

John Chrysostom in Flight

For . . . if you speak of exile, you mention that which only involves a change of country and the sight of many cities, or if you speak of confiscation of goods, you mention what is only freedom and emancipation from care.

—JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *LETTER TO OLYMPIAS*¹

Alliances in the late fourth century were easily made and almost as easily broken. As was the case for Gregory of Nazianzus, with whom you associated often determined your status as an orthodox or heretical bishop. Gregory's use of panegyric to frame both himself and his associates as orthodox was one approach to remembering an orthodoxy firmly in place. John Chrysostom's many relationships—both friendly and hostile—were equally important for the making (or the unmaking) of the orthodox bishop. This bishop of Constantinople produced an expansive epistolary campaign, which was integral to his life as an exile and will be the focus of this chapter. Although these letters did not secure his return during his lifetime, they provide us with a different vision of exile than what we have seen so far—and one that would later cause a great deal of concern for his biographers.

Like many of the fleeing bishops we have examined, John Chrysostom (ca. 349–407) had a tumultuous episcopal career. He was exiled twice from Constantinople and died during his second expulsion. But John was not a man of any one city. First as an influential presbyter of Antioch and then as the bishop of Constantinople, he is often noted more for his skills as an orator—his “golden mouth”—than for his particular location. In many ways, this wandering man embodies the transient nature of the late antique bishop. And it is this identity that John used to interpret his identity as an exile. Unlike Athanasius of Alexandria or Gregory of Nazianzus, John does not turn only to saints who fled into the desert or to martyrs of imperial persecution as his literary guides. He also appeals to classical models of exile to create his own exilic discourse. In a curious move, one we have not explored before, this discourse evolves as his identity as an exile appears to become a permanent one.

1. John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 9. Edition: SC 13. Translation: *NPNF1* 9 (with some slight alterations).

John's first exile, and even the earlier years of his second exile, are dependent upon themes of return. But with each new departure, John alters his episcopal identity and the spaces from which he finds himself absent. As his position shifts, so do his descriptions and understandings of exile and its relationship to holy spaces. Even though John was a bishop on the move, he used spatial rhetoric to find and locate orthodoxy. We will begin this chapter, therefore, by looking at how John envisions model cities of orthodoxy, which include his hometown of Antioch and that noble city, Constantinople. By assessing his treatment of another bishop in flight, Meletius of Antioch, we see how John's construction of the sanctity of these cities is created beyond their walls. As we will see, John explores this process of boundary making by examining the life and legacy of his own wandering hero, whose episcopal authority is reaffirmed by his legacy of flight.

We will then turn to consider how John interprets his own experience of flight, which is first evident in his letters to the bishop of Rome, Innocent I (*Ep.* 7 and *Ep.* 41).² Then we will examine the evolution of the exilic discourse in his extensive literary corpus composed during the early stages of his second exile. As we will come to see, John's exilic discourse shifts and changes to meet the needs of a man intent on return. Finally, we will investigate two treatises composed at the end of his life that sum up John's resolution as a permanent exile. Like his hero Meletius, John resigns himself to the fate that he will not return—a detail that will remain a damning one.

A MAN IN FLIGHT: JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

John Chrysostom was born in Antioch around 349.³ Most scholars agree that John's mother was a Christian and his father a non-Christian civil servant. Due to a relative amount of material affluence, John was well educated and famously schooled by the rhetorician Libanius.⁴ John was recruited and then baptized by the

2. Letters 1 and 2 to Innocent I are found in Palladius, *Dia.* 2. Both Wendy Mayer and Geoffrey Dunn refer to the collection of John's letters to Innocent as *Epistles* 7 and 41, respectively. Translation in consultation with Dunn's republished translations, which were made in preparation for CCSL and are available on Wendy Mayer's webpage: www.academia.edu/5811500/Translation_Letter_1_to_Innocent_bishop_of_Rome and www.academia.edu/5811509/Translation_Letter_2_to_Innocent_bishop_of_Rome. Edition: SC 342, 68–95. *Epistle* 7 (*Letter to Innocent I*) is John's first letter to Innocent I, while *Ep.* 41 is a follow-up message. These letters are sometimes referenced as *Epistles* 1 and 2, respectively, but I follow the new numbering of the letter collection by Dunn, found in his "Date of Innocent I's *Epistula* 12."

3. The most extensive biography of John Chrysostom is still J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998). Many scholars have supplemented and critiqued Kelly's contribution, but it still sets the standard. The Centre for Early Christian Studies hosts an extensively curated (and growing) bibliography that is invaluable to Chrysostom scholars, www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysostombibliography.html.

4. For a review of Libanius's school, see R. Criore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). For a recent discussion of his so-called religious identity

then-contested bishop Meletius. He appears to have dedicated his life to austere ascetic discipline, possibly under the auspices of two significant spiritual teachers, Diodore and Carterius. Eventually, he was ordained a priest by Meletius's successor, Flavian, and continued to develop his pastoral skills and responsibilities in Antioch, which soon gained him a reputation. John was elected bishop of Constantinople in October–November 397 and, after a short tenure, was sent into exile for the first time in September–October 403.⁵ His second and final expulsion from Constantinople took place on the June 20, 404, and he died while in exile in September 407.

Despite the large amount of evidence, there was no clear and discernible cause for John's two exiles. As was the case with Athanasius, several charges were made against him, but the ultimate reason for his exile remains a mystery. Nevertheless, it is evident that the events leading up to John's two exiles were driven by his controversial election as bishop of Constantinople (ca. October 397). After the death of his predecessor, the bishop Nectarius, many vied for the position as the ruling patriarch of Constantinople. John was said to have been "secretly" elected by the young emperor Arcadius—or, as J. N. D. Kelly insists, appointed under the influence of Eutropius, whom Sozomen states was an infamous eunuch and superintendent to the imperial sacred bedchamber.⁶ Yet, as Wendy Mayer has aptly pointed out, John's election was hardly incidental; it was steeped in a long history of conciliar politics.⁷ Tensions arose once it was clear that John would remain actively involved in Antiochene politics upon his election. For example, he proved to be an avid supporter of the Meletian faction in Antioch under the leadership of bishop Flavian.

The fact that one of John's first acts is to use the status accorded by the see to approach Rome to secure approval of Flavian's election as bishop of Antioch and therefore approval of the claim by the faction to which John was loyal to be the legitimate orthodox Nicene church in that city, confirms his partisan interests in the affairs of the Meletian-Nicene faction at Antioch and suggests that his election was indeed no accident.⁸

in relationship to John, see Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

5. See Claudia Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus in Konstantinopel (398–404). Weltsicht und Wirken eines Bischofs in der Hauptstadt des Oströmischen Reiches*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2002), 327–53. Tiersch reconfirms that John's first exile must have taken place between September and October 403 and discusses arguments for this date, as well as the reasons behind his exile.

6. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 105–6. Claudian composes a scathing poem about Eutropius's questionable conduct in *Against Eutropius*. For this, and for a description of Eutropius's treatment in non-Christian texts, see Jacqueline Long, *Claudian's In Eutropium: Or, How, When, and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

7. Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Bishop: The View from Antioch," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55, no. 3 (2004): 455–66.

8. *Ibid.*, 459. For a more detailed argument for why the election of Flavian was so controversial as well as the Antiochene politics that secured John's election, see in particular *ibid.*, 460–62. I will address this controversy in more detail in chapter 6.

The history behind this controversial endorsement linked Constantinople to Alexandria through that long-standing rivalry in Antioch. The support of this particular faction would ensure problems with Alexandria, as we saw in the previous chapter, when Gregory of Nazianzus's clash with Timothy of Alexandria eventually resulted in his flight from Constantinople. John's ongoing involvement in the battle for control of Antioch, and Asia Minor more broadly, earned him the reputation as a meddling bishop and a threat to ecclesial autonomy.

HOW TO CONSTRUCT A MODEL CITY: ANTIOCH

To understand why John was an important bridge in pro-Nicene Christian memory, it is helpful to briefly revisit the complex Antiochene politics that gave way to his own entrance into Christianity.⁹ In the aftermath of the Nicene council, Eustathius, then bishop of Antioch, was exiled, as early as 326 or as late as 331.¹⁰ Again, it is difficult to reconstruct why or even how a given bishop was expelled from his see. According to Athanasius, Eustathius was exiled for insulting the emperor Constantine's mother (Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 4.1), although later ecclesiastical historians would argue that it was for his heretical leaning or even his insatiable sexual appetite. The ultimate cause remains unknown.¹¹ What we do know is that Eustathius's exile ushered in a period of upheavals that placed Antioch at the center of Nicene politics and intense theological debates.

Soon after Eustathius's departure, he was replaced by the first of more than a few anti-Nicene bishops in Antioch. It appears that the anti-Nicene faction had a strong hold on the episcopal office until Eudoxius departed for Constantinople in 360. The fallout that ensued after his promotion was due in no small part to the differing theological as well as political parties represented in and around Antioch. This fight over the episcopacy resulted in at least three (and briefly four) Christian factions crossing the theological spectrum of the Trinitarian controversy. We will pay attention to the battle that raged after Eudoxius's move to Constantinople, because it was a move that would be replicated by John (equally controversially), and because it is significant for understanding his exilic discourse (Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.23). Eudoxius's advancement left the post in Antioch up for grabs and paved the way for an ongoing competition between bishops for control. Meletius

9. For a full assessment of this controversy, see Thomas Karmann, *Meletius von Antiochien. Studien zur Geschichte des trinitätstheologischen Streits in den Jahren 360–364 n. Chr.*, RST 68 (New York: Lang, 2009); and Karmann, "Johannes Chrysostomus unter der Neunäzismus. Eine Spurensuche in ausgewählten Predigten des antiochenischen Presbyters," *SacEr* 51 (2012): 79–108.

10. For a review of current debates on the dating of his exile, see Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy 325–345* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

11. Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.24, states that Eustathius was exiled for his Sabellianist teachings, while Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.20–21, cites an accusation of adultery. Edition: L. Parmentier, F. Scheidweiler, and G.C. Hansen, *Theodoretus Cyri, Kirchengeschichte*, 3rd ed., GCS 19 (Berlin 1998). Translation: *NPNF2* 3.

was elected in Eudoxius's stead but was unable to hold onto his position for more than a few months, possibly an even shorter period of time than that. He was replaced by Euzoius, who was a *homoian* favorite. With Constantius's death and Julian's recall of all Christian exiles in 361, chaos ensued as Meletius returned. There were now two bishops of Antioch. A third was soon added to the mix with the appointment of Paulinus, the favored candidate of the Athanasian party out of Alexandria. These three bishops embodied, at least in hindsight, the fallout of Nicene politics.¹² For example, Euzoius was remembered as a staunch anti-Nicene bishop, and Paulinus firm in his pro-Nicene position.¹³ Meletius, however, occupies a much more ambiguous position within Christian memory.

According to Theodoret, a fifth-century ecclesiastical historian, Meletius was elected by an anti-Nicene group "in the hope of establishing their impiety" (Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.27).¹⁴ Little did this heretical faction know, according to this same pro-Nicene historian and defender of Meletius, "the maintainers of apostolic doctrine, who were perfectly well aware of the soundness of the great Meletius." At least from Theodoret's point of view, it appears that the true orthodox community had a different plan in mind for Meletius. We will return to this perspective in chapter 6. For now, it is important to note that Meletius's identity as an orthodox bishop was questionable at best from the perspective of fifth-century pro-Nicene historians, and different accounts will remember the end of his life in starkly different ways.

As we know by now, the battle over Antioch was not easily resolved and would be a source of contention until 415, when it appears the Meletian party won the day. Yet Meletius remained at the center of this conflict and was frequently painted as a victim. Much like Athanasius, he was exiled multiple times, in 360, 364, and 369. His critics would point to his exiles as evidence of his guilt, and his entire episcopacy appeared to be defined by his displacement. Socrates, for example, would question Meletius's claim to the episcopal see after Paulinus's election. He noted that Meletius's status as an exile undermined his claim and was careful to note that Paulinus was never forced to flee his post (Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 5.5).

Before his final expulsion, sometime around 369, Meletius was credited with bringing John Chrysostom into the Christian fold.¹⁵ But what flavor of Christianity John would adopt was left to the ecclesiastical historians to determine, well after the fact. His ongoing commitment to Meletius remained shrouded in controversy both during his lifetime and after his death. This was made most clear in a text

12. A fourth man, Vitalis, was elected in 375.

13. After Euzoius died, he was replaced by Apollinarius, who stood in as the Arian representative.

14. For a detailed discussion on Theodoret's role in how pro-Nicene historians will remember Antioch see chapters 5 and 6.

15. Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* 5.2, would argue that Meletius did not die as an exile but returned after the death of Valens (378).

written while he was still in Antioch, in which John praises his mentor. Before we turn to John's career as an exile and his epistolary efforts to construct and defend his orthodoxy, we will begin by examining his mentor's identity as a fleeing bishop. John's hagiographical reflection in *On St. Meletius*, much like Gregory's funeral orations, constructs the controversial bishop as a saint worthy of praise, not a man who should be condemned. It will quickly become clear why. This text ushers us into John's exilic discourse, which would shape the path he followed in his mentor's fleeing footsteps.

BISHOPS WHO DIE IN FLIGHT: MELETIUS OF ANTIOCH

John Chrysostom composed the sermon *On St. Meletius* while still in Antioch, five years after the famed Council of Constantinople in 380 and Meletius's death.¹⁶ The homily directly addresses Meletius's first exile and, more importantly, his death in Constantinople. John was not the only pro-Nicene author to praise Meletius after his death. Gregory of Nyssa also composed a funeral oration for the bishop.¹⁷ Both authors state that Meletius died in Constantinople at the ecumenical council, thus proving his legitimacy as a pro-Nicene supporter and not an Arian in disguise. Despite the strong contingency in Antioch that supported Paulinus, later historians would take their cues from both John and Gregory. Nevertheless, Meletius remained a controversial figure who never fully escaped his Arian past precisely because he posed a direct threat to Alexandrian politics in and around Antioch. By threatening Alexandria, Meletius's legacy had a chance to undermine Athanasius's legacy as well.

On St. Meletius is broken into four sections. The first addresses the strong support for Meletius in Antioch, which seems only to have increased after his death. John then discusses Meletius's difficult history as a perpetual exile, which will be our primary focus here, along with the third section, which addresses Meletius's activity in Constantinople. The sermon ends with John praising the bishop's virtuous activity and affirming the Antiochene community's (as well as his own) ongoing adoration of their deceased leader.

When addressing Meletius's exile and the Meletian faction mourning his loss, John states, "And God yielded, wanting to show both that man's virtue and your courage" (*Melet.* 4).¹⁸ His exile was not only for the saint's benefit but also for the benefit of the Antiochene community:

16. John Chrysostom, *Melet.* Edition: PG 50.515–20. Translation: Wendy Mayer, *The Cult of the Saints: St. John Chrysostom* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 43–44, unless otherwise noted.

17. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Mel.*; Wendy Mayer, "Cathedral Church of Cathedral Churches?" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 66 (2000): 631–56.

18. We might recall that Cicero makes a similar claim in *De re publica*. See the introduction for a more detailed description of classical motifs.

For when he arrived [in Antioch], like Moses in Egypt, and freed the city from heretical error and, by cutting off from the rest of the body the limb that was festering and in an incurable state, brought back uncontaminated health to the majority of the church, the enemies of truth couldn't endure the correction and, stirring up the emperor of the time, expelled him from the city, hoping by this to subvert the truth and overturn the correction of events. (*Melet.* 4)

The first thing to note is what John purposefully leaves out. At no point does he reference Meletius's initial election from a heretical community, which later historians like Theodoret will be forced to address. Instead, he refers to Meletius's election as a celebratory experience and a correction to the unnamed heretical divisions present in Antioch. Meletius not only freed the Antiochene community but also began to heal them from heretical error. In this text, Meletius's orthodoxy is not in question. Instead, John affirms the saint's orthodoxy by yet again drawing our attention to his exile. He was cast out, John argues, because of his mission. His exile was then proof of his persecution, now a familiar theme.

The reaction to Meletius's expulsion was swift and violent. John insists that the city was so enraged by the decision that they were willing, even desperate enough, to resort to violence. Rocks and stones were thrown at the prefect whose job it was to remove Meletius from the city. Meletius alone was able to protect the prefect and gently correct the grieving city. He was a true leader, John argues, who not only brought healing but also prevented the city from descending into chaos. His reach was so great and his hold over Antioch so steady that even his absence was no deterrent for his continued influence over Antioch's people. In fact, John describes Meletius as carrying the city with him into exile: "And he took the entire city with him when he went off to Armenia" (*Melet.* 5). The bond between the city and its bishop was so strong that it transcended space and time: "For, although you were situated here and circumscribed by the city, by love's spirit, you were lifted up to Armenia day after day and saw his holy face and heard his most pleasurable and blessed voice, and so came back again" (*Melet.* 5). This temporary displacement, Meletius's first exile, was not actually a separation but a chance to strengthen the bond between bishop and city in a way that no physical separation could ever sever.

This first exile, although brief—a mere thirty days, according to John—ended in joyous celebration. Meletius's triumphant return, not unlike Athanasius's, as described by Gregory of Nazianzus, was met with great fanfare. Curiously, John does not mention Meletius's subsequent career as an exile or his establishment of a church just beyond the Antiochene walls. Other writers note that Meletius was expelled up to two more times after this initial removal, a detail with which John would have been intimately acquainted and which he even mentions in a later text on the martyr Babylas. In this text, John chooses to turn to the Council of Constantinople and omits the series of expulsions that appeared to undermine his central message. This intentional omission is replaced with John's insistence that the community went with him, even into exile, and appeared to return daily, as the quote above insists.

John states that the Christian community in Constantinople, where all the churches were summoned, was given the opportunity to witness Meletius's virtue first hand. It is worth noting that it is in Constantinople that Meletius died. What John leaves out is that Meletius was not present in Constantinople as the unquestioned representative of Antioch. At this point, Paulinus appeared to have gained significant popularity, and Meletius's orthodoxy also may have been still doubted, due to the nature of his election by an anti-Nicene faction. To avoid addressing these more difficult issues, John decides to emphasize why Meletius had to die in Constantinople and not Antioch. He assures his readers that Meletius's death spared the city the full weight of grief, which would have shaken it to its very foundations. That his death occurred well beyond the reaches of his flock was a divine act of mercy and, we soon learn, instructional as well.

Meletius died without a firm grip on his episcopal position back in Antioch. If we follow Gregory's logic, the triumphant return justifies the exile. Meletius's death outside of Antioch was clearly troubling for John, especially when Meletius's legacy remained so uncertain. John takes full advantage of Meletius's history of displacement. Exile, as we now know, served as a sign of persecution, an idea John is all too happy to exploit. The efficacy of the return, however, was paramount to ensuring that the bishop's persecution was not ill-founded or construed as proof of guilt, which explains why John places great emphasis on Meletius's initial triumphant return. Yet Meletius's career as an exile did not end there. From John's perspective, Meletius had to die in Constantinople not as a failed exile but as the true bishop of Antioch. His ongoing support of Meletius's successor, Flavian, makes this point all the more significant and explains why John's defenders would go to great lengths to make similar claims, even if they admit that Meletius's election was questionable. We will pick up Meletius's legacy within the pro-Nicene narrative in greater detail in chapter 6. For now, it is enough to note that John was well aware of how exile could easily slip into an admission of guilt, and he did his best to cover this up.

Christian flight reread as exile is an effective way to justify a bishop's displacement. Biblical examples of fleeing men were a significant part of this reasoning, as we saw in Athanasius's *Defense of His Flight*. John also made use of this literary strategy when he compared Meletius's experience of flight to the biblical narrative of the three boys who were tried by the fire while in exile (Dan 3:1–30). John remarks:

And so, at that time, he [Meletius], too, was present there [in Constantinople]. And, just as in the case of the three boys, when they were about to be heralded and crowned, they extinguished the fire's force, trampled on the tyrant's pride, put on trial every form of impiety, and had the entire world watching them as spectators (for although the satraps from all over the world and consuls and prefects had been summoned for another reason, they became spectators of those athletes), this is how it turned out, too, on that occasion, with the result that the theater became magnificent

for that blessed man. Summoned for another reason, *the bishops who administer the churches all over the world were in attendance and watched that holy man.* (Melet. 7, emphasis mine)

Particularly in that last statement, John challenges all who knew Meletius as a fleeing bishop and thus doubted his orthodoxy. While he may have died outside of Antioch—a space on which he only ever had a tenuous hold—his death proved instructive. Meletius, like those three youths, was tried and his virtue confirmed outside his homeland. If we follow John's earlier point that the city was carried into exile along with Meletius, his identity as an exile would hardly matter. It is not the city that makes the man, but the man who makes the city—even when he is outside its walls. John concludes that any who still question Meletius's legitimacy are no better than that tyrant who threw the youths into the fire. Meletius's status as the true bishop of Antioch remained intact. He was a holy man, found in a foreign land and tried by fire. His death in Constantinople serves as proof of his legitimacy. The fact that the most holy council members in that most holy city bore witness to this trial further affirms Meletius's orthodox identity. This is not a story of failure, John insists. It is a story of unwavering success, due in no small part to Meletius's death in Constantinople.

HOW NOT TO FLEE: THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA

The city, as a site of Christian authority, was an important and consistent theme in John's literary life. Peter Brown proclaimed that John's golden tongue sounded the death knell of the ancient city, but Aileen Hartney thinks the bell may have been rung a bit prematurely.¹⁹ Hartney mined John's many homilies for evidence of how the bishop contributed rhetorically to the changes that took place in the city during this transformative period in antiquity. John's reorganization of city life away from traditional views of civic engagement was no rejection of the city itself. Instead, Hartney insists, John reinterpreted the city as one more site—if not *the* site—for the formation of Christian identity and orthodoxy.

Christine Shepardson provides a careful analysis of John's efforts to control urban space through spatial rhetoric used in his *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*.²⁰ The Antiochene cityscape, in particular, was transformed into a distinctly Christian space by demonizing Jewish and other non-Christian spaces. For example, Shepardson notes how John uses harsh comparisons to create a topophobia

19. See Aileen M. Hartney, *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City* (London: Duckworth, 2004). Hartney pays particular attention to key sermons written by John that help him to articulate the city as a Christian locale and space in which to discover and cultivate an identity.

20. Christine Shepardson, "Controlling Contested Places: John Chrysostom's *Adversus Iudaeos* Homilies and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15, no. 4 (2007): 483–516.

with regard to the space of the synagogue.²¹ He redefines this Jewish space as the mouth of the devil,²² the theater,²³ or the den of thieves and the inn of prostitutes.²⁴ For our purposes here, Shepardson notes how this logic extends beyond the synagogue to any space that appears questionable, such as Jewish festivals or sacred spaces, like the healing shrine found in the cave of Matrona in neighboring Daphne. John also applies this rhetoric to pagan spaces, such as the Temple of Apollo.²⁵ Shepardson states, “Through his spatial rhetoric, Chrysostom remapped Antioch (and Daphne), constructing a Christian city and requiring of his congregation ‘orthodox’ Christian behavior to mirror their ‘orthodox’ beliefs.”²⁶ John effectively remaps the Antiochene city into an orthodox space through this spatial rhetoric, which travels with him to Constantinople, much like it did with Meletius.

John’s rhetorical creation of the city while he was in Antioch and Constantinople has been well studied, but little scholarship exists on his use of the city when he found himself outside of its walls. John did not recreate the city in the desert like Athanasius did, but he did articulate for the reader an urban space unlike any other in his letters to Innocent I. In order to accomplish this goal, he built upon the utopian ideals of the city found in his *Homily on Matthew* to express the absolute destruction that results once he is exiled.²⁷ The ideal city, or *politeia*, captures the vision of absolute justice and proper order. There can be no heavenly *politeia* without justice. The bishop’s presence is necessary to maintain order and secure the borders around his city, even if he is just beyond those borders, rather than in the city itself. John’s conflict with another bishop from another powerful city, Alexandria, thus becomes another important point for discussing the evolution of John’s exilic discourse.

John’s link to Antioch was not the only theologically and politically infused urban space that would serve to define and unravel his episcopacy in

21. Shepardson relies on the theory of topophobia to show how John actively instills a sense of fear in the process of demonizing non-Christian spaces. See also Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974).

22. Shepardson, “Controlling Contested Places,” 504.

23. *Ibid.*, 507.

24. *Ibid.*, 509.

25. Christine Shepardson, “The City, a Text: Inscribing Orthodoxy in Antioch’s Landscape” (paper presented at the North American Patristics Conference, Chicago, IL, May 23, 2013).

26. Shepardson, “Controlling Contested Places,” 515.

27. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 12–17. Edition: PG 57,13–58,794. Here we see parallels with the utopian city-state in Plato’s *Republic*. John would maintain that Plato’s republic is “ridiculous,” yet the hierarchical structures set in place by John closely follow those found in Plato’s interpretation. John has much to say about the faults of Plato and other classical philosophers but, in typical patristic fashion, follows Plato’s lead in philosophical discourse. John Chrysostom continues to play with the language of scripture out of Matthew 5:14 (*hymeis este to phōs tou kosmou ou dynatai polis krybēnai epanō orous keimenē*) as a way to redefine Plato’s commonwealth through the use of Christian imagery (*Hom. Matt.* 15,11–12).

Constantinople. In addition to his early controversial ecclesial activity in Antioch, John's polarizing personality, evident in his sermons and openly acknowledged by his biographers, appears to have put him at odds with a variety of powerful individuals outside the city.²⁸ Theophilus of Alexandria was notably involved in ensuring John's expulsion, and this is frequently commented upon by both his ancient and contemporary biographers. Like John, Theophilus is presented as a meddlesome bishop who oversteps his authority by playing party politics within Constantinople. He is frequently criticized for his harsh tactics and political ambition. As Elizabeth Clark highlights, Theophilus's afterlife presents him in a much harsher light than is probably warranted.²⁹ This was due in large part to how John characterized Theophilus's involvement in John's affairs in Constantinople, which are remarked upon in a letter written to the bishop of Rome during his first exile, here referred to as *Letter to Innocent I*. This letter, along with a follow-up exchange, is found embedded and framed by Palladius's text, *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom*.³⁰ Chrysostom scholars have recently noted that John's first letter to Innocent may not accurately represent what he actually wrote to the bishop of Rome.³¹ Mayer observes: "The letter's authenticity is widely accepted, but a degree of suspicion attaches to the relationship between the version that survives and the original, by virtue of the neat correlation between the careful legalism of the arguments presented in the letter in its present form and its publication within a work framed as a piece of judicial rhetoric."³² It appears as if Palladius has taken some liberties with the text to fulfill his own goals, which I highlight in the next

28. While I explore primarily the depiction of John's tenuous relationships with Theophilus and the empress Eudoxia, there were, of course, a variety of other figures who were set against John. One notable figure is Epiphanius of Salamis, whose hostility is noted by both Socrates and Sozomen. Mayer questions this figure's motivations ("John Chrysostom as Bishop," 460–62). See Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.12, 14 and Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.* 8.14.

29. Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 6–10.

30. John's most famous biographer, Palladius of Helenopolis, was born in Galatia. He became a monk in 386 and spent several years in Palestine near the ascetic communities of Melania the Elder and of Rufinus of Aquileia. He would later spend time in Alexandria with Isidore, who was the favored bishop of Theophilus for the Constantinopolitan see before John took the post. (Isidore, like so many others, later fell out of favor with the Alexandrian bishop.) Palladius also spent time in the Nitrian desert, where he became acquainted with the infamous Tall Brothers, and soon traveled further south to become a student of Evagrius of Pontus. He was eventually ordained by Dioscorus and then elected bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia Prima in 400. For a recent detailed biography of Palladius, see Demetrios S. Katos, *Palladius of Helenopolis: The Origenist Advocate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Anne-Marie Malingrey (ed.), *Palladius, Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome*, 2 vols., SC 341–42 (Paris: Paillart, 1988) 2:68–95.

31. For a thorough assessment of this analysis, see Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Crisis Manager: The Years in Constantinople," in *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature: Thematic Studies from the Centre for Early Christian Studies*, ed. D. Sim and P. Allen, LNTS 445 (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 129–43. See also Katos, *Palladius of Helenopolis*, 42–69.

32. Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Crisis Manager," 131.

chapter. What, then, is possible to reconstruct regarding John's construction of the orthodox city? If we place these letters alongside the Meletian hagiography above, a few overlapping themes stand out.

In his first brief letter to Innocent I, John issued a complaint against Theophilus of Alexandria's wrongful involvement in Constantinopolitan affairs, which led to John's present state in exile. He was intent on demonizing the bishop's activity in and around Constantinople, and he came to the conclusion that the Theophilus's involvement was nothing short of an act of war. Almost immediately, Theophilus is described as an outsider and an enemy to the city and its church who illegally invaded the borders of the city.

This text asks us to reimagine John inside the borders of the city, even though he is writing during his first exile. He begins by lauding the city's glorious past as "the great city Constantinople" (*tēs megalēs Kōnstantinoupoleōs*). This brief indulgence in nostalgia sets up his readers for what will inevitably be its destruction. He then mournfully states that Innocent has no doubt heard of the "lawlessness" (*paranomian*) that the Constantinopolitans (and he) have had to endure.

Next John appeals to the natural alliance forged between Constantinople and Rome. He appears to be playing on Constantinople's history as the second Rome and may even be appealing to earlier documents that affirm this connection. The city is cited as a "new Rome" in canon 3, drafted at the Council of Constantinople in 381: "The bishop of Constantinople shall have the prerogatives of honor after the bishop of Rome through its being New Rome."³³ John uses this link repeatedly to unsettle the borders around Rome. By shaking Constantinople's walls, he hopes to provoke a response from Rome. These presumed twin pillars of orthodoxy, he argues, must join their efforts to defend themselves against those threatening to invade their cities and supplant their positions of power.

As he constructs this alliance, John simultaneously makes it clear that a rivalry exists between this new Rome and Alexandria and, therefore, between their bishops. While Innocent is a confidant and a like-minded citizen of Rome, John marks Theophilus as an outsider, and a jealous one at that. To make his case, John states that Theophilus completely undermines the laws of the fathers (*tous nomous tōn paterōn*) that dictate appropriate behavior toward fellow bishops. He goes against "the laws and the canons and all regular procedure" set out at both the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, and his behavior has largely to do with why he arrived in Constantinople in the first place. John argues that the Alexandrian bishop was

33. Translation: Neil McLynn, "Two Romes, Beacons of the Whole World: Canonizing Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 345. McLynn resists the presumption that this canon may have been set in an effort to dissuade the overreaching influences of Alexandria as well as promote the standing of Constantinople as the capital chosen by Theodosius as a beacon of orthodoxy. That said, the letter does appear to note a standing rivalry between the two cities.

initially summoned by the pious emperor (*ho eusebestatos basileus*) to answer for charges of misconduct. Although John does not elucidate the charges here, he is presumably referring to Theophilus's foul treatment of the Nitrian monks, who were expelled from Egypt at the early stages of the Origenist controversy.

As the Origenist controversy began to heat up, and Theophilus started to feel pressure from his Jerusalem counterparts, he confronted the Nitrian monks to correct their theological leanings. The scene quickly turned violent. Theophilus was repeatedly noted for his irascible temper, a detail mentioned by several biographers. After refusing Theophilus's entreaties to curb their heretical ways, the so-called Tall Brothers were reportedly beaten by the bishop and chased out of Egypt. They fled to more friendly allies across the empire and made their way to Constantinople. They were taken in by both the empress Eudoxia and John Chrysostom upon their arrival.

John only alludes to the aftermath of this controversy, but he does stress that Theophilus was commanded to come to Constantinople to account for his behavior, and to come alone. He was called as a defendant, not an equal. Theophilus ignored even this simple request. Instead of humbly entering that great city, Theophilus brought a contingency of Egyptian supporters as if "to show from the outset that he came for war and conflict" (*Ep.* 7, 2.8).³⁴ His offensive tactic was confirmed by his ongoing militant behavior. The Alexandrian bishop stubbornly rebuffed all of John's attempts at hospitality. He then blatantly refused to reside within the city limits of Constantinople. John states that Theophilus settled outside the polis (*exō pou tēs poleōs*), as if laying siege to Constantinople. While alarmed by these decisions, John still hoped that the two men might come to a civil resolution and bring an end to this uncomfortable affair. When John was further urged by the emperor "to go outside the walls to the place where Theophilus was sojourning, and hear the argument against him" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9), John reluctantly obeyed. He insisted that he never sought to condemn Theophilus, but dutifully left the sanctity of the city to parley with the hostile outsider.

The situation only escalated from there. It appears that Theophilus did not come empty handed but carried with him certain documents that were meant to undermine John's authority and eventually threatened his position. John implies that these documents contained key canons laid out at the council of Nicaea when he says, "For we had too much respect for the laws of our Fathers" (*tous nomous tōn paterōn*) (*Ep.* 7, 2.9). Since we know the outcome of the tense situation, it is believed that John was referring specifically to canons 5 and 6. Canon 5 states:

34. "Synagagōn meth' heautou plēthos Aigyptiōn ouk oligōn paraginetai, kathaper ek prooimiōn deixai boulomenos, hoti eis polemon kai parataxin aphikneitai." Edition: PG 47 2.8. Translation: Robert T. Meyer (ed. and trans.), *Palladius: Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, ACW 45 (New York: Newman, 1985) in consultation with PG 47 2.8-12.

Concerning those, whether of the clergy or the laity, who have been excommunicated, the sentence is to be respected by the bishops of each province, *according to the canon* that forbids those expelled by some to be admitted by others. But let an inquiry be held to ascertain whether anyone has been expelled from the community because of pettiness or quarrelsomeness or any such ill nature on the part of the bishop. (Emphasis mine)³⁵

If we are to believe that these letters include the quoted canon, the message was loud and clear: Theophilus's decision to expel the Nitrian monks was none of John's business. Canon 6 also reaffirmed the Alexandrian bishop's autonomy: "The ancient customs of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis shall be maintained, according to which *the bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places*, since a similar custom exists with reference to the bishop of Rome. Similarly in Antioch and the other provinces *the prerogatives of the churches are to be preserved*" (emphasis mine).³⁶ These letters (*grammata*) Theophilus carries with him lay out the terms of a bishop's rights outside of his episcopacy. All charges made against a bishop, however grievous, were to be contained within the borders of his episcopal see. Ironically, this privilege of autonomy was one that Theophilus would ultimately deny John.

Soon after this confrontation, Theophilus began to gather evidence against John and initiated a campaign to oust the bishop of Constantinople. John states that Theophilus "seduced" the citizens of Constantinople, "as if the church were already widowed, and had no bishop" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9). Theophilus then went a step further, brazenly accusing John of lawlessness and even soliciting the assistance of known enemies of John to further condemn him. The bishop of Constantinople, not Alexandria, was now on trial. Aghast at his boldness, John reminded Innocent that it was Theophilus, not John, who was accused of misconduct.

John insisted that Theophilus's brazen decision to act the judge was completely absurd and evidence of his illegal activity against both John and, more importantly, the church. He continued, "He had not yet received the charges against us, yet from the very beginning he had cut himself off from the church and communion

35. Translation based on the standard Latin text in Giuseppe Alberigo, et al. (eds.), *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta*, critical edition, vol. 1, *The Oecumenical Councils from Nicaea I to Nicaea II (325-787)*, Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). Canons 5 and 6 of the Nicene document of 318 are subsequently violated. Canon 5 continues: "Accordingly, in order that there may be proper opportunity for inquiry into the matter, it is agreed that it would be well for synods to be held each year in each province twice a year, so that these inquiries may be conducted by all the bishops of the province assembled together, and in this way by general agreement those who have offended against their own bishop may be recognized by all to be reasonably excommunicated, until all the bishops in common may decide to pronounce a more lenient sentence on these persons. The synods shall be held at the following times: one before Lent, so that, all pettiness being set aside, the gift offered to God may be unblemished; the second after the season of autumn."

36. This statement might also refer to canon 3 from the council of Constantinople in 381, which I will address shortly.

and prayer, and he was even bribing our accusers. He transferred the clergy and emptied the churches; how could he rightly mount the judge's bench which in no way belonged to him?" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9). Not only is Theophilus's reputation called into question, but his presumption as an outsider exacerbates the situation even more. Theophilus was no member of the Constantinopolitan community—an argument reminiscent of Athanasius's charges against his Cappadocian competitors. By what right, John exclaimed, could Theophilus even begin to presume to judge its citizens or its bishop? The audacity of the situation leads John to exclaim, "Nor was it even fitting for one from Egypt to act as judge in Thrace, considering that he was answerable for charges and was an enemy [*echthron*] and hostile [*polemion*] besides" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9). Theophilus was the outsider. He was the enemy. And he dared to mount charges against John.

To add insult to injury, Theophilus arraigned a synod to remove John from his bishopric. The illegality of this act was due in no small part to the fact that John was not there to defend himself.³⁷ Under the right circumstances, John argued, he would have happily defended himself before his accusers. The arguments of Athanasius in *Defense before Constantius* (34–35) echo in the background. Theophilus's actions, however, are illegal (*para thesmon*) and undermine accepted canons (*kanona*) and customary procedures (*akolouthian*). But they were successful, and John was sent into exile in 403. Now *he* was the outsider just beyond Constantinople's walls.

To contrast these two scenarios still more, John goes on to compare his own forced removal (*ekbalen*) from Constantinople with Theophilus's flight back to Alexandria. First, we learn that John was seized in the dead of night and placed on a ship against his will. Theophilus's departure from the city also took place at night and on a ship but was done in secret (*lathra . . . apedra*): "Theophilus secretly at midnight flung himself into a boat, and so made his escape, taking all his company with him" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9).³⁸ One man was forcefully and illegally removed, while the other fled willingly. John then pauses to remind Innocent that Theophilus still has not stood trial for his crimes. After his flight, Theophilus was commanded by

37. Again John shames his opponent, stating that the heathens would not have acted so callously: "Not even in the heathen courts would such audacious deeds ever have been committed, or rather not even in a barbarian court, neither Scythians, nor Sarmatians would ever have judged a cause in this fashion, deciding it after hearing one side only, in the absence of the accused, who only deprecated enmity, not a trial of his case, who was ready to call any number of judges, asserting himself to be innocent and able to clear himself of the charges in the face of the world, and prove himself guiltless in every respect" (John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 7, 2.12). Not unlike Athanasius, *Apol. Const.*, the theme of absence plays a significant role in this letter (see chapter 1).

38. "[Theophilus] *lathra meson nyktōn eis hakation heauton hembalōn, houtōs apedra, meth' heautou pantas epagomenos.*"

the emperor to return for his trial, but he refused to return, and John remained a condemned man.

These parallel stories were meant to highlight the stark difference between the two men. On the one hand, we have a bishop who would gladly have appeared to defend himself before a lawful court, but after an illegal trial, he was forced from the city deep in the night. On the other hand, we have a warring bishop who not only refused to answer for his crimes but also fled into the night like a coward. The two men could not be more different, and their flights reveal who the real guilty party was in this unfortunate situation.

John closes the letter with a brief description of the devastation that resulted in the aftermath of Theophilus's departure and John's expulsion from the city. The oft-quoted scene of the invasion of Hagia Sophia, mentioned only briefly in this letter but greatly detailed in Palladius's account, foreshadows what would happen if John were not restored to his see. It was as if all of Constantinople experienced exile. John concludes, "the whole city moved outside the walls" (*Ep.* 7, 2.9).³⁹ Once again, like John's mentor, Meletius, a bishop carries the city with him into exile.

These calamities affect not only the faithful, according to John, but all the citizens of Constantinople, including its heretics, Jews, and Greeks.⁴⁰ In a curious statement, John paints for us a dark image of what took place and what would happen if Innocent fails to take action:

For the trouble has not been confined to Constantinople but has extended into the east. When some evil matter discharges from the head, all the limbs are corrupted; in the same way, now that the evil has begun in this great city, disorder has made its way everywhere, like water from a spring. Everywhere clergy are in revolt against bishops, and as for the lay congregations, some are split up into factions, others are likely to be so; everywhere we find the throes of evil, and the undoing of the whole world (*Ep.* 7, 2.8).

The picture painted by John was indeed alarming. If we expand our understanding of what was at stake—namely, John's position as the orthodox bishop of Constantinople—we find the makings of a quite unusual heresiology. On more than one occasion, Theophilus acted the part of a heretic, although he was never explicitly

39. "Pasa hē polis exō teicheōn metōkizeto." The concept of voluntary and involuntary flight during this tenuous moment is clearly under debate. John wants to assure his readers that his removal from Constantinople was completely against his will. Theophilus, on the other hand, skulks secretly out of the city; the image is not unfamiliar if one keeps in mind Athanasius's own departure from Alexandria.

40. "Ouch hoi homodoxoi monon, alla kai hoi hairetikoi kai Ioudaioi kai Ellēnes" (*Ep.* 7, 2.11). This is a significant break with John's construction of these groups in his Antiochene homilies. See the discussion of how John constructs the Greeks and Jews as others in Shepardson, "Controlling Contested Spaces," 483–85; and Sandwell, *Religious Identity*, 88.

charged. He was labeled hostile and an open enemy of both Constantinople and the church. John even states that he severed himself from the church. If those accusations are not enough, John demonstrates how he violated the laws of the fathers (*tous nomous tōn paterōn*) (*Ep.* 7, 2.9). If we follow John's logic and draw attention to how Christian flight was used in this text, it becomes clear that John's enemy has no right to the office of the bishop or even to be called a Christian. To state it another way, John insists on several occasions that the pious emperor urged him to pursue this lawless figure to administer judgment. Theophilus first undermined John's authority in violation of the very same canons he brought with him to keep John out of Alexandrian affairs. He went on to accuse John of crimes he never committed and against which he was not present to defend himself. Theophilus then solicited the help of common criminals whom John had cast out of his community before fleeing from that holy city after the damage had been done.

After reading this letter, it is clear that Theophilus's violation of the Nicene canons—the very ones he brought to ensure his own authority—and his repeated attempts to undermine John's authority put him in a position that was questionable at best. And, according to John, his illegal activities and involvement in John's forceful removal call into question Theophilus's claims to orthodoxy. While John did not explicitly call Theophilus a heretic, John's biographers certainly would, and it is clear why. We will return to Theophilus when we examine John's biographical afterlife in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to say that the events that transpired placed Alexandria and its bishop into a contentious relationship with Constantinople and its bishop. The battle is one we have heard before and one will hear again.

BISHOPS WHO DO NOT RETURN

As we saw in the previous chapter, the growing importance of Constantinople brought with it a series of challenges that would make John's attempts at control a trepidatious one at best. This becomes all the clearer when we consider that John's problems were equally, if not more, problematic inside the city as they were without. His interactions with the court in Constantinople, for instance, were anything but placid. Many scholars follow the lead of John's ancient biographers and take particular note of his tempestuous interactions with the empress Eudoxia.⁴¹ But these often overexaggerated accounts of their relationship are suspect. Mayer has made a clear case for why and how Eudoxia's memory was strategically maligned.⁴²

41. Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.18.1–5 makes a case for the enmity that arises between Chrysostom and Eudoxia.

42. Wendy Mayer, "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress: The Destruction of Eudoxia's Reputation," in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. A. Drake (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 205–13. For discussion of the significant role Eudoxia's death in childbirth plays in

In addition to John's tense imperial relationships, his ties to the urban ascetic community in Constantinople and the surrounding area were also strained. Unlike Athanasius, John was frequently at odds with the monastic community due to his intense reform efforts. Clark has noted that John's early condemnation of *subintroductae*—a practice of spiritual marriage in which celibate men and women lived together—was particularly unpopular.⁴³ John's disdain for the influential ascetic Isaac, whom Kelly identifies as the “founder of monasticism in the capital,” also did not win him any friends.⁴⁴ John's brief tenure as the reigning bishop of Constantinople was just as difficult to defend inside its walls as it was from the outside.

John's efforts to transform Constantinople into a distinctly Christian city brought its own set of conflicts, as Nathaniel Andrade has convincingly argued. This was due to John's controversial insistence that it was the bishop who made the city holy.⁴⁵ Andrade further gleans from John's homilies images of a heavenly *polit-eia* present in the very structures of an urban reality. John therefore engaged in yet another battle, this time within the city itself, to take on those imperial ceremonies that elicited the sights, smells, and noises of its lingering pagan past:

Such imperial ceremonies drew individuals into a material context of vision, hearing, and scent that deprived them of the agency to act and speak morally as they became coerced by demons, overwhelmed with sinful desires, and mired in relationships that challenged the integrity of Christian bonds. In this way, John emphasized the materiality of imperial ceremonies in civic spaces and claimed that they prohibited the acts of individual moral agency necessary for the creation of a Christian community.⁴⁶

John's response was to degrade potent sites of imperial self-aggrandizement, such as the hippodrome, monuments, and statues. We hear of John carrying out his own processions and even introducing new saints to the city in an effort to strip away the power of competing symbols. By filling the city streets with prayers and psalms, John wrested away a pagan past and replaced it with a distinctly Christian future.⁴⁷ Yet this battle would also be lost once John was cast into exile not once, but twice. And if we follow his conclusions from his letter to Innocent and keep with his logic in his praise of Meletius, it is clear that he, too, intended to take the city with him after he was expelled.

Ps.-Martyrius's recovery of the legacy of John Chrysostom as an unquestionably orthodox figure, see Barry, “Diagnosing Orthodoxy.”

43. Elizabeth A. Clark, “John Chrysostom and the ‘Subintroductae,’” *Church History* 46, no. 2 (1977): 171–85.

44. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 124.

45. Nathaniel Andrade, “The Processions of John Chrysostom and the Contested Spaces of Constantinople,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, no. 2 (2010): 161–89.

46. *Ibid.*, 166.

47. Andrade (*ibid.*) points to the literary work of Ps.-Martyrius as an example of how this literary transformation crystallizes in John's afterlife, a topic to which we will return in the next chapter.

While in exile, John looked for other strategies to continue his fight for the city as its one true patron. A total of around 242 surviving letters written by John between 404 and 407 demonstrate this point.⁴⁸ Mayer has thoroughly examined John's effort to exploit the patron-client relationships he built while in Constantinople and relied upon throughout his life as an exile:⁴⁹

John was not as isolated as he claims (he instead had a number of clergy at his service throughout the three years of his exile), it also now becomes clear that being isolated from the services of individuals of the rank of bishop for the role of envoy was a significant component of the penalty of exile. Because his access was restricted to lesser-ranked clergy (presbyters and deacons) to fulfill this role, the effectiveness of that portion of John's correspondence aimed at achieving rehabilitation was from the beginning compromised, with the potential of effecting the opposite result to that intended.⁵⁰

His use of these political envoys and his reliance upon previously established networks helped to ensure that his authority would still be felt in the city even if this epistolary campaign failed to secure his return. Despite his compromised position, John never ceased to believe that he was the legitimate bishop of Constantinople. These letters also reveal the evolution of John's exilic identity once it is clear that his appeals to Innocent would not result in his return.

Mayer traces the various exilic personae that John used to elicit sympathy and help from his supporters. He made ample use of classical tropes to achieve his "exilic agenda."⁵¹ And he altered the content of each letter to bend the persona of exile to his advantage. In other words, his representation of his own condition while in exile shifts depending upon the recipient of his letter. *Epistle* 173, for example, is a letter to Evethius, a presumed member of a noble family and among one of many supporters in Caesarea.⁵² In this letter, his exile is described as

48. See Roland Delmaire, "Les "lettres d'exil" de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 25 (1991): 72–180. Delmaire has provided a helpful reconstruction of the dating and delivery of these works, as well as a synopsis of the contents of each letter. A more recent article on the history of the letter collection is Daniel Washburn, "The Letter Collection of John Chrysostom," in *Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide*, ed. Cristiana Sogno, Bradley K. Storin, and Edward J. Watts (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 190–204. The total number of letters also depends on how one calculates those found in various manuscript traditions. For a discussion of the different groupings and reception of the letters, see Washburn, "Letter Collection," 192–93.

49. For the collected translation, see Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London: Routledge, 2000), which builds upon the exhaustive efforts made by Delmaire. For more on this collection, see also Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Deconstructing the Construction of Exile," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 62, no. 2 (2006): 248–58.

50. Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Crisis Manager," 134.

51. Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Deconstructing the Construction of Exile," 250.

52. Delmaire states that Evethius was a member of noble family that aided John throughout his exile and dates this letter to September 404. The family lived in either Cappadocia or Galatia. See Delmaire, "Les "lettres d'exil,"" 125.

a peaceful retreat, even a welcome break from the demands of life in the city. John remarks that he is “delighting in the quiet of the countryside and the freedom from politics” (*Ep.* 173.711–12).⁵³

In a series of letters written in November 404 to affluent individuals in Constantinople, John again presented his authority as if it were firmly in place.⁵⁴ For example, he used his authority to encourage and even reproach the behavior of certain members of his former community. He consoled Studius, who has lost a family member (*Ep.* 197). He accused Theophilus and Salustius of neglecting their duties and avoiding attending prayers (*Ep.* 212). And in the summer of 405, John used flattery and bold address to connect with Gemellius, the newly elected prefect of Constantinople (*Ep.* 124). Even though John was removed from Constantinople, he constructed his persona as a pastor and ecclesial leader still heavily invested in the community.

His tone shifted dramatically in his correspondence with Olympias, his chief benefactress in Constantinople.⁵⁵ Olympias is the direct recipient of seventeen letters from John.⁵⁶ In one letter we find a remarkably charged lament over the harsh conditions and desolate terrain in which John has found himself (*Ep.* 6). Contrary to the peaceful ascetic retreat he described in the earlier letter to Evethius and in subsequent letters to other Caesarian supporters, John here detailed the hardships and terrors he had to face along the way to his destination. And he did so again in another letter that addresses the horrors of his current state (*Ep.* 61).

The marked contrasts between these letter collections signal to Mayer an intentional use of familiar exilic tropes to interpret his condition in exile. Comparisons could easily be made to Ovid, for example, whose exilic identity easily slips between lament and ease. John’s approach, unlike Ovid’s, relies on philosophical commitments to take life’s hardships in stride. In his letters to the Caesarean community, for example, he reasserted his stature and authority as a bishop who is quite capable of finding beauty in any circumstance. And we see in John’s letters to Olympias how his use of consolatory themes is meant to demonstrate how his suffering strengthens him and refines his character. But each self-presentation is used to reinforce his authority. We see in these various collections how John presented himself in different ways: In one set, he is a man of leisure taking advantage of his circumstances, much like Athanasius. In another set, he is merely a temporarily displaced pastor who still directs his community

53. “Entruphōntes tē hēsychia tou chōriou, kai tē apragmosynē.” Edition: PG 52.711–712. Translation mine. Mayer adds that this letter is one of many addressed to the Caesarean community that supported John; see Mayer, “John Chrysostom: Deconstructing the Construction of an Exile,” 255–57. The other Caesarean letters include *Ep.* 80–84 (Edition: PG 52, 651–53e) and *Ep.* 172 (Edition: PG 52 710).

54. John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 117, 197, 212, 217, and 220.

55. John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 6. Edition: SC 13, 126–27. A similar lament takes place in John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 236.

56. Wendy Mayer, “Constantinopolitan Women in Chrysostom’s Circle,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, no. 3 (1999): 265–88; and Elizabeth Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom, and Friends: Essays and Translations* (New York: Mellen, 1982).

in absentia. In still another, John describes himself as a victim of circumstance, who, despite the odds, is able to weather his hardship. Mayer concludes: "What emerges from the letters is a man totally focused on rehabilitation and on regaining control of the reins of a see from which, he believes, he has been wrongfully deposed. John writes as someone who is still, despite his physical distance, the Bishop of Constantinople."⁵⁷

Yet John does not return. After realizing that his status as an exile appears to be permanent, John's exilic persona takes on universalizing tones, which build on the consolatory themes present in his letters to Olympias. These themes overlap with popular discourses focused on universalizing the experience of exile to cultivate a philosophical life found in the Greek authors of the Second Sophistic.⁵⁸ It is clear that John combined classical works with biblical models of suffering while in exile as a way to recast his experience of displacement. Mayer also takes notice of this shift in letters composed at the end of his life:

In letters written directly to clergy and laity who were in prison, in hiding, or who were being harassed, John's approach is not to reassure them that he is doing everything possible to have them released or the persecution terminated, but to commend them for their endurance and the love for him this demonstrates. In essence, he counsels them to bear their sufferings nobly, since they are doing it for orthodoxy and for God, and to comfort themselves with the knowledge that their persecutors will draw down upon themselves their own punishment.⁵⁹

It is in his treatises *No Man Can Be Harmed* and *To Those Who Are Tempted* that John fully developed his exilic discourse and finally departed from earlier notions that focused on a theory of return. To add credence to his claims, these two treatises lay out not only the terms for John's experience but also the tenets of his version of the Christian life. To be a true Christian, John concludes, is to accept a life filled with perpetual suffering and, more importantly, displacement.

57. Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Deconstructing the Construction of an Exile," 257.

58. See, e.g., Favorinus of Arelate, *On Exile*, whose reflections intentionally blur the lines between an imagined and literal exile. See Whitmarsh, "Greece in the World," 290. Whitmarsh states that the historian is left wondering whether Favorinus was actually exiled by the emperor Hadrian or whether it was his literary practice that placed him in that position. In either case, Favorinus's reflections function as a political commentary that stresses cosmopolitanism rather than genealogy as the source of one's identity. In other words, Favorinus envisions exile as a universal condition. As Simon Goldhill points out, Greekness was an identity adopted by both Roman and Greek authors living under Roman rule and proved to be a powerful trope that elite authors used to identify themselves as the civic elite. Although Favorinus is still a Greek in the Roman Empire, he uses his circumstance "to authorize and empower himself as a writer and orator in the present." Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 178.

59. Wendy Mayer, "The Bishop as Crisis Manager: An Exploration of Early Fifth-Century Episcopal Strategy," in *Studies of Religion and Politics in the Early Christian Centuries*, ed. David Luckensmeyer and Pauline Allen, *Early Christian Studies* 13 (Strathfield, Australia: St Paul's, 2010), 163.

No Man Can Be Harmed and *To Those Who Are Tempted* were written during the last two to three years of John's life (ca. 406–407).⁶⁰ Both texts are apologetic treatises and were addressed to Olympias. In the first, *No Man Can Be Harmed*, we find a dialogue on the nature of human suffering. The proem asks us to imagine John standing before a universal court. He boldly appears before his accuser—namely, public opinion—as a representative of God's providence. (Here we may have a reimagined trial at the Synod of the Oak.) John's goal in this text is to refute the claims of public opinion that many are unjustly injured. Unmerited suffering, they argue, undermines the providential nature of God. John countered this argument by asserting that no man is capable of injury that he has not already inflicted upon himself.

John presented this philosophical dictum as being particularly true for the Christian philosopher. In many ways, his logic follows that of Seneca the Younger (1–65), who was exiled to Corsica by Claudius in 41. During his exile, Seneca wrote his three treatises titled *Consolations*, in which he addressed the theme of a universalized exile. Like John's, his concern was suffering. In *No Man Can Be Harmed*, John appears to have come across similar conclusions as Seneca, as both state that external forms of suffering are incapable of harming the wise man. Seneca addresses this topic in *Consolations* 2:

“What then?” you say; “will there be no one who will attempt to do the wise man injury?” Yes, the attempt will be made, but the injury will not reach him. For the distance which separates him from contact with his inferiors is so great that no baneful force can extend its power all the way to him. Even when the mighty, exalted by authority and powerful in the support of their servitors, strive to injure him, all their assaults on wisdom will fall as short of their mark as do the missiles shot on high by bowstring or catapult, which though they leap beyond our vision, yet curve downwards this side of heaven.⁶¹

Although Margaret Amy Schatkin has argued that John's link to Seneca is often misunderstood as what she termed a “pseudo-Stoic” principle, there do remain overlapping conclusions.⁶² Whether John favors one philosophical principle over

60. The full title of the first treatise is *No Man Can Be Harmed Who Does Not Harm Himself* (*Quod nemo laeditur nisi a se ipso*), which I shorten here for the sake of brevity. Edition: SC 103. Translation mine in consultation with the French and *NPNF* 1 9. It is clear that the text is written prior to *To Those Who Are Tempted* as it is referenced in two sections of that text. Edition: SC 79. Translation is mine in consultation with the French.

61. Seneca, *Dial.* 2. Edition: LCL 214. Seneca also refers to Ovid's poetry of exile. For direct evidence linking the two authors, see John Gahan, “Seneca, Ovid, and Exile,” *Classical World* 78, no. 3 (1985): 145–47.

62. Margaret Amy Schatkin, *John Chrysostom as Apologist* (Thessaloniki: Hidryma Patriarchikon Paterikon Meleton, 1987), 90. Schatkin states, “Though this dictum circulated as a Stoic paradox in the time of Seneca, who wrote a diatribe on it, its origin is not Stoic but Socratic.” She emphasizes that there is a stronger link to the Socratic principle—to do injustice is a greater evil than to suffer

another is not important for our purposes here. What is clear is that John appealed to a variety of philosophical voices to reconcile and rearticulate his condition as a permanent exile. In *No Man Can Be Harmed*, we no longer hear the urgency of return or the paternalistic demands of a pastor temporarily removed from his flock. The intertextual links that weave throughout this work instead reveal how John attempts to locate and defend a universalized understanding of the exilic state.⁶³

It is notable that John frequently cited exile as a primary example of what others might deem unmerited suffering. For example, as an exile one is robbed of one's possessions, suffers the loss of one's status, and is forced to live beyond the boundaries (*hyperorios*) of one's homeland. Upon reflection, however, John deemed these supposed losses as lacking merit. He began by describing the destructive nature of wealth. It does not provide pleasure, it does not create honor, and it does not bring power. To illustrate, he compared and contrasted biblical figures such as Job, Lazarus, and Judas.⁶⁴ Despite their seemingly lamentable experiences of suffering, Job and Lazarus avoid blasphemy and subsequently attain eternal glory.⁶⁵ Judas, on the other hand, greedily chooses blasphemy and falls into eternal disrepute, with a messy outcome. John concluded that each individual is responsible for his own destiny.

Pushing the point still further, John rounded out his argument by examining two biblical accounts.⁶⁶ He compared the story of those Jews who remain in their homeland (*ho Ioudaiōn demos*) with that of three children who were exiled. The Jews who stayed in their homeland brought on all sorts of calamity, whereas the "virtue of the three children" (*tēn aretēn tōn paidōn tōn triōn*) who lost their homeland (*patridos apobolē*) remained intact as they stood up to the barbarians and the Persian king.⁶⁷ The children, of course, win the glory of victory over hardship. John emphasized this point by stating that the children neither shared in the luxuries of home nor even had access to the comforts of the familiar, yet, despite every hardship they faced in a foreign land as exiles, they maintained their stalwart natures. As in John's sermon on Meletius, it is their condition of exile that confirms their virtue and not their failure.

The theme of suffering is again taken up in the second and last treatise, *To Those Who Are Tempted*, which was composed chiefly for his supporters in

an injustice—than to pseudo-Stoic leanings. Yet many Stoic themes resonate with the work of Seneca the Younger.

63. John outlines his case first through theoretical proofs (chaps. 2–11), then through historical proofs (chaps. 12–17), and finally through an epilogue that sums up his conclusions.

64. See John Chrysostom, *No Man Can Be Harmed*, chapters 4–10.

65. Job is not only cast out (*ekballō*) of his city, but he also makes his home in the "dunghill" (*kopria*).

66. These accounts are found in Daniel 3.

67. It is unclear whether or not John counts these children as Jews. It appears their faithfulness and courage contrast significantly with the so-called Jews who stay in their homeland.

Constantinople.⁶⁸ The text addresses several key themes: the cause of scandal, which is doubt in the providence of God; the remedy, which includes both scripture and external experience; the nature of suffering, which is a summation of his earlier treatise; and the benefits of suffering, which includes a discussion of exile. Finally, in typical apologetic form, John offers a description of the rewards that will be given to the faithful and the retributive acts of the divine that will be inflicted upon sinners.⁶⁹

This particular consolatory text makes ample use of exilic topoi to describe the nature of suffering as a universal experience that is not determined by one's spatial location. Instead, regardless of where one is, suffering ultimately takes place within oneself. Suffering is an internal battle that must be conquered in order to master the self. The suffering of the just must ultimately be explained. And it is through the claim that suffering is an instructive tool that teaches moderation and humility. In other words, suffering is beneficial.

John is no longer a defendant on trial. Instead, he depicts himself as the physician who prescribes a universal cure for all those tempted to succumb to despair. While he remains in one place, his *logos*, or discourse, is sent out in his place to heal and remedy the downtrodden. Schatkin again has drawn our attention to John's use of the Stoic principle regarding an unhealthy philosophical life that is overrun by *pathos* when *logos* is absent. The remedy then must be the importation of the *logos*. Schatkin states, "To cure the diseased soul, the Stoics, beginning with Chrysippus, employed a double method: prophylaxis and *de facto* cure."⁷⁰ Correspondingly, this double prescription is made available through divine scripture and empirical experience.

Once again, John characterized exile as a universal condition by invoking key biblical exemplars. The wandering biblical figures surface in John's exploration of the benefits of suffering. In a startling appeal, he invoked the infamous Cain as his first example. The bloodthirsty brother, we are reminded, is one of the first to be condemned to a life of wandering. Links to the condemned man are reminiscent of that similarly unlikeable hero, Oedipus. Although both men are condemned to wander, they also wander with divine protection.

Next, we find the typical leaders of God's people, such as Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, who move from one place to another (*apo topōn eis topous metēgagē*). These suffering men wander not because they are guilty, but because of their righteousness. These are divinely commanded wanderings. Their education, like that of Odysseus, comes from their travels. John contrasted these two literary

68. The text consists of a prologue, a description of the scandal (chaps. 2–4), a proposed remedy (chaps. 5–23), and an epilogue (chap. 24).

69. This last theme will resurface in our discussion of both Palladius's epilogue and Ps.-Martyrius's description of the empress Eudoxia's death.

70. Schatkin, *John Chrysostom as Apologist*, 124.

motifs in order to universalize the Stoic principle that to suffer is to be human, regardless of whether one is guilty or innocent. All are exiles, because all souls must wander. How one makes use of this condition is what separates the Cains from the leaders of God's people.

The pinnacle event comes when God's Son is sent to wander the earth and ultimately suffer and die for the redemption of humanity. Here John's logic sounds very similar to Athanasius's in the *Defense of His Flight*. John, too, stressed that the Logos wandered. What is different in this wandering is that in the process of taking on the human condition, Jesus also healed this natural state.⁷¹ It is not enough to model oneself after this biblical link. John's logos has been sent out to heal, just like the divine Logos—even when he is unable to attend to his patients in person. Like the divine Logos, John's physical absence is replaced with the healing power of his words (*logos*). John then reassured his supporters that no harm would come to them that they did not create for themselves. Their particular form of suffering will pass if they only heed the words of his logos.

CONCLUSION

The circumstances surrounding John's exile enable us to realize that the borders John constructs are conceptual. They are fantasies—imagined realities—that help him to justify and re-narrate his own predicament. In his earlier works and letters, he constructs a narrative of the self, as well as of the borders of the city. As Denise Walker states, “our narratives of the self, both in casual conversation and in written autobiography, are dominated by narratives of place. Indeed, the generic imperative of autobiography to represent who we are is more often than not answered by the recollection of where we were.”⁷² At first, John's desire was to preserve his legacy as a bishop intent on return. Throughout his epistolary efforts, he built an authoritative exilic persona that he then crystalized in two apologetic treatises composed at the end of his life. As we have seen, the legacy he built for himself changed when it became clear that John would not be reinstated as bishop, and he described exile instead as a universal condition. To do so, he appealed to familiar themes found in the classical conciliatory tradition.⁷³ John's episcopal authority was thus affirmed precisely because he suffered as an exile. John's exilic discourse evolved over the course of his experience and ultimately crystalized as a universal position that all humans must experience. By keeping the end in mind, the individual experiences of suffering, exile chief among them, blur into the larger

71. Athanasius, *Fug.*, also appeals to these familiar biblical tropes of flight, although they are used to justify his flight in times of persecution.

72. Denise Walker, “The Displaced Self: The Experience of Atopia and the Recollection of Place,” *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 36, no. 1 (2003): 21–33.

73. See, in particular, Plutarch, *Cons. ux.* and *Cons. Apoll.*; Cicero, *Tusc.*; and Seneca, *Marc.*

vision of a shared experience of wandering on this earth among the guilty and innocent alike. Some will wander in ignorance, and others—those willing to learn (and cure)—will wander with knowledge and without harm.

As Ruth Morello and A. D. Morrison have argued, letters helped ancient authors to negotiate social status and power relations as well as dramatize roles.⁷⁴ This is certainly the case when we look at the variety of genres present in John Chrysostom's expansive epistolary campaign. In the *Letter to Innocent I*, John aligns Constantinople with Rome. He stresses that these two holy cities—and the bishops who appropriately reside within—are at risk when outsiders threaten to invade and undermine their authority. John describes what he sees as an assault. He focuses on the activities of Theophilus of Alexandria, who has unlawfully interfered in Constantinopolitan politics. Due to his heinous activity, John argues, the very sanctity of Constantinople, and possibly of other holy Roman cities, is under threat. Here we see jettisoned, once again, two significant imperial cities: Constantinople and Alexandria. Familiar appeals to themes of persecution and tacit charges of episcopal malfeasance frame this letter, as well as the *Letter to Olympias*.

When his appeals to Rome fail to secure a permanent return, John increases his epistolary efforts, and his exilic identities forged in the letter collection produced between 404 and 407 changes significantly. The letters in this second group are modeled on classical themes and include references to long suffering, indifference, and even descriptions of luxurious retreat. The aim in this second phase was to produce an authorial persona that justified his ongoing status as an exile. John's epistolary efforts perform what Owen Hodkinson has identified as a "macro-unit of composition" and what he sees as "a kind of literature in which the author can experiment with miniature correspondences, personas, chronological and thematic relations and intratextual allusion."⁷⁵

John was a masterful craftsman and appealed to a variety of literary models and themes to fashion his exilic self, but his efforts failed to secure his ultimate objective. He remained a bishop in exile with no end in sight. This outcome is seen most clearly in the two theological treatises composed for his most intimate correspondent, Olympias. In *No Man Can Be Harmed* and *To Those Who Are Tempted*, John argues that exile is the natural state of all humanity. His experience in exile might appear, at first sight, different—and maybe even suspicious. Quite to the contrary, he concludes: all Christians are in exile.

And while this definition of exile as wandering and the status of all Christians as wanderers was picked up by later Western exilic discourses, it remained

74. Ruth Morello and A. D. Morrison, eds., *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2007). Epistles also promoted what Morello and Morrison identify as a didactic mode: "In pursuing a didactic agenda, the letter genre becomes remarkably elastic, adapting and adopting features from almost any other genre for best effect" (*ibid.*, x).

75. Hodkinson, "Better Than Speech," 287.

a troubling concept for those who attempted to dispel rumors of John's exile as evidence of his guilt.⁷⁶ During his own lifetime and soon after his death, John's reputation was quickly discredited by associations that placed him in dangerous company. His storyline mirrors that of Cain or Oedipus more than the biblical patriarchs and Moses, or even Odysseus, with whom he would take common cause at the end of his life. John's biographers would not adopt this universalization of the exilic state as a paradigm.⁷⁷ Much like his treatment of Meletius, John's own death outside of his episcopacy was not so easily dismissed. The biographies written by Palladius of Helenopolis and the so-called Ps.-Martyrius instead contain localized exilic discourses that elevate the significance of a bishop's position in the city. As we will come to see, this might explain why the dissenting voices of the anti-Johanite party are eventually drowned out. The bishop and his city, especially the city of Constantinople, proved to be much too powerful a picture of orthodoxy for even contemporary biographers to latch on to as a standard for evaluating John's exile. We now turn to see how John's story of exile was wrapped into yet another heroic tale of wandering. We will once again ask ourselves: What does Alexandria have to do with Constantinople?

76. Scholars at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds in 2002 examined the different forms exile took during the Middle Ages from ca. 900 to ca. 1300 in western Europe; the results are published in Laura Napran and Elizabeth van Houts, eds., *Exile in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: International Medieval Research, 2004). The second half of the volume focuses on exile in an ecclesiastical context as it is linked to new interpretations of Christian identity.

77. Palladius does invoke themes of earthly detachment that crop up in these two treatises, but the state of universalized exile is not extended to all who suffer. The uniqueness of John's exile is the only thing that reveals his status as the rightful and true heir to the Constantinopolitan see. Palladius also seems to adopt John's use of Plutarch's notion of the delay of divine punishment evident in *To Those Who Are Tempted* and in his letters to Olympias (see, e.g., *Ep.* 7).