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Monastic Life in the Works of Saint John Cassian

Abstract

In the Danubian Pontic space, Saint John Cassian was a remarkable representative of patristic literature and one of the outstanding persons of early monasticism.

The paper presents the theological and ascetical formation of Saint John Cassian, which helped him transplant the East's Christian spirit into the West. He found here two monastic establishments and tried to bring the Western monks to the holiness and authority of Eastern practices.

It is presented the life from the monasteries founded by Saint John and the recommendations made for the spiritual building of the monks mainly based upon Saint John's work "The goal and end of the monk".

Keywords

Saint John Cassian, monks, monasteries, Scythia Minor, Egypt



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1 Introduction

In its period of maximum economic and cultural flourishing, the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea - Scythia Minor (today's Dobrogea) - also knew the new teaching brought to the world by the Savior Jesus Christ and preached by the Holy Apostle Andrew himself "the first called".

The many martyrs who suffered in Scythia Minor and the numerous archaeological, literary-historical and linguistic testimonies prove the vitality and antiquity of Danubian-Pontic Christianity. The promulgation of the Mediolanum Edict in the year 313 by the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) led to a significant increase in the number of Christians, the construction of numerous places of worship (*basilis*), as well as to the consolidation of the church organization and the flourishing of theological culture¹.

In addition to the growing number of Christians and the development of Christian communities in Scythia Minor, monastic settlements and real hearths of spiritual and spiritual life appeared. A testimony in this sense is the fact that Saint Basil the Great, in his "Small Rules", mentions the monastic settlements on the western shore of the Euxine Pontus, and the historiography of the time records the activity of the so-called "Scythian monks", who mobilized the native population in the fight against the Arian and Pneumatoma heresies, campaigning for the preservation of the unity of the Christian Church. During the persecution of Athanaric, the Audians came to Scythia Minor, named after the monk Audius, originally from Mesopotamia². He had been exiled by Emperor Constantius II (337-361) in Dobrogea, after which, passing to the left of the Danube to the Goths, he managed to con-

¹ Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. I, 2nd edition, Bucharest, Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, 1991, (143).

² There are opinions that Audius would be of Syrian and not Mesopotamian origin, but this fact has yet to be established with certainty.

vert many of them, even laying the foundations of some monasteries³. Finally, he founded the sect of the anthropomorphic audientes, which supported, among other things, the celebration of the Christian Easter simultaneously with the Jewish one, its members distinguishing themselves by austerity, honour, and a sense of justice and at the same time condemning the weaknesses of the age⁴. The followers of Audius did not accept to call themselves Christians but took the name of their leader, living isolated in monasteries or hermitages, far from the episcopal centres. They spread very quickly in Asia Minor and Scythia Minor, and among the Goths, besides spreading the Christian faith, they preached asceticism and self-control. Because they supported anthropomorphism in the interpretation of the Holy Scripture, starting from the 5th and 6th centuries, they became a problem for the Christian Church, being fought by Bishop Zeno of Syria⁵.

At the beginning of the 5th century, in the Danubian-Pontic space, Saint John Cassian (360-435), a prominent representative of patristic literature and one of the most prominent figures of early monasticism, a true exponent of the principles, will appear as Christian asceticism and at the same time, tiresome in acquiring perfection in the monastic environment he created. His discursive style and the evocations of incredible steps of ascetic and contemplative perfection show us a man who, although he lived in several countries and had different roles, stood out for the monastic life lived in the service of the Church.

³ S. P. N. Epiphanius, Constantine in Cypro Episcopi, *Adversus Haereses*, Liber III, caput LXX, XIV-XV, in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca (further MPG), t. 42, (369-373).

⁴ G. Bareille, "Audiens", in A. Vacant, E. Mangenot (Eds.) *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. I/2 (A), Paris, Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1903, (2266).

⁵ Jean Claude Guy S. J., *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle*, Paris, Ed. P. Lethielleux, 1961, (11).

2 Saint John Cassian, the theologian from Scythia Minor

The oldest testimony about the origin of Saint John Cassian⁶ we have it from Gennady of Marseilles, who considers him a “non-Scythian” and was ordained a deacon in Constantinople by Saint John Chrysostom. As a priest, he founded two monasteries, one for monks and another for nuns, in Marseille⁷. According to Henri-Irénée Marrou, Saint John Cassian was originally from a family of landowners with a thoroughly Christian education, which bore the geographical nickname that linked him to his birthplace⁸, today identified with the village of Casieni in Constanța county.

A nostalgic feeling often filled his whole being when he remembered his country and parents. He said, “We are every day strangely disturbed by the desire to return to our country and see our parents again. The remembrance of their great devotion and their faith greatly strengthened us in this purpose, and convinced us that they would never prevent us from performing the holy works which we had undertaken... I was born, and what is an ancient legacy from my ancestors”⁹.

Here is a true ode dedicated to his country, in which it is observed that the love of the country gushes like an unstoppable stream from his soul. Although he is far from his homeland, he does not forget it for a moment, but rather, he longs for it, his soul bathing in the rays of light of the beauty of his native places.

⁶ About fifty years after his death, John Cassian was sanctified, cf. Gennadi von Marseille, *De viris illustribus*, in coll. „Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altkirchlichen Literatur”, herausgegeben von Ernest von Richardson, Leipzig, 1896, Heft I, Kap. 64.

⁷ Gennadi von Marseille, *De viris illustribus*, Kap. 62, in cited translation., cf. P. Godet, “Cassien Jean”, in A. Vacant, E. Mangenot (Eds.), *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. II/2 (Cajetan-Cisterciens), Paris, Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1909, (1823-1824); Jean Claude Guy, *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle*, (13); Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, (9 and following).

⁸ “La patrie de Jean Cassian”, in *Miscellanea Guillaume de Jerphanion*, Roma, Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1947, (588-596).

⁹ *Conférence XXIV*, 1, cf. Jean Claude Guy, *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle*, (15).

Saint John Cassian received a selective education, and since childhood, he familiarized himself with classical antiquity. That is why he complained later¹⁰ that during the vigils, the prayers and the singing of the Psalms, when he wanted to raise his mind to God, the stories of the ancient heroes and the verses of the poets came back to his memory and stirred his thoughts¹¹.

As a young man, he dedicated himself to the monastic state in a Bethlehem monastery with his friend Gherman. Around the year 385, eager to achieve perfection, the two friends head to the deserts of Egypt, considered the true hearth of Christian monasticism. For seven years, the two monks visited hermit settlements, being received with kindness and brotherly love. Since they had sworn before the brothers in Bethlehem that they would not tarry too long, they returned to Palestine to ask for an extension of their stay in Egypt. Returning here, they spent another three years, after which they broke out the Origenist dispute and defended the problem of the anthropomorphist monks from the Sketic wilderness¹², they left Egypt.

In this true “university of the desert”¹³, which was Egypt, where life flows seemingly without history, Saint John Cassian, delighted in the soul, would have remained until the end of his life, if the events mentioned above had not put him in a position to leave these places and go to Constantinople¹⁴.

In the year 400, Saint John Cassian becomes a disciple of Saint John Chrysostom (354-407), who ordains him as a deacon. After the second exile of his teacher, in the year 405, Saint John Cassian, as an exponent of the faithful clergy of Constantinople and the righteous people, went to Rome to inform the pope of the

¹⁰ *Collatio* XIV, caput XII, in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina (further MPL), t. 49, (976-979).

¹¹ P. Godet, “Cassien Jean”, (1824).

¹² *Collatio* X, caput. II, MPL t. 49, (821-823).

¹³ A. Bremond, *Les Pères du Désert*, Paris, 1927, (23), cf. Jean Claude Guy, *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle*, (21).

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

abuse committed against the exiled hierarch. In Rome, he received the grace of the priesthood. Around the year 415, he settled in Marseille, where he founded two monasteries. During the barbarian invasions, these constituted proper shelters of peace of mind and foci of intellectual life. Through these two monastic establishments, as well as through his works, Saint John Cassian made an essential contribution to the spread of monasticism in Gaul and Spain¹⁵, being considered a genuine father of Western monasticism.

3 The Scythian monk-the first founder of Western monasticism

The richness and beauty of Saint John Cassian's life are based on a high intellectual formation, to which his ascetic efforts from the monasteries in the East, as well as his apprenticeship under Saint John the Golden Mouth, contributed decisively. The ascetic needs cultivated his will and reason sublimely, tempering his virtues and making him an almost perfect man after the turmoil and fierce battles with his passions. The precise shaping of his theological and ascetic personality is mainly due to his great teacher, who left his mark on his disciple's soul throughout his entire activity. Saint John Cassian's theological and monastic formation is characterized by a considerable Christian spirit specific to the East, which he transplanted into the West in the monasteries he founded as nurseries of high culture and Christian piety.

Influenced by Saint John Chrysostom, he matched words with deeds and emphasized the need for endless love towards man. He served God and people, showing a remarkable ability to organize church life so that, due to the need to penetrate as deeply as possible the problems related to monasticism, he took care of its organization, writing the work "On the eight deadly sins". He

¹⁵ P. Godet, "Cassien Jean", (1824-1825).

also left the work "Collations of the Fathers" and a treatise "On the Incarnation of the Lord" against Nestorius.

In the first two works, Saint John Cassian shows that he did not intend to leave us a history of the monastic settlements but only to deepen the principles of the ascetic life of the cenobites and anchorites as examples of perfection for the Western monks. He sought to bring the monks of the West to the holiness and austerity of the Eastern practices used, especially in Egypt¹⁶. Far from him was the thought of satisfying the readers' curiosity by describing the life of the hermits. However, from what he presented, it can be seen that the monks preferred lonely places to lead their lives in peace, avoiding crowded centres. Some lived communally, and others led their lives as hermits. They lived in cells or huts made of branches, in caves or ruins¹⁷. Their living was relatively modest. Saint John Cassian gives the example of a monk who consumed only two loaves of six ounces each day¹⁸, to which a little salt water and a drop of oil were added¹⁹, as was customary in the Scete desert. Paying a visit to this "grandfather", Saint John Cassian and his friend Germanus were served "a luxurious meal" consisting, apart from bread, of a small quantity of brine, a little oil, salt, raw olives and, as dessert, a basket, in which there were fried chickpeas, from which each guest served five grains, then six plums and three figs²⁰.

As for the furniture, it was as minimal as possible²¹. Saint John Cassian reminds us of the reed that the monks used to write, a small hatchet or scythe, knife, or flint, which they used to light

¹⁶ Fernand Cabrol, "Cassien", in Fernand Cabrol (Ed.), *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, t. II/1 (B-Césène), Paris, Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1910, (2350).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, (2350-2351).

¹⁸ An ounce was 32 grams.

¹⁹ *Collatio* VIII, caput I, MPL t. 49, (812-813), cf. Fernand Cabrol, "Cassien", (2350).

²⁰ *Collatio* VII, caput II, MPL t. 49, (808).

²¹ Fernand Cabrol, "Cassien", (2350).

the fire²² and the wooden chair they were sitting on. Their bed was made of planks, tree branches or bare earth, on which they spread dry grass or tree leaves²³.

Perfect simplicity can be seen in terms of clothing. Saint John Cassian pays special attention to it, reserving a chapter for each part of the clothing: the koukoulion, the belt, the mantle, the kamilavca, the cane, the shoes, etc²⁴.

Saint John Cassian also presents the virtues of obedience, poverty and chastity, urging the practice of asceticism²⁵ manifested by the way of life and dress of the monks.

The one who wanted to be received into the monastic dinner had to watch outside the monastery gates for ten days as proof of his steadfastness and desire to become a monk, of humility and patience. Sitting on his knees, he threw himself at the feet of all the monks present and was rejected and despised as one who would like to enter the monastery, not out of piety, but out of necessity. Proving his constancy, after overcoming all the temptations and trials, he was allowed to enter the monastery, remaining, however, for another period, under the careful observation of the other monks²⁶.

Saint John Cassian recommends that monks read the Holy Scriptures, especially for spiritual edification. Sharing the same opinion as Blessed Jerome, Saint John Cassian recommends that the

²² Joannis Cassiani, *De Coenobiorum Institutum (About the monastic settlements with communal life and the remedies against the eight deadly sins)*, Liber II, caput VII, MPL t. 49, (92-96).

²³ Mircea Nișcoveanu, "Aspecte din viața creștină în comentariul Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur la Epistolele pastorale", in *Glasul Bisericii*, XXIII, 1964, No. 7-8 (July-August), (683).

²⁴ Joannis Cassiani, *De Coenobiorum Institutum (About the monastic settlements with communal life and the remedies against the eight deadly sins)*, Liber I, caput I, MPL t. 49, (59-78).

²⁵ Fernand Cabrol, "Cassien", (2351); Jean Claude Guy, *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle*, (20).

²⁶ Joannis Cassiani *De Coenobiorum Institutum (About the monastic settlements with communal life and the remedies against the eight deadly sins)*, Liber II, caput V, MPL t. 49, (85-87).

monk dedicate himself to constantly meditating on the Holy Scriptures as a remedy against sins and, simultaneously, as a weapon against the devil. The monks prevent evil spirits from approaching the monastery by reading the Psalms and continuous reading of the Holy Scripture. Likewise, the reading of the Holy Scriptures must have as its fruit the practice of virtues, and then, using reason, the monk “deepens the mystery in the purity of the heart”. For the monk, the Holy Scripture constitutes real food, which offers him the possibility of acquiring a higher state, that of holiness, because the Word of God, transmitted through Scripture, calls everyone to holiness and becomes accessible according to the possibilities of everyone to understand and live it. In the view of Saint John Cassian, the monk must have an excellent education to reach the spiritual meanings of the Scriptures and not be inclined towards a damaging “spiritual aestheticism”. Presenting this method of training the monks, Saint John Cassian, in the “10th Conference”, gives as an example the monks in Egypt, who, during their daily activities, recited a verse from the Holy Scripture: “God, for my help, remember, Lord, to help me, hurry” (Ps. 69:1). This verse is appropriate in all life circumstances, aiming at the pure contemplation of the one God.

“After the veil of passions has been removed - says Saint John Cassian - let the eyes of the soul contemplate carefully, naturally, the mystery of the Scriptures, if indeed they were revealed to us, by the grace of the Holy Spirit; that they would be unknown and unclear but because of our passion, the veil of sins, covering the eyes of the soul, the mysteries become unclear; who, regaining his natural health, the very reading of the Holy Scripture even reaches in full form for the contemplation of true science”²⁷.

Having reached spiritual perfection, the monk receives the gift of intimate and complete knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and

²⁷ *Ibidem*, Liber II, caput VI, MPL t. 49, (88-89).

continuous attendance of the holy text. This knowledge²⁸ it is a mystical knowledge, which Saint John Cassian takes from Evagrius Ponticus, being identified with the “pure contemplation” (θεορία) of God. It is also called the “pure prayer” or the “fire prayer”, which Saint John Cassian characterizes as follows:

“This prayer, entirely of fire and which very few know from experience, is, literally speaking, ineffable; it transcends any human sense and the soul illuminated by a heavenly light is no longer expressed in a human language”²⁹.

The need to work is imposed on the monks as an irreversible postulate. Monks must earn their living from the work of their hands, and Saint John Cassian emphasizes this countless times and seems to attribute the ruin of some Western monasteries precisely to the neglect of this practice³⁰. He again brings up the example of the monks in Egypt who wove mats and made baskets, which they then sold in nearby towns or copied manuscripts³¹.

Both the abbots of the monasteries and the hermits with an improved life showed an extraordinary zeal for work, and some of them took care not only of their living but sent the surplus to the prisoners and the poor³². Saint John Cassian emphasizes that the monk who does not work has no purpose in the monastery, being a stumbling block for himself and the other brothers. Like bees

²⁸ Milan Şesan, “Despre teologia postpatristică”, in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XI, 1966, No. 4-6 (April-June), pp. 279 and following pages. Saint Simeon the New Theologian († 1022) supports the thesis of the “deification of man” formulated by Saint Gregory of Nyssa and supported by Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. He affirms that by stimulating the “fire of knowledge” and through contemplation, love for one’s fellows can be stimulated.

²⁹ *Conférence IX*, 25-27, 31-32, cf. Jean Claude Guy, *Jean Cassian, vie et doctrine spirituelle* (13).

³⁰ Fernand Cabrol, “Cassien”, (2350).

³¹ Book X of *De Coenobiorum Institutum* is reserved almost entirely for the issue of work in monasteries.

³² Fernand Cabrol, “Cassien”, (2350).

in a hive, it is fitting that monks gather the honey of holiness from the flowers of effort³³.

Another occupation of the monks is fasting, which consists not so much in abstaining from certain foods, drinks or appetites but, more importantly, in giving up evil thoughts and ugly deeds which devastate the soul. Fasting cleanses the entire being of the monk, removing all the unpleasant smell of impure life, physical and spiritual³⁴.

Saint John Cassian talks a lot about Lent, showing that it was for six weeks in some provinces and seven in others. Lent was the time of preparation for catechumens and penitents, and the period between Easter and Pentecost was one of great joy, a consequence of the Easter holiday, liturgically compared to Saturday and Sunday, in which at the vigils it was customary to read two passages from the New Testament: one from the writings of Saint Paul the Apostle or the Acts of the Apostles, and another from the Gospel³⁵. During this period, methane is not produced and does not arrive. The day of Pentecost, Saint John Cassian recommends that it be celebrated with equal solemnity and joy as the day of the Resurrection³⁶.

Regarding the church year, although Saint Cassian does not provide many details, the ones related are of particular importance. Thus, the celebration of the Epiphany of the Lord (Baboteza) in the Egyptian monasteries was not separated from the feast of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) but was held on the same day, as was also the case in the West³⁷.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ Joannis Cassiani, *De Coenobiorum Institutum* (About the monastic settlements with communal life and the remedies against the eight deadly sins), Liber II, caput VI, MPL t. 49, (90).

³⁶ Idem, *Collatio XXI*, caput XIX-XX, MPL t. 49, (1193-1194), cf. Fernand Cabrol, "Cassien", (2352).

³⁷ On this occasion, announcements were sent from the Patriarchate of Alexandria to all the Churches of Egypt, stating the beginning of Lent and the date of Easter, cf. Idem, *Collatio X*, caput II, MPL t. 49, (821).

It is worth noting the importance that the Egyptian monks gave to Saturday regarding the divine service. It was honoured equally with Sunday, and Saint John Cassian gives us many details. We thus learn that on both Saturday and Sunday, the “eucharistic synaxis” took place at the third hour of the day (9 o’clock) and the monks’ communion³⁸. Saturday and Sunday, suppressing fasting, were counted as days of celebration. The custom was practised in all churches in the East, and Saint John Cassian attributes to it an apostolic origin³⁹. The celebration of Saturday, Saint John Cassian states, was not done out of consideration for Jewish custom but to give the monks two days of rest⁴⁰. The Sunday service took place until noon, at the sixth hour of the day⁴¹ (12 o’clock) Moreover, the Psalms, prayers and biblical readings were more solemn. After the service, there was a meal.

Furthermore, regarding the table’s order, Saturday and Sunday were considered days of celebration. On these days, lunch and dinner were served, unlike the other days, when only one meal was served in the evening. Even these meals were considered a kind of service. Thus, the main meal, lunch, was preceded and followed by the reading of some Psalms⁴², and dinner was preceded and followed by a solemn prayer to show that it was a more special meal⁴³. At the same time, Wednesdays and Fridays were intended for penance and retreat⁴⁴.

³⁸ Idem, *De Coenobiorum Institutum*, Liber III, caput II, MPL t. 49, (115), cf. (144 and 145).

³⁹ *Ibidem*, Liber III, caput IX, MPL t. 49, (145, 146).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, MPL t. 49, (146). Honouring the Sabbath was not accepted in the West, especially in Rome, where Saturday was considered a day of fasting. Later, there were disputes between the East and the West on this topic.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, caput XI-XII, MPL t. 49, (149, 150). Counting hours was done from sunrise when it was considered the first hour.

⁴² *Ibidem*, Liber II, caput VI, MPL t. 49, (90).

⁴³ *Ibidem*, Liber III, caput XII, MPL t. 49, (151).

⁴⁴ Idem, *De Incarnatione Christi contra Nestorium Haereticum*, Liber VI, caput XXI, MPL t. 50, (184).

We learn from Saint John Cassian that the celebration of the Holy Liturgy began on Saturdays and Sundays at the third hour of the day (9 o'clock). At this time, all the monks gathered in the church or in the place of prayer, where the mystery of the Holy Eucharist was officiated. However, we do not find any detail in what this officiating consists of, which St. John calls "eucharistic synaxis". The monks, most of them not being priests, shared on Saturday and Sunday.

In Books II and III of "On monastic settlements with communal life", Saint John Cassian describes the order of day and night services, especially those in Egyptian monasteries. Sometimes he compares these services with the monks of Palestine or other Eastern provinces. The night services (*Nocturnae solemnitates*), distinct from the evening services (*Vesperinae solemnitates*), were the most solemn. The starting time varied, like that of the daytime services, being conditioned by the sunrise. That is why the one who gave the signal to start the service had to know the course of the stars. Saint John Cassian describes the order of the solemn services, as well as that of the daily services. They were divided into three parts, and due to the duration of several hours, their order was quite varied to eliminate boredom. On ordinary days, the services were simpler and shorter and consisted of reading twelve Psalms. Only two pericopes were read in the night and evening services, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. After reading each Psalm, there was a pause for meditation, and when the Psalm was longer, there was a pause after ten verses, followed by this meditation. This was a kind of prayer and was inspired by the text of the Psalm⁴⁵. While a priest or monk read the summary prayer, the others silently sat. The practice of these meditations is ancient, and there are even Psalters with a prayer at the end of each Psalm. It used to be that the Psalm was read or sung by one monk while the others, seated in their seats, listened and gave the answers to the

⁴⁵ *Idem, De Coenobiorum Institutum, Liber II, caput XI, MPL t. 49, (99, 100).*

Psalms. The number of Psalms varied at first but eventually remained fixed at twelve. This order is similar to that which Saint Basil the Great had established for the monasteries founded by him⁴⁶.

Saint John Cassian gives us interesting details about the origin and nature of the First Hour. It appears in the year 382, being called by the Marseilles monk “solemnitas matutina” or “another Matins” so as not to be confused with the Matins service, together with which it forms a single Laud⁴⁷. The First Hour appeared during the time of Saint John Cassian in a monastery in Bethlehem to eliminate the practice of some monks, who extended their sleep until the third hour of the day (9 o’clock). It was composed according to the model of the other Hours, of three Psalms, each accompanied by a prayer, and marked the end of sleep and the beginning of work in the monk’s life cycle⁴⁸.

4 Conclusions

From what has been presented so far, it can be seen that the works of Saint John Cassian provide us with precious information regarding the monastic life, the divine service and the religious services that were officiated in his time, in the monasteries of the places he visited in the East and West. Saint John Cassian reminds us that the essence of the monastic life lies in the intention and orientation with which it is lived rather than in its ascetic structures and disciplines. He affirms that the core of the monastic vocation is the monk’s faith in salvation, and such an eschatological faith can bring the freedom of commitment on which the monastic life must be based. Such faith enabled monks like John Cassian to carry out all the works they were called to

⁴⁶ *Epistula* 63, MPG t. 32, (963 AB).

⁴⁷ Joannis Cassiani, *De Coenobiorum Institutum*. Liber III, caput IV, MPL t. 49, (126, 128), cf. *Învățătura de credință ortodoxă*, Bucharest, Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, 1952, (252).

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, Liber III, caput II, MPL t. 49, (115).

do, to fulfil their moral and pastoral responsibilities as if they were of absolute importance, even though they knew that, viewed from another perspective, they would not have had any importance. Undeniably, Saint John Cassian remains a mentor and teacher of monastic life. He constitutes a link in the succession of monastic teachers, which continues today.

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