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Caesarius of Arles and the Campaign against Popular Culture in Late Antiquity

Abstract

This article analyses the preaching of Caesarius of Arles (in particular the *Admonitiones*) as a sustained attack on contemporary popular culture. It situates this process in the context of the question of the “democratisation of culture” in Late Antiquity, an enduring historiographical debate in which Caesarius plays a starring role. The analysis focuses in detail on the bishop’s programmatic letter, the so-called *Sermo* 1, and unpicks the strategies used to stigmatise key aspects of popular culture as well as considering the reception of his campaign.

He also wrote sermons for particular festivals and places,¹ but against drunkenness and debauchery too, and against discord and hate, against anger and pride, against the sacrilegious and soothsayers, against the most pagan rites of the Kalends and against augurs, worshippers of trees and springs, and various sorts of vices. [*V. Caes.* 1.55]²

The *Admonitiones* of Caesarius of Arles, numbering around eighty of Caesarius’ sermons,³ can seem mind-numbing after a while, as the bishop returns time and time again to his favourite subjects for criticism. They focus on aspects of Christian morality but also on lifestyle, encompassing issues of culture and what Pierre Bourdieu influentially called *habitus*.⁴ The first-time reader is struck by the sweeping breadth of

Caesarius' area of concern: no sin, it seems, is beneath his notice. Gossiping, drinking, singing and even talking in church all feature prominently in his sermons at one time or another. This group of sermons constitutes a comprehensive attack on the habits, predilections and activities of his congregation. This much has already been demonstrated, in the important work of William Klingshirn, which clearly showed the richness of Caesarius' sermons as sources for the religious and social history of late antique Arles, and beyond.⁵ My own project is complementary, but seeks to investigate the cultural, social and religious history of late antique southern Gaul through the prism of the study of popular culture in particular.⁶

As I shall demonstrate, popular culture was problematized and targeted by the Church as never before and thus we can examine both popular culture and its transformation in this period. Moreover, the study of popular culture, its definition and development in Late Antiquity, provides an important means of examining the interrelated processes of social, economic, cultural and religious change in Late Antiquity. In this way I aim to take a fresh look at the sermons and pastoral work of Caesarius, as well as contributing to a new assessment of the broader history of the transformation of the late antique world, often examined under the rubric of 'Christianisation', although this represents just one strand or reading of a much more complex process. It is worth stating at the outset that my interest is here is not in "popular religion" as such, the problems of which have been widely and fruitfully discussed by medievalists, amongst others.⁷ My approach to popular culture focuses on the interaction of both longstanding and new social and cultural forces and tensions while casting a critical eye on the notions of the spheres of 'religion' and

‘culture’ in Late Antiquity and beyond.⁸ We can see how the Church both *used* aspects of popular culture in order to communicate with a wider audience, while attacking this culture at the same time.

That Late Antiquity saw a striking cultural transformation is undeniable. One particularly influential model for this change is that of “democratisation of culture”. This concept was first mooted by Santo Mazzarino, back in 1960, who saw “democratisation” as a positive and creative movement, linked to empire-wide trends of decentralisation and pluralism, rather than a process of decline.⁹ Mazzarino envisaged this late antique democratisation of culture as a third-century process, but more recently scholars have deployed this concept far beyond this time, to examine cultural change across a Long Late Antiquity. Indeed, Jean-Michel Carrié argues that we should move this transformation back to as late as the sixth to seventh centuries, hence precisely the period in question here.¹⁰ “Democratisation” can clearly be understood in a number of ways but here we can consider two primary forms of the process: ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’. In the former model, we can envisage a process whereby cultural forms previously shared by the lower classes moved upwards to be shared by the whole of society and culture – or, to put it in the more dramatic form imagined by Ramsay MacMullen, whereby the cultural ideals of the subaltern classes ‘triumphed’ over elite culture and values.¹¹ Alternatively, we can understand a ‘top down’ process, whereby institutions, primarily the Church, deliberately produced cultural forms that were accessible to a wider audience, thereby playing a central role in an attempt to construct a specifically Christian popular culture. Of course these options are not exclusive: my concern here is with is the interaction of cultural and

social forces and forms in Late Antiquity, and, I will argue that popular culture lies/is (in) this intersection.

In terms of democratisation, it is obvious that the rise of Christianity brought about new forms of contact between different social and cultural levels. What interest would an aristocrat like Caesarius have had in the behaviour and wellbeing of the lower classes of Arles and its territory during the High Empire? What need indeed would an aristocrat have had to communicate with them, except directly in his capacity as owner of land, property and/or slaves?¹² Sermons therefore clearly constitute an important and obvious aspect of the “democratisation of culture” in this period. For the first time rhetorical and ethical and philosophical discourse were, in principle at least, transmitted across a broad swathe of society.¹³ Nonetheless, debate continues regarding the economic and social composition of the preacher’s audience in Late Antiquity. Ramsay MacMullen has been the most steadfast proponent of the view that this audience was not really broad, being in fact made up almost exclusively of the economic and social elite, in his most recent work estimated more precisely indeed as the top 5%.¹⁴ While earlier analysis was based on the sermons themselves, a key part of MacMullen’s methodology in his new book is, broadly speaking, archaeological, but ultimately rather crude, involving the counting of spaces available in church buildings.¹⁵ In any case we lack the archaeological evidence to make this kind of estimate in the case of Arles and its environs.¹⁶ The sermons themselves must provide our evidence but, unsurprisingly, these prove to be far from conclusive. The picture provided by Caesarius’ sermons generally agrees with the broader picture given by late antique sermons: even if we don’t want to take as hard a line as MacMullen, it is

very apparent that late antique bishops generally felt most comfortable addressing their social equals, or near-equals. When Caesarius enjoins corporal punishment upon recalcitrant offenders, for instance, he is obviously speaking as one *dominus* to another.¹⁷ Nonetheless, we can see that he preached in a variety of locations, in both urban and rural settings, as will be discussed below.

Democratisation of language is also at issue here. Caesarius and his biographers alike (and clearly this congruence is far from coincidental) present him as a preacher to the people, stressing the simplicity of his language. Both books of the *Vita* include a programmatic discussion of the simplicity of his Latin at their start. First, the biographers, in something of a cliché of hagiography, apologise in the prologue for the modesty of its language, citing a supposed saying of Caesarius himself in support: ‘Some avoid rusticity in speech, but do not turn from vices in life’.¹⁸ At the start of Book 2, likewise, the biographers assert the simplicity of their subject’s language, intended to communicate to the ‘learned and the simple alike’ (*doctos simul et simplices*).¹⁹ This stress on a democratic language is likewise programmatic in the so-called *Sermo* 1;²⁰ Caesarius argues in this text that there is no need for ‘worldly’ language, which can ‘scarcely’ be understood even by a ‘few’.²¹ He stresses this again near the end of the treatise,²² proceeding to the clear injunction that: ‘Therefore, my lord bishops should preach to the people in simple, ordinary language that all the people can understand’.²³ The evidence of the sermons themselves can also be seen as clearly indicative of a concern for a wider audience, as regards the length of homily as well as simplicity of language and argument.²⁴

Philological analysis has in fact been crucial in establishing Caesarius as a key figure in the ‘democratisation of culture’. He has appeared as a pivotal figure in the transformation of the classical to the medieval world, as marking a crucial stylistic turning point, in several influential works of scholarship, each focusing on his innovative preaching style. Erich Auerbach describes Boethius as the last ‘ancient’ author, while Caesarius is ‘medieval’, the ‘first important representative’ of a new prose style.²⁵ Aron Gurevich takes a similar line, beginning his *Medieval Popular Culture* with Caesarius, whom he pairs with Gregory of Tours as one of the twin ‘founders of the Middle Ages’.²⁶ Gurevich, following and developing Auerbach’s literary discussion, saw a new stage of culture beginning, arguing that his style, in particular his use of *sermo humilis*, was crucial, constituting a ‘radical’ change not just in style but ‘in the relation of author and public.’²⁷ Caesarius’ sermons appear therefore as important communicative actions in both the ‘democratisation of culture’ in Late Antiquity, and in the transformation of the classical world.²⁸

Nonetheless, we should not see these cultural processes as smooth and uncontested. While deliberately using ‘democratic’ language, Caesarius was in fact engaged in a concerted attack on a range of aspects of non-elite behaviour and culture. A focus on what I call popular culture will show this in the analysis which follows. Here I understand popular culture not as a static “artefact” but rather dialectically, following the highly influential definition of Stuart Hall:

In the study of popular culture, we should always start here: with the double-stake in popular culture, the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it ... there is *no* whole, authentic, autonomous ‘popular culture’ which lies outside the field of force of the relations of cultural power and domination.²⁹

Popular culture is not to be understood as coterminous with a particular group of the population, nor need it (necessarily) originate solely from the “bottom up”. It is a culture which can be shared by various subgroups, with diverse possible relationships to elite and official culture(s). What is crucial is that this popular culture was fully *embedded* in the broader spheres of society, economy and ideology.

Therefore it is not necessary to demonstrate that the ‘popular culture’ under attack from Caesarius (inter alia) was the sole product of or used solely by the ‘people’ – indeed it is clear that it was feared that even clerics themselves as well as the local elites participated in proscribed activities (as will be shown below). What I *can* show is the developing and strengthening of a longstanding tradition of elite disdain for a range of cultural activities that were traditionally *unauthorized* and looked down upon. This is where Holt Parker’s recent discussion of popular culture is also useful. He suggests that we can define popular culture as that produced for or consumed by those without cultural capital (the much cited concept of Pierre Bourdieu).³⁰ Most crucially, it can be defined as ‘unauthorized culture’³¹ – and as we shall see below, what was at stake in ecclesiastical discourse was the process of what me might call authorizing (and de-authorizing) culture in the round.

Any idea of “democratisation of culture” has to incorporate these cultural dialectics in order to be useful.

Ultimately, “popular culture” is a heuristic model, the point of which is to enable a properly ‘thick’ description of (ancient) culture, in all its richness.³² Nonetheless, a number of features of late antique culture present in the sermons of Caesarius can be fruitfully analysed under this rubric, such as singing and dancing, commensality, appropriate and inappropriate body language, dressing up and gift-exchange. There is, inevitably, not enough space here to undertake a full investigation of these elements.³³

This article therefore takes a dual approach to ‘popular culture’: firstly in the abstract as a heuristic concept, as a dialectic between different force fields and cultural relations, but secondly, substantively, as identifiable activities, attitudes and structures.

How far can we use Caesarius as a source for late antique interaction with popular culture, and for this culture itself? Firstly, there is the question of his ‘representativeness’. My argument is not that Caesarius was *typical*: he was set apart from the majority of his fellow bishops not just by his aristocratic background (more common in Gaul, after all) but, crucially, by his ascetic formation. As others have shown, Caesarius’ time spent in the southern Gallic monastic hothouse of Lérins was of the greatest importance in shaping his views of both the episcopacy and the Christian life in general. Caesarius wished to apply monastic standards not just to his fellow clergy, but even to his congregation.³⁴ Next there is the question of the historicity of his popular interactions. As we have seen, both the bishop in his own writings and his biographers stress his role as

preacher to the people. Conrad Leyser, however, has argued, in a significant contribution, that this vision of Caesarius as popular preacher is a construction, an ‘icon’, deliberately created by these same figures, aimed not at ‘the peasant farmers of Provence, but the ‘the rich and urbane clergy and laity of Arles’.³⁵

While this adds important ammunition to the general methodological principle that we cannot use (Caesarius’) sermons as unproblematic evidence for direct interaction with popular culture,³⁶ the ideological construction of Caesarius as the exemplar of a popular speaker is *in itself* an important piece of evidence for late antique and medieval social and cultural relations that we can now go on to unpick. I shall do this with a close reading of the so-called *Sermo* 1, a clear starting point for demonstrating both the opportunities and the problems posed by Caesarius’ sermon. Ironically and perhaps appositely, this is not a sermon *ad populum* at all, but a letter to fellow, suffragan bishops, placed by Morin at the head of his collection of sermons.³⁷ While, unsurprisingly, much of the text is taken up with matters of proper episcopal behaviour it also provides a useful whistlestop, programmatic summary of matters of more general (lay and indeed clerical) comportment, i.e. the substantive elements of ‘popular culture’ which are referred to throughout the *Admonitiones* and which will form the focus for the discussion which follows. Meanwhile, the text and its cognates embody a powerful discourse which both constructs the *concept* of popular culture, while simultaneously attacking it.

The letter begins with Caesarius invoking a theme which is central to the construction of what I am analysing under the rubric of popular culture: *rusticitas*.

If I paused to pay attention to my sinful negligence and my rusticity or ignorance (*rusticitatem vel imperitiam*) as a scrupulous examiner perhaps I would hardly dare advise some good work to rustics in parishes (*parrochiis quoscumque rusticos*) because it is written ‘First cast out the beam from your own eye...’³⁸

Thus he begins by pairing his own *rusticitas* with that of the people of the parishes of the territory of Arles; he presents himself as a *rusticus* who speaks to the *rustici*. He returns to the theme in his closing peroration, with a self-deprecating reference to the irritation his *rusticissima suggestio* might have caused to the ‘learned’ ears of his audience.³⁹ This claim to *rusticitas* is of course not new: Christian writers often chose to make play upon the notion of rhetorical *rusticitas*.⁴⁰ It is indeed this ‘rustic’ Latin that has been cited in the scholarly presentation of Caesarius as a pivotal point in the transformation of classical culture, as discussed above. The term is of course used knowingly by both Caesarius and his biographers.⁴¹ (Moreover, this term should not obscure the fact that Caesarius’ prose was in fact very carefully crafted.⁴²)

Rusticitas appears so far therefore as a trope which the aristocratic bishop employs of himself as part of his ideological and rhetorical armoury. It is also, however, a trope he uses to label others, here aiming for a somewhat different ideological effect. Klingshirn has observed that *rusticitas* is more of an ideological than a sociological construct for Caesarius;⁴³ the figure of the rustic, as others have noted, could be used as a foil with which to rebuke an urban audience.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, even if the term is used to rebuke those of unimpeachable high social standing and education, the term does carry what we can reasonably call a *class* connotation: an association with ignorance and lack of culture.

Such associations are consistently used to stigmatise aspects of culture disliked by the church, such as the festival of the Kalends, attacked in this way in both west and east.⁴⁵ Peter Brown has looked at the concept of *rusticitas* in relation to Gregory of Tours in particular; Brown defines it as ‘boorishness’, and notes its opposition to *reverentia*, which he associates with ‘a precisely delineated image of ideal human relations’, which betrays ‘the long grooming of late-Roman aristocratic society’.⁴⁶

Despite the persistent dislike of many of today’s historians to talk in terms of class, it is clear to me that what we are talking about here is an *upper*-class attack and stigmatisation of *lower*-class behaviour.⁴⁷ At the same time, as we have seen, the concept of *rusticitas* is used, bolstered by the tools and themes of ascetic ideology, by elite members, to stigmatise aspects of elite behaviour that were felt to be unpalatable, by smearing them with lower class connotation.⁴⁸ So here we have, first, as part of a new interaction between elite and non-elite an opportunity and a determination to mould non-elite behaviour according to elite values. We can also see in a parallel process a clear attempt by a new Christian elite to mould what is correct elite behaviour, using what is ultimately the language of class.

The moulding of both sorts of behaviour, in the hands of Caesarius (at least as presented in the textual tradition), is a full-on enterprise. *Sermo* 1 contains a number of striking images of the bishop. He is a watchman (*speculator*), atop the citadel of the city of God,⁴⁹ or ‘an inspector on a lofty site’.⁵⁰ Bishops are also described as the eyes in the head of Christ,⁵¹ and as pilots, directing the ship of the Church.⁵² These related metaphors are

highly revealing of Caesarius' approach. The bishop appears as a policeman, involved in the surveillance and control of his congregation.⁵³ He should use fear, where necessary, and even corporal punishment:

... unless the pilots of the church with all vigilance teach, terrify, sometimes even censure and occasionally punish lightly, at times even threatening the day of judgement with severity, and thus show how to keep the straight path of eternal life, it is to be feared that they will receive judgment where they might have had a remedy.⁵⁴

As well as exhorting fellow clergy to use physical coercion, elsewhere Caesarius even encourages his flock to whip, beat and shackle the stubborn and recalcitrant,⁵⁵ as well as telling them to inform on these miscreants to him 'in secret.'⁵⁶ And, on occasion, as is infamous, he locks the doors in order to keep his congregation from leaving church.⁵⁷

The *speculator* is to guard, through his preaching, against all the sins, major and minor, of his congregations, sins to be expiated through ritual practices: fasting and prayers, as well as, in a common pastoral strategy, almsgiving.⁵⁸ Thus ritual practice and physical punishment have a role to play but it is still the spoken word which *Sermo* 1 promotes as the most powerful tool of all: it is apt indeed that according to his hagiographer, Caesarius wielded his preaching 'like a weapon'.⁵⁹ The central job of the bishop is to preach: as often as possible, indeed it is the job not just of bishops in towns, but also of priests and deacons in parishes.⁶⁰ A central message of this text, signalled with the opening emphasis on *rusticitas*, is that this preaching can and should be simple, and thus easily done, even by lower clergy.⁶¹ Those unable to preach their own sermons should

read out those of others.⁶² No excuses for failing to preach will be accepted on the day of Judgement.⁶³ Caesarius' efforts to promote preaching throughout the region are well known⁶⁴ but the point is crucial: the word of the clergy is a weapon in an ongoing battle.

The word of the clergy represents authorized (and authorizing) discourse, and, like any traditional member of the Roman elite, Caesarius is certain that he can distinguish between authorized and unauthorized speech. Nonetheless, in *Sermo* 1 the concern is with the clergy themselves, who are seen as equally prone to indulging in inappropriate talk. The clergy need to avoid 'idle speech and biting jokes' (*otiosis fabulis et mordacibus iocis*).⁶⁵ This kind of inappropriate speech is attacked frequently in the *Admonitiones*,⁶⁶ where it is presented as a particular sin of impurity, a particularly perilous impurity of the mouth.⁶⁷ Leyser has rightly noted that the prime site of unclean speech is the 'people', especially those of the countryside⁶⁸ (*rusticitas* strikes again!). Nonetheless, *Sermo* 1 extends this concern to the speech of the clergy. Indeed, it is only one of a series of texts that attest to a concern that clergy too are participating in activities which we might choose to consider under the rubric of popular, i.e. *unauthorized* culture.

What kind of popular entertainments were available in late antique Arles and its territories? We obviously need to look beyond the traditional Roman *spectacula*.⁶⁹ We will find much more fertile ground for popular culture when looking for more 'DIY' entertainment, in which we can see Caesarius' congregations (and indeed perhaps his colleagues) as participants and performers, as well as spectators. According to the bishop, congregations should be instructed neither to hire nor even observe as guests at *convivia* a

lively cast of performers, identified by the variant manuscript traditions as dissolute singers (*luxoriosos cantatores.... cantatrices*), players of games (*lusores*) and dancers (*saltatores*), all of which are described as being ‘inimical to chastity and virtue’.⁷⁰

Amongst the activities that recur as part of the broken record of Caesarius’ pastoral bêtes noires, singing and dancing are notably prominent.⁷¹ These seem to have been common at a range of types of gatherings. Council canons from southern Gaul urge clergy to avoid weddings and dinners where love songs would be sung and dirty dances danced.⁷² (Generally singing and dancing were paired together in ecclesiastical discourse.) We can perhaps imagine the presence of paid professional singers where funds permitted, although the surviving evidence for professional performers (discussed below) is for actors and dancers rather than singers. More communal (and drunken) singing and dancing was likewise a common feature of neighbourly get-togethers.⁷³ As elsewhere in the late antique world, so at Arles, this behaviour might well also extend into churches and martyr shrines, as we shall see further below.⁷⁴

Dancing was an activity viewed with consistent suspicion and scorn by patristic writers, and its association with pantomime dancers, and performers of other kinds is an important reason for this disdain. Here we can trace a direct line back to traditional elite discourse which disparaged dancing as distinctly *unauthorized*, as an activity unfit for the respectable citizen. These worries were most apposite, and visible, in the case of oratory, with often polemical focus on affinities between the arts of the rhetor and the dancer.⁷⁵ In Late Antiquity the pantomime in turn became a focus of ire among patristic authors, who were suspicious of both the sexual ambiguity of the pantomime dancer but also his

captivating effect on the audience.⁷⁶ Caesarius uses two different verbs for dancing, often in combination: *ballo* and *salto*, the latter being particularly associated with pantomime dancing. Dancing, it is persistently claimed, is something not performed by a normal person, unless insane or indeed drunk: this is something avowed by both Cicero and Caesarius.⁷⁷ We can see the formation of an unholy trinity: dancing, paired with singing, was linked with uncontrolled sexuality. But the key enabling factor, and hence viewed with strict censure by Caesarius, was of course alcohol. In *Sermo* 55 Caesarius attacks the combination in a particularly striking example of rolling rhythmic prose, attacking those who would destroy themselves and others ‘*ut inebriando, ballando, verba turpia decantando, choros ducendo et diabolico more saltando*’ (the English can scarcely do this justice; ‘by getting drunk, dancing, singing shameful songs, leading the chorus and pantomiming in diabolical fashion’).⁷⁸ It is alcohol which loosened the inhibitions and provoked the singing, dancing and sexual licence and the bishop’s sermons contain many denunciations of excessive drinking.⁷⁹

Attacked along with singing and dancing comes another form of popular culture that could be associated with either ‘professional’ performers or supposedly unchristian laypeople, and was perhaps particularly likely to be found at a *convivium*: *scurrilitas*.

At these banquets they not only refuse to offer sacred reading to feed the soul, but sometimes they are either busy with idle conversation (*otiosis sermonibus*), for which an account must be rendered on judgment day, or they do not fear and blush to say themselves or willingly to hear from others calumnies (*detractiones*), buffooneries (*scurrilitates*) or even obscene talk (*turpiloquia*).⁸⁰

What can we make of these *scurrilitates*?⁸¹ There are a number of associations here, all relevant.

Scurrilitas can be identified variously as story-telling,⁸² clowning and joking: all types of informal performance that had been part both of traditions of popular culture, and of discourses *attacking* this popular culture. The persistence in the early medieval tradition of the figure of the mime is particularly relevant here. The mime is very difficult to reconstruct, due to its improvised nature, but it is well-known that it was consistently despised by the Roman elite as a “low” form. The Roman mime is a very neat example of ‘unauthorized culture’: it seems in some sense at least to have staged a challenge to the dominant social order and was met with consistent vitriol by the elite.⁸³ Yitzak Hen has shown the persistence of forms of the mime into the Merovingian and even the Carolingian era, at least according to the ecclesiastical sources⁸⁴ (here all the usual caveats apply). Hagiographical texts provide a number of cases of appearances by mimes and mime actors and in a letter Alcuin claims to quote Augustine as an authority against bringing ‘actors, mimes and dancers’ into one’s home.⁸⁵

Scurrilitas in the Middle Ages signified buffoonery, jesting, a coarse form of humour. It was, according to Christian moralists, a sin, often found together with *turpiloquium*, a pairing obviously influenced by the Vulgate.⁸⁶ However, later medieval literature also paired the two as key forms of *self-consciously* deviant oppositional and anti-clerical speech⁸⁷ and here we can build an interesting link back to a second important, and longstanding association between *scurrilitas* and popular culture. *Scurrilitas* was

associated canonically with the figure of the *scurra*, the jester, familiar throughout Latin literature and culture. The *scurra* was often associated with malicious speech (here note Caesarius' juxtaposition of *detractiones* and *scurrilitates*).⁸⁸ He was also associated (negatively) with popular literature.⁸⁹

As we have already seen, Caesarius consistently set proper, authorized speech over and against its improper, unauthorized antitype, and we have already noted his concern that clergy too might indulge in this. Here this speech might simply be *otiosus* (idle);⁹⁰ it might have associations with fiction (*fabula*):⁹¹ both terms are used to mark out certain types of speech as lacking in authority. Unauthorized speech, like singing and dancing, might well too be obscene and shameful.⁹² It might also have more satirical connotations that we can link with *scurrilitas*: clergy need to avoid 'biting jokes' as well as gossip, according to Caesarius.⁹³ Dubious speech might also be dangerously libellous: hence the concern here for *detractiones* ('calumnies'). Hence it is not surprising to find potent concentrations and combinations of these various types of unauthorized discourse in Caesarius' sermons.⁹⁴

What were the locations associated with these deviant forms of behaviour and discourse? In the sermons there is a concentration on *convivia* as a key locus for unauthorized and immoral behaviour.⁹⁵ These are immoral on a number of grounds (not least because they provided an opportunity for gluttony, where the money spent might have been given to the poor) but also because of the opportunity for singing, dancing, drinking and sexual immorality as we have already seen. However, this package of inappropriate behaviour is

also complained of frequently as happening at church vigils.⁹⁶ That churches and church rituals could in themselves be loci of unauthorized behaviour provokes a particular level of exasperation from Caesarius. The bishop expends a great deal of effort disciplining the behaviour of his congregations during the mass, where it is of course relatively easy.⁹⁷ Ultimately, however, his claim is totalizing: the bishop wishes to mould the behaviour of his congregation *everywhere*.⁹⁸

‘*Sermo 1*’ seeks to tell Caesarius’ clerics what and how to preach. Therefore it is not surprising that *Sermo 1* contains a sort of ‘greatest hits’, a mini-compendium of the main themes of the *Admonitiones* (as well as a number of their most-repeated phrases!).⁹⁹ This is most clear at section 12, where through a series of rhetorical questions, Caesarius seeks to show that any bishop (or indeed presbyter)¹⁰⁰ is capable of preaching on the all-important issues.¹⁰¹ It is notable that the list of subjects to be castigated here *begins* with the social and cultural sins discussed above, before turning to what we might consider more obviously *religious* sins, i.e. behaviour to be clearly associated with ‘paganism’ (the standard kind of hit list, including such practices as making vows to trees, consulting soothsayers, using ‘diabolical charms’.)¹⁰² That is, *Sermo 1* makes it all too clear that Caesarius’ concern extends far beyond what is usually seen as “Christianization” and indeed beyond the sphere of what is usually subsumed under the category of the “religious”.¹⁰³

To summarise, I have considered several different strategies used by Caesarius to stigmatise certain elements of culture and behaviour, i.e. popular culture. First I examined

the various different uses and ramifications of the concept *rusticitas* (including his application of the term to his own speech, thus defined as aimed specifically *ad populum*); next I analysed the stigmatisation of certain types of speech and performative behaviour. It is not surprising that Caesarius' strategy seems to be particularly effective when these different aspects come together, as with his striking *Sermo* 6, where he attacks the propensity of *rustic* men and women for learning by heart and singing 'diabolical and shameful love songs'.¹⁰⁴

It was the Virgilian scholar Nicholas Horsfall who identified Caesarius as an unlikely but fruitful witness to the longevity of what he called the 'culture of the Roman plebs', which he described as 'a 'parallel' culture, in its own way rich, varied and robustly vigorous', based on 'theatre, games in various senses, music, songs, dance, memory' and striking in 'its ability to survive almost unaltered at least into late antiquity'.¹⁰⁵ A full investigation of this culture is a far bigger project than can be dealt with in this article but what is certain is that Caesarius is testimony not only to a continuing popular culture but also to evolving elite attempts to stigmatise this culture. I have shown how Caesarius can be placed in a long tradition of elite discourse de-legitimising certain forms of speech and behaviour. What is striking in Late Antiquity is the new level of intensity and urgency of this project, bolstered with a new ascetic imperative. Ultimately Caesarius and his colleagues would seek to offer some constructive alternatives to the culture they attacked¹⁰⁶ but the negative, coercive aspect of the campaign against popular culture has been the focus of this article. As already noted, even in his own time and region Caesarius' approach is not the only one that was available: Lisa Bailey's study of the

‘Eusebius Gallicanus’ collection of sermons shows how they provide an interesting contrast to Caesarius’ combative approach, offering a much more consensual and fraternal approach to religious and cultural change within communities.¹⁰⁷

Therefore, we must ask, what, ultimately, was the import of Caesarius’ campaign? As I have already established, the bishop’s significance as an iconic popular preacher and authority should not be overstated, in the short term, at least. While his sister, Caesaria, commissioned the *Vita* within seven years of his death, its influence seems to have been very limited indeed, outside a very few monastic contexts.¹⁰⁸ It would indeed be his reputation as a founder of monasteries and of monastic rules that spread the most effectively in the years after his death. As well as the transmission of his monastic rules it was collections of Caesarius’ sermons *ad monachos* which were the most widely, and quickly, disseminated.¹⁰⁹ The text collated (from two different prefaces from two different manuscript traditions) and published by Morin as Caesarius’ *Sermo 2* purports to serve as a preface to a collection of Caesarius’ sermons, enjoining their reading and sharing.¹¹⁰ This does indeed fit with Caesarius’ injunctions that clergy should read out sermons written by others if they were incapable of preaching themselves,¹¹¹ as well as the claim in the *Vita* that he sent his sermons to be used by clerics ‘in Francia, in Gaul, as well as in Italy, Spain, and other provinces’.¹¹² However the manuscript evidence simply does not suggest that collections of his homilies were used in the sixth and seventh centuries to anything like the same extent as the ‘Eusebius Gallicanus’ collection.¹¹³

It is when it comes to the Carolingian period that we can see most clearly the influence of Caesarius, or rather we see that he has been absorbed into ecclesiastical tradition: a process that must have relied on the copying of his works in previous years, difficult to trace as this is.¹¹⁴ His influence is definitely discernible in the inclusion of canons from ‘his’ councils in Merovingian collections, and the *Vetus Gallica*.¹¹⁵ Caesarius’ words are attributed to others, directly plagiarised, cut and pasted, by a range of authors, in a variety of ecclesiastical genres, beginning in the seventh century. However, it is really in the eighth century, during the period of major Frankish church reform, that Caesarius’ voice really comes to the fore, as his preoccupations, particularly as regards profane practices, match those shared by the reformers.¹¹⁶ Conrad Leyser wishes to see Caesarius’ real significance as only really beginning at this time: ‘He is ... the preacher who constructed ‘the people’ in terms that became the standard for the medieval and even more the Reformation Church. Caesarius is a Tridentine figure, defining a ‘popular culture’ to destroy.’¹¹⁷ The importance and legacy of Caesarius as father figure for the ‘Christianisation’ of southern Gaul continuing right up to the present day has indeed been shown by William Klingshirn’s contribution to this volume.

Caesarius is therefore more just than a good figure to ‘think with’ when it comes to understanding the cultural transformations of Late Antiquity, and the later reception of this period. He remains an important figure, whose powerful if derivative tropes and language lent crucial rhetorical heft in a deeply ideological project. Caesarius, and his hagiographers and editors afterwards, and then his Carolingian and even early modern heirs, used his words as a weapon in a late antique Kulturkampf, backed with the

considerable *auctoritas* of a late Roman aristocrat, although this success would never be absolute. The very repetition of the complaints of ecclesiasts against the persistent elements of popular culture – profane song, dance, calendrical festivities and so on – shows this. The challenge that remains for students of late antique Gaul, is to see Caesarius as just one voice in a polyvocal culture.¹¹⁸

¹ ‘congruas.... locis’: NB ‘congruas... locis’ has also been translated as referring to scriptural passages (e.g. by William Klingshirn, followed by Bona); Klingshirn agrees (pers. com) that either translation is possible.

² ‘Praedicationes quoque congruas festivitibus et locis, sed et contra ebrietatis ac libidinis malum contraque discordiam et odium, contra iracundiam atque superbiam, contra sacrilegos et aruspices, contra kalendarum quoque paganissimos ritus, contraque augures, lignicolos, fonticolos, diversorumque vitia fecit’, *V. Caes.* 1.55. The standard edition of the *Vita* remains that of Dom. Morin: G. Morin (ed.) *Santi Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia nunc primum in unum collecta. Volumen II. Opera varia*, reprinted as *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (= CCSL) 104 (Turnhout, 1953). A useful edition using Morin’s text with notes and appendices plus French translation is M.-J. Delage, *Vie de Césaire d’Arles. Sources Chrétiennes* 536 (Paris, 2010). See too, with Italian translation E. Bona, *Vita Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis* (Amsterdam, 2002). For an English translation see W. E. Klingshirn, *The Life, Testament and Letters of Caesarius of Arles. (Translated Texts for Historians, Liverpool, 1994)*

³ The most commonly cited edition again remains that of Morin: G. Morin (ed) *Santi Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia nunc primum in unum collecta. Volumen I. Sermones* = reprinted as CCSL 103. I have preferred to use the more recent M.-J. Delage, (ed.), *Césaire d’Arles: Sermons au peuple* Vol 1, *Sources Chrétiennes* 175 (Paris, 1971). English translation = M. M. Mueller, *Caesarius of Arles, Sermons.* 3 vols. Fathers of the Church 31, 47, 66. (Washington D.C., 1956-73).

⁴ We might define this as the interplay, or nexus of structures and practices in the conduct of everyday life – the space, where the individual and society meet. See P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977).

⁵ W. E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994); C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), esp. p. 97 also makes an astute contribution, as will be discussed further below.

⁶ This article therefore represents part of a broader project, continuing on from L. Grig, ‘Approaching Popular Culture: Singing in the Sermons of Caesarius of Arles’, *Studia Patristica* 69 (2013), pp. 197-204 and ‘Interpreting the Kalends of January: a Case Study for Late Antique Popular Culture?’, in Grig, *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 237-56.

⁷ The term “popular religion” has been used as part of a discourse seeking to divide respectable, proper religion from its lesser ‘popular’ counterpart, or to ‘separate the grain from the chaff’ in the words of Natalie Zemon Davis: ‘Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion’, in C. Trinkhaus and H.A. Oberman (ed.), *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*, (Leiden, 1974), pp. 307-336, at p. 307. It would be otiose to provide a full bibliography here. The classic discussion for Late Antiquity remains A. Momigliano, ‘Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians’, in G.J. Cumming and D. Baker (ed.), *Popular Belief and Practice, Studies in Church History* 8 (Cambridge, 1972): 1-18; the volume contains a number of relevant pieces; see more recently too eK. Cooper and J. Gregory (ed.), *Elite and Popular Religion, Studies in Church History* 42 (Woodbridge, 2006). Of particular relevance to Caesarius and related material and themes: R. Künzel, F (trans. F. Chevy) ‘Paganisme, syncrétisme et culture religieuse populaire au Haut

Moyen Age: Réflexions de méthode’, *Annales ESC* 47 (1992), pp.1055-1069 and J.-C. Schmitt, ‘Religion populaire” et culture folklorique’, in *Annales: ESC* 31 (1976), pp. 951-53. For discussion and fuller bibliography of the scholarship on elite and popular culture and religion see Grig, ‘Introduction’, in *Popular Culture in the Ancient World*, pp. 1-36.

⁸ For a rather different approach, see A. I. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁹ S. Mazzarino, S. ‘La democratizzazione della cultura nel Basso Impero’, *Rapports du IIe congrès international des sciences historiques II* (1960), pp. 35-54. Bianchi Bandinelli’s analysis of the development of Roman art in the same period is complementary and has been of equal importance in later discussions: see for the big picture R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome: The Center of Power*. Trans. P. Green. (New York, 1970), and more particularly, R. Bianchi Bandinelli, ‘Arte plebea.’, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 1 (1967), pp. 7-19.

¹⁰ See in the special issue of the journal *Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001), in particular J.-M. Carrié, ‘Antiquité tardive et “démocratisation de la culture”: un paradigme à géométrie variable’, *Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001): 27-46, which discusses and critiques various versions of the paradigm.

¹¹ This is pretty much the view of Ramsay MacMullen, in an article representing a rather testy and Gibbonian-tinged response to the above: R. MacMullen: ‘Cultural and Political Changes in the 4th and 5th centuries’, *Historia* 52 (2003), pp. 465-495, esp. p. 476: writing in horrified terms for instance of the appearance of dragons in elite texts as ‘ a triumph for the traditions of The More Lowly! – at which the likes of Pliny would have shaken their heads’.

¹² In common with many of the late antique Gallic bishops known to us Caesarius was an aristocrat: note in particular *V. Caes.* 1.3-4 and in general see R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (London/Berkeley, 1985), pp. 140-56 on the role of aristocrats in the Gallic church.

¹³ See here in particular J. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 171-2.

¹⁴ R. MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity AD 200-400* (Atlanta, 2009), p. 108; see too *idem*, 'The Preacher's Audience (AD 350-400)', *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 40 (1989), pp. 503-511. For an alternative, and convincing approach see Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, with full bibliography and *eadem*, 'Popular Theology in Late Antiquity', in Grig, *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 277-295. Note that all these works concentrate on a period somewhat earlier than that of Caesarius.

¹⁵ This prompts him to estimate, based on 255 churches in 125 towns and cities, that attendance at church could have included only between 1 and 8% of the population: MacMullen, *The Second Church*, p. 108. We might consider this a rather unsubtle methodology, and wonder indeed what the picture would look like if we compared the "data" here with that from later periods (something MacMullen conspicuously fails to do).

¹⁶ For the city of Arles itself, Delage's edition of the *V. Caes.* has a very useful appendix by Marc Heijmans, based on the most up-to-date archaeological knowledge, on the church buildings relevant to Caesarius:

Delage, *Vie de Césaire*, pp. 311-21. In the countryside there are some striking remains of churches of quite an impressive size, e.g. at Ugium/St. Blaise and at Loupian: see N. Duval and J. Guyon, *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France* 1. *Sud-Est et Corse*. (Paris, 1995), 147-50; 81-4, though it is far from clear that either of these *parochiae* would have been in the diocese of Arles.

¹⁷ E.g. ‘flagellis caedite, ut vel plagam corporis timeant, qui de animae suae salute non cogitant’, *Sermo* 13.5 ‘caedite’, *Sermo* 53.2; ‘cum severitate corripite’, *Sermo* 193.4.

¹⁸ ‘Nonulli rusticitatem sermonum vitant, et a vitae vitiis non declinant’, *V. Caes.* 1.2. The importance of the concept of *rusticitas* is discussed below.

¹⁹ ‘ipse dominus communi habuerit in sermone, quia quod erudite diceretur, intellegentiam doctis tantummodo ministraret; quod vero simpliciter, et doctos simul et simplices competenter instrueret’, *V. Caes.* 2.1: ‘the master himself often said in public sermons that what was said in a learned fashion would educate the learned alone, but what was said simply would instruct both the learned and the simple suitably’.

²⁰ See below.

²¹ ‘ut etiam, si sit in aliquot eloquentia saecularis, non oporteat pontificem tali eloquio praedicare, quod vix ad paucorum potest intellegentiam pervenire’, *Sermo* 1.12.

²² Again referring to ‘vix... paucos’, here defined as ‘scolasticos’: *Sermo* 1.20

²³ ‘Unde magis simplici et pedestri sermone, quem totus populus capere possit, debent domini mei sacerdotis populis praedicare’, *Sermo* 1.20. Caesarius’ Latin has indeed come under harsh attack from philologists: For instance Malnory accused him of ‘barbarie’ and ‘rusticité’: A. Malnory, *Saint Césaire, évêque d’Arles* (Paris, 1894), p. 180.

²⁴ Caesarius’ sermons generally lasted ten to fifteen minutes, as far as can be ascertained from the written versions. See Delage’s ‘Introduction’ to the *Sermons au peuple*, Vol. 1, pp. 178: she estimates that the longest sermon lasted only 20 minutes, and contrasts Caesarius’ preaching with that of Hilary of Arles, who would apparently preach for several hours at a time: *V. Hilar.* 14.7-8. We can also note Caesarius’ professed concern that the mass not be too prolonged, in order not to detain the poor and craftsmen: ‘*pauperes homines... quosque artifices*; *Sermo* 76.3

²⁵ E. Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*. (London, 1965), pp. 85, 87.

²⁶ Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 13.

²⁷ Gurevich, *Medieval popular culture*, p. 15 (also in relation to Gregory of Tours).

²⁸ In his article in this issue William Klingshirn discusses related developments in scholarship, such as Daly's take on Caesarius as 'a precursor of medieval Christendom': W.M. Daly, 'Caesarius of Arles, a Precursor of Medieval Christendom', *Traditio* 26 (1970), pp. 1-28.

²⁹ S. Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing the "Popular"', in R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London, 1981), pp. 227-40, at pp. 228, 232.

³⁰ H.N. Parker, 'Toward a Definition of Popular Culture', *History and Theory* 50 (2011), pp. 147-70, at p. 160, n. 69.

³¹ Parker, 'Toward a Definition', esp. p.165.

³² For an introduction to theories of popular culture see J. Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (4th edn) (London, 2006). P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edn. (Aldershot, 2009). is still hugely influential. On popular culture in the ancient world see L. Grig (ed.), *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 2017), J. Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 2009) and S. Forsdyke, *Slaves Tell Tales: and Other Episodes in the Politics of Popular Culture in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, 2012).

³³ See further, for specific aspects, Grig, 'Approaching Popular Culture' and 'Interpreting the Kalends of January'.

³⁴ See here in particular Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles* 88-93, Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 81-99 and ‘The uses of the desert in the sixth-century West’, *Church History and Religious Culture* 18, pp. 113-34, esp. 125.

³⁵ Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*), p. 84.

³⁶ Late on in the writing of this article I became aware of K. Brunner, ‘Publikumskonstruktionen in den Predigten des Caesarius von Arles’, in M. Diesenberger, Y. Hen and M. Pollheimer, *Sermo doctorum: Compilers, Preachers, and their Audiences in the Early Medieval West* (Brepols, 2013) pp. 99-126. Brunner again reminds us that we cannot take as neutral descriptions the ideological picture given by Caesarius of his congregation and their habits.

³⁷ ‘Admonitio sancti Caesarii episcopi vel suggestio humilis peccatoris generaliter omnibus sanctis vel omnibus sacerdotibus directa’. The transmission history of this text does not suggest particularly wide reading in the early Middle Ages. Morin knew of a single early source for the text, albeit the lost ninth-century *Collectio tripertita Longipontana* (Lg), and based his edition (then reprised in the *Corpus Christianorum* edition of 1953) on that first made by Malnory, who use *Parisinus lat.* 12116. I have used the edition of Marie-José Delage in the Sources Chrétiennes series (Vol. 175, Paris 1971), which is based on what is clearly the best and earliest (early twelfth-century) manuscript, though unknown to Morin: Bordeaux 11, f. 68^r-71^r. Part of ‘*Sermo* 1’ were, nonetheless, known from two other actual early medieval sermons, one in a manuscript dating to the early ninth century: see here Delage, *Sermons au peuple*, pp. 72, 218-19.

³⁸ ‘Si neglegentiarum mearum culpas et rusticitatem vel imperitiam diligens examinador attenderem, vix forsitan in parrochiis quoscumque rusticos ad aliquod opus bonum admonere praesumerem, propter illud quod scriptum est: “Eice primum trabem de oculo tuo...”’, *Sermo* 1.1.

³⁹ ‘Ego enim certus sum quod licit rusticissima suggestio mea eruditibus auribus possit asperitatem ingerere vel fastidium generare’, *Sermo* 1.21: Compare the very similar “apology” for his *verba rustica*, explained as aimed at the ‘inperitii et simplices’ in the audience: *Sermo* 86.1.

⁴⁰ See for instance G. Clark, ‘Town and country in late-antique preaching’ in T.S. Burns and J.S. Eadie (eds), *Urban Centres and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity* (Michigan, 2001), pp. 265-84.

⁴¹ Note too, as discussed above, Caesarius’ biographers claim: ‘solitus erat dicere: “Nonnulli rusticitatem sermonum vitant, et a vitae vitiis non declinant”’, *V. Caes.* 1.2

⁴² A balanced discussion of Caesarius’ prose style is given by Marie-José Delage in her ‘Introduction’, *Sermons au peuple*, Vol. 1, pp. 180-208, esp. 206-7; she notes the care the bishop gives to his *cursus* endings; see further I. Bonini, ‘Lo stile nei sermoni di Cesario di Arles’, *Aevum* 36 (1962), pp. 240-57. More generally, a rhetorical claim to simplicity is of course a feature common to Christian authors who use it for ideological reasons even when their style is highly crafted.

⁴³ Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, p. 201.

⁴⁴ We can think again of Leyser's argument that the *primary* audience of Caesarius (or even "Caesarius") is the urban elite and that such passages are designed explicitly to act as a foil, to stir the urban elite to less supposedly "rustic" behaviour: Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 84; see here too Clark, 'Town and country', pp. 274-5 on John Chrysostom.

⁴⁵ See here Grig, 'Interpreting the Kalends'.

⁴⁶ P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (London, 1981), pp. 119-20. See for development of this discussion *idem*, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 95-111.

⁴⁷ Note this comment by Raymond Van Dam with regard to Gregory of Tours: 'one further purpose of the [*Gloria Confessorum*] might well have been an attempt to define and enforce correct behaviour and proper attitudes by emphasising their opposite that were characteristic of this penumbra of 'coarse rusticity': R. Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Confessors*, Translated Texts for Historians, (Liverpool, 1988), p. xix.

⁴⁸ E.g. Caesarius, *Sermo* 44.7 warns that people who did not restrain themselves, hence acting like *rustici*, would give birth to lepers.

⁴⁹ The passage is worth quoting in the original in full: 'Ideo enim speculatores dicuntur esse pontifices, quia in altiori loco velut in summa arce, id est ecclesia, positi et in altario constituti de civitate vel de agro Domini, id est de tota ecclesia, debeant esse solliciti, et non solum ampla portarum spatia custodire, id est

crimina capitalia, praedicatione saluberrima prohibere, sed etiam posterolos vel cuniculos parvulos, id est, minuta peccata, quae cotidie subrepunt', *Sermo* 1.4.

⁵⁰ 'Episcopus enim interpretatur superinspector... in superiori loco positi sumus', *Sermo* 1.19

⁵¹ 'ita et santi sacerdotes, qui in corpore Christi capitis vel oculorum officium habere videntur', *Sermo* 1.16

⁵² 'gubernatores ecclesiarum', *Sermo* 1. 19

⁵³ The text is also concerned with other aspects of episcopal behavior that are not the concern of this article, in particular urging bishops to pay attention to their spiritual and pastoral roles over and above the stewardship of their estates (much on this from 1. 6-9). In this context he urges them to act as *speculatores* of souls, rather than as overseers of vineyards and farm: 1.11.

⁵⁴ 'ita et gubernatores ecclesiarum, nisi cum omni vigilantia docendo, terrendo, interdum etiam distringendo, nunc leniter castigando, nunc etiam cum severitate diem iudicii comminando, rectum vitae aeternae cursum tenere praeceperint, timendum est neinde habeant iudicium, unde potuerant habere remedium', *Serm.* 1.19.

⁵⁵ See e.g. 'flagellis caedite, ut vel plagam corporis timeant, qui de animae suae salute non cogitant', *Sermo* 13.5; 'caedite', *Sermo* 53.2; 'cum severitate corripite'. *Sermo* 193.4.

⁵⁶ *Sermo* 224.5

⁵⁷ *V. Caes.* 1.27: after the reading of the Gospel, especially aimed at those who did not want to hear the sermon.

⁵⁸ *Sermo* 1.4

⁵⁹ ‘vero armis sanctae praedicationis arreptis’, *V. Caes.* 1.17; cf. harsh preaching (‘aspera praedicare’, *Sermo* 5.1) as something to be wished for, with the preacher compared to a doctor, casting out illness with bitter medicine.

⁶⁰ *Sermo* 1.10.

⁶¹ *Sermo* 1.12

⁶² *Sermo* 1.15.

⁶³ *Sermo* 1.20.

⁶⁴ This innovation spread: the Council of Vaison 529 (can. 2) gave presbyters and deacons the right to preach across the province; see still H. G. J. Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France During the Sixth Century*. (Rome, 1950), pp. 267-8.

⁶⁵ *Sermo* 1.10; this concern goes back to the Augustinian tradition: Possidius tells us that Augustine sought to counter just such ‘unnecessary and harmful; *sfabulae* amongst his own clergy: *V. Aug.* 22.9-10.

⁶⁶ E.g. ‘fabulas vanas, mordaces iocos, sermones otiosos ac luxuriosos’, *Sermo* 6.1; ‘otiosis fabulis detractionibus ac scurrilitatibus’, 7.1.

⁶⁷ e.g. 19.3; 33.4: Caesarius urges concern that the mouth, which receives the eucharist, should not be the source of impure words.

⁶⁸ Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 97.

⁶⁹ Thundering against the spectacles was a traditional patristic cliché (see most recently L. Lugaresi, , *Il teatro di Dio. Il problema degli spettacoli nel cristianesimo antico (II-V secolo)* (Brescia, 2010) and A. Puk, *Das römische Spielwesen in der Spätantike* (Berlin, 2014). Matching the clichés with the continuing existence of a real-life spectacle culture is difficult, although Arles was exceptional, for the relatively late disappearance of its traditional spectacles. Nonetheless the most recent studies date the incorporations of the theatre into the new city fortifications during the fifth century: M. Heijmans, *Arles durant l'Antiquité tardive : de la « duplex Arelas » à l'« Urbs Genesisii »*. (Rome. École française de Rome, 2004), pp. 95-6; M.-P. Rothé, M. Heijmans, *Arles, Crau, Camargue (Carte archéologique de la Gaule 13/5)*, (Paris, 2008),

pp. 300-1. As for the amphitheatre, there is evidence of spoliation for construction materials, “parasitical” constructions and the presence of mid-fifth century coins in the subterranean areas, suggesting occupation at this point, though this cannot be conclusive: Rothé and Heijmans, *Arles, Crau, Camargue* 283; 286-7; C. Sintès, ‘La reutilisation des espaces publics à Arles: un témoignage de la fin de l’antiquité’, *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), pp. 181-92, at p. 190 is cautious regarding the dating of this re-occupation. The circus, however, does present a very different picture: though “disfigured” with the accretion of new structures around its façade around the end of the fourth century, it continued to host chariot races even up till the middle of the sixth century, after which it seems to have been finally abandoned: see Heijmans, *Arles durant l’Antiquité tardive*, 360-5; Sintès, ‘La reutilisation des espaces publics’ and for contemporary testimony: Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.11.10 and Procopius, *Wars* 7.33.5.

⁷⁰ ‘... castitati et honestati inimicos’, *Sermo* 1.12. Delage’s edition, based on the earlier manuscript, has ‘luxoriosos cantatores, lutores, vel saltatores’; Morin’s manuscript has ‘luxoriosos cantatores, lutores, vel cantatrices’.

⁷¹ See here Grig, ‘Approaching popular culture’ for further references and discussion on singing in particular.

⁷² ‘...ubi obsceni motus corporum choris et saltibus efferentur’, *Conc. Venet.* (Vannes) (461-91) can. 11; repeated exactly in *Conc. Agath.* (Agde) (506) can. 39.

⁷³ E.g. *Sermo* 55.2

⁷⁴ E.g. *Sermo* 13.4; 16.3; 55.2.

⁷⁵ To take just two examples the renowned orator Hortensius was supposedly nicknamed Dionysia, after a famous dancer of the age (Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 1,5,2) while Cicero claims that a dance was named ‘Titius’ after the orator Sextus Titius, whose gestures were considered effeminate: Cicero, *Brutus* 225: see A. Zanobi, *Seneca’s Tragedies and the Aesthetics of Pantomime* (London, 2014), p. 18.

⁷⁶ See further, R. Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*. (Cambridge, MA, 2008).

⁷⁷ According to Cicero: ‘almost no one dances while sober - unless he is insane (nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit)’, *Pro Murena* 13. Caesarius attacked those dancing ‘like a maniac or a madman (velud freneticus et insanus ballare)’, *Sermo* 16.3) though he also declared the dancing to be in ‘diabolical fashion (diabolico more)’.

⁷⁸ *Sermo* 55.2.

⁷⁹ See here for excellent discussion and references L. Bailey, ““These Are Not Men”: Sex and Drink in the Sermons of Caesarius of Arles”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007), pp. 23-43.

⁸⁰ *Sermo* 1.17.

⁸¹ Cf. *Sermo* 6.1 scurrilitates; 7.5: scurrilitatibus; 72.3: scurrilitatibus; 95.4: scurrilitate; 216.3: omni scurrilitate.

⁸² Here Caesarius' use of *fabula* when speaking derogatively about unauthorized speech might be relevant (otiosus (*Sermo* 7.1; 1.10), vanus (*Sermo* 6.1)), with a sense of fantastical narrative or unreliable tales.

⁸³ For an introduction to the Roman mime see E. Fantham, 'Mime: the missing link in Roman literary history', *Classical World* 82 (1989), pp. 153-63.

⁸⁴ Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul A.D. 481-751* (Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1995), 226-31.

⁸⁵ See Hen, *Culture and Religion*, pp. 228-30; Alcuin, *Ep.* 175: 'Augustinum: 'Nescit homo, qui histriones et mimos et saltatores introducit in domum suam, quam magna eos inmundorum sequitur turba spiritum'

⁸⁶ 'aut turpitude aut stultiloquium aut scurrilitas quae ad rem non pertinent sed magis gratiarum actio': Eph. 6.5. While other authors, both within and outwith the commentary tradition (e.g. Ambrosiaster, *Ad Ephesios* 5.4; John Cassian, *Coll.* 5.19) tend to pair *scurrilitas* with *stultiloquia*, Caesarius never does.

⁸⁷ See E.D. Craun, *Lies, Slander and Obscenity in Medieval English Literature: Pastoral Rhetoric and the Deviant Speaker*, (Cambridge, 1997), esp.. Chapter 5: 'Reforming deviant social practices: *turpiloquium/scurrilitas* in the B Version of *Piers Plowman*', pp. 157-186.

⁸⁸ Also at *Sermo* 7.1: ‘otiosis fabulis detractationibus ac scurrilitatibus’. On the *scurra* as malicious see Cicero, *De Orat.* 2.246.

⁸⁹ Associated with the figure of the parasite from Augustan literature onwards, most notably in Horace, e.g. *Epist.* 1. 18.4: see G.N. Sandy, ‘Indebtedness, “Scurrilitas,” and Composition in Catullus (Cat. 44, 1, 68), *Phoenix* 32.1 (1978), pp. 68-80. Ian Ruffell notes how Horace deliberately disassociates himself and his authorized literature from the popular literature represented by the figure of the *scurra*: I. Ruffell ‘Beyond Satire: Horace, popular invective and the segregation of literature’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 93 (2003): pp. 35-65, esp. 63.

⁹⁰ ‘otiosi fabulis’, *Sermo* 1.10; ‘otiosis ... sermonibus’, *Sermo* 1.17

⁹¹ *Sermo* 1.10.

⁹² ‘turpiloquia’, *Sermo* 1. 17:

⁹³ ‘mordacibus iocis’, *Sermo* 1.10.

⁹⁴ Note repeated combinations in the *Admonitiones*: e.g. ‘fabulas vanas, mordaces iocos, sermones otiosos ac luxuriosos’, *Sermo* 6.1; ‘otiosis fabulis detractationibus ac scurrilitatibus’, *Sermo* 7.1.

⁹⁵ E.g. ‘sumptuosa et deliciosa’, *Sermo* 1. 1; 1.17; cf. ‘illa diabolica convivia’, *Sermo* 54.6. See further B. Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul* (New York, 2002), pp. 25-37, noting (esp. p 27) that Caesarius’ hard, ascetically-flavoured stance was definitely a minority position in Gaul.

⁹⁶ ‘nec in sanctorum solemnitatibus’, *Sermo* 1.12; cf. *Sermo* 216.4 225.5. Complaints about dubious behaviour at saints’ vigils are frequent in Late Antiquity; on Augustine’s objections and the activities involved see now MacMullen, *Second Church*, 60-62. The complaint is also a common early medieval cliché: cf. Childebert’s edict: *MGH Cap.* I, no 2: ‘noctes per vigiles cum ebrietate, scurrilitate vel canticis’...

⁹⁷ E.g. for strictures on posture during the mass: *Sermo* 76.1-21; 77.1-2; 78.1.

⁹⁸ E.g. ‘...sive in domo, sive in itinere, sive in convivio, sive in concessu’, *Sermo* 13.4.

⁹⁹ The fact that Morin placed this text as his *Serm.* 1 is indicative of his view of its importance, not least for his own understanding of Caesarius’ own preaching and pastoral mission. The subjects mentioned here helped him, along with the account given in the *V.C.* 1.55, structure his own collection of the corpus.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Qui enim est presbyter, non dicam episcopus’, *Sermo* 1.12.

¹⁰¹ A series of questions begin ‘Quis est, qui non possit admonere/dicere... Quis est qui admonere non possit etc.’ *Sermo* 1.12.

¹⁰² See here on Caesarius’ response to such activities Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 201-43.

¹⁰³ See here the typically perspicacious comments of Robert Markus, (1992) ‘From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and Paganism in Gaul’, in J. Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (eds) *The Seventh Century* (London, 1992): 154-72, esp. p. 157.

¹⁰⁴ *Sermo* 6.3; see further Grig, ‘Approaching popular culture’.

¹⁰⁵ N. Horsfall, *The Culture of the Roman Plebs* (London, 2003), pp. 66-7.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of Caesarius’ success in introducing singing to his congregations in this light see Grig, ‘Approaching popular culture’.

¹⁰⁷ L. Bailey, *Christianity’s Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul* (Notre Dame, 2010), pp. 55-6

¹⁰⁸ There are seven remaining manuscripts, the earliest, the *Codex Aurelianus* probably dating to the eleventh century; the *V. Caes.* itself is referred to in the version of the *vita* of Radegund (who established her monastery at Poitiers on Caesarean lines) written by his sister, Baudonivia, but not in that of Venantius Fortunatus: see Delage, *Vie De Césaire d'Arles*, 103-107; Bona, *Vita Caesaris*, pp. 43-4; W. Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery for Women in Arles and the Composition and Function of the 'Vita Caesarii', *RBen* 100 (1990), pp. 441-81.

¹⁰⁹ See L. Rudge, (2007) *Texts and Contexts: Women's Dedicated Life from Caesarius to Benedict*. PhD thesis, University of St Andrews (2007), pp. 74-78. Morin's group 'M', the *Collectio Homiliarum ad monachos X*, was the earliest and most widely spread collection, the earliest manuscript being Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, m.s. 1221. That this collection can be specifically connected with Arles and the scriptorium there, as assumed by Morin, cannot be proved.

¹¹⁰ Morin constructed *Sermo 2* out of two texts with different manuscript histories. The first part ('*Humilis suggestio sive salubris ammonitio*') served as a prologue to a collection of sermons in manuscripts ('G') going back as early as the 8th century (Monacensis lat. 6298 (*Frising.* 98), the collection known as G; a second part (*Praefatio libri Sermonum*) comes from a single manuscript source, Zwifalten 49, from the 11th century. See Morin, G. (1932), 'L'origine du symbole d'Athanase: témoignage inédit de S. Césaire d'Arles', in *RB* 44: 206-19, esp. 210-11.

¹¹¹ Caesarius, *Sermo* 1.15

¹¹² *V. Caes.* 1.55.

¹¹³ See Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, esp. pp. 131-43, which discusses the legacy of the collection and samples the manuscripts.

¹¹⁴ A point made by Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, pp. 273-4.

¹¹⁵ See Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 275; Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface', pp. 160-161.

¹¹⁶ As argued by Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface'; further demonstrated by Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 273-86.

¹¹⁷ Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 97.

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