

MICHEL
Foucault

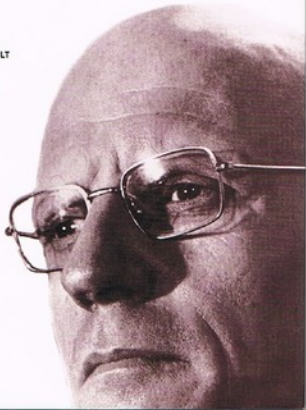
ETHICS
SUBJECTIVITY AND TRUTH

EDITED BY
PAUL RABINOW

THE ESSENTIAL
WORKS OF FOUCAULT
1954 - 1984

VOLUME

I



THE ESSENTIAL WORKS OF
MICHEL FOUCAULT
1954-1984

PAUL RABINOW
SERIES EDITOR

Ethics,
Edited by Paul Rabinow

MICHEL FOUCAULT

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Translated by

ROBERT HURLEY AND OTHERS

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VOLUME ONE

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The battle for chastity is discussed in detail by John Cassian in the sixth chapter of the *Institutiones*, “Concerning the spirit of fornication,” and in several of his *Conferences*: the fourth on “the lusts of the flesh and of the spirit,” the fifth on “the eight principal vices,” the twelfth on “chastity,” and the twenty-second on “night visions.” It ranks second in a list of eight battles,¹ in the shape of a fight against the spirit of fornication. As for fornication itself, it is subdivided into three categories.² On the face of it a very unjuridical list, if one compares it with the catalog of sins that are to be found when the medieval Church organizes the sacrament of penance on the lines of a penal code. But Cassian’s specifications obviously have a different meaning.

Let us first examine the place of fornication among the other sinful tendencies.

Cassian arranges his eight sins in a particular order. He sets up pairs of vices that seem linked in some specifically close way:³ pride and vainglory, sloth and accidie, avarice and wrath. Fornication is coupled with greed, for several reasons. They are two “natural” vices, innate

*The opening paragraph of the original text, a contribution to a 1982 volume on occidental sexualities edited by Philippe Ariès and André Béjin, is omitted in this translation. The paragraph describes the text as an extract from the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*; but the description precedes Foucault’s decision to relegate discussion of the period discussed in the text to a fourth volume, *Aveux de la chair* [*Confessions of the Flesh*], which remains unpublished. The full paragraph reads: “Ce texte est extrait du troisième volume de l’Histoire de la sexualité. Après avoir consulté Philippe Ariès sur l’orientation générale du présent recueil, j’ai pensé que ce texte consonait avec les autres études. Il nous semble en effet que l’idée qu’on se fait d’ordinaire d’une éthique sexuelle chrétienne est à réviser profondément; et que, d’autre part, la valeur centrale de la ques-

and hence very difficult to cure. They are also the two vices that involve the participation of the body, not only in their growth but also in achieving their object; and finally they also have a direct causal connection—overindulgence in food and drink fuels the urge to commit fornication.⁴ In addition, the spirit of fornication occupies a position of peculiar importance among the other vices, either because it is closely bound with greed, or simply by its very nature.

First, the causal chain. Cassian emphasizes the fact that the vices do not exist in isolation, even though an individual may be particularly affected by one vice or another.⁵ There is a causal link that binds them all together. It begins with greed, which arises in the body and inflames the spirit of fornication; these two engender avarice, understood as an attachment to worldly wealth, which in turn leads to rivalries, quarreling, and wrath. The result is despondency and sorrow, provoking the sin of accidie and total disgust with monastic life. Such a progression implies that one will never be able to conquer a vice unless one can conquer the one on which it leans: “The defeat of the first weakens the one that depends on it; victory over the former leads to the collapse of the latter without further effort.” As with the others, the greed–fornication pair, like “a huge tree whose shadow stretches afar,” has to be uprooted. Hence the importance for the ascetic of fasting as a way of conquering greed and suppressing fornication. Therein lies the basis of the practice of asceticism, for it is the first link in the causal chain.

The spirit of fornication is seen as being in an odd relationship to the last vices on the list, especially pride. In fact, for Cassian, pride and vainglory do not form part of the causal chain of other vices. Far from being generated by them, they result from victory over them:⁶ “carnal pride,” that is, flaunting one’s fasts, one’s chastity, one’s poverty, and so on before other people, and “spiritual pride,” which makes one think that one’s progress is all due to one’s own merits.⁷ One vice that springs from the defeat of another means a fall that is that much greater.

tion de la masturbation a une toute autre origine que la campagne des medecins aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siecles” (“This text is an extract from the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*. After having discussed with Philippe Ariès the general orientation of the present collection, I thought that the text was consonant with the other studies. It indeed seems to us that the idea one ordinarily has of a Christian sexual ethics should be profoundly revised; and that, moreover, the central value of the question of masturbation has an altogether other origin from that of the doctors’ campaign of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries”). The text that appears here, translated by Anthony Forster and originally published in *Western Sexuality*, ed. P. Ariès and A. Béjin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), has been amended.

And fornication, the most disgraceful of all the vices, the one that is most shameful, is the consequence of pride—a chastisement but also a temptation, the proof God sends to the presumptuous mortal to remind him that he is always threatened by the weakness of the flesh if the grace of God does not come to his help. “Because someone has for long exulted in the pureness of his heart and his body, it naturally follows . . . that in the back of his mind he rather prides himself on it . . . so it is a good thing for the Lord to desert him, for his own good. The pureness which has been making him so self-assured begins to worry him, and in the midst of his spiritual well-being he finds himself faltering.”⁸ When the soul has only itself to combat, the wheel comes full circle, the battle begins again, and the prickings of the flesh are felt anew, showing the inevitable continuance of the struggle and the threat of a perpetual recurrence.

Finally, fornication has, as compared with other vices, an ontological particularity that gives it a special ascetic importance. Like greed, it is rooted in the body and impossible to beat without chastisement. While wrath or despondency can be fought only in the mind, fornication cannot be eradicated without “mortifying the flesh, by vigils, fasts and back-breaking labor.”⁹ This does not exclude—on the contrary—the battle the mind has to wage against itself, since fornication may be born of thoughts, images, and memories. “When the Devil, with subtle cunning, has insinuated into our hearts the memory of a woman, beginning with our mother, our sisters, or certain pious women, we should as quickly as possible expel these memories for fear that, if we linger on them too long, the tempter may seize the opportunity to lead us unwittingly to think about other women.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, there is one fundamental difference between fornication and greed. The fight against the latter has to be carried on with a certain restraint, since one cannot give up all food: “The requirements of life have to be provided for . . . for fear lest the body, deprived through our own error, may lose the strength to carry out the necessary spiritual exercises.”¹¹ This natural propensity for eating has to be kept at arm’s length, treated unemotionally, but not abolished. It has its own legitimacy; to repudiate it totally, that is to say, to the point of death, would be to burden one’s soul with a crime. On the other hand, there are no holds barred in the fight against the spirit of fornication; everything that can direct our steps to it must be eradicated, and no call of nature can be allowed to justify the satisfaction of a need in this domain. This is an appetite

whose suppression does not lead to our bodily death, and it must be totally eradicated. Of the eight sins, fornication is the only one that is at once innate, natural, physical in origin, and needing to be as totally destroyed as the vices of the soul, such as avarice and pride. There must be severe mortification therefore, which lets us live in our bodies while releasing us from the flesh. "Depart from this flesh while living in the body."¹² It is into this region beyond nature, but in our earthly lives, that the fight against fornication leads us. It "drags us from the slough of the earth." It causes us to live in this world a life that is not of this world. Because this mortification is the harshest, it promises the most to us in this world below: "rooted in the flesh," it offers "the citizenship which the saints have the promise of possessing once they are delivered from the corruption of the flesh."¹³

Thus, one sees how fornication, though just one of the elements in the table of vices, has its own special position, heading the causal chain, and is the sin chiefly responsible for backsliding and battles, at one of the most difficult and decisive points in the struggle for an ascetic life.

In his fifth *Conference*, Cassian divides fornication into three varieties. The first consists of the "joining together of the two sexes" (*comixtio sexus utriusque*); the second takes place "without contact with the woman" (*absque femineo tactu*)—the damnable sin of Onan; the third is "conceived in the mind and the thoughts."¹⁴ Almost the same distinction is repeated in the twelfth *Conference*: "carnal conjunction" (*carnalis commixtio*), which Cassian calls *fornicatio* in its restricted sense; next uncleanness, *immunditia*, which takes place without contact with a woman, while one is either sleeping or awake, and which is due to "the negligence of an unwatchful mind"; finally there is *libido*, which develops in "the dark corners of the soul" without "physical passion" (*sine passione corporis*).¹⁵ These distinctions are important, for they alone help one to understand what Cassian meant by the general term *fornicatio*, to which he gives no definition elsewhere; but they are particularly important for the way he uses these three categories—in a way that differs so much from what one finds in earlier texts.

There already existed a traditional trilogy of the sins of the flesh: adultery, fornication (meaning sexual relations outside marriage), and "the corruption of children." At least these are the three categories to be found in the *Didache*: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not commit fornication; thou shalt not seduce young boys."¹⁶ And these are what we find in the "Epistle of Saint Barnabas": "Do not commit

fornication or adultery; do not corrupt the young.”¹⁷ We often find later that only the first two precepts are imposed, fornication covering all sexual offenses, and adultery covering those which infringe the marriage vows.¹⁸ But, in any case, these were habitually accompanied by precepts about covetousness in thought or sight or anything that might lead one to commit a forbidden sexual act: “Refrain from covetousness, for it leads to fornication; abstain from obscene talk and brazen looks, for all this sort of thing leads to adultery.”¹⁹

Cassian’s analysis has two special features: one is that he does not deal separately with adultery, but places it with fornication in its limited sense; and the other is that he devotes attention mostly to the other two categories. Nowhere in the various texts in which he speaks of the battle for chastity does he refer to actual sexual relations. Nowhere are the various sins set out dependent on actual sexual relations—the partner with whom it was committed, his or her age, or possible degree of consanguinity. Not one of the categories that in the Middle Ages were to be built up into a great code of sins is to be found here. Doubtless, Cassian, who was addressing an audience of monks who had taken vows to renounce all sexual relations, felt he could skip these preliminaries. One notices, however, that on one very important aspect of celibacy, where Basil of Caesarea and Chrysostom had given explicit advice,²⁰ Cassian does make discreet allusion: “Let no one, especially when among young folk, remain alone with another, even for a short time, or withdraw with him or take him by the hand.”²¹ He carries on his discussion as if he is only interested in his last two categories (about what goes on without sexual relationship or physical passion), as if he was passing over fornication as a physical union of two individuals and only devoting serious attention to behavior which up until then had been severely censured only when leading up to real sexual acts.

Yet even though Cassian’s analysis ignores physical sex, and its sphere of action is quite solitary and secluded, his reasoning is not purely negative. The whole essence of the fight for chastity is that it aims at a target which has nothing to do with actions or relationships; it concerns a different reality than that of a sexual connection between two individuals. A passage in the twelfth *Conference* reveals the nature of this reality: in it Cassian describes the six stages that mark the advance toward chastity. The object of the description is not to define chastity itself but to pick out the negative signs by which one can trace progress toward it—the various signs of impurity that disappear one by

one—and so to get an idea of what one must contend with in the fight for chastity.

First sign of progress: When the monk awakes he is not “smitten by a carnal impulse” (*impugnatio carnali non eliditur*), that is, the mind [*âme*] is no longer troubled by physical reactions over which the will has no control.

Second stage: If “voluptuous thoughts” (*voluptariae cogitationes*) should arise in the monk’s mind, he does not let it dwell on them. He can stop thinking about things that have arisen in his mind involuntarily and in spite of himself.²²

Third stage: When a glimpse of the world outside can no longer arouse lustful feelings, and one can look upon a woman without any feeling of desire.

Fourth stage: One no longer in one’s waking hours feels any, even the most innocent, movement of the flesh. Does Cassian mean that there *is* no movement of the flesh, and that therefore one has total control over one’s own body? Probably not, since elsewhere he often insists on the persistence of involuntary bodily movements. The term he uses, *perferre*, signifies no doubt that such movements are not capable of affecting the mind [*âme*], which thus does not suffer from them.

Fifth stage: “If the subject of a discourse or the logical consequence of a reading involves the idea of human procreation, the mind does not allow itself to be touched by the remotest thought of sexual pleasure, but contemplates the act in a mood of calmness and purity, as a simple function, a necessary adjunct to the prolongation of the human race, and departs no more affected by the recollection of it than if it had been thinking about brickmaking or some other trade.”

Finally, the last stage is reached when our sleep is not troubled by the vision of a seductive woman. Even though we may not think it a sin to be subject to such illusions, it is however a sign that some lustful feeling still lurks in the depths of our being.²⁵

Amid all this description of the different symptoms of fornication, gradually fading out as one approaches the state of chastity, there is no mention of relationships with others, no acts, not even any intention of committing one. In fact, there is no fornication in the strict sense of the word. This microcosm of the solitary life lacks the two major elements on which is centered not only the sexual ethic of the philosophers of the ancient world but also that of a Christian like Clement of Alexandria (at least in Epistle 2 of his *Pedagogus*), namely, the sexual

union of two individuals (*sunousia*) and the pleasure of the act (*aphrodisia*). Cassian is interested in the movements of the body and the mind [*âme*], images, feelings, memories, faces in dreams, the spontaneous movements of thoughts, the consenting (or refusing) will, waking and sleeping. And two poles are sketched out which, it must be stressed, do not coincide with the body and soul. They are, first, the involuntary pole, which consists either of physical movements or of feelings evoked by memories and images that survive from the past and ferment in the mind, besieging and enticing the will; and, second, the pole of the will itself, which accepts or repels, averts its eyes or allows itself to be ensnared, holds back or consents. On the one side, then, bodily and mental reflexes that bypass the mind [*âme*] and, becoming infected with impurity, may proceed to corruption [*pollution*], and on the other side, an internal play of thoughts. Here we find the two kinds of “fornication” as broadly defined by Cassian, to which he confines the whole of his analysis, leaving aside the question of physical sex. His theme is *immunditia*, something that catches the mind [*âme*], waking or sleeping, off its guard and can lead to pollution, without any contact with another; and the *libido*, which develops in the dark corners of the mind [*âme*]. In this connection, Cassian reminds us that *libido* has the same origin as *libet* (“it pleases”).²⁴

The spiritual battle and the advance toward chastity, whose six stages are described by Cassian, can thus be seen as a task of dissociation. We are now far away from the rationing of pleasure and its strict limitation to permissible actions; far away, too, from the idea of a separation as drastic as possible between mind [*âme*] and body. But what does concern us is a never-ending struggle over the movements of our thoughts (whether they extend or reflect those of our body, or whether they motivate them), over its simplest manifestations, over the factors that can activate it. The aim is that the subject should never be affected in his effort by the obscurest or the most seemingly “unwilled” presence of will. The six stages that lead to chastity represent steps toward the disinvolvement of the will. The first step is to exclude its involvement in bodily reactions; then exclude it from the imagination (not to linger on what crops up in one’s mind); then exclude it from the action of the senses (cease to be conscious of bodily movements); then exclude it from figurative involvement (cease to think of things as possible objects of desire); and, finally, oneiric involvement (the desires that may be stirred by images that appear, albeit spontaneously, in dreams). This

sort of involvement, of which the willful act or the explicit will to commit an act is the most visible form, Cassian calls *concupiscence*. It is against this that spiritual combat—and the effort at dissociation, at disimplication that it pursues—is turned.

Here is the reason why, all through this battle against the spirit of fornication and for chastity, the sole fundamental problem is that of pollution—whether as something that is subservient to the will and a possible form of self-indulgence, or as something happening spontaneously and involuntarily in sleep or dreams. So important is it that Cassian makes the absence of erotic dreams and nocturnal pollution a sign that one has reached the pinnacle of chastity. He often returns to this topic: “The proof that one has achieved this state of purity will be that no apparition will beguile us when resting or stretched out in sleep”²⁵; or again, “This is the sum of integrity and the final proof: that we are not visited by voluptuous thoughts during sleep and that we should be unaware of the pollutions to which we are subjected by nature.”²⁶ The whole of the twenty-second *Conference* is devoted to the question of “nocturnal pollutions” and “the necessity of using all our strength to be delivered from them.” And on various occasions, Cassian calls to mind holy characters like Serenus, who had attained such a high degree of virtue that they were never troubled by inconveniences of this kind.²⁷

Obviously, in a rule of life where renunciation of all sexual relations was absolutely basic, it was quite logical that this topic should assume such importance. One is reminded of the importance, in groups inspired by Pythagorean ideas, accorded the phenomena of sleep and dreams for what they reveal about the quality of existence, and to the self-purification that was supposed to guarantee its serenity. Above all, one must realize that nocturnal pollution raised problems where ritual purity was concerned, and it was precisely these problems which prompted the twenty-second *Conference*: can one draw near to the “holy altars” and partake of the bread and wine when one has suffered nocturnal defilement?²⁸ But even if all these reasons can explain such preoccupations among the theoreticians of monastic life, they cannot account for the absolutely central position occupied by the question of voluntary/involuntary pollution in the whole discussion of the battle for chastity. Pollution was not simply the object of a stricter ban than anything else, or harder to control. It was a yardstick [*analyseur*] of concupiscence, in that it helped to decide—in the light of what formed

its background, initiated it, and finally unleashed it—the part played by the will in forming these images, feelings, and memories in the mind [*âme*]. The monk concentrates his whole energy on never letting his will be involved in this reaction, which goes from the body to the mind [*âme*] and from the mind [*âme*] to the body, and over which the will may have a hold, either to encourage it or halt it through mental activity. The first five stages of the advance toward chastity constitute increasingly subtle disengagements of the will from the increasingly restricted reactions that may bring on this pollution.

There remains the final stage, attainable by holiness: absence of “absolutely” involuntary pollutions during sleep. Again, Cassian points out that these pollutions are not necessarily all involuntary. Overeating and impure thoughts during the day all show that one is willing, if not intending, to have them. He makes a distinction between the type of dream that accompanies them and the images’ degree of impurity. Anyone who is taken by surprise would be wrong to blame his body or sleep: “It is a sign of the corruption that festers within, and not just a product of the night. Buried in the depth of the soul, the corruption has come to the surface during sleep, revealing the hidden fever of passions with which we have become infected by glutting ourselves all day long on unhealthy emotions.”²⁹ Finally, there is the pollution that is totally involuntary, devoid of the pleasure that implies consent, without even the slightest trace of a dream image. Doubtless this is the goal attainable by the ascetic who has practiced with sufficient rigor; the pollution is only a “residue” in which the person concerned plays no part. “We have to repress the reactions of our minds and the emotions of our bodies until the flesh can satisfy the demands of nature without giving rise to any pleasurable feelings, getting rid of the excess of our bodily humors without any unhealthy urges and without having to plunge back into the battle for our chastity.”³⁰ Since this is a supernatural phenomenon, only a supernatural power can give us this freedom, spiritual grace. This is why nonpollution is the sign of holiness, the stamp of the highest chastity possible, a blessing one may hope for but not attain.

For his part, man must do nothing less than remain in relation to himself in a state of perpetual vigilance even as far as the least impulses that might be produced in his body or his soul are concerned. To stay awake night and day—at night for the day and in the day thinking of the night to come. “As purity and vigilance during the day dispose one to be chaste during the night, so too nocturnal vigilance replenishes the

strength of the heart to observe chastity during the day.”⁵¹ This vigilance means exerting the sort of “discrimination” that lies at the heart of the self-analysis [*techniques de soi-même*] developed in active spirituality. The work of the miller sorting out his grain, the centurion picking his troops, the moneychanger who weighs coins before accepting or refusing them—this is how the monk must unceasingly treat his own thoughts, so as to identify those which may bring temptation. Such an effort will allow him to sort out his thoughts according to their origin, to distinguish them by their quality, and to separate the objects they represent from the pleasure they can evoke. This is an endless task of analysis that one must apply to oneself and, by the duty of confession, to our relations with others.⁵² Neither the idea of the inseparability of chastity and “fornication” affirmed by Cassian, nor the way in which he analyzes them, nor the different elements that, according to him, inhere in them, nor the connections he establishes between them—pollution, libido, concupiscence—can be understood without reference to the techniques of self-analysis [*technologies de soi*] that characterize monastic life and the spiritual battle it traverses.

Do we find that, between Tertullian and Cassian, prohibitions have been intensified, an even greater importance attached to absolute continence, and the sexual act increasingly stigmatized? This is not the way the question should be framed.

The organization of monasticism and the dimorphism that developed between monastic and secular life brought about important changes in the problem of sexual renunciation. They brought with them the development of very complex techniques of self-analysis [*techniques de soi*]. So, in the very manner in which sex was renounced there appeared a rule of life and a mode of analysis which, in spite of obvious continuities, showed important differences with the past. With Tertullian, the state of virginity implied the external and internal posture of one who has renounced the world and has adopted the rules governing appearance, behavior, and general conduct this renunciation involves. In the mystique of virginity which developed after the thirteenth century, the rigor of this renunciation (in line with the theme, already found in Tertullian, of union with Christ) transforms the negative aspect of continence into the promise of spiritual marriage. With Cassian, who describes rather than innovates, there occurs a sort of double action, a withdrawal that also reveals hidden depths within.

This has nothing to do with the internalization of a whole list of for-

bidden things, merely substituting the prohibition of the intention for that of the act itself. It is, rather, the opening up of an area (whose importance has already been stressed by the writings of Gregory of Nyssa and, especially, of Basil of Ancyra) which is that of thought, operating erratically and spontaneously, with its images, memories, and perceptions, with movements [*mouvements*] and impressions transmitted from the body to the mind [*âme*] and the mind [*âme*] to the body. This has nothing to do with a code of permitted or forbidden actions but is a whole technique for analyzing and diagnosing thought, its origins, its qualities, its dangers, its potential for temptation, and all the dark forces that can lurk behind the mask it may assume. Given the objective of expelling for good everything impure or conducive to impurity, this can only be achieved by eternal vigilance, a suspiciousness directed every moment against one's thought, an endless self-questioning to flush out any secret fornication lurking in the inmost recesses of the mind [*âme*].

In this chastity-oriented asceticism [*ascèse*] one can see a process of "subjectivation" which has nothing to do with a sexual ethic based on physical self-control. But two things stand out. This subjectivation is linked with a process of familiarization which makes the obligation to seek and state the truth about oneself an indispensable and permanent condition of this asceticism; and if there is subjectivation, it also involves an indeterminate objectivation of the self by the self—indeterminate in the sense that one must be forever extending as far as possible the range of one's thoughts, however insignificant and innocent they may appear to be. Moreover, this subjectivation, in its quest for the truth about oneself, functions through complex relations with others, and in many ways. One must rid oneself of the power of the Other, the Enemy, who hides behind seeming likenesses of oneself, and eternal warfare must be waged against this Other, which one cannot win without the help of the Almighty, who is mightier than he. Finally, confession to others, submission to their advice, and permanent obedience to one's superiors are essential in this battle.

These new modalities taken up regarding sexual ethics in monastic life, the buildup of a new relationship between the subject and the truth, and the establishment of complex relations of obedience to the other all form part of a whole whose coherence is well illustrated in Cassian's text. No new point of departure is involved. Going back in time before Christianity, one may find many of these elements in embryonic form

and sometimes fully shaped in ancient philosophy—Stoic or Neoplatonic, for instance. Moreover, Cassian himself presents in a systematic way (how far he makes his own contribution is another question which need not concern us here) a sum of experience which he asserts to be that of Eastern monasticism. In any case, study of a text of this kind shows that it hardly makes sense to talk about a “Christian sexual ethic,” still less about a “Judeo-Christian” one. So far as consideration of sexual behavior was concerned, some fairly involved thinking went on between the Hellenistic period and Saint Augustine. Certain important events stand out, such as the guidelines for conscience laid down by the Stoics and the Cynics, the organization of monasticism, and many others. On the other hand, the coming of Christianity, considered as a massive rupture with earlier moralities and the dominant introduction of a quite different one, is barely noticeable. As Peter Brown says, in speaking of Christianity as part of our reading of the giant mass of antiquity, the topography of the parting of the waters is hard to pin down.

NOTES

- 1 The seven others are greed, avarice, wrath, sloth, accidie, vainglory, and pride.
- 2 *Conferences* 5.11 and 12.2.
- 3 *Conferences* 5.10.
- 4 *Institutions* 5, and *Conferences* 5.
- 5 *Conferences* 5.13–14.
- 6 *Conferences* 5.10.
- 7 *Institutions* 12.2.
- 8 *Conferences* 12.6. For examples of lapses into pride and presumptuousness, see *Conferences* 2.13 and especially *Institutions* 12.20–21, where offenses against humility are punished by the most humiliating temptation, that of a desire *contra usum naturae*.
- 9 *Conferences* 5.4.
- 10 *Institutions* 6.13.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 5.8.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 6.6.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 6.6.
- 14 *Conferences* 5.11.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 12.2.
- 16 *Didache* 2.2.

- 17 *Epistle of Saint Barnabas* 19.4. Earlier on, dealing with forbidden foods, the same text interprets the ban on eating hyena flesh as forbidding adultery, of hare as forbidding the seduction of children, of weasel as forbidding oral sex.
- 18 For instance Saint Augustine, *Sermon* 56.
- 19 *Didache* 3.3.
- 20 Basil of Caesarea, *Exhortation to Renounce the World* 5: “Eschew all dealing, all relations with young men of your own age. Avoid them as you would fire. Many, alas, are those who through mixing with them, have been consigned by the Enemy to burn eternally in hell-fire.” See the precautions laid down in *The Great Precepts* (34) and *The Short Precepts* (220); see also John Chrysostom, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae*.
- 21 *Institutions* 2.15. Those who infringe this rule commit a grave offense and are under suspicion (*conjuracionis pravique consilii*). Are these words hinting at amorous behavior, or are they simply aimed at the danger of members of the same community showing particular favor to one another? Similar recommendations are to be found in *Institutions* 4.16.
- 22 The word used by Cassian for dwelling on such thoughts is *immorari*. Later, *delectatio morosa* has an important place in the medieval sexual ethic.
- 23 *Conferences* 12.7.
- 24 *Conferences* 5.11 and 12.2.
- 25 *Institutions* 6.10.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 6.20.
- 27 *Conferences* 7.1, 12.7. Other allusions to this theme in *Institutions* 2.15.
- 28 *Conferences* 22.5.
- 29 *Institutions* 6.11.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 6.22.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 6.23.
- 32 See, in the twenty-second *Conferences* (6), the case of a consultation over a monk, who each time he was going to communion suffered a nocturnal visitation and dared not participate in the holy mysteries. The “spiritual physicians” after an interrogation and discussions diagnosed that it was the Devil who sent these visitations so as to prevent the monk from attending the desired communion. To abstain was to fall into the Devil’s trap; to communicate in spite of everything was to defeat him. Once this decision had been taken, the Devil appeared no more.

