
rules such as dress and liturgical arrangements, the causes of the eight principal vices, and the means for curing them. Through clarifying such topics, Cassian wants to show that cenobitic life is the monastic phase of correcting individual faults.\textsuperscript{19} Thus, he regards communal ways as “the exterior and visible way” of a monk.\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Collationes patrum} is devoted to explaining anchoritic teachings, such as the goal of monastic life and the means for acquiring it.\textsuperscript{21} The anchoritic way is the internal struggle for perfection, divine contemplation. For Cassian, however, the external and internal aspects are inseparable. Cenobitic and anchoritic forms and teachings are two aspects to be embraced by “every monk aiming for perfection.”\textsuperscript{22}

Egyptian cenobitic and anchoritic ways play a foundational role in defining the poverty of Egyptian monasticism as found in Cassian’s works. In other words, apostolic radical poverty was preserved in the two different forms. However, Cassian focuses on the renunciation of Antony and the Pachomian community as reflected in the fourth book of \textit{De institutis} and the third conference, which are mainly concerned with the meanings of renunciation. Antony is viewed as an anchorite pioneer.\textsuperscript{23} His exemplary renunciation is praised by Cassian: “We know how the blessed Antony was called, whose conversion was instigated by God alone.”\textsuperscript{24} He “renounced everything and followed Christ” according to the command of God. However, Antony’s poverty is not fulfilled solely by the renunciation of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item De institutis Praef. 8.
\item Collationes 1Praef. 5 (SC 42:75; ACW 57:30).
\item Collationes 1Praef. 2, 4.
\item Stewart, \textit{Cassian the Monk}, 31.
\item Paul in the \textit{Vita Pauli} of Jerome is also regarded as an originator of anchoritic way. However, Goodrich claims that Cassian does not accept the authority of Paul presented as an anchoritic pioneer by Jerome. First, he points out that Paul’s motivation is to flee the secular world to avoid death. Second, he disagrees with Jerome that Paul was the first Egyptian monk, not Antony. Cassian mentions that both Antony and Paul can be regarded as anchoritic founders. In addition, Cassian’s use of Paul is restricted in his ascetic works. For further examination on the difference between Cassian’s poverty and that of Jerome’s as well as Cassian’s use of Paul, see Goodrich, \textit{Contextualizing Cassian}, 78–96.
\item Collationes 3.4.2 (SC 42:142; ACW 57:121).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
his possessions. He pursued the invisible and divine by rejecting “behaviour, vices, and affections of body and soul” as did Abraham.\textsuperscript{25} For Cassian, Antony’s poverty is basically the process of attaining inner renunciation—freeing oneself from vices and the affection of the soul and body.

Cassian also admires the cenobitic life of the Pachomian monks—their strict observance of monastic poverty.\textsuperscript{26} While explaining how Egyptian postulants are accepted into a cenobitic monastery, on the basis of the rule of Pachomius (particularly, \textit{Praecepta} 49), Cassian introduces cenobitic renunciation. That is, under rigorous instructions, novices are asked to renounce all their possessions before their admission to a monastery and then their individual belongings are thoroughly restricted in the cenobium.\textsuperscript{27} They must also practice humility and obedience through cooperative manual labour and monastic practices on the path to inner purity.\textsuperscript{28} Pachomian rules are not literally accepted by Cassian and he extensively develops them. However, the influence of Pachomius is apparent in Cassian’s view of Egyptian poverty. In this way, for Cassian, Egyptian poverty takes on two different forms.

Third, Egyptian asceticism possesses its own clear expression of the monastic journey.\textsuperscript{29} In other words, Egyptian anchorites and cenobites have practiced an explicit monastic programme. A systematic explanation of monastic exercises and the path toward perfection is found in the writings of Evagrius Ponticus. Evagrius, following the anchoritic manner of Antony, is considered to be the first to develop an Egyptian spiritual theology in a

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Collationes} 3.4.1–2, 3.6.1–2 (SC 42:141–142,145; ACW 57:121,123). Cassian attempts to pair the renunciation of Antony with that of Abraham.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{De institutis} 4.1–2.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{De institutis} 4.4–6.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{De institutis} 4.1–5.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{De institutis} 4.43; \textit{Collationes} 1.4, 14.1–2.
creative and systematic way.\textsuperscript{30} His monastic programme focuses on the process toward the contemplation of God: moving from the πρακτική (the practical or active phase) to the γνωστική (the contemplative or mystical phase).\textsuperscript{31} Through πρακτική, the monk moves from the beginning to the acquisition of virtues through ascetic disciplines. The phase ends with attaining ἀπάθεια (passionlessness), “the purification of the mind from the passions” which were set in motion by the devil and give rise to λογίσμοι (evil thoughts) within the soul.\textsuperscript{32} Through ἀπάθεια, the monks are led into the next phase γνωστική (the contemplative phase). It is divided into φυσική (the contemplation of created things as being expressive of God’s love) and θεωρητική (contemplation of the Holy Trinity itself).\textsuperscript{33} The summit of the contemplative phase is the contemplation of the Holy Trinity. Evagrius’ monastic scheme may be understood as progressive and successive, moving from the practice of the virtues to ἀπάθεια, the contemplation of God in the creatures, and γνῶσις of the Holy Trinity itself. In this way, for Cassian, Egyptian monasticism has had clear and systematic stages and aims based on Evagrius’ monastic program.\textsuperscript{34}

However, for Evagrius, rather than highlighting the abandonment of wealth, he attempts to make clear how internal poverty can be achieved. According to Evagrius, wealth is always neutral so monastic poverty is not about literally renouncing possessions, but about removing the psychological passion for money, that is, avarice. In his monastic program, especially in the phase of the πρακτική, Evagrius emphasizes absolute poverty as the ascetic

\textsuperscript{30} Harms, Desert Christians, 311–329.


\textsuperscript{34} Stewart claims that after Salvatore Marsili’s study of Cassian’s dependence on Evagrius, scholars have accepted that “Cassian relied heavily on Evagrius’ writings” (Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 36). See Marsili, Giovanni Cassian ed Evagrio Pontico, 87–144.
beginning and the maintenance of poverty as an ascetic discipline. However, he is deeply conscious of how the monk is challenged by evil thoughts in the πρακτική stage. Keeping extreme poverty is the antithesis of one of the evil λογίσμοι, avarice or the love of money. Avarice leads a monk to give up poverty and to desire material possessions. The monk who is eager to have many possessions will neglect his ascetic life because possessions lead to worries about wealth.\(^\text{35}\)

Each historical source related to the early Egyptian monks shows the renunciation of wealth in its own way. However there are many commonalities. First, they agree on the two main aspects of abandoning wealth that are required to help fulfill monastic life: one, that radical poverty is required at the beginning of monastic life; and two, its maintenance—living a self-sufficient life and sharing surplus food with the poor—is required throughout monastic life. Radical poverty is the indispensable criterion for following the words of Jesus Christ and embodying the life of the Apostolic Church. Ultimately, the goal of imitating Jesus and the first Christians is to attain purity of heart and to contemplate divinity. Here, the act of renouncing material wealth is the absolute beginning of being directed toward God. However, as Evagrius points out, radical poverty is not the end of monastic life in itself. Rather, the monks must proceed toward internal purification. The problem is not about money per se, but about the desire for it. Thus, when it comes to poverty, Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius are more concerned with showing how the desire for wealth can be governed through the spiritual progress.

By using Evagrius’ ascetic scheme and views of poverty, Cassian attempts to systematically define what Egyptian poverty means. As mentioned above, the two authentic branches—the cenobites and anchorites—have practiced apostolic poverty in their own ways.

However, while poverty is a matter of inner progressive growth, Cassian pays special attention to radical poverty in order to show his readers the ideal and strict manner of Egyptian monastic poverty. Thus, Chapter Two will focus on what poverty means to Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius and how Cassian reflects upon their understanding of poverty.

1. Antony of Egypt on Radical Poverty

In order to appreciate Antony’s understanding of radical poverty, it is important to analyze all the surviving writings related to his life and teachings, such as the Vita Antonii, the Epistulae Antonii, and the sayings of Antony as reflected in the Apophthegmata patrum and others.36 However, there are difficulties in accessing the ascetical teachings of the historical Antony. Except for the Vita Antonii, other works concerning Antony are fragmentary and too restricted to use to understand his overall concept of poverty.

This being the case, how can poverty as found in the Vita Antonii be understood in detail? Renunciation in the Vita has two steps: first, the outer abandonment of possessions in order to begin a new life based on the words of Jesus (chapters 2.1–3.1), and second, inner renunciation, which is the ultimate aim and is achieved by fighting against demons (chapters 3.2–53.3). The Vita clearly suggests that monks are never able to enter an ascetic world without the renunciation of wealth and that radical poverty must be maintained throughout their lives. However, the Vita does not say that external poverty is the goal of monastic life. Antony created an anchoritic way for achieving ascetic perfection through the struggle against inner passions. Thus, even though radical poverty may be emphasized, the Vita

36 To be sure, there are other writings that touch upon Antony, the Letters of Ammonas (Ep.9), Vita Pauli of Jerome (Prologue, 9.14–16), Practicus of Evagrius (92), Historia Lausiaca (21.8–9), and De institutis (5.4.1–2). However, as with the Epistulae Antonii and Apophthegmata patrum, it is not easy to examine Antony’s understanding of poverty in them. With regard to primary sources and English translations of Antony, see Harmless, Desert Christians, 76–84,105–110.
mainly describes how Antony completed his spiritual growth with the assistance of God.

However, the *Vita Antonii* does show how Antony’s initial abandonment of possessions and his attempt to maintain poverty in the anchoritic way were gradually attained.

The first chapter of the *Vita Antonii* reveals the elements that led Antony to leave the world, devoting himself to the ascetic life. That is, they are the commandments of Jesus Christ (Mt 19: 21; Lk 18: 22) and the renunciation of worldly goods by the Apostolic Church (Acts 2: 44, 4: 32–35):

Not six months had passed after the death of his parents when (as was his custom), on his way to church he was thinking to himself and reflecting on all these things: how the apostles gave up everything and followed the Saviour, and how those in Acts sold their possessions and brought them and placed them at the feet of the apostles for distribution to those in need. He was thinking about what sort or what kind of hope was laid up for them in heaven. Pondering these things, he went into the church, it happened that the Gospel was being read at that time and he heard the Lord saying to the rich man, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell all your possessions and give to the poor, and come follow me, and you will have treasure in heaven.’

After the word of God inspired him, Antony did not hesitate to “go and sell all his possessions and give to the poor.” This signals the beginning of ἄσκησις. However, according to the *Vita Antonii*, Antony’s renunciation happened over time:

He sold all his remaining possessions and, collecting a considerable amount of money, distributed it among the poor, keeping a little for his sister. When Antony entered the church again and heard the Lord saying in the Gospel ‘Do not be concerned about tomorrow’, he could no longer bear to remain there, so he left and distributed his remaining things among those less well off. His sister he entrusted to well-known and faithful virgins, giving her to them to be raised in virginity, while from that time on he devoted himself to ascetic discipline in front of his home, watching over himself spiritually and practicing patient endurance.38

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38 *Vita Antonii* 2.5–3.1.
Antony distributed a great amount of his inheritance—three hundred fertile and very prosperous acres—to the people living in his village and the poor. However, it is obvious that he did not abandon all his possessions, for he set aside a little money to provide for his younger sister. But this is not enough. Athanasius wants Antony to be a perfect man of God. Therefore, he shows Antony being moved to further renunciation by Jesus’ words: “Do not be concerned about tomorrow” (Μὴ μεριμνήσετε περὶ τῆς αὔποι, Mt 6:34). In these short episodes of Antony’s call and withdrawal, the Vita Antonii presents the reader with the two biblical passages (Mt 6:34, 19:21) that encouraged Antony to proceed into complete poverty. Perhaps the passages correspond to the two steps of renunciation. It seems to me that even though Antony was regarded as an ideal monk, Athanasius attempted to show the fact that his monastic formation was not achieved in a painless way. In addition, the author does not regard the perfect renunciation of wealth as the fulfillment of monastic life. True poverty is achieved by attaining inner purification by conquering the psychological temptation for the accumulation of wealth. In my opinion, the Vita Antonii seems to say that only when there was no money, was Antony finally ready for practicing ἀσκησις. In this way, Antony’s first principle of poverty is that without the perfect renunciation of possessions there can be no true ascetic life.

After the account of Antony’s withdrawal from the world (chapters 1 to 3.1), the Vita focuses on how he acquired internal renunciation of vices and affections and established ascetic perfection. In other words, the Vita attempts to show that the ascetic life of Antony required conflict with the demons in the process of withdrawing to the desert and Antony’s final victory over them in the chapters 5 to 53. Athanasius describes Antony’s struggle

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39 Vita Antonii 2.4.
against the demons in four distinct steps (chapters 5–7, 8–10, 13, 51–53). At each step, the
demon tries to force Antony to give up his strict disciplines and finally his ascetic vocation.
Antony was not reluctant to face their attack and defeated all his demons through physical
ἀνακηρύξ, ceaseless prayers, and the use of Scripture.

Throughout his ascetic journey Antony maintained poverty. He worked for food and
the other necessities of life since he relinquished all his possessions. In order to remain in
strict poverty during monastic training, Antony did not even keep surplus food. He believed
that keeping extreme poverty was to follow the word of God:

He worked with his hands, having heard ‘Let the lazy person not eat.’ He would spend
part of what he earned on bread and part of it he would give to those who were
begging.

Here, another rule of total poverty is outlined in the *Vita Antonii*. That is, not keeping surplus
articles or food, but distributing them to the poor and keeping only minimum necessities
throughout the ascetic struggle for perfection. This is how Antony kept radical poverty in his
ascetic training.

However, the devil “who hates and envies what is good,” tempts Antony. The devil attempted to
lead him [Antony] away from his ascetic discipline, filling him with memories of his
possessions, his guardianship of his sister, the intimacy of his family, love of money,
love of honor, the pleasure that comes from eating various kinds of foods, and the
other indulgences of life, and finally the difficulty of living virtuously and the great

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41 Ibid., 27. The four steps are as follows: “his achievement of a high state of virtue even as a youth
(*Vita Antonii* 5–7), his first movement outside the village, into the tombs (8–10), his seclusion in the fortified
well (13), and his retreat to the inner mountain (51–53).”

42 Ibid., 28–34.

43 *Vita Antonii* 3.6. According to Caner, manual labour and self-sufficiency as reflected in the *Vita* and
the *Apopthegmata patrum* had been dominantly accepted by later Egyptian ascetic sources (Caner, *Wandering,

44 *Vita Antonii* 3.6.

45 *Vita Antonii* 5.1.
suffering that that entails.\textsuperscript{46}

It is through the evil thought (λογισμός) of avarice that the devil was first able to attack Antony. The devil caused him to have “a great dustcloud of thoughts.”\textsuperscript{47} The devil tempts Antony to think about the comforts of the secular life that he has fully renounced. The \textit{Vita} is clear that Antony reflected on “Christ in his heart, the goodness he had through him and the spiritual insight given to him by his soul”\textsuperscript{48} in order to struggle against the first avaricious temptations. Finally, he overcomes the first challenge of the devil, which focused on getting him to abandon poverty. On the basis of this success, Antony can conquer the following challenge, namely sexual temptation.\textsuperscript{49}

After his first apprenticeship and victory over the attacks of the devil, Antony moved from the border of the village to the necropolis and then to the desert, in an abandoned military fortress. In the second battle with the demons (chapters 8 to 10), at the tombs, Athanasius describes full-fledged attacks by the demons on Antony in the tombs and Antony’s decisive triumph against them. Disguised as beasts like lions, bears, leopards, bulls, poisonous snakes, scorpions, and wolves, the demons tormented Antony. In the climax of his combat with the devil and his troops, Antony never avoided their most harsh attacks. He persevered and then was not defeated.\textsuperscript{50} The \textit{Vita} seems to regard the second battle as the decisive event for turning “the desert into a city of asceticism.”\textsuperscript{51} After his victory in the tombs, Antony began to proceed toward a new ascetic life in the desert, an abandoned “barracks.”\textsuperscript{52} There he decided to barricade himself inside and “remained alone inside his

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Vita Antonii} 5.2.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Vita Antonii} 5.3.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Vita Antonii} 5.5.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Vita Antonii} 5.3.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Vita Antonii} 10.3.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Vita Antonii} 8.2.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Vita Antonii} 12.3.
There Antony faced his third attack by the demons, the noise of “mobs of people” and apparitions.

But he did not suffer as he had in the first and second attacks. He was able to maintain his balance and lasted twenty years in his hermitage. That is, he became an anchorite. Antony’s victory over the third assault as an anchorite allowed him to become internally poor, that is, freed from inner vices and affections of soul:

The character of his soul was pure, for it had neither been contracted by suffering nor dissipated by pleasure, nor had it been afflicted by laughter or sorrow. Moreover, when Antony saw the crowd, he was not bothered, nor did he rejoice at so many people greeting him. Instead, like someone guided by reason, he maintained his equilibrium and natural balance.

Based on the second and third battles with the demons, the *Vita* notes how Antony’s great victory over the demons is the groundwork of anchoritic life. Thus, he does not keep ascetic poverty by self-sufficiency, as he did in the first step. Rather, Antony finds a different way of earning his living and retaining poverty. In order to fight against the attacks in this stage of ascetic life, Antony relied on the support of his friends who brought minimal bread.

And still, the avaricious enemy attempts to seduce Antony into giving up his poverty:

Once again the Enemy, seeing Antony’s eagerness and wanting to thwart it, cast onto the road the illusory shape of a large silver dish. Antony, however, recognized that cunning of the hater of goodness and stopped. Seeing that the dish was the work of the Devil, he completely spurned it, saying, “How did this dish get here in the desert?” The path is not worn, nor are footprints of any travelers here. If someone had dropped it, it would have been impossible for him not to notice it because it is so large. No, whoever lost it would have returned and looked for it and found it because this place

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53 *Vita Antonii* 12.4.
55 *Vita Antonii* 13.6: “Antony remained there, and suffered no harm from the demons, nor did he tire of struggling against them.”
56 *Vita Antonii* 14.3-4.
57 *Vita Antonii* 8.2, 12.4
is deserted. This is the work of Devil! Your will not frustrate my purpose with this, Devil! May this “go with you to destruction”! When Antony had said this, the apparition vanished like smoke before a fire. Afterwards, as he walked away, Antony saw some gold thrown on the road—real gold, not another illusion. Whether it was the Enemy who showed it to him, or whether a mighty power was training the athlete and demonstrating to the Devil that Antony really did not care about money, he did not say nor do we really know—except that it was gold that appeared.  

The *Vita* tells us that Antony never fell into the traps of the devil. Here we can find that throughout his monastic life, not simply in the beginning of ascetic life, he struggled against the temptation for material wealth.

The last conflict between Antony and the devil (chapters 51–53) happened when he fell in love with a mountain where there was “a spring with very clear, sweet, and very cold water” and even “a few untended date palms”:

He surveyed the land around the mountain. Finding a very small piece suitable for tilling, he farmed it, and having a sufficient supply of fresh water, he sowed the ground. By doing this, each year he had bread from there, rejoicing that he would not be bothering anyone about bread, and he made sure that he would not be a burden in anything.

The monk’s withdrawal to the mountain resulted from his need for retreat from “being bothered by crowds of people.” There he established his perfect anchoritic life. Antony avoided receiving food from others, made a little garden, and settled into his ascetic routine. Antony also wove baskets and exchanged them for supplies. This perfect anchoritic life was achieved by fully conquering avarice. It is also the preparation for the last battle with the demons. They came in visual and aural attacks, as hyenas, and as a beast that resembled a

58 *Vita Antonii* 11.2–12.1 (SC 400:164–166).
59 *Vita Antonii* 49.7.
60 *Vita Antonii* 50.6 (SC 400:270).
61 *Vita Antonii* 49.1.
62 *Vita Antonii* 53.1.
human being. Antony was not frightened. He firmly announced: “I am a servant of Christ; if
you have been sent against me, look, here I am!”\textsuperscript{63} The beast like a man fled and died. The
Vita concludes that “the death of the beast was the downfall of the demon, for they had tried
everything to drive Antony out of the desert and had failed.”\textsuperscript{64} In the Vita, there are no more
battles between Antony and the demons.

I have discussed how the total poverty of Antony is described in the Vita Antonii. The
Vita says that monastic renunciation is a continuous process of fighting against demons’
temptation. Here the Vita is concerned with two aspects of radical poverty. First, the act of
perfect renunciation of possessions can be regarded as an indispensable condition of ascetic
life. Antony’s belief in absolute poverty is based on the word of Jesus Christ and the ideal of
the primitive Church. Second, keeping perfect poverty must go on until the monk completes
his/her inner renunciation. Through Antony, we can see that physical poverty can be achieved.
More importantly, monastic poverty proceeds toward the complete rejection of vices and
affections of the soul. Therefore, the Vita Antonii focuses on how Antony’s inner avarice was
controlled.

The Epistulae Antonii more clearly show Antony’s interest in inner poverty. The main
purpose of the Epistulae is to explain the history and nature of God’s salvation, that is, the
entire process beginning with the fall of human souls and ending with their return to their
original state. In particular, the second to seventh Epistulae deal with the history of God’s
salvation which may be based on Origen’s cosmology and anthropology.\textsuperscript{65} Human souls
were fallen because they had moved far away from the law God implanted in them. The

\textsuperscript{63} Vita Antonii 53.2.

\textsuperscript{64} Vita Antonii 53.3.

\textsuperscript{65} Antony, Epistulae Antonii 2–7 trans., Derwas Chitty (Fairacres, Oxford: S.L.G. Press, 1974); cf.
Origen, De principiis 2.6.3–5 ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, SC 252 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978);
fallen souls can never know themselves without the assistance of God, who sent Christ as the fulfillment of human salvation. The first Epistula presents how the human body and soul are imprisoned, are ignorant of their original states, and can only be purified by the Spirit.\(^\text{66}\)

Throughout his Epistulae, Antony implores his readers to heed his advice about the true knowledge of human salvation. One of his main concerns is to seek true knowledge (γνῶσις) about the original human state, which is attained by the purification of the soul and body under the full guidance of the Holy Spirit. True knowledge may also be acquired by removing all inner desires.\(^\text{67}\) In Antony’s Epistulae, this process of removing inner passions may be understood as spiritual warfare for the purification of the human soul and body through personal repentance.\(^\text{68}\) The human mind being purified begins to fully obey the guidance of the Spirit (first letter) and finally returns its original state. Here we can see that for Antony, radical poverty is a necessary step toward internal renunciation, but not the end of monastic life.

Cassian mines the stories of Antony to support his arguments for discretion, unceasing prayer, spiritual knowledge, and mortification.\(^\text{69}\) In particular, as mentioned above, the anecdotes of Antony’s call and perfect renunciation are mentioned by Cassian.\(^\text{70}\) In the third conference, Cassian claims that the renunciation of Antony described in the Vita Antonii is inspired by the direct word of God.\(^\text{71}\) The radical poverty of Antony is compared to the

\(^{66}\) Epistulae Antonii 1.

\(^{67}\) Rubenson, The Letters of St. Antony, 139.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 86.

\(^{69}\) De institutis 5.4.1; Collationes 2.2.1, 2.6.1, 8.18.1, 9.31, 14.4.1, 18.54, 24.11.1. Weber discussed Cassian’s use of the writings and traditions attributed to Antony (Weber, Die Stellung des Johannes Cassianus zur ausserpachomianischen Mönchstradition, 81–82). Stewart, following Weber’s argument, suggests that Cassian’s description of the monk as a most prudent bee conforms to the expression of the wise honeybee in the Vita Antonii 3.4 (the Latin translation). Thus, he concludes that Cassian’s Antony relies on the version of Evagrius of Antioch (Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 36, 140).

\(^{70}\) Collationes 3.4.2.

\(^{71}\) Collationes 3.4.2.
renunciation of Abraham so that it becomes an ideal model of poverty. Through the mouth of Paphnutius, Abraham and Antony were led into renunciation in the same way: just as Abraham “was called out of his homeland” by God’s voice, so Antony “was instigated by God alone.” It is important to note a correlation between a renunciant’s achievement and the initial call of that renunciant. Thus, Cassian mentions the three kinds of calls: first, from God, second, from human agency, and third, out of need. Here the ones who are drawn to renunciation by God are of the loftiest nature. It is necessary for their lives to coincide with what is asked for by God. This involves perfect renunciation: of wealth, of vices, and of every present and visible thing. He uses for an example, the story of Abraham’s rejection of his “country, . . . kinsfolk and father’s house,” which correspond to the three kinds of renunciation. In this way, Abraham is described as the ideal biblical figure that attained renunciation through God’s call. Abraham’s success is directly paired with the renunciation of Antony.

Cassian provides readers with the story of how Antony was led to renounce his wealth. This account, found in the Vita Antonii, is retold in Collationes, 3.4.2:

We know how the blessed Antony was called, whose conversion was instigated by God alone. He went into a church and there he heard the Lord proclaiming in the Gospel: ‘Whoever does not hate father and mother and children and wife and fields, and his own soul besides, cannot be my disciple.’ And: ‘If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.’

72 Collationes 3.4.1–2, 3.6.2.
73 Collationes 3.4.1–2.
74 Collationes 3.3.1.
75 Collationes 3.3.1.
76 Collationes 3.6.2.
77 Collationes 3.4.2; Stewart indicates that Cassian’s use of the first renunciation from the Vita Antonii is an important example which shows his exact knowledge of the Vita Antonii, particularly, Evagrius of Antioch’s Latin version (Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 36, 229).
In order to show the divine origin of Antony’s renunciation, Cassian focuses on Jesus’ sayings to his disciples (Lk 14:26) and the rich young person (Mt 19:21). Through the account, Cassian notes Antony’s submission to God’s call. Athanasius uses Antony’s poverty to show an extreme boundary between the pagan world and the true world based on Holy Scripture. Through giving up his wealth, Antony took a step toward the life of the Apostles and their Jerusalem Community. His decision was instigated by God’s voice. Thus, Cassian seems to say that his readers can emulate the exemplary life of Biblical figures like Abraham by following Antony’s way of renunciation.

However, through a comparison of the renunciation described in the *Vita Antonii* and Cassian’s in the third conference, we find that Cassian places more importance on Antony’s first step than Athanasius does in the *Vita Antonii*. As mentioned above, the Antony of Athanasius achieved perfect poverty in a gradual process. However, Cassian ignores this. Cassian wants to show his readers that Antony’s radical poverty was finished at once in immediate obedience to God’s word.

Cassian’s interest in Antony’s radical rejection of possessions causes Abba Paphnutius to be silent on the subject of internal purity, a major theme in the *Vita Antonii*. Cassian ignores Antony’s success with regard to internal purity even though he emphasizes internal renunciation. Through this, we can see how Cassian selectively emphasizes the radical poverty found in the *Vita Antonii*.

### 2. Pachomius on Radical Poverty

Traditionally, it has been believed that Pachomius originated cenobitic monasticism, a

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community where monks live together. However, Armand Veilleux claims that Pachomius established a new and original form of an already existing cenobitic life, “borrowing elements from the structural organization of a traditional Coptic village and from ecclesiastical institutions, as well as from ancient Egyptian wisdom.” Recent Pachomian scholars seem to agree with Veilleux’s opinion. In other words, contrary to what has often been assumed, the Pachomian community was not the birthplace of Christian cenobitic monasticism. However, thanks to his organizational genius, Pachomius and his community still hold a significant place in the study of the development of Christian monasticism.

Cassian draws attention to the impressive organization of Pachomian monasteries, writing that “a huge number of monks—more than five thousand brothers” is subjected “at every moment to their elder with . . . obedience.” He praises the fact that Pachomian monks fulfilled their humility and obedience by ceaselessly practicing the rigorous rules of Pachomius. According to Cassian, their perfect achievement of obedience and humility is

79 Like the *Vita Antonii*, the traditional understanding of Pachomius as the originator of cenobitic monasticism seems to be derived from the success of Pachomian monasticism—particularly, the monastic rules and biographies of Pachomius (James E. Goehring, *Ascetic, Society and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999], 26–27).


82 Harmless says that Pachomius can be regarded as an organizational genius and pioneer who established a confederation of nine monasteries for men and two for women, even though he may not have created the monastery itself (Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 115).

83 *De institutis* 4.1.

84 *De institutis* 4.1–2.
based on “the initial stages of their renunciation.”\textsuperscript{85} This means the process by which monastic postulants can be taken into a Pachomian monastery according to the rules. The Pachomian novice should not only give up “former possessions, the contamination of even a single copper coin clings to him,” but they should not distribute money “for the needs of the cenobium,”\textsuperscript{86} because if the novices are allowed to have their materials, they become caught in self-confidence and a sense of superiority to “poorer brothers.”\textsuperscript{87} They would never be able to submit to the strict discipline which must be practiced with the other monks and so they would not be able to acquire humility and obedience (the virtues of cenobitic life).\textsuperscript{88} Here Cassian finds that radical poverty is the foundation of the perfect Pachomian community. In this way, in the fourth book of \textit{De institutis}, Cassian does not hesitate to introduce Pachomian rules as an ideal example to his readers. Therefore, in order to understand cenobitic radical renunciation in Cassian’s monastic literature, it is necessary to examine Pachomius’ view of the renunciation in the Pachomian \textit{vitae} and rules. I will first analyze the questions of why and how Pachomius, as an early and gifted organizer, decided to create an extraordinary cenobitic monastery in Upper Egypt, before I begin to clarify his concept of poverty. Pachomius’ motivation for and the process of forming the first \textit{κοινωνία}\textsuperscript{89} show impressive aspects of monastic poverty. Then, the meanings of Pachomian radical poverty and Cassian’s understanding of Pachomian poverty will be discussed.

How can we listen to the voice of Pachomius concerning his motivation and concept

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{De institutis} 4.2.
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{De institutis} 4.3.1, 4.4.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{De institutis} 4.4.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{De institutis} 4.3.2.
\textsuperscript{89} The monastic literature of Pachomius does not speak of monasteries, but of the \textit{κοινωνία}, that means fellowship in Greek. To be sure, the term is drawn from the New Testament in order to depict the radical vision of the Jerusalem Church in the New Testament (Harmless, \textit{Desert Fathers}, 116).
of poverty."90 There are two significant moments in Pachomius’ spiritual evolution that led to the creation of his first community: Pachomius’ experience with Christians which ignited in him the desire to serve all people, and his training under Palamon that opened his eyes to the ascetic way of life.91 The process of establishing his community did not follow a clear blueprint but emerged from Pachomius’ continuous search for God and his own spiritual growth. According to the Vitae Pachomii, he went from being a pagan soldier to being the founder of a monastery at Tabennesi. The accounts of his conversion provide an impressive and important source for understanding his monastic ideal. Pachomius was drafted into the army during the war of 312/13 between Licinius (ca. 263–325) and Maximin Daia (270–313).92 While he was quartered in Thebes, Pachomius experienced the charity of local Christians. When Pachomius was distressed, they brought him “something to eat and drink and other necessities”93 with true love. At that moment, he prayed to the Christian God, promising that he would love all men as they had done. The Vita Prima describes the contents of Pachomius’ prayer in detail after he experienced Christian charity and realized its deep

90 Unfortunately, there is no surviving source attributed to the historical Pachomius. Many ancient biographies of Pachomius are anonymous. Regarding the Vitae Pachomii, over the years there have been many scholarly debates on which sources were the oldest and most trustworthy. The debates concerning the most primitive vita are largely divided into two groups: The first group gives priority to the oriental versions—the Coptic or Arabic Lives—as the most primitive source. For the scholars belonging to this group, the Bohairic Life is regarded as the best-preserved account of Pachomius in Bohairic Coptic (the dialect of Lower Egypt and the Nile Delta). Even if it is fragmentary, the First Sahidic Life contains the most impressive anecdotes about the early life of Pachomius. The second group gives priority to the Vita Prima which may have been composed in the 390s by a Pachomian monk living near Alexandria in the monastery of Metanoia. As Goehring points out, some important conclusions can be drawn: the oldest vitae seem to be compilations that mirror the most primitive material—whether it was oral or written—from its own tradition. It may be, therefore, only possible to sketch out basic outlines of Pachomius’ career (including his motivation for founding his koinonia, and his view of poverty) by comparing the oldest existing versions (James E. Goehring, The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism [Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985], 3–23).


92 Philip Rousseau, Pachomius, 58.

meaning:

O God, maker of heaven and earth, if you will look upon me in my lowliness, because
I do not know you, the only true God, and if you will deliver me from this affliction, I
will serve your will all the days of my life and, loving all men, I will be their servant
according to your command [emphasis added].

The *Vita Prima* clearly states that the specific commandment of God which Pachomius
understood to be most central was to serve others, that is, to become a servant to all human
beings.

The *Bohairic Life* presents the method by which Pachomius served others after his
conversion. There we read that Pachomius’ first attempt to keep his promise was to find “a
deserted village called Seneset” and to serve its poor inhabitants and strangers there, which
he did for three years. Through his charity, many people gave up their homes and came to the
village (Seneset). His renown went out to many people.

Then the *Vitae* report that Pachomius encountered with an anchorite monk, Palamon,
and how Pachomius’ first promise was deepened through ascetic life with him. The *Bohairic
Life* explains why Pachomius decided to become a monk:

After three years spent in that place [Seneset], he realized that he was surrounded by
many people to the point of being much inconvenienced, for they would never let him
have a moment’s peace. Then he sought to become a monk and to give himself up to
the anchorite life.

The *Bohairic Life* shows that Pachomius tried to serve others as soon as he was converted.

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94 *Vita Prima* 5 (SH 19:3–4): “λατεύσω τῷ θελήματί σου πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς μου καὶ πάντας
tων ἀνθρώπων ἀγαπῶν, δουλεύσω αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν σου.”

95 However, the explanations of the two *Lives* are different from each other. While the *Vita Prima* 6
(SH 19:4–5) reports that after he was baptized, in order to practice his vow, Pachomius wanted to become a
monk and went to the anchorite Palamon. The *Bohairic Life* 8 and 9 adds another story (making a community)
between the narratives of conversion and the resolution of becoming a monk. For *Bohairic Life*, I will refer to L.
Th. Lefort, ed., *Vita Pachomii Boharice*, CSCO 89 (Paris: E. Typographeo Reipublicae, 1925) and Armand
Veilleux, trans., *The Bohairic Life*, in *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, *The Life of Saint Pachomius* (Kalamazoo,

96 *Bohairic Life* 8.

97 *Bohairic Life* 10.
Even though Pachomius attempted to follow God’s will, the first three years exhausted him mentally.

Consequently, Pachomius decided to withdraw from the village and the many people he had supported to give up everything he possessed and to become a monk. As Derwas J. Chitty says, for the *Vitae*, becoming a monk means that first there is the inner conflict with his own thoughts, then the stage of demonic onslaught from without, then the victorious growth, in which the wonder-working stage of perfect faith gradually gives place to the calm of perfect knowledge wherein Pachomius is “seeing the Invisible God in purity of heart as in a mirror.”

In this way, Pachomius chose to pursue purity of heart by renouncing his affection for the earthly world in Seneset. In the process, he finally came to realize that “the will of God is to minister to the race of men, to reconcile them to Him [God].” This means that for Pachomius, the meaning of charity, which he initially considered to be social and economic support for the poor, fully changed. For him, more essential charity was understood as perfectly abandoning worldly things and attaining purity of heart through ascetic disciplines and later sharing it with all people. It is to unite human beings to God. Thus, such a realization can be recognized as the climax of Pachomius’ life.

Pachomius asked Palamon to train him as a monk. After Pachomius endured Palamon’s rigorous ἓιζκής, Palamon clothed him in monk’s garb. They worked together spinning and weaving hair sacks and carried sand down from the mountain to stay awake.

According to both the *Bohairic* and *Greek* tradition of the *Vitae*, Pachomius overcame sleep

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98 *Bohairic Life* 10.


100 *Vita Prima* 23 (SH 19:14); *Bohairic Life* 22: “Τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ διακονεῖν τῷ γένει τῶν ἄνθρωπων, ἀποκαταλάβασιν αὐτοὺς αὐτῷ.”

101 Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 10.

102 *Bohairic Life* 10; *Vita Prima* 6 (SH 19:4–5). According to Veilleux, this ἓιζκής means “the special way of life by which a monk realizes his struggle for conversion and sanctification” (Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol.1, 474).
through obedience, which resulted in progress and a feeling of salvation.\textsuperscript{103}

Following Palamon as a model, Pachomius passed other ascetic tests which demonstrated further progress and perfection.\textsuperscript{104} After Palamon trained him for seven years, Pachomius was commanded by a voice from heaven to build a monastery: “Pachomius, Pachomius, struggle, dwell in this place and build a monastery; for many will come to you to become monks with you, and they will profit their souls.”\textsuperscript{105} The \textit{Vitae} show this as a very important and decisive occasion for Pachomius. The voice from heaven can be understood as the ultimate result of his ascetic training.

As indicated above, through his ascetic training with Palamon, Pachomius gradually came to find a clearer and more basic understanding of serving others and he realized the proper way to do this. For Pachomius, to serve is to help the souls of those who want to be monks. To fulfill this, he founded a cenobitic monastery at Tabennesi.\textsuperscript{106} Consequently, a monastery is the best place for those who decide to be monks, where they are welcomed and can support and encourage each other.

In the Pachomian \textit{koinonía}, radical poverty resembles the two aspects of Antony’s renunciation: poverty as the first step of becoming a monk and its continuity in cenobitic life. The \textit{Vita Prima} shows that the rule of radical poverty comes from the words of Jesus (Lk 14:26–27, 33).\textsuperscript{107} When the first disciples came to him, Pachomius required them to

\textsuperscript{103} Bohairic Life 10; Vita Prima 6.
\textsuperscript{104} For his fast and strict dietary regime, Bohairic Life 11; Vita Prima 7.
\textsuperscript{105} Bohairic Life 17. According to Vita Prima (12), “Stay here and build a monastery; for many will come to you to become monks” (Παπάμεινον ὅτε καὶ ποίησον μοναζηήπιον ἐλεύονται γὰρ πολλοὶ πρὸς σὲ γενέθθαι μοναχοῖ).
\textsuperscript{107} Veilleux points out the biblical passages in his translation of Vita Prima 24 (Veilleux, \textit{Pachomian Koinonia}, vol. 1, 312).
“renounce all the world, their parents, and themselves, and follow the Saviour” according to the Scriptures. In this way, full renunciation is to follow the commandment of Jesus. No one can become his disciple without completely abandoning his/her possessions. In addition, the basic Pachomian monastic rules seem to be associated with Palamon’s ascetic tradition. The accounts of Pachomius’ experience with Palamon show that he became a true monk based on the absolute renunciation of the world, keeping total poverty throughout ἀδοκίμιος. Pachomius and Palamon did manual labour. However, any surplus was given to the poor. In doing so, they kept voluntary poverty.

The *Vita Prima* describes the strict rule of radical poverty for Pachomian novices:

He [Pachomius] began to receive those who came to him. After appropriately testing them and their parents, he clothed them in the monk’s habit. He introduced them to the life gradually. First, they had to renounce all the world, their parents, and themselves, and follow the Saviour who taught doing so, for this is to carry the Cross.\(^\text{110}\)

The *Praecepta*, one of the four books of the Rule of Pachomius,\(^\text{111}\) describes how the postulants were taken into the Pachomian κοινωνία. Whoever wanted to join the monastery must remain outside the κοινωνία for a few days.\(^\text{112}\) There they were tested to see if they had truly renounced the world: “has he done something wrong and, troubled by fear, suddenly run away? Or is he under someone’s authority? Can he renounce his parents and spurn his own...

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\(^{108}\) *Vita Prima* 24.

\(^{109}\) *Vita Prima* 6; *Bohairic Life* 10.

\(^{110}\) *Vita Prima* 24; *Bohairic Life*, 23: “He [Pachomius] talked with them to know whether they would be able to renounce their parents and follow the Saviour. Then he put them to the test and, having found they had the right intentions, he clothed them in the monks’ habit and received them as his companions with joy and God’s love. Once they had joined the holy community, they gave themselves over to great exercise and many ascetical practices.”

\(^{111}\) The Rule of Pachomius was originally written in Sahidic. But many copies in Coptic, Greek, Ethiopian, and Latin were circulated. The Latin translation of Jerome preserves the complete text of the Rule. Jerome’s translation consists of four parts: *Praecepta, Praecepta et Institutia, Praecepta atque Judicia, Praecepta ac Leges* (Armand Veilleux, trans., *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol.2, *Pachomian Chronicles and Rules*, 8–13).

\(^{112}\) *Praecepta* 49.
After they answered all the questions and showed their sincerity, the novices were taught the monastic disciplines and finally accepted in the κοινωνία. The acceptance of the novices was completed by stripping them of their secular clothes and having them put on monastic garb. Here removing “the secular clothes” seems to symbolize the full renunciation of the world.

After being received into the monastery, Pachomian monks must maintain poverty as long as they keep monastic life:

They shall have only what is distributed by the father of the monastery through the housemasters. This is their equipment: two linen tunics plus the one already worn, a long scarf for the neck and shoulders, a goat skin hanging from the shoulder, shoes, two hoods, a belt and a staff. If you find anything more than this, you shall take it away without contradiction.

Without any individual possessions except monastic necessities, they were voluntarily poor. According to Pachomius’ rules and teachings, they worked together for their survival. The Vita Prima reports that Pachomius forced his monks to do “the manual work that was determined for them by the housemaster according to the direction of the Great Steward, that is, the father of the monastery.” According to the Praecepta, the monks must work when ordered by the housemaster. No one may remain in the cell alone. While working, they should pay attention to reciting “holy things” or to keeping silent. They usually wove baskets from palm leaves. Only certain brothers could sell “the monks’ handiwork and

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113 Praecepta 49.
114 Praecepta 49.
115 Praecepta 49.
116 Praecepta 81.
117 Vita Prima 28.
118 Praecepta 58; the Vita Prima 24 also reports that Pachomius cultivated vegetables to help take care of other members.
119 Praecepta 60.
120 Praecepta 72.
buy what they needed." Here we can see that Pachomian monks should be poor and hardworking without exception.

However, the Vitae do not hide the fact that the monasteries were getting richer after the death of Pachomius:

They [the Pachomian monasteries] had acquired many fields, and again after some time many boats—each monastery built its own. Because of this they had no leisure and were burdened with heavy cares. In the time of Abba Pachomius, as they were few, they were vigilant not to be burdened by worldly possessions, for the yoke of the Lord is light. Seeing that many of the brothers were beginning to alter the way of life of the ancient brothers, Theodore was very sad about them. The Vitae show that poverty was only followed as long as Pachomius was alive and, after his death, Pachomian monks began to fall into temptation, straying from the principle of radical poverty. Palladius’ Historia Lausiaca suggests that Pachomian communities were wealthier than their surrounding neighbours. The Pachomian communities grew wealthy because they had created “every sort of handicraft” and kept even swine and sold their surplus at market.

Recent scholarship has examined the existence of radical poverty as reflected in the Vitae and the Pachomian rules. Through a close reading of the Vitae and other Pachomian sources, Goehring claims that Pachomian monasteries were located in deserted villages where “fertile land for vegetable gardens and the water necessary for their irrigation were immediately available,” and “commercial markets for the monks’ handiwork were nearby.” In this context, the Pachomian communities became sizable and wealthy. Thus, radical poverty as

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121 Vita Prima 28.
122 Vita Prima 146; Bohairic Life 197.
125 Ibid., 96.
found in the *Vitae* and the rules seems to reflect only the earliest stage of Pachomian *κοινωνία*.

We need to remember that for Pachomius, radical poverty was not considered the end of Pachomian *κοινωνία*, but as an element for achieving his ideal. As has been discussed, Pachomius decided to found a monastic community where monks could work together for their survival and practice ἀσκησις. He firmly believed that “serving others” could be embodied in the *κοινωνία* where the monks collectively sought out spiritual perfection. According to Rousseau, Pachomius wanted neither “mere association with others, nor even the service of others in some vague sense.”

The ultimate purpose of Pachomian *κοινωνία* was for all the monks to overcome various evil thoughts with the fear of God, to remain in virtue, and to achieve purity of soul and to contemplate “the invisible God.”

Here we can see that for Pachomius, radical poverty and manual labour played an indispensable role in acquiring the virtues of obedience and humility and proceeding toward perfection. Perhaps Pachomian monks came to regard the matter of wealth as the desire for money, that is, avarice. Here the accounts of wealthy Pachomian communities show us that many of the monks were dedicated to creating possessions and storing them up.

Consequently, they began to believe that wealth could be used for good, such as charity, building up their monasteries, and promoting monastic ἀσκησις without worrying about food, drink, and clothing. In this context, references to physical poverty found in the *Vitae* and the rules, though limited, emphasize radical poverty as an essential beginning and the maintenance of poverty throughout monastic life. Further, as mentioned above, post-Pachomian *κοινωνία* moved away from the rule of radical poverty.

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127 *Vita Prima* 47, 49, 57, 60, 96; *Bohairic Life* 46, 59, 72.
As mentioned above, Pachomian κοινωνία is described in the fourth book of De institutis. There Cassian praises the rigorous life, obedience, and patience of Pachomian monks. But instead of identifying Pachomius and his community as the founders of Egyptian cenobitic monasticism, he traces their origin to the original apostolic community in order to emphasize the close relationship between the Jerusalem Church and Egyptian monasticism. Cassian probably did not have a chance to visit a Pachomian κοινωνία. He likely read Jerome’s translation of Pachomian materials circulating in Gaul since those texts seem to be reflected in Cassian’s own writings.

Cassian’s use of Pachomian documents clarifies the meaning of renunciation in the fourth book of De institutis. Further, Pachomian rules are often used throughout the previous books of De institutis. Cassian introduces the rules to his Gallic audience as the most outstanding cenobitic successors of the Jerusalem Church. Particularly, in the first chapter of the fourth book, where the Pachomian community may be understood as a cenobium in which the ideal of the primitive Christian Church is realized because of the monks’ strict life and obedience to a single abba and their elders.

Here we can discern some impressive terms that make Pachomian κοινωνία similar to the Jerusalem Church: a “huge number of monks,” a “rigorous way of life” and “obedience.”

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128 Piamun indicates that the cenobitic monasticism “took its rise at the time of the apostolic preaching (Collationes 18.5.1).”

129 Cassian, in his writings, never mentions that he really visited Pachomian monasteries in Upper Egypt (Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 140).

130 Particularly, De institutis 4.1 and 4.3.1 can be compared to Jerome’s preface of the Regula Pachomii and Praecepta 49. As will be explained in detail, rather than accepting Jerome’s translation as it is, Cassian reinterprets the Pachomian sources. See Driver, John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture, 21–23; Stewart, Cassian the Monk, 36.

131 De Vogüé claims that the following monastic institutes seem to be inspired by the rule of Pachomius: De institutis 1.9.2, 2.7.3, 2.11.2, 2.15.1–2, 3.7.1–2 (De Vogüé, “Les sources des quatre premiers livres des Institutions de Jean Cassien,” 290).

132 De institutis 4.1 (SC 109:122).
Collationes 18.5.1 is derived from his interpretation of Acts 2 and 4. Cassian understands the primitive church as the community of “the multitude of believers with one heart and one soul.” They sought the same rigorous rules and practices under the guidance of the Apostles. This single-minded group began with the absolute divestment of wealth. Cassian believes that there have been those who have kept the perfection of the Apostolic Church in a cenobitic way. In order to show the Pachomian monks as this remnant of the primitive Church, he asserts that like the Apostles, “this huge number of monks—more than 5000 brothers” comprises one body that is obedient to a single abba.

Jerome says that there were several large Pachomian monasteries: “Thirty or forty houses exist[ed] in one monastery.” A house had “forty brothers who obey the master.” The Historia Lausiaca relates that there had been “all the other monasteries, having thirteen hundred men,” since the first Pachomian κοινωνία. In this way, it is clear that the Pachomian κοινωνία was not a sole monastery directed by an abba. De Vogüé suggests that Cassian remains intentionally silent concerning the diversity of the Pachomian κοινωνία. In the fourth book of De institutis, Pachomian materials are chosen to justify what Cassian wants to say about the nature of renouncing the secular world. The Pachomian κοινωνία as presented in the first chapter of the fourth book is idealized by Cassian as one community with a single mind and perfect virtues similar to the Jerusalem Church.

In Cassian’s mind, the way of Pachomian monastic life is exactly reflected in the rules of Pachomius. In explaining how those who are willing to renounce the world can be taken into a monastery, Cassian basically follows the outline of Praecepta 49. However, he does

133 De institutis 2.5.1 (SC 109:64): “Multitudinis scilicet credentium erat cor et anima una.”
134 Collationes 18.5.4.
136 Historia Lausiaca, 32.8 (ACW 34:94).
not copy the Pachomian Rule exactly. In Cassian’s version, new detailed rules are added. First, in Cassian’s version, the postulant must show his firm “humility and patience” by being “rebuked and disdained by everyone” while he remains at the door of the monastery. Second, the novice must be asked “with the utmost earnestness if, from his former possessions, the contamination of even a single copper coin clings to him.” He adds a long explanation of why the monastic beginner must be asked this particular question. Third, after he passes the test of fully giving up his wealth, the postulant is allowed to wear monastic garb. The novice is still not permitted to “join the community of the brothers immediately.” He must be trained by an elder near the entrance of the monastery for a full year. Here, compared to the Pachomian Rule, we can discover what Cassian wishes to accentuate in the admission process: to show that radical poverty is the most important criterion for introducing monastic beginners to the monastery. Cassian stresses this point because radical poverty is the starting point for cultivating humility and obedience. Unlike in the Pachomian Rule, Cassian’s novices are not allowed to join the elder monks as soon as they pass all the tests. They must continue to prove their humility, acquired by the divestment of possessions over a long period of time. Cassian certainly exaggerates the poverty of novices entering the Egyptian monastery as suggested in Praecepta 49 since, as indicated above, Pachomius’ successors began to retain income beyond the requirement for subsistence levels. For Cassian, the Pachomian κοινωνία is the contemporary model of the Apostolic Church based on perfect poverty. Cassian intimates to his Gallic readers that the Pachomian

\[137\] De institutis 4.3.1.
\[138\] De institutis 4.3.1.
\[139\] De institutis 4.3.2–4.4.
\[140\] De institutis 4.5.
\[141\] De institutis 4.7.
\[142\] De institutis 4.3.2–4.4.
κοινωνία is directly linked to the first Christian community and by following the Pachomian example monks will be able to make the same spiritual progress as the Apostolic community and prominent biblical figures.

3. Evagrius Ponticus on Radical Poverty

When it comes to radical poverty, Evagrius tells his readers to begin with “voluntary exile” (ξενιηείαν),¹⁴³ that is, to become absolutely separated from their homeland, family, inheritance and wealth. Additionally, monks cannot pray without worry and will never be able to attain their ultimate goal, if they are still attached to the material they gave away.¹⁴⁴ Evagrius tells his readers how to fight against the desire for wealth in vulnerable circumstances.

Evagrius arrived in Nitria, Egypt around 383. There he spent the remaining sixteen years of his life as a monk keeping a semi-anchoritic life in Nitria, Scete, and the Desert of Cells.¹⁴⁵ Unlike Pachomian cenobitic monks who resolved financial problems with their monastic colleagues in well-organized ways, the basic life of these semi-anchoritic communities was more similar to the ascetic life of Antony. Anchoritic monks spent most of their time alone in isolated cells praying and contemplating Scripture. They gathered together only to share a communal meal in the church on Saturday evening and during worship on Sunday. Semi-anchoritic monks had to earn money to pay for their monastic life. Thus, for those anchorites, who renounced their possessions and family, keeping total poverty was

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¹⁴⁴ De octo spiritibus malitiae 3.7 (PG 79:1152c–1152d).

complicated and challenging.\textsuperscript{146} In this context, it is important to learn how Evagrius’ predecessors achieved complete renunciation, and to investigate how he applied their version of poverty to the anchoritic life, developing his own creative opinions about the subject.

3.1. Prerequisites for Understanding the Distinctiveness of Evagrian Poverty: the Monastic Scheme and Eight Thoughts (\textit{λογίσμοι})

In order to examine Evagrius’ monastic poverty, we need to bear in mind that he is considered to be “the first great theoretician of the spiritual life.”\textsuperscript{147} Throughout his monastic writings, Evagrius clarifies how monks should combat the demons—more precisely, the eight evil thoughts\textsuperscript{148} which obstruct monks from achieving detachment (impassibility, \textit{ἀπάθεια}). Evagrius is mainly concerned with explaining the meaning of poverty as part of his detailed analysis of the eight evil thoughts (\textit{λογίσμοι}) in the monastic scheme. In other words, he is fully dedicated to explaining how, in the process of \textit{ἀσκησις}, a monk is challenged by avarice, how he can successfully deal with this temptation, how he is able to maintain poverty, and how he is able to pray without distraction.

In order to understand the meanings of Evagrius’ poverty, it is necessary to examine briefly his understanding of the human being, particularly human psychology. In \textit{Practicus}, he explains how the human soul is divided and the roles played by each of its parts. Based on this psychological pattern, he then builds an ascetical program designed to help monastics attain perfection. For example, he writes, “The rational soul acts according to nature when its concupiscible part longs for virtue, and the irascible part struggles on its behalf, and the rational part perceives the contemplation of beings.”\textsuperscript{149} This shows Evagrius’ tripartite

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} Brakke, “Care for the Poor, Fear of Poverty, and Love of Money,” 77.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Harmless, \textit{Desert Christians}, 312.
\item \textsuperscript{148} For more on the \textit{λογίσμοι}, see Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, ed., \textit{Évagre le Pontique: Traité pratique ou le Moine}, SC 170, 55–63.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Evagrius, \textit{Practicus}, ed. Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, SC 171 (Paris: Éditions du
understanding of the fallen soul (the rational, the concupiscible, and the irascible).

Similar to the world view of Antony as found in his Epistulae, the fallen mind derives from Evagrius’ cosmology, which may have been influenced by Origen’s theory of the pre-existent soul. The world of rational beings (λογικοί) was created by God before the visible, physical world. Here, the pure λογικοί were completely united to and knew the essence of God. Unfortunately, by the misuse of their free will, the λογικοί began to distance themselves from communion with God. These pure rational beings, as a result, became separated from their union with God. These λογικοί are what Evagrius calls the fallen minds. In this Fall, pure minds became souls, that is, the rational part of the human soul. However, God’s mercy and grace did not allow the λογικοί to be fully separated from God. Thus, the physical world was created again. In the second world, each fallen mind received its own body and God thereby created the worlds of angels, humans, and demons according to the degree of the fall. Particularly, human bodies were created by a predominance of air and irascibility. Here, the other two parts of the human soul, the irascible and concupiscible parts, are regarded as the passionate parts of the soul that are joined to the human body. For Evagrius, therefore, the ultimate purpose of the human soul is to be united with God again by establishing health in each of its three parts through ἄσκησις and prayer.

To purify the lower passionate parts of the human soul, and then to lead it into the

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152 Practicus 38, 49, 78, 84.

153 Letter to Melania 11–12.
knowledge of its original state and to contemplate the essence of God,$^{154}$ those who practice
the practical level cannot help but face severe attacks from the eight evil λογίσμοι—gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, dejection, acedia, vainglory, and pride.$^{155}$ These eight thoughts are inspired by demons as a means to make trouble for the monks. Evagrius, in De malignis cogitationibus, explains that the demons cannot attack the human soul directly. Instead, they must “introduce into the soul mental representations” (Πάντες οἱ δαμανιώδεις λογισμοὶ νοῆματα εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν αἰσθητῶν εἰσφέρονται πραγμάτων).$^{156}$ Mental representation (νοῆμα) means “the image [of the object] that the mind receives.”$^{157}$ He maintains that the νοῆμα—
or incomplete images—are inspired by the demons in order to “bring on irascibility or concupiscibility [of the human soul] contrary to nature.”$^{158}$ Therefore, it is important for those who pursue the knowledge of God to be aware of how demonic thought works, what kinds of thoughts act upon the human mind, and what sorts of things most afflict the mind.$^{159}$

Victory against these demonic challenges (the eight evil λογίσμοι) leads to ἀπάθεια. Through ἀπάθεια, as indicated above, the monks are led into the next phase, γνωστική.

Evagrius’ monastic scheme may be understood as progressive and successive. In this ascetic system, Evagrius attempts to clarify the meaning of total poverty in the monastic life.

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$^{154}$ Practicus 50.

$^{155}$ In his writings, the Practicus (SC 171), the De octo spiritibus malitiae (PG 79:1145d–1164d), and the De malignis cogitationibus (SC 438:148–301), Evagrius analyzes how the eight evil thoughts work and provides remedies for each of eight principal thoughts.


$^{157}$ De malignis cogitationibus 25 (SC 438:240–244).

$^{158}$ De malignis cogitationibus 2 (SC 438:156).

$^{159}$ De malignis cogitationibus 19 (SC 438:216–222).
3.2. The Meaning of Radical Poverty for Evagrius Ponticus

I have discussed the Evagrian monastic scheme and the eight evil λογίσμοι as the precondition for understanding his views on radical poverty. In his system, we can find the two features of monastic poverty as seen in the Vita Antonii and Vita Pachomii in the πρακτική phase—that is, the emphasis on absolute poverty as the ascetic beginning, and maintaining poverty throughout the process of ascetic discipline. He is deeply conscious of how monks are challenged by evil thoughts in the πρακτική phase. In the practical phase, poverty is not an end but a crucial means by which a monk can overcome the attacks of evil and finally proceed toward ἀπάθεια. Keeping extreme poverty is the antithesis of the love of money or avarice. Avarice leads a monk to give up poverty and to desire material possessions. It is “the root of all evils (ῥίζα ἡ ὄν κακῶν).” The monk who is eager to have many possessions will neglect his ascetic life because possessions lead to worries about wealth. It is also important to recognize that the monk’s desire for material wealth is never satisfied:

The sea is never filled up even though it takes in a multitude of rivers; the desire of the avaricious person cannot get its fill of riches. He doubled his wealth and wants to double it again, and he does not stop doubling it until death puts a stop to his endless zeal. In this way, Evagrius affirms that it is hard for the covetous monk to focus on prayers and reading the Bible. It is avarice which leads the monk to become a slave to the desire for wealth. For Evagrius, therefore, the desire for material possessions becomes a fundamental
Evagrius, however, in chapter 19 of *De malignis cogitationibus*, states that wealth itself does not cause the monk to sin:

Suppose the thought of avarice is sent by him [demon, enemy]; distinguish within this thought the mind that received it, the mental representation of gold, the gold itself, and the passion of avarice; then ask which of these elements is a sin. Is it the mind? But how? It is the image of God. But can it be the mental representation of gold? And who in his right mind would ever say this? Does the gold itself constitute sin? Then for what purpose was it created? It follows therefore that the fourth element is the cause of the sin, namely that which is not an object with substantial subsistence, not the mental representation of an object, nor even the incorporeal mind, but a pleasure hostile to humanity, born of free will, and compelling the mind to make improper use of the creatures of God.

Gold is created by God. Therefore, it is good. It is rather the disordered passion for gold (engendered by avarice) that inflames the irascible part of the human soul. Avarice eventually makes an evil use of the created good. The greedy monk caught in irascibility without renouncing his possessions neither approaches the virtue of love toward others nor possesses heavenly treasure according the basic word of Jesus that Evagrius relies upon to explain his ideal of poverty. In this way, rather than rejecting material goods and wealth, poverty is about eliminating inner passion, avarice. Poverty is freedom from the desire for wealth, which allows one to proceed to the ultimate end of monastic life through the expulsion of the eight λογίσμοι, including avarice.

If this is the case, why does Evagrius detail the importance of keeping poverty against avarice in the practical level toward ἀπάθεια? Brakke points to the semi-anchoritic monks in

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164 Driscoll, “‘Love of Money’ in Evagrius Ponticus,” 22.

165 *De malignis cogitationibus* 19.

the communities of Nitria, Scetis, and Kellia in northern Egypt who supported themselves individually or in small groups.\textsuperscript{167} For the semi-anchoritic monks, keeping extreme poverty and struggling against the evil λογίσμοι, avarice was likely the most difficult aspect of their spiritual lives. In order to become self-sufficient, the monks had to make money through manual labour, farming, and creating their own businesses. Therefore, voluntary exile, that is, the renunciation of possessions, might create a challenge for most semi-anchoritic monks.\textsuperscript{168}

The sources associated with Antony and Pachomius attempt to show ideal examples of physical renunciation by these monastic heroes. However, they ignore the gradual steps leading up to Antony’s renunciation and the Pachomian monks’ practice of making and selling various crafts, which created a financial surplus. Of course, the economic activities provided adequate food, clothing, shelter, and health care to Pachomian monks.\textsuperscript{169} Many scholars have deconstructed the ideal images of early Christian monks as reflected in historical sources.\textsuperscript{170} They have accepted that the life of the successors of the first ascetic movement was not really poor.

In this context, perhaps, Evagrius recognized how severe life would be for the monk who decided to renounce his possessions throughout his ascetic life. He admits the vulnerable reality of the destitute monk. He explains how the evil thought of avarice terrifies them: “Avarice suggests a lengthy old age, inability to perform manual labour, famines that will come along, disease that will arise, the bitter realities of poverty, and the shame there is in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} Brakke, “Care for the Poor, Fear of Poverty and Love of Money,” 77.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 77.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Goehring, Ascetics, Society, and the Desert, 39–52.
\end{itemize}
accepting goods from others to meet one’s needs.”

Thus, he is absolutely aware of the tension a monk experiences between the affairs of making money for basic necessities and the need to retain poverty for undistracted ceaseless prayer. Therefore, as Brakke points out, Evagrius focuses on examining the “thoughts of worry and mental representations to which possessions give rise” rather than physical poverty.

Evagrius’ radical poverty is more concerned with creating freedom from the anxieties and worries which disturb the way toward the ascetic end, than with abandoning financial resources. In this context, Evagrius asserts that monastic poverty is all about removing the psychological disturbance which inhibits successive inner growth. Thus, perhaps it implies that true poverty is about renouncing the desire for money, not about renouncing financial resources and wealth. For Evagrius, the desire for money can be conquered no matter how difficult it is. Consequently, wealth might be used for monastic life.

As indicated above, when it comes to radical poverty, Evagrius is on the side of Antony and Pachomius. Of course, he systematized their ideas of poverty. Their explanation of radical poverty is outlined in two aspects. First, they all indicate that monks must begin by absolutely renouncing their wealth, for it is to follow the word of Jesus: no radical poverty, no ascetic life. Second, monks should retain extreme poverty in some way. In other words, monastic life is based on radical poverty. Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius are also interested in articulating how a monk must proceed spiritually. Thus, for them, radical

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171 Practicus 9 (SC 171:512).
172 Brakke, “Care for the Poor, Fear of Poverty, and Love of Money,” 79.
173 Gnosticus 30.
174 Driscoll, “‘Love of Money’ in Evagrius Ponticus,” 25.
poverty is a necessary step for spiritual growth, not the end of monastic life. Avarice needs to be removed for monks to proceed toward monastic perfection. Once avarice is removed, wealth can be thought of without inner passions. Wealth is good in itself. Thus, in their documents, the description of radical poverty is somewhat limited.

As indicated in Chapter One, Cassian criticizes Gallic attitudes toward monastic poverty and wants to suggest, for them, an alternative plan. In order to show an alternative plan, Cassian reflects the Egyptian views on poverty, develops his own notion, and introduces his take on Egyptian poverty to his wealthy Gallic readers. However, Cassian does not focus only on the achievement of internal purification. Rather, Cassian highlights and even idealizes the two principles of radical renunciation as found in the writings associated with Antony and Pachomius: the initial abandonment of wealth and its continuity throughout monastic life. In so doing, Cassian uses idealized examples of Egyptian monks who have achieved radical poverty and maintained poverty. Cassian clearly wants to illustrate, for his Gallic reader, his own ideal of radical poverty thinly disguised as the Egyptian way.

Therefore, in spite of the fact that Evagrius’ poverty is deeply interested in achieving a progressive and successive inner growth beyond external poverty, De institutis and Collationes patrum continue to repeat the principles of radical poverty. For Cassian, Egyptian radical poverty must be regarded as the absolute criterion for entering and embodying the apostolic age. Cassian never forgets to remind his reader that good renunciation begins with radical poverty and ends with maintaining it until death.

Cassian tries to show that the ultimate purpose of monastic life may not be separated from the beginning of monastic life: radical poverty. As Stewart Columba suggests, “what one does on the first day of monastic life, one is still doing on the last.”175 In this context,

Cassian’s monastic journey is circular. The achievement of monastic life is found in the pursuit of a poor life lived daily. In the next chapter, I will examine, on the basis of the Gallic monastic context and the radical poverty of Egyptian monasticism, how Cassian developed his understanding of poverty.
Chapter 3
The Ideal of Radical Poverty in John Cassian and Its Implications

The aim of Chapter Three is to examine how John Cassian’s concept of radical poverty can be understood through his monastic writings. In order to better understand the significance of John Cassian’s radical poverty, the preceding two chapters have dealt with Gallic and Egyptian ascetic views of monastic poverty. On the basis of these two main contexts, I will argue that Cassian does not simply and literally repeat Egyptian views of monastic poverty, but creates a unique understanding of poverty.

Even if he was deeply influenced by Eastern monasticism, especially Evagrian monastic theology, we need to bear in mind that Cassian created his own ascetic corpus to address the circumstances of fifth-century Gallic asceticism. In examining the monastic context in early fifth-century Gaul, I have focused on three influential monks, Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus, who were instrumental in establishing fifth-century Gallic monasticism. In particular, I have indicated that though they created their own monasteries in different situations, the three Gallic monks had a common idea about the meaning of monastic radical poverty. They understood renunciation as the retention of money and its proper use for various monastic works. Their attitude towards radical poverty may be regarded as the conflation of the tradition of aristocratic otium and the monastic practice of renunciation.

As indicated in Chapter One, Cassian attempted to explain how Gallic monks’ spiritual progress had been undermined because they did not renounce their possessions. Without disowning “former possessions” (pristinis facultatibus), or being alert to “the contamination of even a single copper coin” (unius nummi contagio),¹ and trying to keep and

¹ De institutis 4.3.1 (SC 109:124; ACW 58:80).
gain possessions, the monks could never grasp the virtue of humility and would instead come to be absorbed by their own pride. Consequently, they were unable to cope with rigorous monastic disciplines and could not reach ascetic perfection.

If this is the case, how should the lives of the Gallic monks be modified? The alternative Cassian offers is simple: to regard Egyptian ascetic principles as the only apostolic and authoritative way. More precisely, even as he introduces many Egyptian practices, rules, and teachings, for Cassian, it is essential to show how Egyptians renounced the world. Concerning this point, I have explored in the second chapter Egyptian views of radical poverty by analyzing the writings of Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius, all of whom influenced Cassian’s ideal of poverty expressed in *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum*. Their main ascetic works show a clear meaning of radical poverty: to renounce existing wealth and to maintain poverty in a radically isolated life. Cassian intends to exaggerate the Egyptian understanding of monastic poverty and to introduce that to the Gauls.

However, there is another aspect of poverty for Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius. They were deeply interested in achieving a progressive and successive inner growth beyond external poverty. Radical poverty is just the first step and failure comes from excessive human passion for money (avarice). They suggest that avarice can be controlled so that monks are able to progress toward the end of monastic life. In this regard, particularly, Evagrius seems to believe that inner poverty can be achieved by getting rid of anxieties about money (avarice) rather than emphasizing strict radical poverty for its own sake. For him, wealth is neutral and good in itself. Thus, monks who are free from avarice can have possessions and use them for good.

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However, in his writings, Cassian emphasizes radical poverty and, in particular, his own version of radical poverty that he claims is from the Egyptian tradition. As mentioned in the Introduction, the subject of renunciation is primarily found in the fourth book of *De institutis* and the third conference. The first book (the beginning of the first part of *De institutis*), the fourth book (the middle between the first part and the second part), the twelfth book (the end of the second part) and twenty-fourth conference (the conclusion of *Collationes patrum*) all deal with various aspects of renunciation, such as monks as the renunciants, the essential aspects of renunciation, and the importance of the initial step.

According to Pristas, the repeating focal points are intended to remind readers of the importance of the first step of monastic life. In this way, the repetition of renunciation is never without meaning. Such repetition suggests that throughout a monk’s life he must not give up radical poverty in the process of ascetic disciplines: the end is in the beginning. In addition, the seventh book of *De institutis* makes clear the relationship between the human passion for money and poverty; the third conference discusses, again, the meaning of renunciation as presented in the fourth book; and in three other fragments (*De institutis* 2.5.1, *Collationes* 18.5 and 21.30) Cassian discusses how the Apostolic Church was the origin of monasticism and how the decline of the Church was the result of economic impurity.

In this context, in order to clarify Cassian’s understanding of radical poverty, it is necessary for us to analyze the Institutes and the Conferences, taking into consideration the thematic and structural contexts, and then to arrange consistent meanings of poverty found through the analysis of the texts. In so doing, I will show three fundamental aspects of monastic poverty. The first aspect regards the theory behind the renunciation of wealth. Cassian is eager to remind rich aristocratic monk-bishops that achieving radical poverty

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never comes easily and that preserving poverty must therefore be practiced throughout their lives. Based on the Egyptian principles of radical poverty, he asserts that wealth from monastic novices must not be absorbed into the monastery. The monks must be required to do manual labour, give alms, and possess only a minimum of food, clothing, and shelter. However, radical poverty is not the aim for monks, but an essential tool required to control inner avarice.⁴ When the inner passion for wealth is overcome, the act of avoiding possessions and material goods is fully achieved.

However, he observed that most Gallic monks fell into avarice which caused a failure to renounce wealth and ultimately caused them to fall off the spiritual path. Perhaps this observation of Gallic cenobitic life forced him to take a careful and deep consideration of the reality of human circumstances. According to Cassian, after the Fall, the human soul is ceaselessly attacked by persistent desires (vitia). Even if the human will is not destroyed, it is so feeble that its balance between physical desire and spiritual desire is easily lost. The ability of the human will to choose good is attained by eradicating vitia. To do that, lifelong unceasing disciplinae are required. Failure comes from avarice. Human covetousness always stands behind material goods, money and property. Consequently, Gallic monks must focus both on governing greed and avoiding wealth.

Cassian’s understanding of the relationship between wealth and avarice is different from the flexible opinions about wealth as found in Clement of Alexandria, Basil, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Jerome as well as Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus. In addition, Cassian’s repetition of renunciation in monastic daily life implies that he does not believe that avarice can be fully removed so that money can be used without passion. This idea is not similar to the Egyptian monastic teachings, particularly Evagrius’.

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⁴ *De institutis* 7.22.
The second aspect is about the role and place of radical poverty in Cassian’s monastic scheme involving virtues attained through the practical stage and the ascetic ideal for *puritas cordis*. It is important to show the mutual relationship between the practical stage and the monastic ideal, *puritas cordis*. Cassian’s understanding of radical poverty, avarice, and the fallen human condition is clarified by the circumstances of Gallic monasticism. He seems to have become interested in reconciling Evagrian theory with Gallic practice. Based on his understanding of fallen human nature, Cassian asserts that the permanent monastic ends, *puritas cordis* (purity of heart) and *regnum Dei* (the unceasing contemplation of divine realities) cannot be achieved in this life. However, there is hope. Monks can participate in a moment of *puritas cordis* and anticipate the eschatological hope. Cassian focuses on the process, the importance of repeating the tireless practical and moral step, that is, ceaseless cultivation of the virtues attained by controlling the eight *vitia*. In other words, the virtues cause the monks to anticipate *puritas cordis* and *regnum Dei* however temporarily. Of course, the experience of *puritas cordis* intensifies monastic virtues. In fallen human nature, it is natural that the relationship between the monastic ideal, *puritas cordis*, and the virtues, is reciprocal. *Puritas cordis* is only manifested through the virtues. Therefore, regarding Gallic monasticism, Cassian declares that the three prominent virtues—renunciation, obedience, and humility—are of the most importance. True renunciation is attained by creating a complete balance between renouncing possessions and eliminating covetousness and is regarded as the foundational virtue. Renunciation, then, brings about the virtues of obedience and humility. Consequently, *puritas cordis* relies on the success of the three virtues.

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Puritas cordis expresses itself through the process of achieving perfect poverty. However, unlike Evagrius, Cassian does not say that the perfect monastic end is followed by the mastery of all the virtues. As a result, we can see Cassian’s strong preference for the monastic process, not the monastic end.

Finally, the third aspect is the connection between Cassian’s radical poverty and the ideal poverty of the Apostolic Church. According to Cassian, the first Christians literally followed Jesus’ instructions to the young man (Mt 19:21). Through the renunciation of wealth, they embraced the contemplation of God in their lives. However, as indicated in Chapter Two, Cassian understood the decision by the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–19) to have introduced economic flexibility (impurity) into the Apostolic Church. Since then, the church had been in a struggle between those preserving the economic purity of the Apostolic Church and those who were not. Consequently, for Cassian, poverty is a necessary criterion for becoming a true Christian and for the realization of the Apostolic age. Cassian reminds his readers that the radical renunciation of wealth is not an unrealistic vision; rather it is indispensable for making concrete the ideal Christian community as reflected in Acts 4. Therefore, radical poverty is asked of all Gallic monks (a monk being defined as one who struggles against a flexible understanding of poverty and seeks true renunciation). In this chapter, I will attempt to illustrate Cassian’s ideal of radical poverty and its implication by examining the aforementioned three features.

1. Radical Poverty in Cassian’s Monastic Texts

1.1. Radical Poverty in the First, Fourth, and Twelfth Books of De institutis and Twenty-Fourth Conference

Before presenting Cassian’s version of radical poverty and its implication, we need to examine how Cassian locates poverty in De institutis and Collationes patrum. As already
indicated in the Introduction, the two works are “neatly and tightly bound together and form an intended whole” through four crucial points.7

The first book discusses Egyptian cenobitic garb and its symbolic meanings. The first part begins by explaining the relationship between biblical figures and Egyptian monks. Cassian introduces the exemplary lives of Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul through a discussion of the Egyptians’ monastic garments.8 Cassian explains that the monk’s garment is not simply a covering for the body, but signifies the simplicity of those who wear it and illustrates the death of all earthly ways of life.9 More precisely, by connecting the origins of monastic garb and life to biblical figures, Cassian asserts that monastic garments reflect full renunciation, that is, the poverty, simplicity, and humility of “the servants of God.”10 Further, wearing a small hood signifies the innocence and simplicity of childhood and infancy;11 linen with cut off sleeves illustrates the utter separation from a worldly lifestyle;12 the cord suggest that they must do manual labour night and day for themselves and other members;13 a short cape indicates a radically modest and poor life in cenobium14; the goatskin and staff signify the perfect elimination of evil passions, “the most elevated virtue” and the achievement of a purified mind;15 finally, the shoes remind the monks that human beings can never escape from care and worries about worldly matters due to the


8 De institutis 1.1.2–4. Other important figures such as Abraham, Moses, Job, Mary and Martha appear in various contexts (Christopher J. Kelly, Cassian’s Conferences: Scriptural Interpretation and the Monastic Ideal, [Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012], 17–100).

9 De institutis 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10.

10 De institutis 1.1.1–1.2.1.

11 De institutis 1.3.

12 De institutis 1.4.

13 De institutis 1.5.

14 De institutis 1.6.

15 De institutis 1.7.
essential weakness of the human body.\textsuperscript{16} In this way, through the whole of the first book, we can find some important clues about Cassian’s understanding of radical poverty. First, Cassian believes that the origin of his version of renunciation is rooted on the Bible. The act of renouncing a worldly lifestyle is the act of embodying the lives of biblical figures. Second, giving up an earthly lifestyle signifies becoming poor and preserving radical poverty. However, feeble human flesh does not allow monks to keep poverty or to remove inner passions about caring for their physical bodies. Thus, monks must work all day for the minimum necessities and be devoted to overcoming inner vices, including avarice. As a result, for Cassian, just as a monk must wear a hood, linen, cords, cape, goatskin, staff, and shoes at the same time, so the separation between external poverty and internal renunciation is impossible. \textit{Puritas cordis} is not preceded by the mastery of practical disciplines involving physical poverty. It is experienced during the process of maintaining monastic poverty. The division between the ascetic ideal and the practical stage is not clear. In this way, the three-fold view of renunciation suggested in the first book can be regarded as a useful tool for interpreting Cassian’s radical poverty.

Cassian, in the fourth book, returns to the subject of the monk as a renunciant. He develops his idea of ascetic renunciation in detail. The fourth book mainly deals with how postulants can be accepted into a cenobitic monastery and how they must proceed toward monastic perfection. In this context, as indicated in Chapter Two, Cassian praises the Pachomian community and accepts their rules. He defines the most significant type of renunciation as the full divestment of wealth. In fact, Cassian has Abba Piamun tell the readers that only the cenobites and the anchorites had roots fastened into the apostolic tradition. The cenobites, as the earliest form of monasticism, derived directly from the

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{De institutis} 1.9.
Apostolic Church, and the anchorites emerged from the cenobites. The cenobites and anchorites both maintained the obedience of literal poverty.\textsuperscript{17}

After showing the nature of cenobitic poverty through the Pachomian community, Cassian says that the life of a monk is to cultivate obedience and humility in service to others and then to seek internal purification. Of course, the cultivation of ascetic virtues and purification are based on absolute poverty. The fourth book introduces the reader to monks who achieved perfect virtues: Abba John (chapters 23–26), Patermucius, who was accepted into monastery with his eight-year-old son (27–28), and Abba Pinufius (30–43). The fourth book ends with a sermon by Pinufius, emphasizing, again, the meaning of renunciation.

According to Boniface Ramsey, his discourse can be viewed as “the heart of The Institutes and indeed, perhaps of both of Cassian’s monastic writings.”\textsuperscript{18} In his sermon, Pinufius says that a monk is “someone who has been crucified” (\textit{crucifixus quis}) and is absolutely separated from worldly pleasure.\textsuperscript{19} Needless to say, being a renunciant begins with “the contempt of all possessions.”\textsuperscript{20} Here radical poverty means “nothing else than a manifestation of the cross and of dying” (\textit{nihil est aliud quam crucis ac mortificationis indicium}).\textsuperscript{21} In other words, true renunciation is the emptying of self-will. Thus, Cassian’s renunciation involves “humility,” “the dying of desire and all the vices,” “purity of heart,” and “the perfection of apostolic love.”\textsuperscript{22} Abandoning wealth is the beginning of the eradication of self-will. Pinufius says that monks must proceed from the beginning to the end

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Collationes 18.7.4–7.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ramsey, trans., John Cassian: The Institutes, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{19} De institutis 4.35.
\item \textsuperscript{20} De institutis 4.3.2–4.4, 4.43.
\item \textsuperscript{21} De institutis 4.34 (SC 109:172).
\item \textsuperscript{22} De institutis 4.35,43.
\end{itemize}
and only those who do not forget the beginning will be saved.\textsuperscript{23} The homily of Pinufius completes the first part of \textit{De institutis} by returning to the theme of renunciation, while it opens new topics which the second part (Books 5 to 12) deal with by providing a clear progressive map toward internal purification in order to attain the eradication of self-will.

The twelfth book is regarded as the conclusion of the second part (Books 5 to 12). It explains the natures of the eight \textit{vitia} (gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, dejection, acedia, vainglory, and pride) and provides remedies for them. In the twelfth book, Cassian discusses monks who are steeped in pride. Arrogant monks are precisely those who lack obedience and humility. The evil of pride is “a most savage beast” among the eight principal \textit{vitia}.\textsuperscript{24} That is because pride causes “even those who are nearly established in the perfection of virtue” to think that spiritual achievement has been accomplished by themselves, not God’s grace.

Consequently, they may be opposed to God, “the Creator, and Physician of the universe.”\textsuperscript{25} More precisely, Cassian describes the signs found in a monk who is captured by the vice of pride.\textsuperscript{26} He highlights their noisy and chaotic states. He also speaks of the disobedience of the monks who never accept any advice, falling into their own desire and monastic zeal. For Cassian, the more serious problem for monks captured by pride is that they, relying on their own judgment and practice, become convinced that they can lead a monastery and teach disciples. Thus, the evil of pride leads haughty monks and all those surrounding them, to be ruined. However, when Cassian deals with the cause of pride, his emphasis on renunciation appears again. He says that pride is derived from “the mind of a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{De institutis} 4.36.2.
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{De institutis} 12.1.
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{De institutis} 12.4.2, 12.7, 12.8.1.
\item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{De institutis} 12.29.2–3.
\end{itemize}
monk [who] has begun his renunciation badly and lukewarmly.” He also returns to the relationship between cleaving to wealth and pride (originally mentioned in his fourth book). In other words, incomplete renunciation brings about disobedience. Disobedience causes the failure of the eradication of self-will and pride.

Cassian clarifies the theme by discussing the significance of the temptation of avarice. Incomplete renunciation directly intensifies avarice. Covetous monks are obsessed by the wealth they had left and wealth they had never possessed. The strong obsession with money makes them cling to all the worldly pleasures related to wealth like their noble status and lifestyle. As a result, the avaricious monks never accept “the simple and true humility of Christ” and “the rule of submission and obedience.” Cassian asserts that wealth begets avarice and avarice begets pride. In this way, in the last book of De institutis, Cassian emphasizes, again, the importance of the monastic beginning. Obviously, renunciation as presented in the twelfth book is the result of putting into practice the instruction contained in the the first book and fourth book. The repetition of renunciation in Books One, Four, and Twelve connects the two parts of De institutis into a unified structure, even though it may at first appear as if the subjects are handled unsystematically and inconsistently.

As indicated in the Introduction, Collationes patrum falls into two large thematic categories (the first conferences and the second conferences). The first conferences explain Cassian’s monastic goals such as puritas cordis, charity, and contemplation. The second conferences mainly clarify the means for reaching the goals. The structure of Collationes patrum reminds readers that the end of monastic life is found in the ascetical disciplines. However, in the twenty-fourth conference of Collationes patrum (the work’s last conference

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27 De institutis, 12.25.
28 See the second section of the Introduction.
and its conclusion), Cassian returns to the theme of monastic renunciation as reflected in the first, fourth, and twelfth books of *De institutis*. He firmly repeats his assertion that a monk who is eager to proceed toward *puritas cordis* and contemplation must become a true renunciant:

> We despise all these things and disdain them along with each one of this world’s pleasures, and we delight only in this harshness, preferring the redoubtable vastness of this desert to every luxury. . . . For it is a very small matter for a monk to have made a renunciation only once—that is, to have despised present things at the beginning of his conversion—if he does not continue to renounce them every day.\(^{29}\)

As Pristas claims, the reappearance of the theme of renunciation in the last conference is intentional. This is because it returns to the essential topic reflected in the first, fourth, and twelfth books of *De institutis* and binds Cassian’s two works together.\(^{30}\) The intended structure reminds readers that true monks never forget their identity as those who completely renounce wealth and who follow the Egyptian practices introduced by Cassian’s two ascetic works.

### 1.2. Radical Poverty in Supplemental Texts, the Seventh Book of *De institutis*, the Third Conference, and Three Fragments: *De institutis* 2.5.1, *Collationes* 18.5, and 21.30.

In order to understand the placement of radical poverty in Cassian’s ascetic literature, I have examined the meanings of renunciation suggested in the focal points which seem to connect *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum*. Cassian discusses radical poverty in other texts. They are as follows: the seventh book (on the human desire for wealth and avarice), the third conference presenting three-fold renunciation, and *De institutis* 2.5.1, *Collationes* 18.5, and

\(^{29}\) *Collationes* 24.2.4–5 (SC 64:173–174).

21.30 concerning the relationship between the Apostolic Church and Egyptian monasticism and poverty.

The seventh book of *De institutis* delves into the connection between greed and incomplete renunciation. Cassian gives readers a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between money, avarice, disobedience, and pride as suggested in the twelfth Book. According to Cassian, avarice is stimulated by external objects, that is, wealth or money. More precisely, as will be discussed in the next section, greed is the result of a corrupt and evil will. The distorted human will comes from the fall. After the Fall, the human soul is always challenged by desires. Finally, souls become lukewarm for God and lack faith. They have a basic tendency to choose to misuse good things created by God. Thus, humanity is in danger of excessive desire for wealth. Avarice always lies behind wealth.

Avarice, giving various reasons, tempts monks to possess three kinds of wealth—first, that which they have never had, second, that which they gave to the poor and want back, and third, that which they held back from abandoning. It moves them far from their love for God and directs them toward the world. Finally, greedy monks never focus on monastic discipline, or respect their brothers and elders. The monks become arrogant, believing that they cannot be saved in monastic life. Avarice, therefore, begets arrogant monks. As a result, Cassian wants his readers to remember that, as indicated by Pinufius in the fourth book, a monk is a renunciant. True renunciation is the removal of self-will (the excess of human desire), that is, all that does not belong to God. It can be completed only when all possessions are

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31 *De institutis* 7.1.
32 *De institutis* 7.3.2.
33 *De institutis* 7.14.1; *Collationes* 5.11. Cassian presents three biblical figures (Gehazi, Judas, and Ananias and Sapphira) who correspond with the three types of avarice (*De institutis* 7.14.2).
34 *De institutis* 7.7.
The possession of money can be completely rejected throughout monastic life by controlling greed which was a product of the Fall. Therefore, monks can be freed from the temptation of avarice by renouncing their wealth and possessions. Here we find that radical poverty and avarice are interrelated. However, the seventh book notes that perfect renunciation is the exhaustive process of maintaining poverty and removing avarice by manual labour and charity as the first Christians “had renounced all their property and had voluntarily submitted to neediness” and had chosen “to be supported by their own labor.”

The three-fold renunciation in the third conference is complementary to the renunciation found in the fourth book. As discussed in the Introduction, the third conference, as part of the “first conferences,” focuses on articulating monastic goals in practical ways. That is to say, the theme of renunciation is chosen to explain the monastic journey toward perfection. In doing so, Cassian’s clear monastic program (moving from the contempt of possessions to puritas cordis and apostolic charity) presented in the fourth book is supplemented. Renunciation is divided into three types: first, “all the wealth and resources of the world” (corporaliter uniuersas diuitias mundi facultatesque), second, “the erstwhile behavior, vices, and affections of soul and body” (mores ac uitia affectusque pristinos animi carnisque), and third, “everything that is present and visible” (praesentibus uniuersis ac uisibilibus). Through Paphnutius, Cassian says that true renunciation must begin with the complete divestment of wealth and end with the rejection of visible temptations. In order to support the successive relationships of the three steps of renunciation toward monastic perfection, Paphnutius returns again to the examples of influential biblical figures like Abraham (Collationes 3.6.2) and Paul (Collationes 3.7.7–11).

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35 De institutis 4.43.
36 De institutis 7.17.4.
As indicated in Chapter Two, Antony’s renunciation is understood as being the same as Abraham’s. In this way, Cassian focuses on Antony’s exemplary renunciation. His absolute renunciation of wealth is intermingled with that of biblical figures. Through this strategy, Cassian intends to demonstrate the authority of Antony as the first Egyptian anchorite who succeeded in recovering the ideal biblical community by abandoning his possessions and financial resources. To follow the exemplary poverty of Antony is to enter the world of the Bible.

As a result, Cassian’s monastic journey entails progressive steps of renunciation that move from external wealth to internal *vitia* and finally include all visible and worldly things. However, the third conference returns to radical poverty, after presenting the three kinds of renunciation. Here, just as most of the Israelites who escaped Egypt with Moses had difficulty leaving the memory of Egypt behind, and therefore, could not enter the Promised Land, so it is for monks: the radical poverty may not be easy. It is also required for monastic perfection.  

Finally, three fragments, *De institutis* 2.5.1, *Collationes* 18.5, and 21.30 need to be mentioned. They illustrate the biblical origin of monastic poverty and its significance in the history of Christianity as suggested in the first book. For Cassian, the first Christians attained monastic goals through keeping radical poverty and a rigorous life. Thus, fulfilling the end of monastic life is nothing other than the fulfillment of the model of the Jerusalem Church. However, slipping into a compromise repeating the example of Ananias and Sapphira, the earliest Christians began to drift away from apostolic perfection. As discussed in Chapter Two, Cassian asserts that Egyptian monasticism came from those groups that were eager to maintain economic purity and a rigorous life in pursuit of apostolic perfection. They are

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38 *Collationes* 3.7.5–7.
divided into two orthodox branches: cenobitic and anchoritic. Here the importance of radical poverty is justified by Cassian’s accounts of the Jerusalem Church and its decline. The basis of Cassian’s radical poverty comes from his firm belief that the renunciation of wealth is the absolute criterion for entering the model of the Apostolic Church and true Christians can restore and realize the apostolic age here and now. Thus, Cassian says that monks are “the imitators of the Apostle and of the entire early Church.”

I have examined how the theme of radical poverty, which can be considered a plan for reforming Gallic monasticism, is placed in Cassian’s texts. The books and conferences dealing with renunciation help us understand Cassian’s view of radical poverty, though they do so in various contexts. As discussed above, the three principles of monastic poverty which the first book briefly introduces are as follows. First, renunciation is to give up wealth, to maintain poverty, and to create inner purification. Second, because of basic human weakness, renunciation requires constant effort. Third, renunciation justified by the examples of biblical figures is the process of entering into the apostolic age. The rest of the books and conferences supplement these three principles. To sum up, for Cassian, true renunciation is to remove self-will, to follow the humility of Christ, and to restore ceaseless love for God (the contemplation of God). Ultimately, total renunciation is the success of removing both wealth and the desire for it. However, Cassian does not say that renunciation can be perfectly attained, because of the human condition after the Fall. Thus, Cassian’s writings revisit the divestment of possessions and wealth in a systematic way. Monastic life comes to be a continuous process of renunciation. Consequently, in accord with Jesus’ command, monks must renounce their wealth in order to emulate biblical figures and the first Christians.

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39 De institutis 7.18.
2. Cassian’s Radical Poverty and Its Implications for His Monastic Scheme

In this section, considering the three-fold renunciation of wealth, I will, first, clarify the meaning of radical poverty. Particularly, I will focus on the relationship between wealth and covetousness within the context of fallen human nature. Then, I will discuss how radical poverty is placed in Cassian’s monastic scheme. Through this, we can understand how radical poverty is related to Cassian’s main spiritual theology on the ascetic virtues, eight principal vitia, and puritas cordis. Consequently, Cassian identifies the primary characteristic of a monk as one who fights for radical poverty in order to restore the ideal biblical community. We can, therefore, realize that Cassian’s insistence on poverty is a crucial key in Cassian’s spiritual theology.

2.1. Wealth, Avarice and the Fallen Human Condition

As noted above, Cassian admonishes Gallic monks for not completing the first monastic step, abandoning wealth and keeping poverty. Cassian's alternative plan is a literal and permanent renunciation of all material things. External poverty must be preserved until the end of ascetic life:

. . . [I]n order to keep hold of the virtue of poverty that he has seized upon and that he strives to maintain perfectly and inviolably until the end, he considers himself so removed from them all and so detached from everything that he comports himself like a sojourner and a stranger in this world, and he views himself as a ward of the monastery and its servant rather than presuming to act as master of anything. Through appropriate labour, the Monks must provide the bare necessities for themselves. Surplus food and clothing must be given to others. The principle of radical poverty follows

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40 De institutis 4.39.1–3.
42 De institutis 4.14, 7.16–18.
that of the Egyptian desert fathers, which Cassian idealizes. The fourth, seventh, and twelfth books provide clear reasons why economic purity is required. In explaining the whole monastic journey toward perfection, in the fourth book, Pinufius says that monastic life is ultimately the process of renunciation. Renunciation is synonymous with denying self-will. The abandonment of human self-will means attaining the supreme virtue of humility, which leads to controlling inner *vitia*, particularly pride, and then being directed toward God (*puritas cordis* and contemplation of God). Thus, it is natural for Cassian to explain what prevents monks from achieving self-negation. Here he focuses on the relationship between wealth and avarice. As the seventh and twelfth books suggest, the lack of a good renunciation of wealth comes from the human desire for money. The desire for wealth arises from “a corrupt and sluggish mind” and a lukewarm heart for God. Desire for wealth breaks the rule of obedience which is required for humility. Cassian reminds his Gallic readers that because they had failed to make a complete renunciation of property, they became steeped in avarice.

However, the thematic repetition of the divestment of wealth shows Cassian’s intention to make readers remember how important and difficult it is to abandon money. Using the Israelites as an example, the third conference clearly illustrates the extreme difficulty of achieving radical poverty:

Although this manner of speaking first referred to that people [people of Israel who escaped with Moses], nonetheless we see it now daily fulfilled in our life and profession. For everyone who has first renounced this world and then returns to his former pursuits and his erstwhile desires proclaims that in deed and in intention he is the same as they were, and he says: It was well with me in Egypt. I fear that there will be found as many such people as we read there were multitudes of sinners in the time of Moses. For although six hundred and three thousand armed men were said to have left Egypt, no more than two of these entered the promised land.\footnote{Collationes 3.7.5.}
In order to understand the basic human desire for all material things, we need to understand the state of humanity caused by the Fall. For Cassian, *concupiscientia* (desire or the inner impulse to exceed necessity) is regarded as the remarkable quality defining the descendants of Adam. He says that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God. Of course, both the human soul and body were created. Here, rather than articulating Evagrius’ theory of double creation following Origen’s cosmology, Cassian uses the story of Creation from Genesis. However, he focuses on the nature and role of the human soul, compared to the human body. In presenting the nature of the soul, Abba Moses says that the soul is the “more precious part of the human being” and the “very image and likeness of God.” The human soul has “in itself the whole power of reasoning”; while the body, as the physical manifestation of the human person, follows the soul’s orders. Cassian follows Evagrius’ tripartite analysis of the soul: “the reasonable,” “the irascible,” and “the concupiscible.” Unlike Evagrian theology, Cassian is not much interested in clarifying the divisions of the soul and their roles, that is, the relationship between them and evil vices. Rather, Cassian’s main concern is the rise of *concupiscientia* after the Fall and the process of overcoming it.

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44 The subject of Cassian’s anthropology is also found throughout his ascetic literature. After Owen Chadwick provided a clear and concise anthropology of Cassian, Cassian scholars, considering the semi-Pelagian controversy, have been interested in rearranging his views of human nature throughout *De institutis* and *Collationes patrum* (Chadwick, *John Cassian* 2nd ed., 110–136; Pristas, “The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,” 134-394; Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy*, 71–116; Casidy, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 16–118).

45 *Collationes* 8.25, 10.2–5, 23.1.5.

46 To be sure, Origen and Evagrius’ concept of double creation is reflected in *Collationes* 8.10.2. But it is not dominant in his writings.


48 *Collationes* 1.14.8, 23.1.5.

49 *Collationes* 23.1.5.

50 *Collationes* 24.15.3.
Before the Fall, humanity was good and complete, having been made by God. The first human beings were immortal\(^{51}\) and received the fullness of wisdom from God. That is, they had the capability to do the good.\(^{52}\) However, after the Fall, they lost their state of immortality\(^{53}\) and came to know evil as well as good.\(^{54}\) Conceiving evil means that human nature begins to hold the possibility to choose evil and to do it. However, for Cassian, even after the transgression of Adam, his descendants still have the knowledge of good and the ability to freely choose it.\(^{55}\) In spite of this, the knowledge and freedom to choose good gradually became corrupted by *concupiscentia*, the inner impulse to exceed necessity which the Demon implanted in the human soul.\(^{56}\) Since the Fall, human souls have been constantly challenged by *concupiscentia*. Human nature cannot proceed toward perfection without the continual daily disciplines under the grace of God.\(^{57}\) As Chadwick indicates, Cassian believes that after the Fall, the fallen human nature became sick.\(^{58}\)

Cassian regards *concupiscentia* as demonic thought or vice which causes actual sin.\(^{59}\) In the fourth conference, based on Paul’s understanding of the conflict between the desires of the flesh and spirit, Abba Daniel explains that desires cause human beings to be changeable “according to the design of the Lord.”\(^{60}\) The human soul continually experiences either the excess of spiritual or physical desire. If spiritual desire decreases, then physical desire

\(^{51}\) *Collationes* 8.25.4, 13.7.1.  
\(^{52}\) *Collationes* 13.12.2.  
\(^{53}\) *Collationes* 8.25.4  
\(^{54}\) *Collationes* 13.12.2.  
\(^{55}\) *Collationes* 13.12.2.  
\(^{56}\) *Collationes* 7.16, 17, 32.1–4, 8.21.1–9.  
\(^{57}\) *Collationes* 3.5, 13.6–7, 23.3, 11.  
\(^{58}\) Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 126.  
\(^{59}\) Carole Straw, “Gregory, Cassian and the Carnal Vices,” in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Age*, ed. Richard Newhauser (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), 36.  
\(^{60}\) *Collationes* 4.7.1–2, 4.11–12.
increases, and vice versa. Here physical desire signifies an evil will or desire, not the human body itself, while spiritual desire means a good desire, not the substantial soul of human beings.

*Concupiscentia* does not result from drawing the human soul’s attention away from spiritual things by encouraging it to cling to physical desire. Rather, both the flesh and the spirit possess their own *concupiscentiae*. The two desires are innate tendencies or forces. Each wants to go forward in its own direction against the other, and tends towards its own excesses:

Since both of these—namely, the desires of the flesh and those of the spirit—exist in one and the same human being, an interior battle is daily waged within us as long as the desire of the flesh, which swiftly descends into vice, rejoices in those delights which pertain to present repose. On the contrary, the desire of the spirit, which is opposed to this, so yearns to be entirely absorbed in spiritual pursuits that it is even willing to exclude the necessities of the flesh, and so much does it long to be constantly taken up with these pursuits that it does not want to pay any attention at all to the frailty of the flesh.⁶¹

Based on this, the longing of the flesh is directed toward physical vices, such as gluttony and fornication. From these vices, other vices—avarice, anger, sadness, anxiety, vainglory, and pride—arise. Spiritual desire requires excessive spiritual exertions like vigils and fasting without considering the weakness of body:

> If we have been inflamed with spiritual fervor and, wishing to extinguish the works of the flesh regardless of human frailty, have tried with swelling heart to make ourselves practice virtue to an exaggerated degree, the weakness of the flesh intervenes and give us pause in our blameworthy spiritual excess.⁶²

As a result, human beings never escape the conflict between the two forces.

The will of the human soul is located within the struggle of two drives:

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⁶¹ *Collationes* 4.11.2 (ACW 57:160).
⁶² *Collationes* 4.12.3.
During this struggle in which both desires fight against one another, the soul’s free will, which wishes neither to submit completely to fleshly desires nor to expend its energy for the sake of virtue, is somehow guided aright. As long as this contest goes on between the two it cuts off a more dangerous willing on the part of the soul by establishing a kind of equilibrium on the scales of our body.\(^{63}\)

Human will does not have a preference for either desire. Even if it is badly and ceaselessly affected by the strife between the flesh and the spirit, human will is not unable to be in “equilibrium” between the excesses of the spirit and of the flesh. Thus, even in its fallen state, the human soul “does not permit the predominance of either a mind inflamed with spiritual ardor on the right hand or a flesh stung with sinfulness on the left.”\(^{64}\) Finally, the human soul can be directed toward its inner stability and purity:

Neither does the desire of the spirit let the mind be dragged into unrestrained wickedness, nor on the other hand, does the frailty of the flesh permit the spirit to be inflated with unreasonable desires for virtue. . . . But the proper equilibrium which results from the struggle of these two opens up the healthy and temperate path of virtue between the both of them and teaches the soldier of Christ always to proceed along the royal road.\(^{65}\)

In presenting the tension between the flesh and the spirit, Cassian’s Daniel maintains that the struggle (or\(\textit{concupiscentia}\)) is implanted in the fallen soul by God to make humanity better\(^{66}\) and thus, the unceasing struggle stimulated by\(\textit{concupiscentia}\) can be regarded as sign of God’s grace and assistance.\(^{67}\) It helps the human grow.

\(^{63}\)\textit{Collationes} 4.12.3.

\(^{64}\)\textit{Collationes} 4.12.3.

\(^{65}\)\textit{Collationes} 4.12.5.

\(^{66}\)\textit{Collationes} 4.7.

Cassian’s ideas about the conflicted condition of fallen human nature are similar to the anthropological concepts of his eastern predecessors. As discussed in Chapter Two, Origen, Antony, and Evagrius claim that after falling from the pre-existent souls’ world, the intellects came to possess irrational parts (the irascible and the concupiscible) and a material body. Origen, particularly, provides an influential theory. Through “harmful suggestion by means of different kinds of thoughts” caused by demons the fallen human mind always suffers. The human soul attracted by evil thoughts creates sinful actions. Through bad thoughts, demons tempt the human mind to be steeped in pride against God and finally, to give up the true faith. For Origen, the thought, as the origin of actual sin, is synonymous with concupiscencia. In this way, human life is always faced with evil thoughts. However, for Origen, evil temptation and the earthly world were given by God’s providence and are regarded as essential tools for instructing and training fallen human souls. Thus, he suggests, optimistically, that free will is preserved even after the Fall and can make progress against evil thoughts through continuous effort and divine help: “This strength, therefore, which is given to us in order that we may be able to conquer, we by the exercise of our free will either use diligently and conquer or feebly and suffer defeat.”

Origen’s teachings that evil thoughts are the devils’ main means for temptation, that spiritual warfare against evil thoughts is understood as a trial process for salvation, and that

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68 For Origen’s and Evagrius’ cosmology, see the section of “Prerequisites for Understanding the Distinctiveness of Evagrian Poverty,” above.
69 De Principiis 3.3.4.
70 De Principiis 3.2.6.
72 De Principiis 3.2.3.
73 De Principiis 3.2.3.
free will is unbroken are reflected in Antony and Evagrius. In the *Vita Antonii*, demons (as fallen invisible beings) disturb spiritual growth by using their *λογίσμοι* (thoughts). According to the *Vita*, temptation caused by demons is defeated by daily disciplines, the cross of Christ, and scriptural words which purify the human mind. Evagrius, following Origen and Antony, articulates his understanding of the nature and function of evil *λογίσμοι* based on the tripartite model of souls. The demon’s evil thoughts mainly attack the two inferior faculties of the soul. The irrational parts are easily tempted so that they make the intellect (the mind) blind. However, Evagrius is certain that by removing the evil *λογίσμοι* and cultivating virtues through the practical stage, human beings can attain ἀπάθεια, the recovered and purified rational part of soul. As indicated in Chapter Two, all of them are optimistic about overcoming evil thoughts and attaining a purified soul.

However, Cassian gives more weight to the extreme difficulty of overcoming the human condition. Despite the optimistic role of the human will, Cassian does not say that human beings can be restored to their original state by their own efforts. Rather, *concupiscentia* shows how feeble the human condition is and how easily the human will can be tempted by desires and fall into carnal vices and lukewarm states. After the Fall, humanity became mortal and was drawn by the pull of physical *concupiscentia*, particularly to the basic inborn desire, gluttony. No one can entirely avoid the flesh-rooted temptation. Even the holy ones who have controlled their flesh and spirit and proceeded toward virtues were not free from this temptation. The desire of the flesh exists throughout life and as long as

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74 Basil basically agrees with Origen’s views of free will. He claims that human beings can cooperate with the Holy Spirit through their freedom and finally, participate in Christ (Nonna Verna Harrison trans., *St Basil the Great: On the Human Condition* [New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2005], 18–29).


76 *Collationes* 5.19.

77 *Collationes* 5.19.
physical desire is present, spiritual desire is as well. In this context, the role of human will is
to create an equilibrium between the flesh and the spirit. However, it is so feeble that spiritual
progress attained by the human will can be destroyed at anytime. Cassian’s Daniel notes that
the human will could easily lead a person to desire:

- to obtain bodily chastity without disciplining the flesh,
- to acquire purity of heart without the exertion of vigils,
- to abound in the spiritual virtues while enjoying fleshly repose,
- to possess the grace of patience without the aggravation of any contrariness,
- to practice the humility of Christ without jettisoning worldly honors.\footnote{Collationes 4.12.1 (ACW 57:161–162).}

Cassian emphasizes the weakness of the human will which easily “occupies a somewhat
blameworthy middle position and neither delights in the disgrace of vice nor agrees to the
hardships of virtue.”\footnote{Collationes 4.12.1.} Thus, he asserts that constant daily disciplines such as “fasting,
hunger, thirst, watchfulness, reading, vigils, and unceasing prayer” are required. In this way,
Cassian attempts to remind his Gallic readers that no one can claim to have fully achieved his
ascetic disciplines.

Through Cassian’s anthropology, we can understand his assertion that incomplete
renunciation of wealth comes from avarice. That is to say, avarice is the product of the fallen
human condition and the distorted choice of the human will. Cassian’s eight principal \textit{vitia}
arise from excessive states caused by the misuse of the human will. Avarice as the third
\textit{vitium}, following gluttony and fornication, is seen as the persistent desire for every worldly
good. For Cassian, covetousness is not simply human love for a large amount of money,
property, or other valuable thing, but also for every kind of earthly thing which is not directed
toward God. Thus, the fourth conference concludes with a description of the Gallic monastic
context beginning with incomplete renunciation and its result. Cassian maintains that true
renunciation is not just about abandoning private property or abundant resources. Rather,
avaricious monks come to transfer “their feeling for those things to small and insignificant items” such as “mats, baskets, blankets, books, and other things of the sort.” Through his presentation of the fallen human condition, Cassian claims that human nature is easily attracted by the temptation of avarice. Human greed constantly stimulates the human soul to cling to worldly belongings. No one can fully overcome avarice. Consequently, avarice is always behind wealth. “The object gives rise to the desire.” Even though he accepts Evagrius’ idea that gold created by God is good, fallen human nature is always challenged by its greed. Thus, according to the human will’s response to temptation, wealth can be “bad, good, and indifferent.” Even so, Cassian maintains that literal renunciation of wealth must be tirelessly sought by monks in order to be as far from avarice as possible.

For these reasons, Cassian literally follows Jesus’ words, especially, his command to “go, sell your possessions, and give money to the poor. . . and follow me” (Mt 19: 21). Thus, he is suspicious of the flexible and optimistic ideas that human desire for money can be governed so that wealth can be used for good. As indicated in Chapter One, wealthy Gallic aristocratic monks had been inspired by Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus’ views of monastic poverty. They firmly believed that the monastic ideal could be pursued in the monastic as well as the secular world. The true meaning of becoming poor is not to give up their existing possessions and financial resources, but to save and use them for charity and monastic and ecclesiastical affairs. The surviving documents attributed to Martin, Paulinus, and Honoratus make us aware that their monasteries had not disowned their wealth. Rather they officially declared that they would hold their belongings in order to accomplish tasks such as earning a

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80 Collationes 4.21.1–2.
81 Collationes 3.9.1, 6.3.1–2.
monastic living, founding new churches and monasteries, and leading relief efforts for the poor. In Gaul, Cassian was surrounded by ambivalent attitudes toward monastic poverty.

The equivocal interpretation of radical poverty had been around since the time of the Apostolic Fathers, especially, the famous assertion of *the Shepherd of Hermas* that “wealth is legitimized for the Christian by its charitable application.” The only possibility for holding riches legitimately is to put them to use for the impoverished. Clement of Alexandria, in his exegetical book, *Quis Dives Salvetur*, was interested in the issue of reconciling Christianity with worldly wealth. According to Clement, one of the roles of a Christian is to instruct the rich in how to be saved.

Clement knows he must explain Jesus’ command about the renunciation of possessions as the precondition for salvation (Mk 10:17–31). He says that we must find the “hidden meaning” for the biblical passages cannot be understood in a literal sense. In the end, Clement speaks of the hidden meaning behind Jesus’ words:

‘Sell what belongs to thee.’ And what is this? It is not what some hastily take it to be, a command to fling away the substance that belongs to him and to part with his riches, but to banish from the soul its opinions about riches, its attachment to them, its excessive desire, its morbid excitement over them, its anxious cares, the thorns of our earthly existence which choke the seed of the true life.

Wealth is always neutral. It is much more important for Christians to be clearly aware of how the possessions can be used for God. What matters is the inner human obsession for material wealth. If the rich cleave to their wealth, they are far from the divine plan. Therefore,

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83 Ibid., 10.
84 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 3.
85 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 4, 5.
86 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 5.
87 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 11 (LCL 92:290–293).
88 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 14.
what Jesus really asked the young rich man in Mt 19 was whether he could remain indifferent to his possessions and whether he was willing to share them with the poor. Eventually, Clement made wealth a salvific “instrument.”

Clement does not say how the human passion for wealth can be overcome. However, he gives later Christians a way to reconcile holding wealth with imitating Christ. Clement’s figurative attitude toward riches appears in various Christian texts. Particularly, Cassian’s ascetic writings are influenced (indirectly or directly) by the lives and thoughts of Jerome, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Augustine and they were influenced by Clement. To be sure, they do not fully support Clement’s views about the relationship between wealth and salvation. Rather, they were inclined to the ascetic approach of renunciation. However, they also did not hesitate to embrace ordinary Christians living in the secular world. Thus, they tended toward a more figurative interpretation of Christian wealth by emphasizing voluntarily alms for salvation. For this reason, in their documents, both interpretive approaches to Jesus’ rich young man are found. In addition, rather than demanding the abandonment of wealth, there is an ambiguous tendency toward possessions.

Cassian notes, in the preface of De institutis, that Gallic monk-bishops were influenced by Jerome and Basil as well as the Gallic monastic forerunners. Despite the fact that Jerome and Basil had no direct experience of Egyptian asceticism, Jerome’s translation

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89 *Quis Dives Salvetur* 14.

of Pachomian materials—the Rule of Pachomius, his eleven letters, and the instruction
(_Doctrina de institutione monachorum_) of Horsiesios—and the _Regulae fusius tractatae_ and
the _Regulae brevius tractatae_ of Basil, translated by Rufinus (ca. 345–ca. 410) into a Latin
version around the end of the 390s, seem to have been widely circulated in Gaul.\(^91\)

Jerome frequently criticizes avaricious clergy and priests and requires the
renunciation of goods for those who seek the ascetic life.\(^92\) He also supports strict disciplines,
as can be seen in his _Vita Pauli_. However, Jerome’s life is somewhat antinomic. According to
Kelly, his monastic period in the Syrian Desert lasted less than three years\(^93\) and his ascetic
life was both obscure and strange. The following passage illustrates the irregularities of
Jerome’s practice from _Epistula_ 7.1:

The letter was brought to me through the instrumentality of the holy Evagrius in that
part of the desert which draws a vast line of demarcation between the Syrians and the
Saracens. I rejoiced even more than did the Romans. . . . The aforesaid brother
[Evagrius] often pays me a visit and cherishes me in Christ like his own flesh and
blood, yet he is separated from me by many miles, so that his departure always leaves
me with as great regret as his coming brings me joy.\(^94\)

As mentioned above, Jerome stayed in the Syrian Desert and his friend, Evagrius often
seemed to visit him to support his needs. In his cell filled with books, there were even
copyists. Jerome devoted himself to reading books and copying them.\(^95\) In addition to the
unusual features of his ascetic training, even when Jerome visited Egypt with Paula, we
cannot tell if he pursued the strict practices of the Egyptian Desert Fathers.\(^96\) Eventually, as

\(^{91}\) _De institutis_ Praef. 5; J. N. D. Kelly, _Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies_ (London: Gerald
Duckworth, 1975), 280–282; Also, Ramsey suggests that Basil’s ascetic writings, the _Longer Rules_ and the
_Shorter Rule_, influenced Gauls during Cassian’s time (Ramsey, trans., _John Cassian: The Institutes_, 16).

\(^{92}\) _Epistulae_ 52.6.1, 71.3.3.

\(^{93}\) Kelly, _Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies_, 48.

\(^{94}\) Jerome, _Epistulae_ 7.1 ed. Isidore Hilberg, CSEL 54 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1994); Charles C. Mierow,

\(^{95}\) Kelly, _Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies_, 48.

\(^{96}\) Goodrich, _Contextualizing Cassian_, 83–84.
Megan Williams suggests, Jerome was mainly concerned with “the ascetic idea” rather than “the ascetic life.” His view of monastic renunciation and practices is as far as possible from Cassian’s and the Egyptian ideal. In this context, Jerome does not provide a consistent statement regarding radical poverty. For example, contrary to his requirement for ascetics to renounce their possessions, as mentioned above, in his Epistula to Demetrias, a highborn Roman lady who had begun the ascetic life, he says that renunciation of wealth is a matter of removing covetousness. Through despising riches, human desire for money can be resolved. Then Christians can use their wealth for good works in various ways. For example, they may “build churches” and embellish the interior and exterior buildings. In addition, wealth can be used for assisting helpless people. Here we can see that Jerome also stands in the same tradition of interpretation as Clement.

Basil, in his first Epistula, mentions that after his education in Athens, he visited Syria and Egypt to follow his “great and experienced teacher,” Eustathius of Sebaste, around 356. During his short sojourn in Egypt, no evidence survives about whether he dedicated himself to the Egyptian monastic life. Rather, as the first Epistula shows, Basil did not find what he pursued in Egypt and returned to his family estates at Annisi. There Basil withdrew from the world and began to practice an ascetical life on his own. The bishop of

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98 *Epistulae* 130.14.
99 *Epistulae* 130.14.
100 *Epistulae* 130.14.
103 For an informative and a chronological summary of Basil’s development of poverty and the ascetic ideal, see Anna M. Silvas, “The Emergence of Basil’s Social Doctrine: A Chronological Enquiry,” in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 5, 133–176.
Sebaste in Armenia, who was a proponent of asceticism and well known in Cappadocia, inspired Basil to be concerned with “pastoral responsibilities and a public reputation,”\(^\text{104}\) that is, to incorporate ascetic ideals and practices into the life of the church in the middle of the secular world. Therefore, Basil’s ascetic writings may be intended to provide an ascetic framework for all Christians, not just monks.\(^\text{105}\) This is certainly the case with the *Regula Basilii*, which takes “the form of relatively short answers to specific questions,” much closer to the *Apophthegmata patrum* than a monastic rule.\(^\text{106}\) In other words, Basil’s ascetic works seem to result from his own answers to many questions of how his ascetic ideals “were suited to all Christians, to be fulfilled within the Church.”\(^\text{107}\)

On the basis of his monastic corpus, the Basilian monastery was gradually developed to meet the needs of the secular world with social charitable purposes. In his *Epistula* 94 to the governor of Cappadocia, Basil spoke of a new kind of monasticism centered on the church with the clear aim of assisting the poor. In addition to a residence for the bishop and quarters for his monks, Basil urged his community to establish “inns for guests” and hospitals with nurses and doctors.\(^\text{108}\) In this sense, Basil’s monastery may be regarded as a community for a real social purpose in the nexus between asceticism and the church. In this respect, as Goodrich suggests, his community did not entirely close its doors to the world.\(^\text{109}\) Here Basil’s understanding of asceticism is different from that of Cassian. In Cassian’s mind, a monk should be located in a community that is fully separated from the secular world.\(^\text{110}\)

\(^{104}\) Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 74.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 190–232.

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 354.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 192.

\(^{108}\) *Epistulae* 94 (PG 32:486–490).


\(^{110}\) *De institutis* 4.16.2–3.
him, as often indicated above, the ascetic life begins by renouncing all of one’s possessions. Of course, in his writings, Basil requires the principle of radical poverty.\footnote{Epistulae 22 (PG 32:387–294); Basil, \textit{Regulae fusius tractatae} 8 (PG 31:1079–1305); M. Wagner, trans., \textit{Basil of Caesarea: Ascetical Works}, FOTC 9 (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1950), 252–257.} The temptation of avarice leads monks into “the meager care of his needs” or “fatiguing labor.”\footnote{Epistulae 22.} Thus, through renunciation of wealth, monks can proceed to “repudiate all worldly affections which could hinder him from reaching the goal of piety.”\footnote{Regulae fusius tractatae 8.} However, in \textit{Homilia in divites}, his ambivalent attitude toward wealth is found. In spite of the fact that he warns his audience including against the risk of possessions, he does not announce that all the Christians must renounce the world. For him, the rich can be saved through giving alms for “the naked,” “the hungry,” “every stranger,” “the orphan,” and “every helpless person.”\footnote{Basil, \textit{Homilia in divites} 1 ed. Yves Courtonne (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1935); C. Paul Schroeder, trans., “To the Rich,” in \textit{On Social Justice}, PPS 38 (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009), 43. Except for \textit{Homilia in divites}, the importance of voluntary poverty for almsgiving is repeatedly mentioned in his other moral homilies. The moral homilies show that rather than analyzing how the human desires for transitory wealth impede inner purification of the individual soul, Basil pays attention to how riches can be used for the poor and the needy in a socially concrete way (Basil, \textit{Quod rebus mundanis adhaerendum non sit} 1-8 trans. Mark DelCogliano, PPS 47 [New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2012], 164–175; Basil, \textit{De humilitate} 1 PPS 47; \textit{De invidia} 5 PPS 47; \textit{Dicta tempore famis et sicciatis} 1-9 PPS 38; \textit{In Psalmum 14B} 1–5 PPS 38). Further, Basil clearly mentions that monopolizing wealth, not distributing it to the needy is inhumane and unjust (Basil, \textit{In illud, Destrauem horrea mea} 5 PSS 38). Here, while Clement simply regards poverty and charity as an essential tool for individual inner purification, Basil attempts to articulate how charity can be performed in specific circumstances. For more on the social aspect of Basil’s wealth and poverty: Charles Avila, \textit{Ownership: Early Christian Teaching} [London: Sheed and Ward, 1983], 47–58; Barry Gordon, \textit{The Economic Problem in Biblical and Patristic Thought} [Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1989], 101–111; González, \textit{Faith and Wealth}, 173–186; Brown, \textit{Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire}, 35–44; Holman, \textit{The Hungry Are Dying}, 64–134; Anna M. Silvas, “The Emergence of Basil’s Social Doctrine: A Chronological Enquiry,” 133–176.} It means that they can hold their possessions to be shared with the poor. Sharing possessions and wealth can be regarded as following the ultimate commandment of Jesus, that is, loving your neighbour as yourself, and with the good use of wealth, the rich can obtain “the blessed life.”\footnote{Homilia in divites 1.} In this way, for Basil, the figurative view of Clement may be regarded as a useful tool for understanding the salvation of the rich.
Like Basil, for John Chrysostom, almsgiving is a salvific practice for the wealthy. He asserted that being rich is in itself not a sin, but sinners are those who do not share their wealth with the poor. In the first homilia of De Lazaro (Lk. 16:19–31), the rich man’s main fault was not helping his poor neighbours so that his own spiritual health was harmed. The poor Lazarus endured his suffering without complaint. Thus, he came to build up his spiritual strength. As a result, in the second homilia, Chrysostom attempts to define the poor as “those who had many desires, not the one who had no possessions” (οὐδὲ πένης ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος ὁ μηδὲν κεκτημένος, ἀλλ’ ὁ πολλῶν ἐφιέμενος).

For John, it is evident that radical poverty is not about renouncing money and property, but about removing inner passions.

A contemporary of Cassian, Augustine, seems to agree with the more figurative idea that wealth can be employed for the good. We can discern what abandonment of wealth meant for Augustine from the Vita Augustini of Possidius (ca. 370–ca. 440), bishop of

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118 John Chrysostom, De Lazaro 2 (PG 48:982); Catharine P. Roth, trans., On Wealth and Poverty, PPS 9 (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1981), 40. This claim of Chrysostom is commonly found in John’s homilies (John Chrysostom, In peccata fratrum non evulganda (PG 51: 353–355); R. Blackburn, trans., Against Publishing the Errors of the Brethren and Uttering Imprecations upon Enemies, NPNF 1/9 [1889; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994], 2; John Chrysostom, The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, 11). Thus, Mayer claims that John’s main concern about poverty is about the salvation of all Christians including the rich which may be attained by keeping voluntary ascetic poverty and almsgiving (Mayer, “John Chrysostom on Poverty,” in Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity, 69–118). Further, Chrysostom maintains that by eliminating inner passions for wealth through voluntary poverty and almsgiving, Christians can meet Christ walking “through the streets of our city today, meeting us daily in the form of the miserable beggar” (Homilia Rudolf Brändle, “This Sweetest Passage: Matthew 25: 31–46 and Assistance to the Poor in the Homilies of John Chrysostom,” in Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society, 127–139).

Calama in Numidia. According to the *Vita*, Augustine, ordained as presbyter of Hippo, founded a monastery within the Church and provided “the principal regulation of the society.” The main rule was as follows: “No one should own anything, but that all things should be held in common and distributed according to personal need” as in the early Jerusalem Church described in Acts 2:44–47.

In the third chapter of the *Vita*, Possidius reports that Augustine returned to his home town in Africa after his conversion and eventually decided to abandon his property and to live with “those faithful who, constantly meditating on the law of God, served Him by fasting, prayers, and good works.” Possidius’ fifth chapter clearly points out that Augustine’s renunciation meant sharing all possessions for the common good, not disowning them.

For Augustine, the true meaning of poverty is to become a *servus Dei* who seeks “the law of God” wholeheartedly. One’s affluence can be used to support a *servus Dei*. For this reason, the *Vita* indicates that Augustine’s “clothing, and footwear, and even Augustine’s house furnishing were modest yet adequate.” Augustine does not mention Antony’s radical poverty, though he respected the life of Antony.

We can infer that the monks in Augustine’s monastery were not totally self-sufficient. In this sense, Augustine seems to agree with the central premise of Clement: material possessions are morally neutral. Therefore, radical poverty as

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121 *Vita Augustini* 5; In his *Sermo* 355.2 and 356, Augustine also reminds his readers of the importance of poverty (Augustine, *Sermo* 355.2, 356 [PL 39:1568–1575, 1575–1581]).

122 *Vita Augustini* 3.


124 *Vita Augustini* 22 (FOTC 15:99).

commanded by Jesus is about remaining dispassionate toward money and using material possessions for good.

The moderate interpretation of Jesus’ teaching to the young rich person is not limited to the authors discussed above and the Gallic monks. Although the Egyptian desert Fathers emphasized a more radical renunciation of wealth for their monks, scholars have concluded that the successors of Pachomius might not have been voluntarily poor and self-sufficient, and that many Egyptian monks kept in touch with the secular world for their economic sustenance. Evagrius also suggests that material goods are good in themselves. Thus, if monks do their best to control passion, then they can use wealth without passion. To be sure, he does not say that the process of overcoming avarice is easy. As a result, despite the Egyptian desert ascetics’ stress on radical poverty, in their life and monastic theology, Clement’s perspective is somewhat reflected in their documents though it is never dominant.

Cassian, who directly experienced Egyptian monastic life, does not veil the fact that in Egyptian monasticism there was a clear division between what he sees as the true ascetic group following the radical poverty of the Apostolic Church and the fallacious group. According to Abba Piamun, the ascetics called the sarabaites were those who “withdrew themselves from the communities of the cenobia and as individuals cared for their own needs.” They struck Cassian as too much like Ananias and Sapphira who deceived the Apostles in order to keep a part of their possessions and were far from the true way.

In this way, we can see that Cassian was well aware of contemporary prominent writers and Eastern monasticism. It is clear that he was familiar with the flexible and spiritual views of wealth that they provided. By describing his ideas of wealth, avarice, and fallen

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126 Collationes 18.7.2.
127 Collationes 18.7.1–2.
human nature, perhaps he wished to keep his Gallic readers away from these flexible ideas. Cassian’s perspective seems extremely rigorous at first. However, the reality of fallen human nature and the difficulty of perfecting renunciation are important and recurrent themes for Cassian. In this respect, his version of poverty is fairly practical and realistic for the Gauls.

2.2. The Relationship between Radical Poverty and Monastic Perfection: Mutual Dependence between Daily Disciplines, Virtues, and Puritas Cordis

In Cassian’s mind, renunciation of wealth is the constant process of achieving a balance between physical poverty and the human desire for material goods. If this is the case, how is renunciation associated with Cassian’s entire monastic scheme? At a glance, Cassian’s monastic program seems to be progressive. The fourth book and the first, third and fourteenth conferences show that monks must proceed from the renunciation of wealth, through cultivating the essential virtues against the eight vitia, to perfection (charity, puritas cordis, or divine contemplation). However, we need to be aware of the fact that Cassian does not say monastic life is always progressive and successive (from the practical stage to the contemplative stage) as it is in Evagrian spiritual theology. Challenged by desire, the human soul drifts between success and failure. Therefore, in order to avoid avarice, monks are required to make a life long renouncement of all material goods no matter how small and trivial. For this reason, for Cassian, the practical stage of monastic life—improving virtues and removing vitia through ascetic daily disciplines—is much more important than the contemplative stage. Thus, he reinterprets the Evagrian monastic scheme:

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128 De institutis 4. 43; Collationes 1.4.3, 3.6.1–7.3, 14.1.2–3.2.

Whoever, therefore, wishes to attain to the Θεοφηηική must first pursue practical knowledge with all his strength and power. For the πρακτική can be possessed without the theoretical, but the theoretical can never be seized without the practical. For certain steps have been arranged and distinguished in such a way that human lowliness can mount to the sublime. If these follow one another according to the method that we have mentioned, a person can attain to a height to which he cannot fly if the first step has not been taken. In vain, therefore, does someone who does not reject the contagion of vice strive for the vision of God.¹³⁰

However, the contemplative stage (the ultimate end of monastic life) is not meaningless to Cassian. Abba Nesteros mentions that the final step of monastic training is Θεοφηηική, which “consists in the contemplation of divine things and in the understanding of most sacred meanings” (in contemplatione diuinarum rerum et sacramissinorum sensuum cognitione consistit).¹³¹ In the first conference, Abba Moses explains that the monastic aims are divided into two parts: the immediate goal (scopos, destinatio), puritas cordis and the ultimate end (telos, finis), the kingdom of God (the regnum Dei).¹³² In Cassian’s view, monks are those who devote themselves to overcoming present challenges working toward regnum Dei. In this way, the monastic map that Cassian provides to Gallic monks is completed by indicating the clear ends of the monastic journey.

Cassian’s regnum Dei is based on two biblical texts: “the kingdom of God is within you” (Lk 17:21) and “the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).¹³³ As mentioned above, the biblical passages already suggest Cassian’s connection between regnum Dei and puritas cordis. Only those

¹³⁰ Collationes 14. 2 (SC 54:184; ACW 57:505): “Nam haec πρακτική absque theoretica possideri potest, theoretica vero sine actuali omnimodis non potest adprehendi.”

¹³¹ Collationes 14.1.3 (SC 54:184; ACW 57:505).

¹³² Collationes 1.4.3 (SC 42:82).

¹³³ Collationes 1.13. 2–3 (SC 42:91).
who have completely expelled the vices through the practical disciplines can attain *regnum Dei.*

The signs of *regnum Dei* brought about by *puritas cordis* are eternal righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit per Rom 14:17. In other words, the reign of God is broadly understood as eternal purity and joy in the Holy Spirit. But, unfortunately, Cassian does not articulate what *regnum Dei* as the end of ascetic life means in detail. However, we can base our understanding of Cassian’s *regnum Dei* on Evagrius’ views on the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God introduced in *Practicus:*

The kingdom of heaven is the impassibility of the soul accompanied by true knowledge of beings. The kingdom of God is knowledge of the Holy Trinity co-extensive with the substance of the mind and surpassing its incorruptibility. Evagrius differentiates between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven corresponds to the knowledge of created beings, while the kingdom of God is the contemplation of God. As shown in Chapter Two, it is impossible for monks to proceed toward γνωστική without attaining φωσική. Thus, we can presume that Cassian’s *regnum Dei* is related to Evagrius’ phase of Θεωρητική or contemplation. In spite of Cassian’s lack of specificity concerning *regnum Dei,* it is at least conceptually close to the contemplation of God that Evagrius regards as the final journey.

However, for Cassian, everlasting *contemplatio divina, regnum Dei,* is not completely achieved in life: “To cling to God unceasingly and to remain inseparably united to him in contemplation is indeed impossible for the person who is enclosed in perishable flesh.”

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134 *Collationes* 1.13.2, 18.16.2–4.
135 *Practicus* 3–4.
136 However, unlike Evagrius, Cassian does not separate the kingdom of heaven (the φωσική) from the kingdom of God (the γνωστική). Perhaps he simplifies the two-fold concepts of the contemplative phase by adopting only the kingdom of God (Stewart, *Cassian the Monk,* 58).
137 *Collationes* 1.13.1 (SC 42: 90); cf. *De institutis* 5.14.4: “Inhaerere quidem deo iugiter et contemplationi eius quemdmodum dicitis inseparabiliter copulari impossibile est homini ista carnis fragilitate
His *finis* of monastic life transcends mortal and fleshly limitation. Therefore, it is never embodied in the present human life. As a result, his monastic ideal becomes the future hope taking place after death.\(^{138}\)

However, Cassian mentions that in preparation for *regnum Dei*, ascetics must know where we should fix our mind’s attention and to what goal we should always recall our soul’s gaze. And when our mind has been able to seize it, it should rejoice, and when it is distracted from it, it should mourn and sigh, realizing that it has fallen away from the highest good when it notices that it is separated from that gaze, and it should judge as fornication even a moment’s separation from the contemplation of Christ.\(^{139}\)

Even though the complete vision of God is impossible, monks should devote themselves to fixing their “mind’s attention” on the ultimate *finis*. He says that they can “anticipate, however fleetingly and imperfectly, the joy to be fully realized there.”\(^{140}\) For Cassian, of course, it is through the considerable effort of ascetic disciplines that “recalling our soul’s gaze” is attainable.\(^{141}\) But Cassian does not say what is precisely meant by the mysterious and victorious vision of God beyond mortal limits. From the first conference, Cassian concentrates his attention on elucidating how to arrive at *puritas cordis*, which is the sole requirement for reaching *regnum Dei*. Cassian’s stress on the means shows that his map for the ascetic life is not simply oriented towards the end. It is not a straightforward linear journey that ends with ultimate perfection.

For Cassian, although there is a progressive relationship between the two monastic stages, both everlasting *puritas cordis* and pure contemplation of God are never completely achieved in earthly life. Only moments of *puritas cordis* can be experienced through the

\(^{138}\) Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 40–41.

\(^{139}\) *Collationes* 1.13.1 (SC 42:90; ACW 57:50).

\(^{140}\) Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 40.

\(^{141}\) Rousseau, “Cassian, Contemplation and the Coenobitic Life,” 123.
practical life. Some scholars have suggested that Cassian, borrowing the Evagrian concepts of ἀπάθεια, attempts to modify Evagrius’ ἀπάθεια to puritas cordis in order to remove any hint of Evagrian doctrine.\textsuperscript{142} Cassian’s puritas cordis may be understood as the state of purifying the heart (or mind), though its definition is not clearly presented.\textsuperscript{143} To be sure, the spiritual state of puritas cordis is not simply about a purified feeling in the modern sense, but about the full recovery of the rational part of the human soul understood as “the conscious centre of our experience as human beings.”\textsuperscript{144} As indicated above, in the first conference, puritas cordis, the perfect love of God, and divine contemplation (the unbroken love and mind “attached to divine things and to God”) are regarded as the real monastic goals.\textsuperscript{145} Cassian suggests that they are synonymous because puritas cordis is the perfect charity of God, which is the essence of divine contemplation as the continuous love of God.\textsuperscript{146} The monastic ideal Cassian seeks seems to be puritas cordis.

*Puritas cordis* enables us to anticipate in the eternal joy and requires the virtues attained by ceaseless discipline. However, ἄσκησις and virtues are never attained in this life because of the limits of the human body and soul. Thus, puritas cordis also is impermanent:

The blessed Apostle speaks clearly about this too when he says: ‘Bodily discipline is beneficial for a few things, but piety’—which is undoubtedly to be understood as love—‘is beneficial in all respects, since it holds the promise of the life that now is and of the one that is to come.’ That this is said to be beneficial for a few things is a clear indication that it can neither be continually exercised nor of itself confer the highest perfection on our efforts. The term ‘a few things’ can in fact refer to either thing. It can refer to the shortness of the time, because bodily disciplines cannot

\textsuperscript{142} Marsili, Giovanni Cassiano ed Evagrio Pontico, 115; Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont eds., Evagre le Pontique: Traité pratique, 103.

\textsuperscript{143} *Collationes* 1.7.4, 1.22.2, 7.6.3, 7.23.1, 9.2.1, 9.6.5, 10.10.8, 11.9.2, 12.11.3, 15.10.3, 16.22.3, 18.16.4, 19.6.5.

\textsuperscript{144} Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 389–391.

\textsuperscript{145} *Collationes* 1.8.1–2.

\textsuperscript{146} *Collationes* 1.6.3, 1.7.2, 1.8.1, 1.11.1–2.
coexist with a person both in the present and in the future, and certainly also to the small benefit that is gained by bodily discipline, for bodily affliction produces some initial progress but not the perfection of love itself, which holds the promise of the present life and of the one that is to come. And therefore we consider the exercise of the aforesaid works to be necessary, because without them the heights of love could not be scaled.\textsuperscript{147}

Thus, human beings must make ceaseless δικαστήρια for virtues. The virtues help us participate in puritas cordis however temporary, while the experience of puritas cordis helps us pay attention to our daily disciplines and finally help cause the virtues to grow. In the process, human nature gradually grows stronger. As a result, Cassian does not say that puritas cordis is followed by the absolute mastery of the virtues. Rather what he wants to say is that puritas cordis expresses and manifests itself through the process of unceasing disciplines and the virtues. Puritas cordis and the virtues are interrelated and dialectical.\textsuperscript{148}

However, he does not articulate a clear system for the virtues. Various virtues are introduced by describing the practical struggle of a monk against the vitia. As the human will is restlessly stimulated by both physical and spiritual desires, the human soul loses its balance and chooses fleshly vices. For Cassian, virtues seem to come from the healthy state of the human will working against temptations, particularly the eight principal vitia. The sixth conference gives us a clue to the connection between virtues and vitia. It clearly states that all people including “any holy persons” never “remain constantly in the same [healthy] state.”\textsuperscript{149} Thus, “we must always push ourselves with unceasing care and concern to attain the virtues, “lest our progress suddenly cease and regression [into evil vitia] occur.”\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{147} Collationes 1.10.2–3 (ACW 57:48–49).

\textsuperscript{148} The understanding of the mutual relationship between the practical and contemplative life is not original to Cassian. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa discuss the dialectic connection between them (Chadwick, John Cassian, 2nd ed., 84; Greer, Broken Lights and Mended Lives: Theology and Common Life in the Early Church, 60–66).

\textsuperscript{149} Collationes 6.14.2.

\textsuperscript{150} Collationes 6.14.3.
Here Cassian shows us that the nature of the virtues is the opposite of the *vitia*. For this reason, Chadwick suggests that “chastity means not fornicating, patience not being angry, humility not being proud, and temperance not being gluttonous.”\(^{151}\) Because of the relationship between the virtues and *vitia*, we can suppose that the structure of virtues corresponds to the structure of *vitia*.

The fifth conference suggests two important principles by which we can comprehend the classification of the eight principal *vitia*. First, the eight *vitia* are mutually interrelated, though each *vitium* has its own specific nature. Second, Cassian always considers the reality of the human condition fighting against the eight *vitia*. That is, his theory of the eight *vitia* is never applied to all people in the same way. Each individual person or community suffers from a different *vitium* and thus needs to make a proper strategy for each situation.

Cassian, in the fifth through twelfth books of *De institutis* and the fifth conference, deals with his eight *principalia vitia*. The *principalia vitia* introduced in *De institutis* and their recapitulation in *Collationes patrum* show their cause, treatment, and classification. In the fifth conference, Abba Serapion classifies the eight *principalia vitia* and analyzes their interrelation. The *vitia* are categorized according to two criteria. First, they are divided into natural vices (*naturalia vitia*) and unnatural vices (*extra naturalia vitia*).\(^{152}\) The *naturalia vitia* are the ones which originate in human beings naturally, such as gluttony (*gastrimargia*), fornication (*fornicatio*), and anger (*ira*), while the *extra naturalia vitia* do not originate in human beings naturally, such as avarice (*avaritia, amor pecuniae*), sadness (*tristitia*), listlessness (*acedia*), vainglory (*cenodoxia*), and pride (*superbia*). The second classification has to do with their effect on humankind. There are those consummated by bodily action

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\(^{152}\) *Collationes* 5.3 (SC 42:190).
(gastrimargia and fornicatio) and apart from bodily action (cenodoxia and superbia) and motivated by outside forces (avaritia and ira) and aroused by internal feelings (acedia and tristitia). In categorizing his vitia, Serapion says that the eight vitia are linked. The last two vitia (vainglory and pride) are regarded as especially dangerous and are generated after the monk conquers the other six vitia. The very pursuit of ascetic discipline for a long time, leading to the conquest of the previous vitia, may cause the vitia of vainglory and pride. Therefore, rooting out vainglory and pride is the last step of Cassian’s schema. The vitia of vainglory and pride are related to each other in the same way as the first six vitia are linked together, each being dependent on the former vitia.

However, according to the conference, based on the interrelationship of the eight vitia, four smaller groups are formed: gluttony and fornication, anger and avarice, sadness and acedia, and vainglory and pride. The second vitium in each set (fornication, avarice, acedia, and pride) is produced by the first vitium (gluttony, anger, sadness, and vainglory). In this way, Cassian offers his schema of the eight vitia, including their interrelationships. These vitia can be overcome through gradual inner growth, from gluttony to pride. Even if the

153 Collationes 5.3 (SC 42:190).
154 Collationes 5.10.1 (SC 42:197–198): “Haec igitur octo uitia licet diuersos ortus ac dissimiles efficientias habeant, sex tamen priora, id est gastrimargia, fornicatio, filargyria, ira, tristitia, acedia quadam inter se cognatione et ut ita dixerim concatenatione conexa sunt, ita ut prioris exuberantia sequenti efficiatur exordium. Nam de abundantia gastrimargiae fornicationem, de fornicatione filargyriam, de filargyria iram, de ira tristitiam, de tristitia acediam necesse est pullulare. Ideo que simili contra haec modo atque eadem ratione pugnandum est et a praecedentibus semper adversus sequentes oportet nos inire certamina.”
155 Collationes 5.10.3.
156 De institutis 12.1.
157 Collationes 5.10.3.
158 Collationes 5.10.5.
159 Straw defines Cassian’s system of the eight principal vices as “an upward ascent,” that is, moving from gluttony to the province of personal control which allows one to approach God (Carole Straw, “Gregory, Cassian and the Cardinal Vices,” 36–46).
octo vitia are influenced by Evagrius, Cassian was the first writer to have an interest in articulating the close relationship between them in “a recognizably systematic manner.”

While Evagrius’ teaching on the eight λογίσμοι influenced Cassian, the organization and presentation of them differs. As indicated in Chapter Two, Evagrius’ eight λογίσμοι are as follows: gluttony, fornication, avarice, sadness, anger, listlessness, vainglory, and pride. Particularly, Practicus and De octo spiritibus malitiae present basic information about the origins of the λογίσμοι and the cures for them. Evagrius may have written Practicus and De octo spiritibus malitiae for beginners, because they somewhat lack “the sophisticated analysis of temptation and its remedies, found in the treatise On Thought [De malignis cogitationibus].” De malignis cogitationibus gives a more advanced description of the eight λογίσμοι, considering their arrangement and interrelationship, though it does not show a systematic catalogue of them. In De malignis cogitationibus, Evagrius’ main concern is to show how monks are attacked by demons. Evagrius categorizes λογίσμοι and the strategies of the demons in the same way. First, he regards gluttony, avarice, and vainglory as the fundamental λογίσμοι. The monks encounter the triple λογίσμοι before all the other λογίσμοι when the demons decide to make trouble. The triple λογίσμοι are derived from the temptations of Jesus in the desert (Mt 4:1–11 and Lk 6:1–13). Evagrius claims that Jesus was challenged by the triad as the initial assault by the demon that tempted him to give up his

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160 Ramsey, John Cassian: The Conferences, 178.

161 For the introduction to the eight λογίσμοι, see Practicus 6–33. De octo spiritibus malitiae gives the more detailed description of λογίσμοι. In De malignis cogitationibus, the eight catalogues of evil λογίσμοι are more systematically classified on the basis of Evagrian anthropology (the two passable parts—the concupiscible and the irascible—and demonic λογίσμοι (Sinkewicz, Evagrius of Pontus, 136-139; Columba Stewart, “John Cassian’s Schema of Eight Principal Faults and his Debt to Origen and Evagrius,” in Jean Cassien entre l’orient et l’occident, ed. Cristian Bădilită and Attila Jakab [Paris: Beauchesne, 2003], 209-211; William Harmless and Raymond R. Fitzgerald, “The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus,” TS 62 [2001]: 508).

162 Sinkewicz, Evagrius of Pontus, 68.

163 De malignis cogitationibus 1.

164 De malignis cogitationibus 1
vocation. But Jesus expelled them. For this reason, the devil is always at hand unless the
monks overcome the three λογίσμοι.165 The other λογίσμοι arise from this triad.166 For
example, glutony is tied to “the spirit of fornication.” Sadness and pride are products of
avarice. In addition to such a classification, Evagrius provides another classification for his
λογίσμοι influenced by the tripartite model of the human soul.167 As Stewart suggest,
Evagrius seems to connect the eight λογίσμοι according to the tripartite model in his other
writings. Gluttony, lust, and avarice are the principal manifestation of desire. Sadness and
anger are ways of reacting to challenge. Acedia, vainglory, and pride are problems of self-
understanding.168 In this way, Evagrius makes clear the nature of his own octad and their
interrelationship. Nevertheless, when compared to Cassian’s interrelationship of the vitia, the
Evagrian scheme is less orderly.169 Perhaps, as Newhauser suggests, Cassian is more
concerned with providing clear concepts and showing the interrelationships of the vitia while
Evagrius is more concerned with creating a catalogue of the eight λογίσμοι.170

However, we need to bear in mind that Cassian never says that the vitia are
universally relevant. Rather, each person is attacked by a different vitium:

‘Yet it ought to be known that the same battle plan is not observed in each one of us
since, as we have mentioned, we are not all attacked in the same way. Each one of us

165 De malignis cogitationibus 1.
166 De malignis cogitationibus 1.
167 In the De malignis cogitationibus 3 and 8, Evagrius introduces the tripartite models.
168 Practicus 10, 23; Stewart, “John Cassian’s Schema of Eight Principal Faults and his Debt to Origen
and Evagrius,” 209.
169 As for the difference between Evagrius’ λογίσμοι and Cassian’s vitia, except for the differences in
the interrelationships of Evagrius’ λογίσμοι and Cassian’s vitia, Cassian’s delicate modifications of Evagrian
λογίσμοι still remain. For example, the reversed positions of the Evagrian fourth (sadness) and fifth (anger)
λογίσμοι in the list of Cassian’s vitia; Cassian’s exposition of the causes and remedies of λογίσμοι; the meaning
of the number of eight λογίσμοι through Cassian’s own interpretation of the chapters 7 of Deuteronomy
(Collationes 5.16.1); Cassian’s intentional rejection of the term λογίσμοι was to eliminate traces of Evagrian
influence on his ascetical scheme (Harmless, Desert Christians, 384; Stewart, “John Cassian’s Schema of Eight
Principal Faults and his Debt to Origen and Evagrius,” 205–206).
170 Newhauser, The Early History of Greed, 62.
must throw himself into the fray with an eye to the particular manner in which he is being assaulted, such that one has to fight first against the vice that is placed third, and another against that which is placed fourth or fifth. And to the degree that these vices gain the ascendancy in us and demand different strategies, we ourselves must draw up battle plans according to which the progress which follows each victory and triumph will bring us to purity of heart and to the fullness of perfection.\textsuperscript{171}

Cassian ends the fifth conference with a discussion on the nature of the \textit{vitia} by paying special attention to the aforementioned view. Through his theory of the \textit{vitia}, we can suppose that for Cassian, most Gallic monks had been mainly tempted by avarice. In Cassian’s understanding of the eight \textit{vitia}, theory and practice must be reconciled.

Cassian’s virtues, as indicated above, are described as basically antithetical to the \textit{vitia}: temperance and gluttony, chastity and fornication, patience and anger, diligence and acedia, and humility and pride. Each virtue has its own nature and role. The virtues follow the principles of the relationship between the \textit{vitia} and their application to human realities. That is, for the Gauls, some virtues take precedence. However, there is a strong connection between the virtues, and Cassian maintains that a monk must cultivate all the virtues:

For all the virtues possess a single nature although it is divided into many species and names, just as gold is a single substance although it takes the shape of many and various kinds of adornments in accordance with the skill and wish of the craftsman. And so whoever is seen to have failed in some of them obviously possesses none of them perfectly.\textsuperscript{172}

However, he suggests that among various virtues, the primary virtues are: renunciation, obedience, and humility. As has been discussed above, the three virtues are implied throughout Cassian’s monastic journey as suggested at the end of Pinufius’ sermon in the fourth book.\textsuperscript{173} According to the scheme, they are the most prominent virtues which must be

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Collationes} 5.27.1 (ACW 57:204).
  \item \textit{De institutis} 5.11.1 (ACW 58:123).
  \item \textit{De Institutis}, 4.43. In \textit{De institutis} 4.43, the only two virtues specified are renunciation and humility. But throughout the fourth book, Cassian presents the role of obedience as the begetter of humility. Philip Turner focuses on the four virtues (Philip Turner, “John Cassian and the Desert Fathers: Sources for Christian
attained during the practical stage.\textsuperscript{174} The three virtues are required for overcoming human desires (\textit{vitia}), for beginning to purify the human mind and for turning toward God.

Indeed, these three virtues can be properly cultivated in cenobitic life. In the nineteenth conference, Abba John compares the two legitimate monasticisms, the anchorites and cenobites. The main purpose of the cenobitic life is “to put to death and to crucify all his desires.”\textsuperscript{175} Thus, it is in a \textit{cenobium} that the practical stage can be most effectively practiced.\textsuperscript{176} Without a moral life trained in a cenobitic monastery for a long time, no one can become a true anchorite.\textsuperscript{177} As a result, Cassian suggests that these virtues be immediately sought by Gallic monks in a \textit{cenobium}.

Humility is the virtue which governs pride, the most severe \textit{vitium}. Cassian insists that “it is apparent that a person cannot attain the end of perfection and purity except by true humility.”\textsuperscript{178} Humility reflects the inner state of being fully immersed in “the belief that unless he [God] offers him [a person] his protection and help at every moment, he cannot ever reach perfection.”\textsuperscript{179} Humility is manifested in a person in the \textit{cenobium} who “has put to death in himself all his desires”; who “conceals from his elder not only none of his deeds but also none of his thoughts”; who “commits nothing to his own discretion”; who “maintains a gracious obedience and a steadfast patience”; who “neither brings injury on anyone else nor is saddened or sorrowful”; who “does nothing and presumes nothing that

\textsuperscript{174} \textit{De institutis} 4.43; \textit{Collationes} 9.3.1.
\textsuperscript{175} \textit{Collationes} 19.8.3.
\textsuperscript{176} Weaver, \textit{Divine Grace and Human Agency}, 89.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Collationes} 19.10.1.
\textsuperscript{178} \textit{De institutis} 12.23.
\textsuperscript{179} \textit{De institutis} 12.23.
neither the general rule nor the example of our forebears encourages”; who “is satisfied with utter simplicity”; who “does not declare with his lips alone that he is inferior to everyone else but believes it in the depths of his heart”; who “holds his tongue and is not loudmouthed”; and who “is not ready and quick to laugh.”

We can see that humility is not much different from the dying of all human desires.

Obedience as “the first place among the other virtues” essentially means to obey the teachings and rules of experienced elders who have followed the example of Christ. Further, however trivial it is, every individual judgment must rely upon an elder’s discretion. Monastic postulants “do not even presume to attend to their common and natural necessities on their own authority, to say nothing of daring to leave their cells, without the knowledge and permission of their superior.” They must regard an elder’s command as given by God and do their best to achieve “everything that has been ordered by him.” Consequently, obedience leads a monk to mortify his desires and to be a servant as Christ was.

As discussed above, total renunciation means the perfect balance between physical poverty and the removing of inner desire for material goods and wealth. This virtue is asked at the most initial stage of monastic life and is to be maintained throughout ascetic life. As suggested in the sermon of Pinufius, renunciation corresponds to the self-emptiness of the human will, imitating the lowliness of Christ. Thus, we can find that all three virtues are

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180 De institutis 4.39.2.
181 De institutis 4.30.1.
182 De institutis 4.7–8.
183 De institutis 4.9.
184 De institutis 4.10.
185 De institutis 4.10.
186 De institutis 4.8.
directed toward the perfect eradication of human desires. The self-emptiness of the human will helps the monk proceed toward monastic perfection, *puritas cordis*. In this respect, just as Cassian’s eight *vitia* begin with gluttony and end with pride and are interrelated, so too are three virtues related.

The interrelationship of the virtues is clearly presented. Throughout the fourth book, Cassian repeats his scheme for the monastic practical life. Without perfect renunciation, true obedience and humility cannot be attained. When radical poverty is preserved by the elimination of avarice, novices are able to remain under the strict rules and commands of their elders. Further, humility comes from the patience and obedience cultivated in a well-established *cenobium*. Cassian’s monastic journey says that the essential virtues begin with the renunciation of wealth and end through obedience with humility. Finally through the virtues, we can enjoy *puritas cordis*.

However, as mentioned above, for Cassian, the relationship between the virtues and *puritas cordis* is not necessarily successive. The weak human condition suffers from the temptation of evil desires and cannot easily experience permanent renunciation. Thus, monks must seek virtues throughout the ascetic life. Therefore, it is natural that even the moment of *puritas cordis* is temporary and incomplete. However, despite *puritas cordis*’ impermanence, it enables us to focus on the removal of human *vitia* through the virtues. The virtues restore the human soul to tranquility. As a result, *puritas cordis* and the virtues are mutually reliant.

In this context, Cassian asserts that *puritas cordis* corresponds to ceaseless prayer. His unceasing prayer is related to the plain verse of the Holy Scripture, Psalm 70:1. The unceasing prayer, thus, is to repeat the scriptural formula out loud or in one’s heart. The

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187 *De institutis* 4.3.1–2, 4.4–5, 4.23, 4.43.

188 *Collationes* 10.10.2 (SC 54:85; ACW 57:379): “Deus in adiutorium meum intende: domine ad adiuuandum mihi festina” (O God, incline unto my aid; O Lord, make haste to help me).
unceasing prayer is regarded as both the result of active life and “the mind that has been established in tranquility.”\textsuperscript{189} It is also “the continuing awareness of God.”\textsuperscript{190} Of course, this formula is part of the Bible and the practice of unceasing prayer is linked to the reading of the Bible continuously. Praying by focusing on a single verse allows one to discover the hidden mysteries of the Bible by deepening one’s participation in it, and increasing anticipation of the future hope, \textit{divina contemplatio}. Here we see Cassian connecting his concept of the monastic ideal to concrete and ascetical disciplines, especially prayer and meditation on the Bible.\textsuperscript{191}

The acquisition of ceaseless prayer is \textit{puritas cordis}. If this is the case, through unceasing prayer, we can see how \textit{puritas cordis} expresses itself in the virtues. Cassian attempts to remind Gallic monks that they must seek the emptiness of their desires by cultivating the virtues in the practical stage. In their cenobitic monasteries, the postulants must abandon wealth and financial resources at the initial moment. Then, they survive through manual labour, give surplus food to the poor, and avoid possessing material goods. Monastic radical poverty leads to true renunciation. True renunciation brings about obedience and humility. Gradually we achieve unceasing prayer. However impermanent it is, the experience of the unceasing prayer helps attain more advanced virtues. This is how Cassian’s reciprocal ascetic scheme based on total poverty works. This monastic journey is immediately required to reform Gallic monasticism.

As we have seen, Cassian’s conviction that \textit{puritas cordis} is found in the practice of daily disciplines suggests that he understands the monastic journey as a continual process.

\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Collationes} 9.6.5.

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Collationes} 10.10.2. Levko suggests that for Cassian, perfect purity of the heart is synonymous with ceaseless prayer; thus monks must always seek to attain constant prayer through a “mind purged from all carnal desires,” that is, the process of spiritual ascent (Levko, \textit{Cassian’s Prayer for the 21st Century}, 1–22).

\textsuperscript{191} Stewart, \textit{Cassian the Monk}, 85.
However, as Brian Daley suggests, Egyptian monastic literature is commonly interested in describing the monastic end realized in this world. The Vita Antonii implies that a monk may experience the inner stillness and participate in the vision of God when it describes Antony, even after his twenty-year ἅσκησις:

When those people saw him, they were amazed to see that his body had maintained its natural condition, being neither fat from lack of exercise nor weakened from fasting and fighting with demons; they found him just as they had known him before his withdrawal. The character of his soul was pure, for it had neither been contracted by suffering nor dissipated by pleasure, nor had it been afflicted by laughter or sorrow. Moreover, when Antony saw the crowd, he was not bothered, nor did he rejoice at so many people greeting him. Instead like someone guided by reason, he maintained his equilibrium and natural balance.

The description of Antony is reflective of monks who have completed monastic perfection and also offers a glimpse into a possible future for monastic postulants. The Vita shows that the perfected Antony advised his monks that they “have no need to leave home for the kingdom of God or to cross the sea for virtue,” because of Jesus’ saying, “the kingdom of God is within you” (Lk 17:21). In other words, the kingdom of God is the state of attaining ascetic virtues. The virtues exist in us through practicing ascetic disciplines. In this way, Antony is held up an exemplary monk since he experienced and realized regnum Dei.

In the Vitae Pachomii, the Pachomian monks’ view of the realized monastic end is also provided. The first two sections of both the Bohairic Life and the Vita Prima point out

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194 Vita Antonii 20.4.

195 Vita Antonii 20.1–9.
God’s general plan for the salvation of humanity. They describe the creation of the earth by the Word of God, the presence of the Word in all the prophets of the Old Testament, the incarnation of the Word, the expansion of the Gospel, and recent history, including the origin and development of early Egyptian monasticism. As Rousseau points out, the history of salvation based on Logos Christology in the prologue notes “the endeavors of Pachomius as part of God’s general plan for the salvation of humanity.” In such a historical view, they attempt to describe the hope of becoming a perfect monk. It is also fitting that the Vitae would portray Pachomius, as the one who is chosen by God. As a result, it is implied that Pachomian κοινωνία was where God’s salvation had been fully embodied. The firm belief that Pachomian κοινωνία was anchored in the divine plan is well reflected in Pachomius’ teachings about the meaning of Christ’s resurrection. The bodily passion and resurrection of Jesus are identified with the bodies of Pachomian monks which suffered and were glorified in the rigorous process of monastic life. Pachomius does not hesitate to tell to his monks that “we have already risen with him [the Lord].”

Like Antony and Pachomius, Evagrius indicates in Practicus that monks would experience regnum Dei through ceaseless disciplines. Evagrius’ concern about the monastic end realized in this world is shown in his writings. The end of monastic life as “the kingdom of God” equates the continuous vision of God with the purified mind of a monk. Of course, an eschatology based on having one’s mind purified cannot be completely attained in the physical life. However, according to Evagrius, his monks have a strong possibility of anticipating the contemplation of God through the achievement of impassibility. Practicus

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196 Bohairic Life 1–2; Vita Prima 1–2.
198 Vita Prima 56.
199 Vita Prima 56.
says that the mind of a monk in the state of ἀπάθεια can remain in stillness through prayer “without distraction,” the mind separating from “sensible things,” and approaching the contemplation of God.\(^\text{200}\)

Compared to Cassian’s unwillingness to accept the realized monastic ideal, the Egyptian monastic forefathers are more positive and resolute. In Cassian’s understanding, any realization of the monastic ideal must take into account the frailty of the human situation. Permanent puritas cordis and regnum Dei are not fully attained during physical life. However, this does not mean that our efforts in the present life are hopeless. With the assistance of God, we can anticipate the future regnum Dei. Cassian asserts that regnum Dei has already begun to be embodied here and now through the process of seeking the virtues in daily practices like Psalmody, fasting, manual labour, and reading divine books and prayers. This means that eschatology is in process. Cassian’s belief in the process of monastic eschatology may be the result of his careful consideration of the fallen human condition, the nature of the vitia, and his readers’ circumstances. As a result, Cassian regards radical poverty as the essential foundation of the monastic process. True renunciants begin to realize the ultimate end here and now, however incomplete.

In this way, the act of maintaining physical poverty is the essential cornerstone of the practical disciplines and is the cause of true renunciation. Cassian’s stress on the significance of radical poverty is neither absurd nor unrealistic. As presented above, in De institutis 2.5.1 and Collationes 18.5 and 21.30, the Jerusalem Church is regarded as the origin of Christian monasticism.\(^\text{201}\) They accomplished this perfection by continually clinging to Jesus’ words (Mt 19:21; Lk 18:22). However, the ideal church gradually fell away from economic purity

\(^{200}\) Practicus 63–70.

\(^{201}\) According to Kristensen, the biblical passages of the Gospels and Acts employed into present cenobitic practices and are almost exclusively interpreted in a literal sense (Ansgar Kristensen, “Cassian’s Use of Scripture,” ABR 28 [Sept. 1977]: 276–288).
“following the example of Ananias and Sapphira.” 202 After the death of the Apostles, the earliest Christians began to compromise on the apostolic renunciation of wealth and property and even to “look out for their own wealth rather than distributing it for the use of all the faithful” (opibus suis incubare coepisset nec eas usui cunctorum fidelium secundum apostolorum instituta diuideret). 203 According to Cassian, “the example of Ananias and Sapphira” was the first instance of a flexible understanding of wealth and was the precursor of ecclesiastical decadence. 204 Consequently, the Council of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15 made a decision to weaken the rigorous institutes of the Apostolic Church in order to accept pagans. 205 The “liberty” established by the Council further estranged the younger generation of Christians following Ananias and Sapphira from the economic purity and rigorous life of the Jerusalem Church.

As indicated above, we discover Cassian’s distinct view of the Council of Jerusalem and the development of the Christian Church. Unlike the intention of the author of Acts to identify the Council at Jerusalem as the decisive turning point of the mission to the pagans in the Greco-Roman world, Cassian criticizes the first council of the Christian Church for damaging the perfect life and faith of the Jerusalem Church:

At the death of the apostles, the multitude of believers began to grow lukewarm, especially those who came over to the faith of Christ from different foreign nations. Out of regard for their rudimentary faith and their inveterate paganism, the apostles asked nothing more of them than that they abstain ‘from things sacrificed to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood.’ But this liberty, which was conceded to the pagans because of the weakness of their new faith, gradually began to spoil the perfection of the Church which was in Jerusalem. 206

202 Collationes, 21.30.2.
204 Collationes, 21.30.2.
205 Collationes, 18.5.2.
206 Collationes 18.5.2–3 (SC 64:15; ACW 57:637–638): “Cum apostolorum excessu tepescere
In Cassian’s mind, the Church has been divided into two groups: the Christians who have spoiled the purity of the Jerusalem Church and monastic Christians seeking the perfect life of the Apostolic Church. For Cassian, the Egyptian ascetic community was the only group connected to the biblical community of Acts 4. They alone fought for the foundational apostolic age:

‘Those in whom the apostolic fervor still existed, however, were mindful of that earlier perfection. Abandoning their towns and the company of those who believed that the negligence of a more careless life was lawful for both themselves and the Church of God, they began to live in rural and more secluded places and to practice privately and individually what they remembered had been taught by the apostles in a general way throughout the body of the Church.’

The decision to renounce wealth is not simply to fully imitate the Egyptian monastic tradition, but it also allows Christians to begin to follow Jesus’ words, thereby embodying the apostolic community. Cassian establishes the authority of the Egyptian monastic tradition by connecting it with the Apostolic Church. As discussed above, he suggests that the renunciation of Antony and Pachomius and his community can be viewed as an essential door through which the apostolic period can be entered. Monks are the ones who can restore and realize the Biblical community by following Jesus’ words, especially his invitation to the rich young man. Cassian is convinced that Gallic monasticism can be reformed and the Jerusalem Church can be realized only through the devoted practice of

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207 Collationes 18.5.3 (ACW 57:638).

208 In fact, a return to the apostolic age is one of dominant themes in patristic thought as well as early Christian ascetic writings (A. Hilhorst ed., The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought [Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004], 1–242).

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radical poverty. Cassian believes this because the Bible says that renunciation is the only way Christians can participate in *regnun Dei*. 
Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to provide a clue to understanding the spiritual theological implication of radical poverty as reflected in Cassian's ascetic literature. In his article, “John Cassian’s Schema of Eight Principal Faults and His Debt to Origen and Evagrius,” Columba Stewart concludes that Cassian “received a great tradition [the Origenist theologies], made it his own, and passed it on bearing the marks of his creative reflection.”\(^1\) I have done my best to keep in mind Stewart's observation. I have asked how Cassian judged the Gallic monastic context and from this, what he found. From this point of view, I have attempted to demonstrate that his multiple repetitions about renunciation of wealth were intentional. They imply that radical poverty is closely associated with human avarice and that human greed is never easily overcome. Thus, monastic life must be a continual process of renunciation. Based on the relationship between wealth and covetousness, I have suggested that Cassian's key theological subjects (monastic virtues, *vitia, puritas cordis*, eschatology, and the end of monastic life) can be reinterpreted in a new way. Consequently, the study of Cassian's ascetic poverty as related to fifth-century Gauls leads us to rethink this neglected topic and to find, in Cassian, a conservative reformer who admonishes his audience not to give up the dream of an apostolic community, which can be established by removing avarice through radical poverty.

Even though he is eager to say that it is necessary for orthodox Christians to embody the apostolic age by practicing true renunciation, he is a realist. He observed the Gallic realities. The monks had fallen prey to desires for trivial things, which helped to break their monastic vocations. The vulnerability of fallen human nature leads Cassian to ask the

\(^{1}\) Stewart, “John Cassian’s Schema of Eight Principal Faults and His Debt to Origen and Evagrius,” 217–218.
question: Is it possible for us to use money without passion? He claims that it is impossible because covetousness always exists behind material goods and wealth. Therefore, a monk’s daily discipline for maintaining poverty is justified. In the process of cultivating the most primary virtue (renunciation), monks experience a moment of purity of heart so that, with the help of God, they might look upon wealth with indifference and as something morally neutral. However, this moment of purity is imperfect and temporary because the human soul is easily shifted by the slightest temptation of avarice. For this reason, monks must return to the initial step, radical poverty, throughout life. Consequently, they must realize the destructive relationship between riches and covetousness and be devoted to poverty without forgetting the hope of the Apostolic Church. Of course, my dissertation has suggested that Cassian’s views on poverty were influenced by various existing opinions during the changing fifth-century Gallic world.

In order to examine the abovementioned argument, in Chapter One, I discussed the idea that Gallic monks were led into monasticism by motives involving religious devotion as well as secular aristocratic ambition. I focused on Mathisen's theory that the upper classes in Gaul joined monasteries for socio-political survival. Mathisen bases his argument on a thoughtful analysis of various Gallic materials as developed by Hanzelmann and Prinz. However, in the first chapter, the aspect of religious devotion as an essential motive for Christianizing the aristocrats was not overlooked. Particularly, by analyzing the written sources related to Martin of Tours, Paulinus, and Honoratus, I have suggested that they were influential in establishing the Gallic ascetic model and were devoted to expressing their religious commitment to ascetic life. However, contrary to their claims the documents show that their monastic lives were not absolutely separated from their wealth and the secular world. They created a unique aristocratic ascetic life by merging the aristocratic tradition of
otium and the ascetic ideal. Further, they believed that monks must be honoured by both the ecclesiastical and secular worlds. Thus, they were willing to accept episcopal offices. As found in their writings, they did not hesitate to accept private and ecclesiastical donations. It was not surprising that their wealth was employed for monastic survival, ecclesiastical affairs, and charity. Indeed, they believed that the monk-bishop who embodied ascetic ideas in secular life was superior to his isolated counterpart who lived an ascetic Egyptian lifestyle. That is to say, for Gauls, being a monk was a prerequisite for becoming a bishop regardless of the person’s motivation and concern. Ascetic life was fulfilled by planting ascetic ideals in secular society through the use of high ecclesiastical office. In this context, it is clear that their views on poverty should be different from that of Cassian.

Chapter Two dealt with Cassian’s main Egyptian sources, how they inspired him and how Cassian interpreted them. For Cassian, the Jerusalem Church was the ideal model of radical poverty. To imitate Christ, the first church practiced absolute renunciation of wealth and rigorous lifestyles. Unfortunately, economic impurity (beginning with the rise of Ananias and Sapphira and the Council of Jerusalem) allowed this ideal church to fall into decline. However, there were two Egyptian monastic branches (the cenobites and the anchorites) who kept radical poverty and remained true to the pure apostolic tradition. In addition, these authentic groups practiced monastic poverty in a very systematic way based on Evagrian ideas. Thus, to articulate his understanding of poverty, Cassian focused on the image of the Apostolic Church as expressed in Acts, the Vita Antonii, the Pachomian rules, and Evagrius’ works.

Further, I attempted to clarify the meaning of renunciation of wealth for Antony, Pachomius, and Evagrius, as developed in its own ascetic context and to identify common attitudes about poverty. Two facets of Egyptian radical poverty were discussed. First, the
Egyptian ascetics emphasized literal renunciation to embody the ideal biblical community and to follow Jesus’ sayings, especially, Mt 19:21. More precisely, for them, the renunciation of wealth meant giving up all existing wealth (money and material goods) at the beginning of monastic life, and all surplus food and clothing must be given to the poor (or guests) throughout monastic life. Second, poverty was never limited to the attainment of physical poverty. They were more concerned about removing the human desire for wealth: wealth must be abandoned to achieve the state of passionlessness. Notably, Evagrius said that riches were always neutral. Therefore, it was more necessary for a monk to free himself from covetousness. Thus, the Egyptians believed that this inner passion could be overcome and then without passion, financial resources could be used properly. However, as the later Pachomian community illustrates, even Egyptian ascetics easily fell into avarice, showing how difficult it was to overcome avarice and maintain voluntary poverty.

However, Cassian wanted to romanticize Egyptian radical poverty. He created the idealized Egyptian monk who had fully achieved radical poverty and proceeded toward internal poverty. In addition, he attempted to bring his idealized vision to the Gauls.

Chapter Three investigated how Cassian’s poverty developed within his Gallic context, reflecting upon his Egyptian ascetic sources. According to Cassian, becoming a monk meant to seek perfect ascetic spiritual aims (puritas cordis and regnum Dei) in the isolated state established through the renunciation of wealth. The renunciation of wealth allows monks to imitate the life of the Jerusalem Church, to keep rigorous practices, and ultimately to follow Jesus’ teachings. Thus, Cassian was convinced that the whole process of maintaining poverty was the essential path to the apostolic period.

Cassian warned his Gallic audience against the moderate tendencies of Clement of Alexandria. As the first to systematize Christian attitudes toward the relationship between
salvation and the use of wealth, Clement developed three influential theological points: 1) all riches, created by God, are, in themselves, neutral; 2) the lesson from the story of the rich young man in (Mk 10:17–31) is to free the human soul from the passion for money; 3) finally, if wealth is used properly for the poor without passion, the wealthy can be saved. As was indicated above, Clement influenced (directly or indirectly) Basil, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine, as well as the Egyptian monks, particularly Evagrius. However, based on Gallic monastic circumstances, Cassian’s ascetic writings focus on the fragility of the human bodily and spiritual nature; therefore, he continually turned his emphasis back to radical poverty. In contrast to Clement, Cassian believes that wealth is inseparable from avarice; and that daily disciplines for removing inner passion must not be ignored.

Therefore, we can see that his contextualized attitude towards poverty makes Cassian’s spiritual theology and his doctrine of the virtues, vices, puritas cordis and the monastic way different from Evagrius. Unlike the progressive and successive monastic spiritual goals found in Evagrius, Cassian was much more interested in making an ascetic map centered on the experience of puritas cordis through the process of cultivating virtues. Cassian believed that the virtues of renunciation, obedience, and humility were urgently required to reform Gallic monasticism. Renunciation (the perfect balance between radical poverty and the absence of avarice) is the primary virtue. It leads monks to obedience and humility. Cassian, in his theological scheme, suggested that radical poverty is never completed at one time and must be revisited throughout monastic life. For Cassian, the ideal of literal poverty is never the subject of compromise, for it is regarded as the only way to establish the ideal apostolic community. However, in my opinion, he is not a reckless idealist. Rather, he is very aware of human weakness and is reticent to say that physical poverty can be achieved. Monks must voluntarily practice poverty day after day. In the process, they may
enjoy a God-given temporary moment of *puritas cordis* and anticipate eternal contemplation of God. In so doing, they are refreshed. Here we can see a realistic ascetic conservative’s attitude towards poverty in the midst of the changing early fifth-century Gallic world.
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