

The Date of Innocent I's *Epistula* 12 and the Second Exile of John Chrysostom

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IN THE HISTORY of Christianity in late antiquity one of the episodes about which we have detailed knowledge concerns the events surrounding the deposition of John Chrysostom as bishop of Constantinople in 403–405. We have Palladius' *Dialogus*, Socrates' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, pseudo-Martyrius' *Vita Iohannis Chrysostomi*, Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Zosimus' *Historia Nova*, and Nicephorus Callistus' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, as well as correspondence both to and from John. Yet the problem with having more information about a particular period is that we seem to have even more instances where we know that there is something missing in what we can reconstruct. The more we know simply makes us more aware of how much there is that we do not know. This is certainly the case with John's removal from Constantinople.¹

Amongst the source material concerned with John's deposition are four letters between him and Innocent I, bishop of Rome from 401/2 to 417 (*PG* 52.529–542). A version of the first of these, from John to Innocent, has been preserved in ch. 2 of Palladius' *Dialogus*.² It may be dated to a little after Easter (17 April) 404.³ It outlines John's own history of events leading

¹ See Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Bishop: The View from Antioch," *JEH* 55 (2004) 455–466, who argues that we gain new insight into John's episcopate when we consider information that is not Constantinopolitan in perspective.

² *Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome*, ed. Anne-Marie Malingrey (*SC* 341–342 [1988]) II 68–95. In the collection of Innocent's letters this is *Ep.* 4 (*PL* 20.494 = P. Coustant, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum* [Paris 1721] 771–788). The opening words are *Etiam antequam*.

³ J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London 1995) 246. Rudolf Brändle, *John Chrysostom: Bishop – Reformer*

up to his second exile so as to demonstrate Theophilus' guilt and begs Innocent to involve himself in resolving the matter. The second letter from John⁴ may be dated to spring 406, for John tells us that he was in his third year of exile.⁵ It contains little information other than an emotive description of John's remoteness and difficulty in communicating and the hope that Innocent continue to work on his behalf in seeking his recall. The third is a letter from Innocent to John.⁶ It is brief and counsels John to patient endurance and informs him that Innocent has taken action by sending a letter through Cyriacus the deacon. The fourth is a letter from Innocent to the presbyters, deacons, and people of Constantinople.⁷ It is a response to a letter brought to him by Germanus and Cassianus; the Roman bishop urges the church of Constantinople to patience, praises John's innocence, and comments on the fact that an ecumenical synod is needed in order to determine whether canons of the council of Nicaea have been violated. Both these last two letters are preserved in Sozomen and are presented as being

— *Martyr*, transl. John Cawte and Silke Trzcionka (Sydney 2004) 131, is inclined to date the letter closer to Pentecost at the start of June.

⁴ *PG* 52.535–536. In the collection of Innocent's letters, *Ep.* 11 (*PL* 20.513–514 = Coustant 809–814). The opening words are *Corpus quidem*.

⁵ *PG* 52.536: ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡμᾶς τρίτον ἔτος τοῦτο ἐν ἐξορίᾳ διατρίβοντας. See Roland Delmaire, "Les 'lettres d'exil' de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie," *RecAug* 25 (1991) 71–180: "Mais les Anciens ont une manière de compter différente de la nôtre et Jean veut dire par là non pas qu'il est en exil depuis trois ans pleins, mais qu'il est dans sa troisième année d'exil. À notre avis, cette lettre est écrite au printemps 406 comme les autres; elle est envoyée d'Arabissos, car les allusions à la disette et à l'épidémie se retrouvent dans d'autres lettres écrites peu après son arrivée dans cette ville" (90).

⁶ *PG* 52.537–538 (= Soz. *HE* 8.26 [GCS N.F. IV 384–385] = Nicephorus Callistus *HE* 13.32 [*PG* 146.1029–1032]). In the collection of Innocent's letters, *Ep.* 12 (*PL* 20.513–514 = Coustant 813–814 = Philipp Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*² I [Leipzig 1885] no. 298). The opening words are *Etsi innocens*.

⁷ *PG* 52.537–538 (= Soz. 8.26 [GCS 385–387] = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1031–1034]). In the collection of Innocent's letters, *Ep.* 7 (*PL* 20.501–508 = Coustant 795–802 = no. 294 Jaffé). The opening words are *Ex litteris*.

sent at the same time. We can date the last letter to after October 404 (more on this below).⁸ Yet the date of *Epistula* 12, the third letter, has been the subject of a variety of views because not everyone has accepted Sozomen's linking them together.

We need first to review the opinions offered by other scholars on this matter of *Epistula* 12. Palladius recorded that there were a couple of letters between Innocent and John that he did not reproduce.⁹ This accounts for the variety of dates offered for *Epistula* 12 by scholars who even consider this letter in their research into Chrysostom as they attempt to reconcile what is in both Palladius and Sozomen. *Epistula* 12 is important in that it is the only preserved letter from Innocent to John, and it is from Innocent's perspective that I wish to review the circumstances of John's exile and to offer a place for this letter in that sequence of events. This is a significant undertaking for, despite his painstaking and crucial research, Roland Delmaire was more interested in the letters from John rather than to him, and I can find no reference to *Epistula* 12 in his article. It is my position that this particular letter from Rome, found in Sozomen, is best understood as the one mentioned by Palladius as being one of the letters taken back to Constantinople by Theoctenus. My argument is that it needs to be dated prior to the time when Innocent revised his strategy in this matter and began to petition the emperors to call an ecumenical synod of bishops to deal with John's deposition.

Scholarly opinion

Sozomen himself (8.27.1) dated Innocent's *Epistula* 12 to October 404, sent to Constantinople together with *Epistula* 7. Green accepts this.¹⁰ In his 1721 edition of Innocent's letters Coustant rejected the October 404 dating of both *Epistulae* 7 and 12 offered by Sozomen, arguing that the law Sozomen

⁸ Soz. 8.27.1 dates the arrival of *Epp.* 7 and 12 in Constantinople to about the same time as a hailstorm in Constantinople, four days after which Eudoxia died (6 October 404).

⁹ Pallad. *V.Chrys.* 3.1–5 and 40–43, discussed below.

¹⁰ Malcolm R. Green, *Pope Innocent I: The Church of Rome in the Early Fifth Century* (diss. Oxford 1973) 68.

mentioned a little earlier (8.24) requiring provincial adherence to imperial recognition of new bishops was not promulgated in Constantinople until November¹¹ and that *Epistula* 7 must therefore be dated to 405.¹² However, he dated *Epistula* 12 to 407, because of the introduction Sozomen attached to these letters, which stated that they were written in conjunction with his efforts to convene an ecumenical synod.¹³ This is the position repeated by Philipp Jaffé¹⁴ and Erich Caspar.¹⁵

However, in the notes to the third letter between John and Innocent in the Chrysostom collection in Migne, it is noted that: "Prior epistola scripta est anno 405" (*PG* 52.537). Further, it is stated that "Respondet Innocentius epistolae Chrysostomi, a quodam Cyriaco diacono sibi allatae" (529–530). Meyer too notes that *Epistula* 12 was Innocent's answer to John's first preserved letter (the Palladius letter *Etiā antequam*) to Innocent.¹⁶ Both Migne and Meyer would seem to imply that the letter is to be identified with one of the letters mentioned at the start of chapter 3 in Palladius, which seem to be the first sent by Innocent in response to his becoming aware of John's deposition.¹⁷ They make no reference to Sozomen's dating of October 404. Although Cardinal Baronius argued that Innocent's reply to

¹¹ *Cod. Theod.* 16.4.6 (p.450 Pharr).

¹² Coustant, *Epistolae* 796.

¹³ Coustant, *Epistolae* 813–814: "Quibus verbis significare videtur, vel utramque epistolam simul missam, vel certe istam septima posteriorem non esse. Verum huic scriptori insolens non est, ea quae dissitis temporibus gesta sunt simul componere atque confundere. Sane cum de congreganda synodo, in qua Innocentius omnem spem posuerat, altum sit in hac epistola silentium, hoc non levi argumento est, eam scriptam esse cum ab hac spe excidisset. Istud non abhorret a vero, Innocentium proxima Joannis epistola motum, hanc scripsisse, ut sanctum praesulem in malis, quibus eum affligi didicerat, consolaretur. Quod si ita est, Joanni superstiti vix reddi potuit."

¹⁴ Jaffé 45 no. 298. *Innoc. Ep.* 7 is numbered 294 in Jaffé and is dated to 405.

¹⁵ Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* I (Tübingen 1930) 317 and 320.

¹⁶ Robert T. Meyer, *Palladius: Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom* (New York 1985) 162 n.41.

¹⁷ Pallad. *V. Chrys.* 3.1–7. The other letter was one to Theophilus.

John's letter in Palladius has not survived, he noted simply that *Epistula* 12 recorded that Cyriacus went back to the East with some letter from Innocent.¹⁸

Coleman-Norton accepted that *Epistula* 7, which was carried to Constantinople by Germanus and Cassianus, was written in response to the letters brought by them.¹⁹ He indicated that the kind of sentiments Palladius said were in the letters Innocent wrote to John and those in communion with him that were taken back east by Theotecnus (*V. Chrys.* 3.40–43) are to be found in *Epistulae* 7 and 12.²⁰ He did not go so far as to identify these letters with those mentioned by Palladius. Certainly in the case of *Epistula* 7 that would not seem to be possible, given that Germanus and Cassianus had not yet been to Rome (if we trust Palladius' chronology that Theotecnus was in Rome before the other two). However, it is, as I am arguing, quite possible to make this identification in the case of *Epistula* 12.

Brändle refers to two letters Innocent wrote to John and to his loyal clergy in Constantinople, but he does not discuss whether the one to John himself is *Epistula* 12 or not.²¹ We may deduce that Brändle is referring to the two letters found in Sozomen, for the letter written to the clergy (and people, we may note) of Constantinople in Sozomen (*Epistula* 7) does contain Innocent's demand for a synod and his rejection of the

¹⁸ Caesar Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici* V (Rome 1607) 211: "Quae autem post primam illam legationem Orientalium Innocentius ad Ioannem Chrysostomum scripserit, incertum est, quod litterae ipsae non extent: sed eodem argumento, quo ad Constantinopolitanae Ecclesiae clericos scripsit, ad Ioannem itidem dedisse litteras, par est existimare, nempe de futura indicenda ob eam causam Synodo oecumenica. Extat autem perbreuis tantum eiusdem Innocentii epistola ad Chrysostomum, quam recitat Sozomenus, datamque refert post alias litteras Cyriaco diacono ad eumde in Orientem missas." For him (192–193) the first legation was the one that consisted of bishops Demetrius, Pansophius, Pappus, and Eugenius and the deacons Paul and Cyriacus.

¹⁹ P. R. Coleman-Norton, *Palladii Dialogus de Vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* (Cambridge 1928) 156.

²⁰ Coleman-Norton, *Palladii Dialogus* 155.

²¹ Brändle, *John Chrysostom* 132.

canons of the Antiochene synod of 341, as Brändle mentions.²² However, if we conclude that Brändle's comments about the letter to John refer to *Epistula* 12 (remembering that several letters from Innocent to John are mentioned by Palladius) then I am slightly puzzled. He says "Firstly, that the pope is convinced of his complete innocence. Secondly, he can provide him no assistance."²³ As I read *Epistula* 12, though, what I find are Innocent's urgings that John be patient and his belief that John possessed τὸ ἀγαθὸν συνειδός and was ὁ ἀνάτιος.²⁴ This may amount to an expression of belief in John's innocence, but there is no statement in the letter about the Roman bishop's impotence in providing assistance (unless we are so to understand his urging patience as such an admission).

As part of an extensive investigation into the dating of the arrival in Rome of Chrysostom's friends, Delmaire offers an opinion about the date of *Epistula* 7. Like Coustant, Delmaire makes use of the law preserved in the *Theodosian Code* about the necessity of being in communion with Theophilus and Arsacius as the reference point. Bishop Cyriacus of Synnada (to be distinguished from Cyriacus the deacon, one of the bearers of the letter from John to Innocent in Palladius) arrived in Rome, according to Palladius, after fleeing the threat that that law contained (3.62–68). As that law was not promulgated until 18 November 404, Delmaire argues that Cyriacus could not have been in Rome until spring 405. Germanus and Cassianus, too, could not have reached Rome until that time. Palladius' chronology is not to be trusted. Delmaire dates Innocent's *Epistula* 7 to summer 405, after Demetrius, Cyriacus, Eulysius, and Palladius had arrived in Rome and after Innocent had announced the synod of Italian bishops.²⁵

²² In the flow of his narrative, Brändle refers to these letters just before a letter from Honorius to Arcadius in June 404 and before the arrival of Theotecnus in July 404, which is certainly not the time of these letters according to Sozomen.

²³ Brändle, *John Chrysostom* 132.

²⁴ Innoc. *Ep.* 12 (*PL* 20.514 = *Soz.* 8.26.2 = *PG* 52.537 = Nicephorus Call.13.32 [*PG* 146.1029] = no. 298 Jaffé).

²⁵ Delmaire, *RecAug* 25 (1991) 82, 84, 85 ("Il est clair que Palladius veut ici dramatiser son récit en comprimant en quelques mois ce qui s'est en fait

While I would certainly endorse his argument that *Epistula 7* ought to be dated to 405, I am not so sure I would date it quite so late in the year. As I have argued elsewhere,²⁶ both Palladius and Innocent made it clear that the latter did not seem to possess the authority to convoke a synod to consider Alexandria's involvement in ecclesial affairs in Constantinople, for *Epistula 7* itself states that the bishop of Rome was still manoeuvring to get the synod called,²⁷ not, as Delmaire believes, that he had convoked the synod already. About *Epistula 12* Delmaire has nothing to say. I can find no reference to *Epistula 12* from Innocent to John in Malingrey's work either.

Innocent's responses to John's deposition

It is understandable that scholars like Delmaire and Malingrey do not mention Innocent's letter to John, as their focus is

déroulé en près d'un an"), 86 ("Innocent décide alors de convoquer un synode des évêques occidentaux [Palladius, *Dial.* III, 119–121]: celui-ci demande la tenue d'un concile à Thessalonique pour trancher la question entre Jean et Théophile [*Dial.* III, 121sq.]. La lettre d'Innocent au clergé et au peuple de Constantinople—envoyée après l'arrivée à Rome de Démétrius, Cyriacus, Eulysius, Palladius, Germanus et Cassianus—dans laquelle l'évêque de Rome annonce la tenue d'un concile, ne peut être antérieure à la décision prise ou acceptée par le synode des Occidentaux et date sans doute de l'été 405").

²⁶ Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Roman Primacy in the Correspondence between Innocent I and John Chrysostom," in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo* (forthcoming). For a brief overview of Innocent's involvement in Constantinople see Lorenzo Dattrino, "Sollecitudine pastorale di Innocenzi I, Papa di Roma, per la chiesa sorella di Costantinopoli," *Lateranum* 44 (1998) 221–225: "Innocenzo era perciò cosciente della sua impossibilità a decidersi per un'azione di carattere giuridico" (222). This is consistent with the position of Green, *Pope Innocent* 66.

²⁷ *Innoc. Ep.* 7.4 (*PL* 20.506 = *PG* 52.538 = *Soz.* 8.26.18 = *Nicephorus Call.* 13.32 [*PG* 146.1033]): καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς πολλὰ σκεπτόμεθα ὄν τρόπον ἡ σύνοδος οἰκουμενικὴ συναχθεῖη. Cf. Delmaire, *RecAug* 25 (1991) 87: "les évêques d'Occident décidèrent de faire organiser ce concile à Thessalonique et demandèrent à Honorius, qui était retourné de Rome à Ravenne dans la seconde moitié de l'année 404, d'écrire à son frère Arcadius pour que celui-ci ordonne la convocation de ce concile."

on events from John's perspective.²⁸ When we consider the events of John's deposition from Innocent's developing perspective, and I shall argue that his position did undergo change, we gain a fuller understanding of what happened and the part the West played. When we appreciate the shifts in Innocent's thinking and activity we may be able to locate *Epistula* 12 within that unfolding pattern.

How did Innocent react to the news that kept coming to him from the East? He had learnt of John's first exile in a letter from Theophilus, brought by an Alexandrian lector, from Eusebius, a Constantinopolitan deacon, and then from John himself, from forty episcopal supporters, and from the clergy of Constantinople, in the letters brought by bishops Pansophius, Passus, Demetrius, Eugenius, and the deacons Paul and Cyriacus (Pallad. *V. Chrys.* 1.158–177). It was at this point that Innocent sent his first letters to the East commenting on this matter, one to both John and Theophilus, informing them, according to Palladius, that he was in communion with them both, that he nullified (ἀθετήσας) the decision of Theophilus, and that he wanted a synod of Western and Eastern bishops, which would contain neither friends nor foes of the two protagonists, to investigate (3.1–5). Are we to trust Palladius' accuracy with regard to Innocent's "nullifying" the decision of the Synod of the Oak? Given what Innocent would go on to say in his next letter to Theophilus, the one preserved in Palladius, we may well doubt it. Instead, we could imagine Innocent expressing reservations at the procedures used in that synod, urging Theophilus to reconsider.

Very shortly thereafter the Alexandrian presbyter Peter and the Constantinopolitan deacon Martyrius arrived in Rome with letters from Theophilus and the minutes of the Synod of the Oak. Palladius again recorded Innocent's reaction: Innocent felt that the charges were slight and that it was wrong for

²⁸ Delmaire, *RecAug* 25 (1991) 174, in his *récapitulatif des événements* for 405, makes no mention of Innoc. *Ep.* 7, even though he had discussed it in his article. *Ep.* 11, the second of John's letters to Innocent, is mentioned under 406. *Ep.* 12, as noted, makes no appearance in his article.

John to have been condemned in absentia.²⁹ In his second letter to Theophilus, Innocent is reported to have reproved him for his rash judgment, and to have indicated that he, Innocent, would engage in prayer and fasting to repair the breach that had occurred in ecclesial unity (*V. Chrys.* 3.8–21). In the letter that Palladius reproduced or summarized (ἦν δὲ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ἡ δόναμις αὕτη), what we find is Innocent reaffirming his bonds of communion with both bishops, asserting his belief that the decision was childish (παγνιωδῶς), offering anew an invitation to Theophilus to meet with a synod and have his case against John decided in accordance with the canons of the council of Nicaea, and guaranteeing Theophilus' safety at such a gathering (3.21–33).

News then came to Innocent from John's synod, in a letter brought by Theotecnus the presbyter, that John had been driven from Constantinople a second time by force and exiled to Cucusus, and that the church had been burned (3.34–39). Delmaire dates this to the end of July or a little earlier.³⁰ In response Innocent wrote letters of communion to be carried by Theotecnus both to John and to the twenty-five bishops who had written to him and (again, we depend upon Palladius' account) urged them to be patient because of his inability to do much for fear of someone who could be harmful to him (3.40–43).

After this came the visits to Rome of the various Eastern clergy in the spring of 405, including Germanus and Cassianus, whom Innocent sent back to Constantinople with *Epistula* 7. In this letter Innocent urged the clergy and people of the Eastern capital to continue in the patience they had mentioned in their

²⁹ Delmaire, *RecAug* 25 (1991) 80–81, dates this visit to Rome to May–June 404 and Innocent's second letter to Theophilus to the end of July or the beginning of August.

³⁰ Delmaire, *RecAug* 25 (1991) 81. In that case, however, since he establishes that John did not arrive in Cucusus until the end of August (76, 173), either Theotecnus did not arrive quite so early or, more probably, his information was only that John had gone into a second exile or was heading to Cucusus rather than was in Cucusus.

letter.³¹ He noted that John had not been tried properly and that the bishop who replaced him could not really be a bishop;³² he noted further that John should be tried according to the canons of Nicaea and not according to the canons composed by heretics, which had been condemned at Serdica.³³ Finally, Innocent indicated, as mentioned above, his belief that a synod needed to be called and that he was working at bringing that about.³⁴

After this Innocent's involvement took on a new form as he shifted gears. He could no longer patiently wait and hope that Theophilus would be cowed into a change of heart by his writing to him informing him of his support, as bishop of Rome, for the bishop of Constantinople. A more interventionist approach was devised. Rather than talking about a synod, Innocent began writing to Honorius to make that a reality.³⁵ According to Palladius, Honorius ordered the Italian bishops to meet, which they did, and they, in their turn, asked the emperor to write to Arcadius, his imperial sibling in the East, urging that a synod of Eastern and Western bishops be held in Thessalonica. This the emperor did, and Palladius preserved that letter.³⁶ The Italian synod had also concluded that John ought

³¹ *Ep.* 7.1 (*PL* 20.502–504 = *PG* 52.537–538 = *Soz.* 8.26.8–9 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1032]).

³² *Ep.* 7.2 (*PL* 20.504 = *PG* 52.537–538 = *Soz.* 8.26.11–13 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1033]).

³³ *Ep.* 7.3 (*PL* 20.504–506 = *PG* 52.537–538 = *Soz.* 8.26.14–16 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1032–1033]). Pallad. *V.Chrys.* 9.16–32 indicated that Theophilus had appealed to the canons of the synod of Antioch in 341, which declared that anyone taking repossession of his church without synodal approval was doing so illegally. These canons had been condemned by the synod of Serdica in 343.

³⁴ *Ep.* 7.4 (*PL* 20.506–508 = *PG* 52.537–538 = *Soz.* 8.26.17–19 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1033]).

³⁵ As I indicated above, this is one of the reasons why I do not consider that Innocent wrote *Ep.* 7 after the synod had been called. While Innocent called for the synod, it was the emperor who called the synod. See Émilienne Demougeot, “À propos des interventions du pape Innocent I^{er} dans la politique séculière,” *RHist* 212 (1954) 23–38, at 26–30.

³⁶ Pallad. *V.Chrys.* 3.133–157 (= *Innoc. Ep.* 9 [*PL* 20.512]).

to be restored to his church in order that he could be tried (and, they hoped, found innocent) as bishop and not have an excuse not to attend because of his deposition (*V. Chrys.* 4.9–13).

Epistula 12 within Innocent's responses

The best way to date *Epistula 12* would be to determine where its contents best match the variety of concerns and suggestions we know from elsewhere that Innocent had expressed, as described above.

Epistula 12 does not mention the points that Palladius asserted were in the first letter Innocent wrote to John after receiving John's first letter, about being in communion with both metropolitan bishops and the need for an ecumenical synod that would exclude friend and foe alike. This is sufficient to exclude equating these two letters.

Cyriacus the deacon, the one who along with the others had brought John's letter to Innocent that is now in chapter 2 of Palladius' *Dialogus*, is mentioned in *Epistula 12*. Yet it does not say that it was Cyriacus who was bearing this letter back to John. In fact, Cyriacus had been sent with a different letter elsewhere.³⁷ The comment of Innocent that follows in the letter³⁸ could well suggest that he was sent to Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, John's leading opponent, with either the first or, more likely I think, the second letter to Theophilus, the one that is preserved in Palladius.³⁹ We do not know whether Cyriacus was a frequent visitor to Rome,⁴⁰ but it would make the most sense for Innocent to inform John about Cyriacus' activity close to the event, i.e., soon after John's first letter and then the

³⁷ Innoc. *Ep.* 12 (*PL* 20.514 = *Soz.* 8.26.2 = *PG* 52.537 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1029] = no. 298 Jaffé): τὰ καθήκοντα γράμματα διὰ Κυριακοῦ τοῦ διακόνου ἐξαπέσταλται.

³⁸ ὥστε μὴ πλέον δυνηθῆναι τὴν ὕβριν ἐν τῷ συντριβεῖν, ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν συνειδὸς ἐν τῷ ἐλπίζειν.

³⁹ Pallad. *V. Chrys.* 3.22–33. Of course, the trouble with this is that one would presume that John replied to Theophilus making use of Peter and Martyrius, the two who had brought the letter to Rome in the first place.

⁴⁰ I think the Cyriacus mentioned in *Ep.* 7.4 (*PL* 20.508 = *Soz.* 8.26.19 = *PG* 52.538) is Cyriacus the bishop of Synnada. Interestingly, Nicephorus Callistus omitted his name in his version of Innocent's letter.

minutes of the Synod of the Oak had been received in Rome.

The next time Innocent wrote to John, at least according to Palladius, was after Theotecnus came to Rome. Palladius (3.40–43) does not tell us what was in the second letter that Innocent sent to John, borne back to Constantinople by Theotecnus, except that it was a letter of communion with John. The other letter that Theotecnus carried was to those in communion with John. They might possibly be identified with the twenty-five bishops who had written to Innocent in the first place. There is nothing here in what Palladius wrote, as I have pointed out, to suggest that this latter was a letter to the clergy and people of Constantinople. The comments Palladius does offer seem to apply more to the letter to the group of bishops than to the one sent to John. I have commented already that I do not believe that there is anything concrete in *Epistula* 12 to indicate, as fully as Brändle and Coleman-Norton believe, that Innocent felt himself helpless with regard to John.⁴¹ What we do find Palladius telling us is that in the letter sent to this group (not in the letter sent to John himself) Innocent expressed his frustration at not being able to help and his hope that they would be patient as he himself was.

I would urge that we should reckon *Epistula* 12 to be the other letter—the one to John—that Theotecnus carried back to the East. There is a note of optimism in this letter that things would be resolved satisfactorily. Such optimism is more to be expected earlier rather than later during John's final exile.

The problem with identifying *Epistula* 12 with the letter taken back to Constantinople by Theotecnus is that the optimism that seems to be in Innocent's letter to John about a happy resolution does not seem to be there in what Palladius tells us was in Innocent's other letter, the one to those in communion with John, where he lamented that he could do little for the

⁴¹ One could not even argue, I think, that Innocent's urging John to be patient was because he could do nothing. What we find in *Ep.* 12 is Innocent informing John that he has sent the appropriate letter, which I think is the one reproduced in Palladius, with Cyriacus. The implication, as I see it, is that Innocent believed that his actions would soon have the desired effect. He was urging patience not because he was impotent but because the process, which he hoped would lead to resolution, took time.

deposed bishop. Yet perhaps this contrast is not so striking if we think that the bishop of Rome either was not being as candid with John as he was with the others about his pessimism or was overstating his caution to the others.

Of course, what one would like to see in *Epistula* 12 as we have it now is some reference to John's expulsion from Constantinople or the burning of the church, the items of news that Theotecnus had brought to Rome. Certainly Innocent's references to πάντα τὰ ἀδίκως συμπίπτοντα and the need for endurance could well be taken as a reference to John being sent into exile.⁴²

After that we have no more information of any letters between John and Innocent. As we know from the two letters in Sozomen, Palladius was not exhaustive in detailing all the correspondence between these two bishops, so there may well have been more that he has not reported.

What about Sozomen's position that *Epistula* 12 was sent at the same time as *Epistula* 7, in October, presumably with Germanus and Cassianus?⁴³ Certainly what Palladius reports about the letter sent from the clergy of Constantinople (3.83–86) matches what Innocent wrote back to the Eastern capital in *Epistula* 7. However, Palladius did not mention that Innocent wrote a letter for John, which they took back.⁴⁴ *Epistula* 7 expresses Innocent's frustration that his solution—the ecumenical synod—was taking such a long time coming, a sentiment that we do not find in *Epistula* 12. Even if Innocent had not wanted to depress John by sharing his frustration, one would expect him at least to mention to John, if he wrote to him at this time, something about the efforts he was making in having a synod convoked. One would also expect him to have informed John

⁴² Innoc. *Ep.* 12 (*PL* 20.514 = *PG* 52.537 = Soz. 8.26.3 = Nicephorus Call. 13.32 [*PG* 146.1032]).

⁴³ We have already noted the impossibility of this date for *Ep.* 7.

⁴⁴ For that matter, Palladius has no information that Germanus and Cassianus took back a letter to the clergy of Constantinople, which *Ep.* 7 clearly is. Besides, Palladius might not have been thorough in listing all such correspondence between the two capitals. So this first argument of mine is not particularly strong.

that the inventory compiled by Germanus and Cassianus had cleared him of any charges of misappropriation. *Epistula* 12 is silent on this matter too. Further, by the time the presbyter and deacon had arrived in Rome, they were traversing a well-used route. More than half a dozen bishops had put their case to the bishop of Rome, most supporting John. Again, one would think that some of this would be included in a letter to John, by way of encouragement. Yet again, there is silence. The brevity of *Epistula* 12—presuming that whole sections of it have not been lost, which is admittedly possibly a dangerous presumption to make—is perhaps more to be expected if the letter were written in July 404, when John was just setting out on his journey into exile, than in the spring of 405, by which time he had been in Cucusus for several months.⁴⁵ Lastly, we have to question how Sozomen came to associate *Epistula* 7 and 12 together. While his information about the former appears to be accurate, perhaps, finding the two letters together in a collection, he came to the conclusion himself that they must have both been sent at the same time. In other words there might not have been anything in Sozomen's source that claimed the two letters belonged together and it was only his assumption that they did.

From spring 405 onwards Innocent began his campaign to motivate Honorius into getting his brother to agree to call an ecumenical synod. We may note in passing that the bishop of Rome did not feel himself to be in a position to write directly to the Eastern emperor. Many things that seemed positive for John's cause were occurring: Honorius agreed to get involved, he order an Italian episcopal synod to meet, the synod wrote back to Honorius, the emperor wrote to his brother, and a delegation of Western clergy set off for the East.⁴⁶ If *Epistula* 12 had been written during this time one would expect some information to be forthcoming from the bishop of Rome to

⁴⁵ See Kelly, *Golden Mouth* 255–257.

⁴⁶ Whether or not Innocent had the authority to convoke a synod of Italian bishops is a moot point. What I think we find here is the bishop planting the idea of a synod in the emperor's mind so that, in having him call for the synod, he would be much more committed to pursuing the matter with his imperial brother.

encourage his exiled colleague, but there is none.

Again in passing, we may note that ever since the imperial interest in Christianity from the time of Constantine, the convoking of inter-provincial episcopal synods (Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople in 381) had been an imperial prerogative. Given how the West had been practically excluded from that of 381, for there to be a synod of both Western and Eastern bishops under a divided empire, such as existed after the death of Theodosius in 395, there would need to be the involvement of both emperors.

Could *Epistula* 12 be Innocent's response to *Epistula* 11, the one from John written in spring 406, during his third year of exile? If all Innocent's efforts to secure an ecumenical synod had by now failed, could it not be said that the only thing the Roman pontiff had left to offer his exiled counterpart were thoughts of forbearance? The reference to Cyriacus, the one very concrete detail in the letter, however, still inclines me to prefer a date close to Cyriacus' known visit to Rome in the middle of 404.

Conclusion

For these reasons I am suggesting that Sozomen was mistaken in dating *Epistula* 12 from Innocent to John to October 404. The letter is certainly not to be dated to 406 or 407, nor is it to be thought of as one of the two letters Innocent sent to John and Theophilus after he had received John's lengthy appeal for help. Again, it does not seem to fit into 405 when Innocent's desires for an ecumenical synod seemed to be becoming a reality. I believe that it is best understood as the letter, mentioned by Palladius, that Theotecnus carried back to the East in July or August 404 after his visit to Rome. Considering John's second exile from Innocent's perspective helps us understand, I believe, the change in strategy that we find in the West in responding to this event. The initial one, an intra-episcopal one, was for Innocent to write to Theophilus, hoping that the prestige of the Roman church as it supported John would be sufficient for the bishop of Alexandria to reconsider his actions. The second strategy, one that involved imperial authority, was pursued when the first failed. Innocent's *Epistula* 12 to John helps us appreciate how slow decision-making was

in a Christianity based on episcopal collegiality and interminable letter writing, and how much patience was required.⁴⁷

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⁴⁷ I am grateful for the comments provided by my colleague, Dr. Wendy Mayer, who read a draft of this article.