CHAPTER 4

Christianizing Popular Culture
The View 'from the Pulpit'[1]

> [Bishop Caesarius] also wrote sermons for particular festivals and places,[2] but also against drunkenness and debauchery, and against discord and hate, against anger and pride, against the sacrilegious and soothsayers, also against the most pagan rites of the Kalends and against augurs, worshippers of trees and springs, and various vices.[3]

Having established the locations and contexts in which popular culture was both constituted and experienced in the previous two chapters, I now move on to focus on popular culture as seen by the late antique church, examining both constructions of this culture and projects for its suppression and christianization. I shall concentrate particularly on the sermons of Caesarius of Arles, for several reasons. The case of Caesarius offers the best opportunity to combine (and oppose) testimonies of differing kinds: as well as the large body of texts associated with Caesarius, the city of Arles, as we have seen, is one of the best-known cities of the late antique west. However, it is the content of his sermons and related material that is quite simply the most compelling for a study of late antique popular culture.

The sermons of Caesarius, in particular his *Admonitiones*,[4] can seem mind-numbing after a while, as the preacher returns time and time again to his favourite subjects for criticism. The homilies focus on aspects of

[1] Some of the material in this chapter has appeared in earlier forms as Grig 2013b and 2018.

[2] *congruas . . . locis*: this has also been translated as referring to scriptural passages (e.g. by William Klingshirn, followed by Bona); Klingshirn agrees (pers. comm.) that either translation is possible. I have consulted Klingshirn's English translation of the *Vita* throughout.

[3] *Praedicationes quoque congruas festivitatibus 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, lignicolas, fonticolas, diversorumque vitia fecit*, *V. Caes.* 1.55.

[4] In Morin's classification of the corpus, the first eighty are classified as *sermones de diversis seu admonitiones*. The most commonly cited edition is indeed that of Morin; I have also consulted the more recent editions of M.-J. Delage. I have made use of the English translations of M. M. Mueller, in the 'Fathers of the Church' series; see the Primary Sources in the Bibliography for full details.

Christian morality but also on lifestyle, encompassing issues of culture and what Pierre Bourdieu influentially called the *habitus*.[5] 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 by William Klingshirn, who expertly demonstrated the richness of Caesarius' sermons as sources for the religious and social history of late antique Arles, and beyond.[6] My own project, as set out in the preceding chapters, is complementary, seeking to investigate the cultural, social and religious history of late antique southern Gaul through the prism of the study of popular culture. We shall see how episcopal discourse sets out to define correct behaviour through the lens of 'religion'; however, the range of behaviours targeted go far beyond what we might define as narrowly 'religious'.

The question of Caesarius' 'representativeness' arises immediately. As we have already seen, Caesarius was not *typical* in the broader scheme of things, even if he was not that atypical as a bishop of Arles: he was an aristocrat, moulded by his ascetic training at Lérins. However, even in his own time and in his own region his approach to his congregation, and to popular culture, was not the only one. For instance, Lisa Bailey's work has shown how the Eusebius Gallicanus collection of sermons provide an instructive contrast to Caesarius' combative approach, offering a much more consensual and 'fraternal' approach to religious and cultural change within communities.[7] It is in fact the very extremity of Caesarius' discourse that makes him a compelling crucial witness, in that in his rhetoric lies one part of the dialectic of popular culture, forged, as Stuart Hall has argued, in the nexus of competing forces, from above and below.

In what follows I shall first lay out what we might call the 'Caesarian' programme, as well as the problems posed by the bulk of our source material; that is, the writings produced by Caesarius himself, his close associates and his later editors. I shall then move on to look in more detail at the sermons themselves to examine close up Caesarius' distinctively maximalist approach to his pastoral role, including his campaign to stamp out key areas of popular culture, including singing, dancing and

[5] The interplay or nexus of structures and practices in the conduct of everyday life – the space where the individual and society meet: see Bourdieu 1990, as discussed later, p. 124.
[6] Klingshirn 1994: 3. [7] Bailey 2010: 55–9.

scurrilitas, as well as his techniques for doing this. As I shall demonstrate, popular culture was problematized and targeted as never before. However, I shall show how the church also *used* aspects of popular culture in order to communicate with what was undoubtedly a wider audience, while attacking this culture at the same time. The key themes of democratization and christianization, as laid out in Chapter 1, are therefore central to this discussion.

Introducing the 'Caesarian' Programme

Let's begin with the so-called *Sermo* 1 in order not just to lay out the contours of the episcopal programme but also to demonstrate both the opportunities and the problems posed by Caesarius' sermons as a historical source. To begin with, there was no 'Caesarian corpus' of sermons as such in late antiquity.[8] Indeed, trying to identify a 'pure' Caesarian corpus is extremely difficult. Caesarius himself was in general far from original: he clearly utilized a 'cut-and-paste' mechanism in the writing of his sermons, which makes identification all the more difficult.[9] 'Textual fluidity' is thus a seriously understated characterization of the state of Caesarius' tradition in the early middle ages, and this is something we need to bear in mind when reading a series of texts that proclaim themselves to be authoritative.

The corpus as we have it today – a large one of c. 240 sermons – is a modern creation, that of one remarkable individual, the Benedictine scholar Dom Germain Morin.[10] Morin worked on linguistic and stylistic grounds to create the 'Caesarian' corpus, including sermons previously edited under other names, and no fewer than fifty-seven sermons edited for the first time.[11] While the achievement is huge, the subjective nature of

[8] That is, a large collection in his name, in marked contrast to the 'Eusebius Gallicanus' collection, used by Caesarius himself, on which see Bailey 2010, especially on the manuscript tradition: 131–43. Bailey notes that sermons from this collection survive in 477 mss, the earliest of which date from the seventh century. This collection was already in use at the time of Caesarius and was used by Caesarius himself. Smaller collections of Caesarius' sermons did exist and are visible in the manuscript tradition: the group 'M', largely consisting of sermons *ad monachos*, was the most numerous, with the earliest extant manuscript dating to the end of the seventh century: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, m.s. 1221; see Rudge 2007: 74–8.

[9] It is not really surprising, therefore, that Caesarius' own works were so often misidentified as the works of other church fathers, most often Augustine himself, but also Jerome and Maximus of Turin, among others; see Gryson 2007: 350–8.

[10] See Morin's own discussions of his editorial principles: Morin 1893, 1932 and 1938.

[11] Morin divided Caesarius' sermons into three groups, or classes: Class 1 contained 149 sermons that he considered as original, Caesarian compositions. His Class 2 sermons were those modelled on the works of others, but were considered by Morin to have substantial Caesarian elements

identifying authorship based on solely internal criteria is undeniable.[12] Morin constructed his 'Caesarian' corpus based on his own particular idea of what the bishop *stood for*, influenced strongly, not least, by Caesarius' own *Vita*, written by his disciples shortly after his death.[13] The influence of this text is apparent in Morin's decision to use the key topoi from Caesarius' preaching, as described in the passage from the *Vita* given at the head of this chapter, in his thematic ordering of the sermons in his edition. Even assuming that 'Caesarian' sermons largely represent the bishop's own words,[14] Morin's 'Caesarian' corpus is an ideological construction of his own.

Ironically, and perhaps appositely, *Sermo* 1 is most likely not a sermon *ad populum* at all but a letter from Caesarius to his suffragan bishops, which Morin placed at the head of his collection of sermons, presumably to act programmatically for what follows.[15] While, unsurprisingly, much of the text is taken up with matters of proper episcopal behaviour, it also provides a useful whistle-stop, programmatic summary of matters of more general comportment, both lay and clerical; that is, the substantive elements of

(identified in terms of language and/or thought). Morin's Class 3, meanwhile, represented what he saw as only minor revisions of sermons by other preachers. See here Klingshirn 1994: 11–12.

[12] See the comments of Delage 1971: 77, 79. More recent commentators have been more cautious, or indeed sceptical: note the pithy remarks of Leyser 2000 as well as the comments of the various contributors in the special edition of *Early Medieval Europe* 26.1 2018; see further on Morin, Vessey 2005. It is notable that no scholar has yet taken up the challenge to revise Morin's work. This job would clearly be too much for a single individual; such a project would be ideally suited to a small team, using the relevant software. Shari Boodt's European Research Council-funded project studying the reception of Latin patristic sermons in the middle ages is one exciting ongoing project, although it does not look at Caesarius.

[13] It has no fewer than five named authors: Book 1 is purportedly written by three bishops, Cyprianus, bishop of Toulon, Firminus, bishop of Uzès and Viventius (whose see is unknown), while two of Caesarius' own clerics, the presbyter Messianus and the deacon Stephanus, were the named authors of Book 2; see Delage 2010: 19–26.

[14] The relationship between the *spoken* word and the texts transmitted in the early medieval manuscripts requires consideration in itself. William Klingshirn thinks we should assume the presence of stenographers, pointing to the mention of church notaries in the *Vita* (*V. Caes.* 1.21), as well as suggesting that Caesarius revised his own sermons in order to make them more generic and thus more widely useful: Klingshirn 1994: 10–11. We might contrast the finished products with the often very specific stenographer-produced sermons of Augustine on the one hand and with the highly generic sermons that made up the Eusebius Gallicanus collection on the other: Caesarius' homilies fall somewhere in the middle. See Dolbeau 2018 for a helpful account of the transmission of Latin sermons.

[15] *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, 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 used *Parisinus lat.* 12116. I use here the edition of Marie-José Delage, based on Bordeaux 11, f. 68^{r}–71^{r}, unknown to Morin but in fact the best and earliest (early twelfth-century) manuscript. Parts of *Sermo* 1 were, nonetheless, known from two other early medieval sermons, one in a manuscript dating to the early ninth century: see here Delage 1971: 72, 218–19.

'unauthorized culture' which are referred to throughout the *Admonitiones* and which will form the focus for the discussion that follows. *Sermo* 1 and related texts present a powerful discourse which constructs the concept of popular culture, while simultaneously attacking it.

The letter begins with Caesarius invoking a theme which is central to his construction of popular culture: *rusticitas*.

> If I turned or paused to pay attention as a scrupulous examiner to my sinful negligence and my rusticity or ignorance [*rusticitatem vel imperitiam*] 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".[16]

Thus the bishop 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*. This is also a key theme in the presentation of Caesarius by his biographers, who provide a clearly programmatic discussion of the simplicity of Caesarius' Latin at the start of each book of his *Vita*. First, in the opening prologue, the biographers (in something of a hagiographical cliché) apologize for the modesty of their language, citing a supposed saying of Caesarius himself in support: 'Some avoid rusticity in speech, but do not turn from vices in life.'[17] At the start of Book 2, likewise, the biographers again assert the simplicity of Caesarius' language, described as intended to communicate to the 'learned and the simple alike' (*doctos simul et simplices*).[18] This stress on a democratic language is programmatic across *Sermo* 1. Caesarius argues that in preaching there is no need for 'worldly' or even 'pontifical' language, which, he says, can 'scarcely' be understood by even a 'few'.[19] He stresses this again near the end of the treatise,[20] proceeding to the clear injunction that 'my lord bishops should preach to the people in simple, ordinary language that all the people can understand'.[21]

[16] *Si neglegentiarum mearum culpas et rusticitatem vel imperitiam diligens examinator attenderem, vix forsitan in parrochiis quoscumque rusticos ad aliquod opus bonum admonere praesumerem, propter illud quod scriptum est: 'Eice primum trabem de oculo tuo'*, Caes. *Serm.* 1.1.

[17] *Nonulli rusticitatem sermonum vitant, et a vitae vitiis non declinant*, *V. Caes.* 1.2.

[18] *ipse dominus communi habuerit in sermone, quia quod erudite diceretur, intellegentiam doctis tantummodo ministraret; quod vero simpliciter, et doctos simul et simplices competenter instrueret* ('the master himself often said in his 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 properly'), *V. Caes.* 2.1.

[19] *non oporteat pontificem tali eloquio praedicare, quod vix ad paucorum potest intellegentiam pervenire, Serm.* 1.12.

[20] Again referring to *vix . . . paucos*, here defined as *scolasticos*: *Serm.* 1.20.

[21] *Unde magis simplici et pedestri sermone, quem totus populus capere possit, debent domini mei sacerdotes populis praedicare*, *Serm.* 1.20.

As pointed out many years ago by Erich Auerbach in his classic work *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, Caesarius not only refuses to apologize for the uncouthness of his Latin but he also demands a similarly direct style, aimed at the widest possible audience, from his fellow bishops. *Sermo humilis* was embraced by late antique Christian writers and theorists as suitable not only for lowly subjects but also for the most sublime of all.[22] Interestingly, we can contrast the cases of Caesarius and Hilary. Hilary's biographer claimed that Hilary would vary his levels of speech, and while adopting a simple style for 'rustics', he would raise his game for those *instructi* in the congregation.[23] Caesarius, however, advocated the use of a simple style in all cases.[24] His Latin has traditionally come under harsh attack from philologists, although recent scholars have tended to be more sympathetic.[25] It is indeed on the basis of philological analysis that Caesarius has been analysed as a key figure in the 'democratization of culture'. Auerbach described Caesarius as the first medieval author on the basis of his prose style.[26] Aaron Gurevich began his *Medieval Popular Culture* with Caesarius, arguing that it was thanks to the bishop of Arles, with his use of *sermo humilis*, that a new stage of culture began.[27] We should not forget, nonetheless, that, simple as it seems, Caesarius' prose was in fact very carefully crafted, part of a deeply ideological 'democratizing' project.[28] He indeed returns, tellingly, to the

[22] See Auerbach 1965: 25–66, especially 33–45; the classic discussion of the three different levels of style is that of Cic. *De or.* 21.69–70, as followed by Augustine, in his highly influential text *De doct. Christ.* 4.12ff. While there is no direct evidence that Caesarius had read this work (or indeed *De cat. rud.*), Caesarius uses many of the rhetorical techniques described in *De doct. Christ.*, as noted by Klingshirn 1994: 149.

[23] *V. Hil.* 14. [24] As stressed by Auerbach 1965: 91–2.

[25] Malnory, for instance, accused him of linguistic 'barbarie' and (indeed) 'rusticité': Malnory 1894: 180. More recent judgements have been somewhat more sympathetic: Erich Auerbach argued that the 'individuality' of Caesarius' style should be recognized: Auerbach 1965: 89; Irma Bonini stressed the effectiveness of this style but also noted a number of weaknesses: Bonini 1962: 'un senso di pesantezza o di noia' (p. 245); 'espressioni sciatte e i periodi contorti' (p. 257). Marie-José Delage seeks to defend Caesarius from Malnory's charge, suggesting that we should place Caesarius' language in an 'intermediary zone' between written and spoken language; Delage 1971: 181. Her considered summary of Caesarian Latin describes it as 'une langue claire, vigoreuse, mais limitée' but also as 'certainement ni celle d'un barbare, ni celle d'un homme inculte' (1971: 193). William Klingshirn emphasizes that Caesarius chose to use 'the vernacular Latin spoken by his audience': Klingshirn 1994: 148; see too Campetella 2001, arguing that Caesarius consciously borrowed from the local Latin of his audiences.

[26] Auerbach 1965: 87.

[27] Gurevich 1988: 13 pairs Caesarius with Gregory of Tours as 'founders of the Middle Ages'; with them began 'a new stage in the history of culture'.

[28] Delage 1971: 206–7 notes the care the bishop gives to his *cursus* endings. A rhetorical claim to simplicity is of course a feature common to Christian authors in late antiquity who use it for ideological purposes, even when their style is highly crafted.

theme of his 'rustic' Latin in his closing peroration to his fellow bishops, with a self-deprecating reference to the irritation his *rusticissima suggestio* might have caused the 'learned' ears of his audience.[29] This is a very nice example of Caesarius' carefully crafted and ideologically focused rhetorical *rusticitas*.[30]

Rusticitas appears here as a topos which the aristocratic bishop employs of himself as part of his ideological and rhetorical armoury. It is double-edged as an ideological and rhetorical weapon, however: it is also a topos he uses to label others with a rather different ideological aim in mind. In the view of Klingshirn, *rusticitas* functions for Caesarius more as an ideological than a sociological construct.[31] Conrad Leyser has argued that the figure of the rustic is primarily a foil with which to rebuke an urban audience.[32] Nonetheless, even if the term is used to rebuke those of unimpeachably high social standing and education, its valency comes from what we can reasonably call a *class* connotation: an association with ignorance and lack of culture. Such associations are consistently used to stigmatize aspects of culture disliked by the church – as we shall see in Chapter 6, in the case of the festival of the Kalends, attacked in this way in both west and east. Gregory of Tours' use of *rusticitas*, as discussed by Peter Brown, is also relevant here: 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'.[33] There is indeed plenty of traditional snobbery to be seen in patristic texts, including the sermons of Caesarius, as Igor Filippov notes, drawing attention to how Caesarius sneers at 'rustics' getting drunk on homemade booze.[34] We might also wonder how far the prevalence of complaints about *rusticitas* indicates an aristocratic response to ongoing changes to the built environment and shifts in the relationship between town and country. Ultimately, the use of the charge of *rusticitas* by Caesarius and others is aimed at a wide audience, part of the growing claim of the church to discipline society.

Despite the persistent disinclination of many of today's historians to talk in terms of class, it is clear to me that our late antique authorities present an

[29] *Ego enim certus sum quod licit rusticissima suggestio mea eruditis auribus possit asperitatem ingerere vel fastidium generare*, *Serm.* 1.21. Compare the very similar apology for his *verba rustica*, explained as aimed at the *inperitii et simplices* in the audience: *Serm.* 86.1.

[30] The use of the concept is not of course original to Caesarius; see for comparisons Clark 2001.

[31] Klingshirn 1994: 201.

[32] Leyser 2000: 84; see here too Clark 2001: 274–5 on John Chrysostom.

[33] Brown 1981: 119–20. See for development of this discussion Brown 2003: 150–4.

[34] *aliqui rustici, quando aut vinum habuerint aut alia sibi pocula fecerint*, *Serm.* 47.7; Filippov 2010: 195.

upper-class attack on and stigmatization of *lower*-class behaviour.[35] Caesarius thinks and speaks as both an ascetic and an aristocrat. He pairs *rusticitas* with *imperitia* – lack of knowledge or expertise, or ignorance. The choice of *imperitia* is surely not a coincidence: its opposition, *peritia*, in the sense of expertise, was a key concept for John Cassian who used it to stress his spiritual and moral authority.[36] However, the concept of *rusticitas*, bolstered by the tools and themes of ascetic ideology, was used by members of the elite to stigmatize aspects of elite behaviour that were felt to be unpalatable by smearing them with lower-class connotations.[37] Hence the interaction between elite and non-elite that was new in late antiquity constituted both the opportunity and the ideological imperative to mould non-elite behaviour according to elite values. At the same time, we can see, in a parallel process, the clear attempt by a new, often ascetically trained, Christian elite to mould what was correct – indeed, *elite* – behaviour, using what is ultimately the language of class.

The moulding of lay behaviour, both ascetic and elites, in the hands of Caesarius (at least as presented in the textual tradition) is a substantial enterprise. *Sermo* 1 contains a number of strikingly coercive images of the bishop. It is worth quoting this passage at length:

> For that reason, bishops are said to be watchmen [*speculatores*] because they have been placed in a higher position, as if on the top of the citadel, that is, of the church; established on the altar, they should be solicitous for the city and the field of God, that is, the entire church, guarding not only the wide expanse of the gates, that is, prohibiting serious sins by salutary preaching, but also watching the rear doors and little rabbit-holes. So to say, they should continually advise the detection and cleansing of slight offences which daily creep up, by means of fasting, alms, and prayers.[38]

The image of the watchman/*speculator* comes from Ezekiel: *Fili hominis, speculatorem dedi te domui Israel, et audies de ore meo verbum, et annuntiabis eis ex me*.[39] As discussed by Conrad Leyser, this notion of the bishop

[35] 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"': Van Dam 1988: xix.

[36] See Leyser 2000: 47–61.

[37] For example, warning that people who did not restrain themselves sexually, hence acting like *rustici*, would give birth to lepers: Caes. *Serm.* 44.7.

[38] Caes. *Serm.* 1.4.

[39] According to the Vulgate, Ezekiel 3.17: 'Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my moth, you shall give them a warning from me' (Revised Standard Version).

represents a distinctive ascetic model, developed by Augustine in a widely transmitted sermon, used for the anniversary of bishops' consecrations, and then used again by Caesarius' teacher Pomerius.[40] Leyser has shown how each author uses the metaphor differently, with Caesarius using it 'to legitimate a regime of intimate episcopal supervision'.[41] In *Sermo* 1 Caesarius describes the bishop as 'an inspector on a lofty site',[42] the eyes in the head of Christ[43] and the pilot of a ship, directing the ship of the church.[44] The bishop indeed appears as a policeman, involved in the surveillance and control of his congregation.[45] 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 at times gently punishing, at times even threatening the day of judgment with severity, and thus show how to keep the straight path of eternal life, it is to be feared that they will only receive judgment where they might have had a remedy.[46]

Indeed, as well as exhorting his fellow clergy to use physical coercion, elsewhere Caesarius encourages his flock to whip, beat and shackle the stubborn and recalcitrant,[47] as well as telling them to inform on these miscreants 'in secret'.[48] On occasion, too, he would lock the doors during the liturgy in order to keep his congregation from leaving church.[49]

According to Caesarius, the episcopal *speculator* is to guard, through his preaching, against all the sins, major and minor, of his congregations. These sins are then to be expiated through ritual practices – fasting and prayers – as well, in accordance with a widespread pastoral

[40] See Leyser 2000: 28–31, 65–6, 71–2, 162–3; in particular Aug. *Serm.* 339; Pomerius, *De vita cont.* 1.20.2–3.

[41] Leyser 2000: 152.

[42] *Episcopus enim interpretatur superinspector . . . quia in superiori loco positi sumus*, *Serm.* 1.19.

[43] *ita et santi sacerdotes, qui in corpore Christi capitis vel oculorum officium habere videntur*, *Serm.* 1.16.

[44] *gubernatores ecclesiarum*, Caes. *Serm.* 1.19.

[45] Caes. *Serm.* 1 is also concerned with other aspects of episcopal behavior that are not of concern here, such as 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 to 1.9). In this context Caesarius urges them to act as *speculatores* of souls rather than as overseers of vineyards and farms: 1.11.

[46] *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 ne inde habeant iudicium, unde potuerant habere remedium*, Caes. *Serm.* 1.19.

[47] See, for example, *flagellis caedite, ut vel plagam corporis timeant, qui de animae suae salute non cogitant*, *Serm.* 13.5; *caedite*, *Serm.* 53.2; *cum severitate corripite*, *Serm.* 193.4.

[48] *Serm.* 225.4.

[49] *V. Caes.* 1.27: after the reading of the Gospel, especially aimed at those who did not want to hear the sermon – thus raising the stakes even above the level of his predecessor Hilary, who, as we saw, shouted at those who dared to leave early: *V. Hil.* 18.

strategy, as almsgiving.[50] Ritual practice and physical punishment alike have a role to play but it is the spoken word that *Sermo* 1 promotes as the most powerful tool of all. Caesarius warns that no episcopal excuses for failing to preach would be accepted on the day of judgement.[51] It is indeed apt that his hagiographers describe Caesarius as wielding his preaching 'like a weapon'.[52] He saw the word of the bishop as a crucial weapon in an ongoing battle, with preaching essential in rural areas, as well as in towns.[53] It is with this in mind that the Council of Vaison in 529 enshrined the right of presbyters and deacons, as well as bishops, to preach.[54]

Caesarius and his biographers alike thought preaching a powerful weapon – but (how) did it work? Lisa Bailey applied the work of the anthropologist Maurice Bloch to her study of sermons, showing how the formalization of language works to control discourse. Bloch discussed the role of formalized speech both *in* and *as* ritual, arguing that ritualized language acts coercively, as a 'form of social control'.[55] Bailey makes the case for seeing sermons in this light: 'Highly formalised language is coercive, attempting to dictate appropriate responses and reactions and, in its most effective forms, making contradiction or negation impossible by virtue of its internal structures. It is efficacious because it is intangible. It communicates without explanation and therefore cannot be argued with.'[56] We should further note that the sermon is of course just one part of the liturgy, where different elements work together in order to construct religious authority in various ways, notably through performance.[57]

Preaching, according to Caesarius, should be simple, and was therefore something that could be done by all members of the clergy.[58] Those unable to preach their own sermons should read out those composed by others.[59] The *Vita* tells us that Caesarius had copies of his own sermons made to be used in other churches as far away as Spain.[60] Indeed, Morin's *Sermo* 2

[50] *Serm.* 1.4. [51] *Serm.* 1.20.

[52] *vero armis sanctae praedicationis arreptis*, *V. Caes.* 1.17; see also harsh preaching (*aspera praedicare*, *Serm.* 5.1) as something to be wished for, with the preacher compared to a doctor, casting out illness with bitter medicine.

[53] *Serm.* 1.10. [54] Conc. Vas. a.529 can. 2. See further Beck 1950: 267–8; Klingshirn 1994: 230.

[55] Bloch 1974. [56] Bailey 2010: 27.

[57] Bloch 1974: especially 69–71 comments on the particular religious authority conferred by song; we shall look at Caesarius' efforts to encourage mass liturgical singing later. The sermon also 'worked' in part due to its architectural and ritual contexts, even if the state of the archaeological remains does not allow us to reconstruct the physical setting of Caesarius' sermons to any real extent: see Klingshirn 1994: 151.

[58] Caes. *Serm.* 1.12. [59] Caes. *Serm.* 1.15.

[60] 'To those far away in Francia, Gallia, as well as in Italy, Spain, and other provinces, he sent through the intermediary of bishops, sermons they could preach in their own churches, so that when they had abandoned frivolous and perishable things they might become, according to the apostle,

purports to act as a preface to a book of sermons (a *libellus*) to be used in parishes and read by presbyters and deacons.[61] *Sermo* 2 is not quite what it seems, however, having been constructed by Morin out of two different texts, with different manuscript histories.[62] In fact, a much wider distribution of Caesarius' sermons is not really discernible in the manuscript tradition, at least outside the monastic context, and they certainly did not receive contemporary 'success' on anything like the scale of the 'Eusebius Gallicanus' collection.[63] Nonetheless, the making and dissemination of these collections aimed not just to spread preaching but also, of course, to spread a safely *authorized* (and authoritative) version of preaching.[64]

Like any traditional member of the Roman elite, Caesarius was certain that he could distinguish between authorized and unauthorized speech. Nonetheless, in *Sermo* 1 even the clergy themselves are seen as prone to indulging in inappropriate talk. Caesarius writes that they 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] as we shall see later. *Sermo* 1 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 – that is, *unauthorized* – culture, the nature of which we shall discuss later. This serves as an important reminder that, first,

"followers of good things" (Titus 2.14). In this way he spread the "fragrance of Christ" far and wide', *V. Caes.* 1.55.

[61] *admonitiones simplices parochiis necessarias in hoc libello conscripsimus, quas in festivitatibus maioribus sancti presbyteri vel diacones debeant commissis sibi populis recitare*, *Serm.* 2. Furthermore, Caesarius counsels the further copying out of this *libellus* (emending mistakes where necessary!) and indeed the passing on of copies to other parishes for further transcription.

[62] The first part (*Humilis suggestio sive salubris ammonitio*) served as a prologue to a collection of sermons ('G') found in manuscripts going back to as early as the eighth century (Monacensis lat. 6298 (*Frising* 98)). This preface enjoins the reading and sharing of the said *libellus*. A second part (*Praefatio libri Sermonum*) comes from a single manuscript source, Zwifalten 49, dating from the eleventh century. While Morin argued that Caesarius wrote the first part of the prologue for a collection of sermons, covering the major feasts of the liturgical year, one might consider this interpretation to be optimistic rather than entirely convincing: see Morin 1932: especially 210–11.

[63] It was not until the Carolingian period that Caesarius enjoyed a florescence, as has been noted by William Klingshirn, among others: Klingshirn 1994: 273–86 (ch. 10, 'The legacy of Caesarius'); Claussen 2004: 180–2.

[64] See Bailey 2010: 21–2.

[65] *Serm.* 1.10; this concern goes back to the Augustinian tradition: Possidius tells us that Augustine sought to counter just such 'unnecessary and harmful *fabulae*' among his own clergy: *Vita Augustini* 22.9–10 (ed. and trans. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, *Vite dei Santi, iii: Vita di Cipriano, Vita di Ambrogio, Vita di Agostino* (Milan, 1975).

[66] For example, *fabulas vanas, mordaces iocos, sermones otiosos ac luxuriosos*, *Serm.* 6.1; *otiosis fabulis et detractionibus ac scurrilitatibus*, *Serm.* 7.5.

'popular culture' does not apply only to a narrow sociological group and, second, cultural change can be seen to move 'upwards' as well as 'downwards'. This is the way in which we can best understand the process whereby Caesarius and his colleagues used the concept of *rusticitas* itself as a tool with which to discipline *all* society, clerical and lay, 'elite' and non-elite alike.

Indeed, we might wonder if Caesarius was expecting there to be any 'real' rustics in the congregation. Who made up the audience of the sermons the bishop sought to have delivered so widely? In previous chapters we looked at the location of churches in both city and countryside. The city of Arles, as we saw, possessed several churches in addition to the seat of the bishop, the cathedral, including several other possible sites for preaching such as the cult sites associated with St Genesius. We then saw how the diverse *territorium* of Arles (see Map 5) included a number of smaller and larger church buildings in a variety of different landscapes, associated with varying forms of social organization and ecclesiastical status.[67] But who was actually in the congregation? Debate continues regarding the economic and social composition of the preacher's audience in late antiquity. Ramsay MacMullen was the most steadfast proponent of the view that the real-life audience was far from broad, but was rather made up almost exclusively of the economic and social elite, estimated more precisely as the top 5 per cent in his most recent work.[68] Even if we do not want to take quite as hard a line as MacMullen on the make-up of the preacher's audience, we can certainly agree that late antique bishops felt most comfortable addressing their social equals, or near-equals. Karl Brunner indeed concludes that Caesarius aimed his preaching at a prosperous 'Mittelstand' (middle class).[69] On one occasion Caesarius expresses concern that the mass not be too prolonged, in order not to detain the poor and craftsmen.[70] However, on several other occasions he is clearly

[67] As we saw in Chapter 3, there are some striking remains of churches of quite an impressive size, for example at Ugium/St Blaise and at Loupian: see Duval and Guyon 1995: 147–50, 81–4, though it is far from clear that either of these parishes would have been in the diocese of Arles.

[68] MacMullen 1966 and 1989 used internal evidence; in MacMullen 2009, especially 108, he counted the spaces available in church buildings where possible; we might consider this a rather unsubtle methodology, and wonder how different the picture would look if we compared the 'data' here with that from later periods (something MacMullen conspicuously fails to do). For an alternative approach, see Maxwell 2006 with full bibliography and Maxwell 2017. Note that all these works concentrate on a period a little earlier than that of Caesarius.

[69] Brunner 2013.

[70] *pauperes homines . . . quosque artifices*, Caes. *Serm.* 76.3. See further Delage 1971: 178 who estimates (on the basis of the written versions) that Caesarius' longest sermon would have only lasted 20 minutes, and contrasts his preaching with that of Hilary of Arles, who would apparently preach for several hours at a time: *V. Hil.* 14.7–8.

speaking as one *dominus* to another, such as when he enjoins corporal punishment upon recalcitrant offenders.[71] Overall, Caesarius' sermons seem therefore to conform to the broader late antique picture and should certainly not be taken as unmitigated communications *de haut en bas*, as it were.

While both the *Vita* and Caesarius in his own works stress his role as preacher to the people, we have already seen that we must be sceptical. Conrad Leyser has argued, in a significant contribution, that this vision of Caesarius as popular preacher is a construction, an 'icon', an image aimed not at 'the peasant farmers of Provence, but the rich and urbane clergy and laity of Arles'.[72] The ideological construction of Caesarius as the exemplar of a popular speaker is *in itself* an important piece of evidence for the ideological project that I am seeking to deconstruct. As we shall see, 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 while also stigmatizing the behaviour of their social superiors, not least through his attack on *rusticitas*. We can see the bishop claiming the unique authority to discipline culture at all levels of society. We have a triangulation between bishop, secular elite and non-elite that we will explore in the chapters that follow. For now, we will look more closely at the *Admonitiones* themselves, sermons that can be seen as distinctively authoritative, in various ways. I shall first turn to look at the approach to the body, a crucial field for the exercise of power.

Disciplining the Rustic Body

Let's begin with a striking passage, in which Caesarius offers his sermon as a mirror, held up to his congregation to show the people their own sinful behaviour. It is an arrestingly embodied image of Christian identity, where the congregation are imagined as a woman about her *toilette*.

> Our sermon is proposed to your charity as a mirror. Just as when a lady looks in a mirror she corrects whatever she sees crooked but does not break the mirror, so as each one of you recognizes his own hideousness in the sermon, it is more proper for him to amend his life than to become angry at the preaching, which is like a mirror.[73]

[71] For example, *flagellis caedite, ut vel plagam corporis timeant, qui de animae suae salute non cogitant*, Caes. *Serm.* 13.5; *caedite*, *Serm.* 53.2; *cum severitate corripite*, *Serm.* 193.4; Caesarius' corporal punishment of his own slaves (*V. Caes*. 1.25) was discussed in Chapter 3.

[72] Leyser 2000: 84; compare Brunner 2013.

[73] *Sermo enim noster quasi speculum, caritati vestrae proponitur: et ideo quomodo matrona, quando speculum adtendit, in se potius quod tortum viderit corrigit, et non speculum frangit, ita et unusquisque*

William Klingshirn discusses this use of the image of the mirror in his exemplary study of Caesarius: 'if so, it was a mirror of a peculiarly distorted and selective kind, which represented only those aspects of attitude or behavior the bishop could observe for himself or learn from others, reflected only those matters he chose to discuss, and presented only those interpretations he chose to present'.[74] Indeed, we simply cannot accept Caesarius' claim that he represents the behaviour of his congregation transparently and neutrally. We might in fact choose to see the mirror operating in another direction; that is, we might instead argue that the picture of the congregation that we gain from his sermons is often in fact most revealing of the bishop's *own* pastoral priorities and strategies.[75]

Caesarius' analogy of the mirror is used to make a highly tendentious, ideological claim. It is thereby deeply revealing of his methods and of his interest in the *habitus* of his congregation, including a concern with bodily deportment and practice. This even extends to the dress of his flock: elsewhere small sins are compared with spots or tears on clothing – and Caesarius reminds his flock that none of them would wish to wear a dirty tunic to church.[76] The scholar of lived religion Meredith McGuire has highlighted the importance of matters to do with the body, and bodily propriety in policing the boundaries of the 'sacred' and 'profane' (a central interest for Caesarius): 'Most reform movements – Protestant and Catholic alike – emphasized bodily control and propriety, especially regarding sexuality. This development had strong religious connotations, but it was also part of the larger "civilizing process" that was linked to the differentiation of social class elites.'[77]

She notes further, again with the early modern period in mind:

> churches became places where the newly marked boundaries between sacred and profane were ritually observed with newly distinguished, class-based norms of propriety and gentility. Religious people were those who showed respect for the sacred in church by controlling their bodies and deporting themselves with proper postures, gestures, and other tightly controlled behaviours. Ordinary people's religious practices, regardless of official religious affiliation were – by definition – not genteel enough.[78]

vestrum quotiens in aliqua praedicatione cognoscit foeditatem suam, iustum est ut magis se corrigat, quam contra praedicationem velut contra speculum velit irasci, Caes. *Serm.* 42.6.

[74] Klingshirn 1994: 14.

[75] For general methodological discussion of the problems of using sermons as historical sources, see Muessig 2002a and 2002b.

[76] Caes. *Serm.* 44.6; see too 45.2.

[77] McGuire 2008: 40, with a nod to Elias 1978.

[78] McGuire 2008: 40.

This seems strikingly familiar, and reminiscent too of Caesarius' preaching. The body represents a central domain for the exercise of episcopal authority for an ascetic programme such as his. William Klingshirn has already written insightfully on Caesarius' focus on bodily gesture and 'ritual action',[79] citing the work of Pierre Bourdieu to elucidate his analysis of Caesarius' focus on posture and gesture.[80] I think we can take this engagement with Bourdieu further in studying popular culture, firstly by thinking how we can use his concept of the *habitus*: the interplay or nexus of structures in the conduct of everyday life. According to Bourdieu, this *habitus* is where the individual and society meet.[81] Next, we can take Bourdieu's notion of bodily *hexis*: the expression or *embodiment*, of all the factors that make up our *habitus*. According to Bourdieu: 'Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking.'[82] Symbolic power works in part through the control of other people's bodies, with 'seemingly innocuous details' combining to 'inscribe the most fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of a culture'.[83] As Bourdieu argued, it is through this kind of cultural communication, for instance through body language, that we both learn and express our place in society.[84] It would be wrong, again, not to draw attention to the element of *class* at play here. David Gartnam puts it neatly: 'Because the habitus of different classes shape different tastes for culture, the field of culture is a misrecognized and symbolic expression of conflict between the classes, especially between the dominant (bourgeois) class and the dominated (working) class.'[85]

As has been widely shown for classical antiquity, elite status was widely and deeply *embodied*, as indeed expressed in Bourdieu's concept of bodily

[79] Klingshirn 1994: 154–9.

[80] Including the following passage: 'The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body, *made body* by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy', Bourdieu 1977: 94.

[81] Bourdieu did not invent the concept, which is already found in the influential work of Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process.* See the constructive use of this concept for late antiquity in Maxwell 2006: 146–8.

[82] Bourdieu 1990: 69–70. Note too 'Deportment matters. It is a shorthand that encodes, and replicates, the complex realities of social structure, in a magnificent economy of voice and gesture', Gleason 1995: xxiv.

[83] Bourdieu 1990: 69.

[84] Bourdieu developed these concepts through fieldwork among Berber groups in North Africa but also through his work on France, where he looked at how elites were constructed and perpetuated through the use of cultural capital, of 'taste'; see also Bourdieu 1984.

[85] Gartnam 2012: 157.

hexis.[86] A certain gravitas of posture was expected of the elite Roman male. There were well-established dichotomies between elite behaviour and non-elite behaviour, as well as between male and female. The elite male was still and slow, for instance, while the lower classes dashed about.[87] The elite male, as personified by the ideal orator, was supposed to possess a pleasant speaking voice, but derogatory remarks were made about the supposedly guttural noises made by the lower classes. For instance, Ammianus Marcellinus, attacking the pastimes of the Roman plebs, was scornful of the guttural noises made by 'the multitude of lowest condition and greatest poverty': they 'quarrel with one another in their games of dice, making a repugnant sound by drawing back the breath into their resounding nostrils'.[88] The lower classes were seen as generally coarse.[89] The advent of Christianity certainly did not put an end to such class-based prejudices.

As Klingshirn has discussed, Caesarius prescribes a whole series of bodily practices, as part of the construction of the Christian *habitus*. Some of these clearly function as a ritual preparation for the liturgy: for instance, the congregation are exhorted to prepare for church services through abstinence from sex and sin.[90] While the ascetic agenda here is obvious, it does not provide a complete explanation or interpretative model. Caesarius' attempts to mould deference, passivity and of course obedience are striking. He wished to inculcate not just discipline but also *deference* in his congregation, and deference has an important bodily component. As Maud Gleason has put it, '[d]emeanour expresses – or extorts – deference, an awareness of one's place in relation to others'.[91] Caesarius exhorts his congregation to uphold the correct demeanour (and even dress!) in church, as if in the presence of the powerful.[92] This proper deference involved the correct bodily language and posture: the appropriate bodily *hexis*. Posture is a concern in several sermons: the congregation are exhorted to stand, not loll or lie, for the lessons and the sermon, and kneel, or bow the head if infirmity prevents them from kneeling, for prayer.[93] The correct mental attitude stems from bodily practices: chanting the words of the psalms is a prelude to the begetting of holy thoughts.[94]

The model of authority represented by Caesarius himself is harshly patriarchal and not infrequently embodied and indeed physical. As we

[86] As in Gleason 1995; Corbeill 2004: especially 107–39.
[87] Corbeill 2004: 117–18, citing Quintilian and Plautus.
[88] *Ex turba vero imae sortis et paupertinae . . . pugnaciter aleis certant turpi sono fragosis naribus introrsum reducto spiritu concrepantes*, Amm. Marc. 14.6.25, trans. Rolfe.
[89] See on sensory distinction Toner 2009: 123–61. [90] Klingshirn 1994: 155–6.
[91] Gleason 1995: xxiv. [92] Caes. *Serm.* 77.3, 187.3. [93] Caes. *Serm.* 76.1–2, 77, 78.1.
[94] Caes. *Serm.* 75.2.

have already seen, he encourages heads of households to use physical force and restraint where necessary. His pastoral metaphors are stark: he favours presenting the bishop as a doctor, casting out illness with a bitter medicine, cutting with an iron knife or cauterizing.[95] It is by 'harsh preaching' (*aspera praedicare*) alone that ingrained sins can be corrected.[96] Caesarius also expects his congregation to correct their sins through a highly disciplined series of bodily practices. As common in patristic discourse, he presents the Christian life as a constant battle, especially where the body was concerned; for instance, 'amongst all the struggles suffered by Christians, those involving chastity are the toughest, for the battle is daily, and victory is rare'.[97] The ascetic nature of Caesarius' programme is of course crucial here but, as already noted, ascetic discourse is almost seamlessly blended with elite/ist discourse.

Let's return to the metaphorical *matrona* looking in the mirror. She is pictured as merely readjusting her appearance, but Caesarius uses an emotive word: *foeditas*, disgustingness, or hideousness, to describe the behaviour of his congregation. On many occasions he appeals to the congregation's emotions of self-disgust and shame in his attempts to reform their behaviour. In a series of sermons on drunkenness, for instance, Caesarius presents drinking, a common facet of masculine behaviour, not just as disgusting but as representing a loss of bodily control, a loss of bodily integrity, a loss of proper masculinity.[98] As Lisa Bailey has noted, Caesarius here explicitly offers his audience of 'rustics' a traditional elite Roman ideology of the body.[99] In this respect we can indeed see a 'democratization' of Roman bodily ideology as part of a reform process similar to that outlined by Meredith McGuire.

The image of the *matrona* on the one hand and the emphasis on masculinity on the other both remind us how discourses surrounding popular culture tend to be highly gendered. As so often, women come under particular focus, and indeed attack.[100] As we saw, Caesarius' imagined ideal audience member is clearly an elite male head of household. However,

[95] Caes. *Serm.* 5.2; compare 43.9, 57.2. [96] Caes. *Serm.* 5.1.

[97] *Inter omnia christianorum certamina sola duriora sunt proelia castitatis, ubi cotidiana pugna est, et rara victoria*, Caes. *Serm.* 41.2.

[98] Especially Caes. *Serm.* 46–7. [99] Bailey 2007.

[100] As, for instance, in the frequent association (up to the present day) of women, and femininity, with popular or mass culture, criticized as passive and indeed sentimental, as well as solely focused on consumption, an association which has come under justified feminist critique. See here Striniati 2004: 40, 167–204. Note too Habermas' influential association of women with the 'intimate' sphere and the novel (Habermas 1991), an association which while long made in respect of the ancient novel is now rightfully discredited; see, for instance, Haynes 2003: 2–10.

as so often, women could be good to think with, or rather to use both to denigrate certain types of behaviour and/or to denigrate women themselves by association with this behaviour.[101] Sometimes the bishop takes special pains to specify that he is attacking the behaviour of both men *and* women;[102] at other times he stresses that it is *primarily* women who are at fault.[103] For instance, as so often in the ancient world, he associates women in particular with superstitious behaviour.[104]

Indeed, most relevant of all in this discussion of bodily *hexis* is the specific focus on the behaviour of women, especially *young* women, in *Sermo* 78.[105] The bishop attacks the posture of 'some of our daughters' who do not maintain the appropriate posture during the lessons but instead lie on the floor of the church.[106] In what can only be described as a misogynistic jibe, Caesarius suggests sarcastically that these 'daughters' would stand up alright if they were offered jewels and gold.[107] He addresses these young women directly (*Rogo vos*, *filiae*), asking them to listen, before making an analogy which involves them being 'justly rebuked and slapped' (*objurgo . . . caedo*). Playing with gender, the bishop goes on to ask the girls to imagine him as their (spiritual) mother (*matrem . . . animarum vestrarum*),[108] providing spiritual care and ornamentation, although he subsequently returns to the safer position of 'paternal solicitude'.[109] In his sermons Caesarius thus demonstrates just how fully he had inherited traditional notions of gender from Roman moralizing discourse. This is not to say, however, that he did not challenge other aspects of traditional gender morality: in particular, he attacked the double standards applied to male and female sexual continence.[110] However, in general Caesarius' views correspond very predictably to what we would expect from his class and sex. We can also note one final example, where he extends a metaphor

[101] In terms of works addressed explicitly to women, Caesarius wrote a much-quoted letter to nuns (*Ep.* 21) and the influential *Regula virginum* (Morin II: 99–219 and 129–48). See Rudge 2007 on these texts and their influence in the early middle ages.

[102] For example, *multi rustici et quam multae mulieres rusticana* (singing dodgy songs), *Serm.* 6.3: again, *et viri et feminae*, *Serm.* 19.3; *aliquos viros vel mulieres* (refusing to work on Thursdays, with different jobs highlighted for men and women, the latter being associated with *laneficium* (wool-working)), *Serm.* 13.5; see too 19.4.

[103] For example, *aliqui viri, et praecipue mulieres* (on talking too much in church), *Serm* 50.3; also at 55.4.

[104] See Caes. *Serm.* 52; compare Jerome's sneering at 'superstitious' *mulierculae*: *Com. Matt.* 23.5 (*CCSL* 77.212).

[105] This sermon was preserved as a work of Augustine ('Q' *Collectio Homiliarum L sancti Augustini*) but thematically fits closely with other Caesarian sermon passages and sermons focusing on behaviour in church.

[106] Caes. *Serm.* 78.1. [107] Caes. *Serm.* 78.3. [108] Caes. *Serm.* 78.4. [109] Caes. *Serm.* 78.5.

[110] For example, Caes. *Serm.* 42.3, 43.3.

regarding the body as the *ancilla* and the soul as *domina.* He depicts the maidservant as (perversely) adorned with precious ornaments and luxurious clothes. In a deeply class-suffused aside, the bishop comments that just as the soul is of far greater worth than the body, so too is the mistress of greater worth than the maidservant (*multo amplius mereatur domina quam ancilla*).[111]

The external bodies, as well as the interior souls, of the Christians of Arles, as we have seen, came under the strict disciplinary focus of their bishop. Certain activities of these bodies came under special (and often gendered) scrutiny, and were subjected to a powerful discourse of de-authorization. What we are unpicking here is a discourse that de-authorized certain types of (bodily) activity, largely in line with traditional Roman elite masculine values, now further bolstered by ascetic ideology. Although the case of Caesarius' moralizing discourse is that of an aristocrat, presenting familiar elite views, what is of course unusual is that he is purportedly offering this critique to a wide audience and can therefore be seen as offering something of a 'democratization' of traditional elitist Roman bodily ideology, as well as a democratization of ascetic regimen. Importantly, at the same time, this is paired with a comprehensive and ongoing stigmatization of popular behaviour, as I shall go on to explore further.

Scurrilitas, Singing and Dancing

The bodies of Caesarius' congregation, as I have shown, were seen as in need of discipline, both within and outwith the liturgical context. The bishop called for obedient and decorous bodily praxes. These praxes extended beyond posture – to speech, song and dance, along with, as we shall see, the related concept of *scurrilitas*, which served to stigmatize popular culture comprehensively. We shall see, finally, how again gender played a role in these discourses.

Sermo 6 is a good place to start looking at the interrelation of these elements and to examine Caesarius' discursive and pastoral strategy.[112] This sermon has been examined on a number of occasions because of the interesting discussion of literacy it contains and for what it reveals about Caesarius' wider pastoral strategy, but it repays further attention here.[113] The dramatic situation is as follows: Caesarius has arrived at a rural parish,

[111] Caes. *Serm.* 224.3.
[112] Caes. *Serm.* 6 is preserved in a number of manuscripts, going back to the ninth century: see Delage 1971: 318.
[113] For example, Ferreiro 1992; Horsfall 2003: 14–16; Grig 2013b.

which he says he visits two or three times a year. (This seems more frequent than commonly but of course represents an important part of his pastoral strategy: the *Vita* depicts him travelling frequently around the large geographical territory of Arles.)[114] After some brief but warm introductory words, the bishop moves straight to the point of the homily: the obligation for Christians to read the scriptures. In what follows, the bishop 'imagines' the response of his audience, using a tactic common in 'popular' preaching: 'they' say, firstly, that they have no time to read and, secondly, that they do not know *how* to read. Caesarius will not accept either imagined answer and launches into an attack on the types of activities pursued by the local congregation in preference to reading the scriptures.

The first sinful activities are to do with speech: 'Let us remove from ourselves vain tales [*fabulae vanae*] and biting jokes [*mordici ioci*]; let us reject idle and dissolute conversations [*sermones otiosi ac luxuriosi*] as much as we can.'[115] After attacking excessive eating and drinking, Caesarius goes on to make a parallel between body and soul: 'our flesh is weakened by drunkenness, and our soul is probably weakened by obscene talk [*turpiloquia*] and buffooneries [*scurrilitates*]'.[116]

These expressions and scenarios are common in the *Admonitiones*. Here, as elsewhere, we find speech that is inappropriate, in terms of content, on various grounds. It might simply be *otiosus* (idle);[117] it might have associations with fiction (*fabula*).[118] Both terms are used to mark out certain types of speech as lacking in authority. It might also be libellous or satirical.[119] Inappropriate speech is also frequently described as obscene and shameful – the term *turpiloquia* recurs frequently[120] – or as a sin of impurity, a particularly perilous sin of the mouth.[121] Leyser has perceptively noted that the prime site of unclean speech is the 'people', especially those of the countryside:[122] *rusticitas* strikes again! The term *scurrilitas*,

[114] Leyser 2000: 84 is sceptical, but the specificity of the text as regards a number of named locations does seem convincing, as discussion in Chapter 3 has shown.
[115] Caes. *Serm.* 6.1. [116] Caes. *Serm.* 6.1.
[117] For example, *otiosis fabulis*, Caes. *Serm.* 1.10; *otiosis . . . sermonibus*, *Serm.* 1.17. Note Valerian of Cimiez, *Serm.* 6: *De otiosis verbis*, one of three sermons (the other two being 5 and 12) focusing on speech that is damaging to the Christian community: I am grateful to Lisa Bailey for the references. See further on Valerian Bailey 2018.
[118] For example, Caes. *Serm.* 1.10.
[119] *mordacibus iocis*, also at *Serm.* 1.10; *detractiones*: Caes. *Serm.* 1.17.
[120] *turpiloquia*, *Serm.* 1.17. Valerian meanwhile highlights the dangerous seductiveness of idle speech and warns that it can lead to adultery, for example Caes. *Serm.* 6.5.
[121] For example, *Serm.* 19.3, 33.4: Caesarius urges concern lest the mouth, which receives the eucharist, be the source of impure words.
[122] Leyser 2000: 97.

which recurs on a number of occasions in Caesarius' sermons, combines several of these types of inappropriate speech.[123]

Scurrilitas can be identified variously as story-telling,[124] 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. In Chapters 1 and 2 we looked at popular entertainment in the ancient world and what we can say of its fate in late antiquity. Although as we saw traditional theatrical performances were most likely no longer taking place in late antique Arles, this did not necessarily mean an end to less formal types of performance. Indeed, we can potentially see the cessation of traditional theatre as providing the space for the development of smaller, do-it-yourself alternatives that we can see as characteristic of late antique popular culture.

If we turn briefly to the homilies of Valerian, bishop of the Provençal episcopal see of Cimiez in the mid-fifth century, we find concern about the influence of language from the stage on the language of the Christian community. In one sermon Valerian imagines a member of his congregation on the stage, imitating a 'harlot';[125] in another he complains about the use of 'theatrical words'.[126] Concerns about the shameful and polluting influence of the theatre are neither new in late antiquity nor uniquely Christian. The Roman mime in particular was consistently despised by the Roman elite as a 'low' form. Indeed, we can see the Roman mime as a prime example of 'unauthorized culture': it seems in some sense at least to have staged an ideological challenge to the dominant social order, and in response was consistently met with vitriol by the elite.[127] By its very nature – the need for only a small troupe, the central role of improvisation – mime was well suited to continuity beyond officially funded spectacles. It is not surprising, then, that Yitzak Hen has been able to show the persistence of forms of the mime into the Merovingian and even the Carolingian eras, at least according to the ecclesiastical sources.[128] Hagiographical texts provide a number of cases of appearances by mimes and mime actors, and as late as

[123] Compare *scurrilitates*, Caes. *Serm.* 6.1; *scurrilitatibus*, *Serm.* 7.5; *scurrilitatibus*, *Serm.* 75.3; *omni scurrilitate*, *Serm.* 216.4; in combination: *otiosis fabulis et detractionibus ac scurrilitatibus*, *Serm.* 7.5.

[124] Here Caesarius' use of *fabula* when speaking derogatively about unauthorized speech might be relevant: as *otiosus* (*Serm.* 7.1, 1.10) and *vanus* (*Serm.* 6.1), with a sense of fantastical narrative or unreliable tales.

[125] *Quis te castum putabit, si te viderit meretricum fabulis mixtum scenico sermone compositis*, Val. Cim. *Serm.* 1.7.

[126] Val. Cim. *Serm.* 6.4.

[127] See here Webb 2008: 95–138; for an introduction to the Roman mime, see Fantham 1989.

[128] Hen 1995: 226–31.

the eighth century Alcuin claims Augustine as an authority against bringing 'actors, mimes and dancers' into one's home.[129] As we saw in Chapter 2, church canons were concerned about the clergy themselves attending social occasions where dancing took place,[130] and I shall look at dance in more detail later.

Scurrilitas in the middle ages signified buffoonery, jesting, a coarse form of humour. For Christian moralists it was certainly a sin, often found together with *turpiloquium*, a pairing clearly influenced by the Vulgate.[131] Later medieval literature also paired these two as key forms of *self-consciously* deviant oppositional and anti-clerical speech[132] and here we can build an interesting link back to another 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 (note that Caesarius' juxtaposes *detractiones* and *scurrilitates*).[133] The *scurra* was also associated (negatively) with popular literature.[134] *Scurrilitas* is thus associated with various aspects of popular culture, as enjoyed by 'the people', both as spectators and participants. In Caesarius' sermons it is frequently accompanied by two other activities which we can definitely associate with 'unauthorized culture': singing and dancing, and I shall go on to discuss the place of these activities in discourses against popular culture.

In *Sermo 6* it is singing that Caesarius finds especially irritating, in particular the facility of his rural congregation for memorizing songs, which he terms diabolical and shameful: 'How many countrymen and how many countrywomen can remember diabolical and shameful love songs and sing them continually!'[135]

[129] *Augustinum*: *Nescit homo, qui histriones et mimos et saltatores introducit in domum suam, quam magna eos inmumdorum sequitur turba spiritum*, Alcuin, *Ep.* 175 (*MGH Ep.* 4, ed. E. Duemmler: 290); see Hen 1995: 228–30. Compare a rather allusive but still interesting reference to mime in Val. Cim. *Serm*. 6.5.

[130] Conc. Venet. a.461–91 can. 11, repeated exactly in Conc. Agath. a.506 can. 39.

[131] *aut turpitudo aut stultiloquium aut scurrilitas, quae ad rem non pertinent sed magis gratiarum actio* ('Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but let there instead be thanksgiving' (Revised Standard Version)): Eph. 5.4.

[132] See Craun 1997: especially chapter 5: 'Reforming deviant social practices: *turpiloquium/scurrilitas* in the B Version of *Piers Plowman*', pp. 157–86.

[133] *otiosis fabulis et detractionibus ac scurrilitatibus*, *Serm.* 7.5. On the *scurra* as malicious, see Cic. *De Orat*. 2.246.

[134] Associated with the figure of the parasite from Augustan literature onwards, most notably in Horace, for example *Ep.* 1.18.4: see Sandy 1978: 68–60; Ruffell 2003: especially 63.

[135] *Quam multi rustici et quam multae mulieres rusticanae cantica diabolica amatoria et turpia memoriter retinent et ore decantant!*, Caes. *Serm.* 6.3.

At issue for Caesarius was the ability and propensity of these 'rustics' to memorize love songs while claiming to be unable to learn Christian texts, including the creed:

> They can retain and learn that which the devil teaches – and they cannot keep in mind that which Christ shows them? How much more quickly and better advantage would it be for them, how much more usefully could these rustic men and women learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and some antiphons and the fiftieth and ninetieth Psalms?[136]

Whatever he claims here, Caesarius would of course have been only too aware of the reasons *why* his congregation could remember the words of songs but not of bible passages: the connection between song and memory was well known in the ancient world.[137] We can, for instance, turn to Augustine's unhappy memories of the schoolroom, chanting his times-tables, in what he describes as an *odiosa cantio*.[138] As bishop, Augustine himself harnessed the power of song and its relationship with memory in his campaign against the Donatists, composing the 'Psalm against the Donatists', which he wanted 'to reach the knowledge of the very humblest folk and of the inexpert and the instructed and, as far as possible, to stick it in their memories'.[139] We shall return to the use of song as a pastoral tool shortly, but for now we shall stay with more 'diabolical' lyrics.

Attacks on secular singing are found in a number of late antique and early medieval ecclesiastical texts.[140] *Sermo 6* is also just one of many occasions on which Caesarius berates his congregation for singing songs categorized as 'dissolute' (*luxuriosa*) and 'shameful' (*turpia*), as 'inimical to chastity and honesty'.[141] Furthermore, as so often is the case when it comes to aspects of popular culture disliked by the church, singing is presented not just as immoral but as actually *diabolicus*.[142] Caesarius was of course not the first Christian writer or preacher to attack worldly songs: Jerome, for instance, complained about *cantica mundi* (comprising *turpia verba*).[143] We might wish that our Christian clerics had sought to share some of these shameful lyrics: we are rather in the dark when it comes to the format and

[136] *Ista possunt tenere atque parare, quae diabolus docet; et non possunt tenere, quod Christus ostendit? Quanto celerius et melius quicumque rusticus vel quaecumque mulier rusticana, quanto utilius poterat et symbolum discere, et orationem dominicam, et aliquas antiphonas, et psalmos quinquagesimum vel nonagesimum*, Caes. *Serm.* 6.3.

[137] See here Horsfall 2003: 11–19. [138] Aug. *Conf.* 1.13.22.

[139] *volens etiam causam Donatistarum ad ipsius humillimi vulgi et omnino imperitorum atque idiotarum notitiam pervenire, et eorum, quantum fieri per nos posset inhaerere memoriae*, Aug. *Retractiones* 1.20.

[140] See the collection gathered in Haines 2010: 162–71, although Haines' attributions of some of the earlier texts need to be treated with caution.

[141] For example, Caes. *Serm.* 16.3, 19.3, 33.4, 55.2. [142] Caes. *Serm.* 19.3, 55.2. [143] Jer. *Ep.* 107.4.

content of late antique songs. Valerian of Cimiez evokes both the insidious seductiveness of song and the dangerous affective power of music, including the 'tingling' zither, the organ and the flute.[144] This would refer to a rather more skilled type of performance, however, than we can envisage taking place on a day-to-day basis.

Ecclesiastical critics were concerned not just with the songs themselves but also with the environments in which they were sung – and these included liturgical, or rather paraliturgical, contexts. Dodgy songs made up a standard part of the package of inappropriate behaviour that was frequently associated with church vigils in ecclesiastical texts, and they were censured in church councils, as well as sermons.[145] Augustine frequently berated dubious singing in rambunctious celebrations of the cult of the martyrs that he sought to denigrate.[146] That Caesarius too complains about singing in this context is therefore to be expected.[147] Saints' vigils are not the only ritual context involved; dodgy singing is also associated with a rather different paraliturgical context: the funeral.

In the classical world, singing was closely associated with the funeral: the singing of dirges by paid mourners in particular was seemingly still prevalent in late antiquity. Valuable evidence from the wider late antique world comes, as so often, from John Chrysostom. John objected to the continuation of this practice at Antioch, and counselled the bereaved instead to invite clergy and the poor to sing for the souls of the dead.[148] In his study of the history of Romance song John Haines argues for the persistence of this tradition in the Latin west as well, but it is in fact difficult to trace it this far back securely.[149] The type of singing generally mentioned in connection with funerals in later medieval sources, such as found in the work of Burchard of Worms, sounds rather more cheerful than the traditional

[144] Val. Cim. *Serm.* 6.5.

[145] For example, *Exterminando omnino est irreligiosa consuetudo quam vulgus per sanctorum sollemnitates agere consuevit, ut populi qui debent officia divina attendere, saltationibus et turpibus invigilent canticis, non solum sibi nocentes sed religiosorum officiis praestrepentes*, Conc. Tolet. III a.589, can. 23 (*MHS.C* V, 131,927–132,931). The specific mention of singing is common enough to be something of a cliché in the early medieval period; see Childebert's edict: *noctes per vigiles cum ebrietate, scurrilitate vel canticis* (*MGH Capit.* I ed. A. Boretius): 2.

[146] For example, *Per totam noctem cantabantur hic nefaria, et cantantibus saltabatur*, Aug. *Serm.* 311.5. On Augustine's objections and the activities involved, see now MacMullen 2009: 60–2.

[147] For example, Caes. *Serm.* 1.12, 13.4, 16.3, 55.2, 216.4, 225.5.

[148] For example, John Chryst. *Hom. on Matt.* 31 (*PG* 57.374–5).

[149] See Haines 2010: 34–50; Haines is rather too willing to project back practices attacked in later medieval sources, for example suggesting that when Augustine objects to weeping (*plangere*) at funerals, he is referring to the medieval *planctus* (p. 42). Haines' claim that '[t]he language of Latin ecclesiastic authors is surprisingly transparent and [can] easily be turned inside out to constructive effect' (p. 38) is rather optimistic.

planctus, and is paired with dancing.[150] Interestingly, female-led mourning practices that included dancing, or at least rhythmic movement as well as lament, are also traceable in Jewish and Islamic material from late antiquity and beyond.[151] Nonetheless, the association of singing (and dancing) with women, at least in the Latin ecclesiastical tradition, is clearly part of a powerful misogynistic discourse.[152]

Singing and dancing, again in combination, are also associated in ecclesiastical texts with 'paganism'. This accusation clearly does have a basis in actual practice: hymn singing was associated with a wide range of cults in the classical world; there are also a number of references to sacred dance.[153] In late antiquity attacks on 'pagan' festivities sometimes included references to both singing *and* dancing, such as Gelasius' complaint about *cantilenae turpes* in his famous condemnation of the Roman Lupercalia at the end of the fifth century.[154] Gregory of Tours gives a highly coloured account of the worship of a statue of Berecynthia in Autun, including the detail that *cantantes et saltantes* were involved (before the bishop saved the day, converting all those present).[155] As we shall see in Chapter 6, song and dance were frequently mentioned in attacks on the festival of the Kalends. Indeed, they formed part of a now familiar collection of negative associations, along with dubious versions of Christianity, 'paganism' and the role of women.

It is worth taking a closer look at the terminology used. A number of the texts discussed above refer to the *chorus/choros/chorea*, whether in association with singing or not, which can again be paralleled in several other texts.[156] Caesarius refers to the leading (*duco*) of the *choros* in several

[150] *Laici qui excubias funeris observant cum timore et tremore et reverentia hoc faciant. Nullus ibi diabolica carmina presumat cantare nec joca nec saltationes facere, quae pagani docente diabolo adinvenerunt. Quis enim nesciat diabolicum esse, et non solum a christiana religione alienum, sed etiam humanae naturae esse contrarium, ibi laetari, inebriari, et cachinnis ora dissolvi*, Burchard, *Decretum* 10.34 (but allegedly quoting the Council of Arles), col. 839B; Haines 2010: 162 cites a passage preserved as a letter of Eutychianus, third-century bishop of Rome, although it is clearly not: *Cantus et chores mulierum et ludos joculatorios, et cantiones in ecclesia et in atrio fieri prohibete. Carmina diabolica quae supe mortuos nocturnis horis vulgus facere solet, et cachinnos quos exercet, sub contestatione Dei omnipotentis fieri vetate* (*PL* 5.166D–167A).

[151] See Sautter 2017. [152] Haines 2010: 44–50.

[153] See Wille 1967: 26–74 for a comprehensive account of music in Roman religious cult; more briefly but still usefully, MacMullen 1997: 46–8.

[154] Gelasius, *Adversus. Andromachum* 19 (G. Pomarès, *Gélase Ier: Lettre contre le Lupercales et dix-huit messes du Sacramentaire léonien, SC* 65 (Paris, 1959)).

[155] Greg. Tur. *Glor. conf.* 76.

[156] Note too references to the *obsceni motus corporum choris* in Conc. Venet. a. 461–91 can. 11, repeated exactly in Conc. Agath. a.506 can. 39: *Non licet . . . in ecclesia chorus secularium vel puellarum cantica exercere*, Synod, Dioces. Autiss. a.5761–605 can. 9.

sermons.[157] What can we envisage here? Generally, scholars have imagined a circular, sung dance, classical in origin, which evolved into the 'carol/e', or 'ring dance' in the medieval Latin west.[158] Such a dance appears in the second-century 'apocryphal' *Acts of John*, which contains the famous 'dance hymn', likely a third-century interpolation of Syrian origin. In this text Christ himself invites his disciples to dance in a circle and sing together; this dance has variously been associated with different Hellenistic traditions, mystery religions and ecstatic dancing.[159] We shall look at liturgical dancing later, but for now we will stay with the profane sort.

The verbs usually used for dancing, often in combination, are *ballo* and *salto*, the latter being particularly associated with pantomime dancing. Dancing was an activity viewed with suspicion and scorn by patristic writers, building on a broader classical tradition in the same vein. The association with pantomime dancers, and performers of other kinds, is an important (though not the only) reason for this disdain. We can here again trace a direct line back to traditional elite discourse, which disparaged dancing as distinctly *un*authorized, as an activity unfit for the respectable (male) citizen. These worries were most apposite, and visible, in the classical world in the case of oratory, where we can see an often polemical focus on supposed affinities between the arts of the rhetor and those of the dancer.[160] In late antiquity the pantomime was a focus of ire among ecclesiastical authors, who were suspicious first of the sexual ambiguity of the pantomime dancer but also of his captivating effect on the audience.[161] It is not surprising that Caesarius used the verb *salto* as the term most associated with the pantomime. Dancing, it is persistently claimed, is not something performed by a normal person – or, rather, man – unless insane or indeed, as we shall see, when drunk: this is something avowed by both Cicero and Caesarius.[162] It is certainly not considered as an art that would be performed by a respectable male, the usual imagined audience of our

[157] For example, Caes. *Serm.* 13.4, 225.5.
[158] See Haines 2010: 58–9; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'carol'.
[159] See here Dewey 1986 and Schlapbach 2017: 154–66.
[160] To take just two examples, the renowned orator Hortensius was supposedly nicknamed Dionysia after a famous dancer of the age (Gell. *NA* 1.5.1), while Cicero claims that a dance was named 'Titius' after the orator Sextus Titius, whose gestures were considered effeminate: Cic. *Brut.* 225: see Zanobi 2014: 8.
[161] See further Webb 2008: especially 163–5.
[162] According to Cicero: 'almost no one dances while sober – unless perhaps he is insane' (*nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit*), *Mur.* 13. Caesarius attacked those dancing 'like a maniac or a madman' (*velud freneticus et insanus ballare*) or in 'diabolical fashion' (*diabolico more saltare*), *Serm.* 16.3.

preachers. And so we return to the theme of bodily *hexis* and its class associations: dancing as an uncontrolled, irrational bodily practice is the antithesis of the controlled bodily composure expected by ancient rhetors and late antique preachers alike. Furthermore, the association of dancing with *women* was seen as especially scandalous. The connection with sexuality made it a particularly unpalatable activity for respectable women to perform, while professional female dancers were seen as dangerously corrupting to men.[163]

This takes us to our final context for singing and dancing: the secular *convivium*, which was seen as a prime site of *scurrilitas*.[164] The singing and dancing that went on here would have involved the participation of the guests themselves but also performances by hired professionals.[165] According to Caesarius, congregations should be instructed neither to hire nor even observe a range of performers at *convivia*, identified by the variant manuscript traditions as dissolute singers (*luxuriosi cantatores . . . cantatrices*), players of games (*lusores*) and dancers (*saltatores*), all of whom are described as being 'inimical to chastity and virtue'.[166] Dancers are presented across ecclesiastical texts, as Ruth Webb writes, as 'dangerously sexual beings'; we can contrast this picture with the more workaday evidence provided by surviving papyri contracts for the hiring of female dancers.[167] It is the presence of these professionals, performing sexually alluring songs and dances, that meant that weddings and other feasts were seen as inappropriate for clerics, specifically, to attend.[168] Even more than at the vigils for the saints and the dead, the danger of excessive alcohol consumption was especially high at the *convivium*. In one sermon Caesarius attacks what he sees as a deadly combination in an especially striking example of rolling rhythmic prose, criticizing those who would destroy themselves and others: *ut inebriando, ballando, verba turpia*

[163] See Webb 1997; Webb notes how council canons expressed fears about the possible contamination of clerics from being present at performances of female dancers, hence the conciliar stipulations cited earlier.

[164] Caes. *Serm.* 1.17; compare *illa diabolica convivia*, *Serm.* 54.6. On ecclesiastical responses to *convivia* in general, see Effros 2002: 25–37, who comments (esp. p. 27) that Caesarius' hard, ascetically flavoured stance against these was definitely a minority position in Gaul.

[165] See Hen 1995: 228–30 for clerical references referring to hired performers in early medieval Gaul.

[166] *castitati et honestati inimicos*, Caes. *Serm.* 1.12. Delage's edition, based on the earlier manuscript, has *luxuriosos cantatores, lusores, vel saltatores*; Morin's has *luxuriosos cantatores, lusores, vel cantatrices*.

[167] Webb 1997: 129–30; see Westermann 1924 for a fascinating papyrus document from Egypt (P. Corn. Inv., 26) in which a woman hires a female dancer and her colleague. Nonetheless, we can assume that these women were generally vulnerable to sexual abuse.

[168] Council canons from southern Gaul repeatedly urged clergy to avoid weddings and dinners with singing and dancing, as we saw earlier: Conc. Venet. a.461–91 can. 11 and Conc. Agath. a. 506 can. 39.

decantando, choros ducendo et diabolico more saltando (the English translation can scarcely do this justice: 'by getting drunk, dancing, singing shameful songs, leading the chorus and pantomiming in diabolical fashion').[169] Alcohol is identified as the key factor which loosened inhibitions and provoked singing, dancing and sexual licence. As we saw, Caesarius' sermons contain many denunciations of excessive drinking, often discussed in terms of the threat it posed to masculinity.[170] Once more, we see the importance of gender in discourses surrounding popular culture.

How far can we actually identify 'popular' practices in the types of drinking party attacked by Caesarius? We might indeed suspect that the bishop is aiming his critiques squarely at the social elite, seeking to discredit their activities by linking them with the behaviours of the *rustici*. While this is clearly part of what is going on, the evidence of ceramic and other finds in small sites in the countryside, as we saw in Chapter 3, does in fact support the notion that a wider range of people now had access to imported food and drink than we might originally assume.[171] As established in Chapter 3, our rural 'non-elite' is a broad category: we can certainly imagine the better-off peasants and artisans as those targeted here, as borne out by the evidence from small sites across the region.

So what was the pastoral solution to this cocktail of unacceptable behaviour? Song and dance, as we have seen, were linked to 'pagan' religiosity, profane behaviour in general, challenges to accepted gender norms and sexual immorality. However, bishops were well aware of the pull these activities exerted on Christians – even, at times, on their fellow clerics. Secular dancing was simply beyond the pale, according to its clerical critics, and could not be rehabilitated. Ruth Webb has wondered whether it is the *non-verbality* of dance that rendered it so particularly suspect:[172] dance stood in opposition to the *logos*, to rationality and rhetoric, classically and consistently gendered as male. Karin Schlapbach in a fascinating monograph on dance discourse in antiquity discusses the disruptive potential of dance as an 'intersubjective experience'.[173] Moreover, dance offered, at least potentially, an opportunity for unregulated female self-expression.

[169] Caes. *Serm.* 55.2. [170] See here for excellent discussion and references Bailey 2007.
[171] See further Heath 2004: 39, 139, 177–83. [172] Webb 1997: 136–8.
[173] Dance can 'blur the boundaries between seemingly clear-cut categories. Dance reconciles opposites by encapsulating vitality and disruption, rational patterns and sensory experience, presence and transience, active and passive. The mimesis of dance has many openings onto the pragmatic contexts of its performance, thus calling into question the relationship between form and content, between representation and reality, between the individual and other human beings. This makes dance an especially powerful tool in cultural processes', Schlapbach 2017: 268.

Ruth Webb asks: '[m]ight we . . . glimpse the importance of dance for women as a means of expression, an alternative to the male discourse that was closed to all but the educated few?'[174] The physicality of dance rendered it suspect for Augustine, who refers to the attempts of his colleague Aurelius to outlaw dancing as part of a package of reforms at Carthage.[175] As Brent Shaw comments: 'the mobilizing of certain repetitive body movements was closely associated with ritual chanting and singing. All these practices were connected with collective behaviour that was potentially a precursor to aggression and violence.'[176] While this was especially moot in the febrile and highly conflictual North African context, it is evident the disruptive potential of dance was felt, and feared, more widely.

Could dance ever be rehabilitated? David famously danced for joy in the Old Testament, while Jesus criticized those who would not dance or cry.[177] Scattered references to liturgical dance in early Christian literature show a range of views and practices, as we would expect. While linked with heretical traditions in heresiological texts, it would be more accurate to see dancing as associated with certain local traditions.[178] Even in late antiquity a more positive concept of dance as an offering to God and to the saints can occasionally be found: Giselle de Nie points to two unusually positive references to dancing in texts from late antique Gaul. Although we have already seen Gregory of Tours associating *saltantes* with a supposed pagan cult, he was nonetheless happy to imagine saints engaged in a joyful *tripudium* in heaven in his account of the miracles of St Julian. The anonymous preacher of a sixth-century sermon on Martin of Tours also imagines the church across the world engaging in an exultant *tripudium*.[179] Even in the Western ecclesiastical tradition, dance *could* be seen as a positive offering, *if* in a safely spiritualized, metaphorical version – but clerics remained highly suspicious of real-life liturgical dancing.[180]

[174] Webb 1997: 139. [175] Aug. *Contra ep. Parm.* 3.6.29 (*CSEL* 51). [176] Shaw 2011: 467.

[177] 2 Samuel 6.14; Matthew 17.11; Luke 7.32.

[178] See here Dilley 2013. The *Acts of John*, as discussed earlier, was definitively condemned as heretical at the Council of Nicaea in 787, but perhaps more telling in terms of its significance in the history of Christian dance is the lack of reference to or use of this hymn in later sources: see here Hellsten 2016, with references.

[179] de Nie 1997: 190; Greg. Tur. *De virtutibus sancti Juliani* 1.50; for the text and discussion of the *Sermo in laude Sancti Martini*, see Peebles 1961 (*longe lateque per orbem diffusa, multiplici exultatione tripudiat*: p. 245).

[180] See, for an example, Ambrose, *De paenitentia* 2.6.43–4 (*PL* 16.508B).

Liturgical singing was a different matter and was viewed much more positively. Evidence of singing as part of the Christian liturgy goes back to the New Testament,[181] while Pliny the Younger famously refers to hymn singing in early second-century Bithynia.[182] Early Christian ritual was hereby in line with wider Mediterranean religious practice. As with other aspects of early Christian practice, the form of liturgical singing itself was far from uniform, but the works of Ambrose would be foundational in the late antique and early medieval west. Ambrose's use of massed antiphonal singing to mobilize his congregation in the 'Basilica crisis' in Milan in 386 is rightly famous.[183] Ambrose was very much aware of the potential affective power of liturgical singing; he alludes to it in a letter, writing that his enemies in the imperial court had accused him of using his songs almost as magical charms, playing on the double meaning of *carmen*.[184] He made adept use of the form of the hymn to translate theological concepts and thereby his own doctrinal teaching.[185] As we have already seen, Augustine, famously a witness and admirer of Ambrose's use of music,[186] made use of song as an ideological weapon himself with his (in)famous 'Psalm against the Donatists'.[187]

This abecedarian 'Psalm' consists of twenty twelve-line stanzas, each starting with a different letter of the alphabet, as well as a thirty-line epilogue, with a recurring antiphonal refrain, presumably to be sung by the whole congregation: *Omnes qui gaudetis de pace, modo verum judicate*. The composition is strikingly unclassical and has often been derided as 'doggerel'.[188] It

[181] For a useful overview, see Wilson 1998.

[182] *carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem* (i.e. in turns), Plin. *Ep.* 10.96.7.

[183] See Aug. *Conf.* 9.7.15 and Paulinus, *V. Amb.* 13.3 (ed. and trans. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, *Vite dei Santi, iii* (Milan, 1975)). The bibliography here is large; see most recently Williams 2017: 274–5, with references.

[184] *Hymnorum quoque meorum carminibus deceptum populum ferunt, plane nec hoc abnuo. Grande carmen istud est quo nihil potentius; quid enim potentius quam confessio trinitatis, quae cottidie totius populi ore celebratur?*, Amb. *Ep.* 75a[21a]34 (*CSEL* 82, ed. O. Faller, Vienna, 1968). See here Williams 2017: 275, noting the stress Ambrose himself places on the unanimity of the singing congregation, singing 'with one voice'. See further now Dunkle 2016.

[185] See Charlet in press.

[186] Augustine praises the affective qualities of the liturgical singing at Milan, as well as commenting on the fortifying properties of congregational singing during the lengthy liturgy: Aug. *Conf.* 9.7.15. See further Moorhead 2010.

[187] Shaw 2011: 441–89, especially 475–89 provides welcome context for this much-derided work, setting it against a background of the regular use of songs/chants in violent, sectarian dispute. Shaw also notes Augustine's own testimony that other such 'ABC' songs had already been written by *nostri vel latine vel punice*, Aug. *In Ps.* 118.8. See further Nodes 2009 and Hunink 2011; for the text of the Psalm itself, see Lambot 1935. The abecedarian form was known at least as early as the third century, as visible in the 'Psalmus responsorius', although the earliest (fragmentary) Latin example was composed in the fourth century by Hilary of Poitiers: see Pohlmann 2017: 104–6.

[188] Augustine himself describes it as being *non aliquo carminis genere*, *Retract.* 1.20.

relies on rhythmical stress rather than metre, and rhymes, each line ending with *-e* or *-ae*. Brent Shaw has described the Psalm as 'the Western world's first known pop song, although given its epic length (Vincent Hunink estimates it would take c. 35 minutes to perform!), one might wonder how often it was actually performed.[189] Augustine's composition is, nonetheless, a clear example of the way in which the church could harness the 'democratization of culture' to pursue ideological ends.[190]

The use of singing in church, apart from its affective and doctrinal aspects, could also have more mundane benefits, although no less important from the pastoral point of view. Ambrose himself gave a straightforward account of the benefits of the introduction of congregational singing:

> What a labour it is to achieve silence in church while the lessons are being read. When one man would speak, the congregation makes a disturbance. But when the Psalm is recited, it makes its own 'silence', since all are speaking and there is no disturbance . . .. The singing of praise is the very bond of unity, when the whole people join in one choir.[191]

Ambrose here refers to the unifying quality of congregational singing (in which women, as well as men, were permitted to join in) – however, first of all he refers to the use of this singing in bringing about silence in church. Singing was an important mechanism for regulating behaviour in church, a major concern of Caesarius, as we have seen. The bishop of Arles would indeed follow along the same path.

Caesarius, as far as we know, did not compose his own songs for his congregation; however, the *Vita* recounts his long struggle to get the congregation at Arles to chant psalms during the liturgy, a project also referred to in his own preaching.[192] This use of song was part of his broader campaign to reform popular behaviour. As recounted in the *Vita*: 'Additionally, he ordered the laity to learn psalms and hymns, and to sing sequences and antiphons in a loud and rhythmic voice like the clergy,

[189] Shaw 2011: 476; Hunink 2011: 400.

[190] Note that Fulgentius of Ruspe (462/467–527/532) thought it worthwhile to imitate Augustine in this regard with his *Psalmus abecedarius contra Vandalos Arrianus*, of which only a fragment remains; see Bianco 1979.

[191] *Quantum laboratur in ecclesia, ut fiat silentium, cum lectiones leguntur! Si unus loquatur, obstrepunt universi; cum psalmus legitur, ipse sibi est effector silenti; omnes loquuntur et nullus obstrepit . . .. Magnum plane unitatis vinculum, in unum chorum totius numerum plebis coire*, Amb. *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos* 1.9: (*CSEL* 64; ed. M. Petschenig; trans: Erik Routley, *The Church and Music* (London, 1950)) (lightly altered).

[192] *V. Caes.* 1.19; Caes. *Serm.* 75.1.

some in Greek, others in Latin. He did this so that they would not have time to be occupied with gossip in church.'[193]

As discussed in Chapter 2, the detail that the psalms were sung in both Greek and Latin is intriguing, and can be seen as evidence for a congregation that included Greek speakers, most likely as members of the urban non-elite. The chanting of psalms is presented as a pious alternative to the insubordinate behaviour, chatter and gossip the bishop decried: that is, it was clearly a method for the inculcation of correct, Christian behaviour. We have already looked at Caesarius' attempts to instil the correct bodily *hexis*, the correct bodily ideology, including 'respectable' posture, and what the aristocratic bishop considered due deference. We saw how talking in church, particularly by women, was a frequent topic of concern for the bishop, and so this is the context in which we are to understand his joy when he finally succeeded in getting his flock to chant the psalms in church. The idea was that the act of singing would, in due course, inculcate the correct Christian behaviour, as chanting the words of the psalms would help to beget holy thoughts. Nonetheless, the ever-vigilant Caesarius warned his congregation that their lifestyle needed to accord with the holy words of the psalms: singing in itself was not enough.[194]

Caesarius was not just concerned about behaviour within the walls of the church: he also wanted his congregation to take their new Christian *praxes* outside the church. He wanted his congregation to replace their singing of dirty songs with the memorization of the psalms while at home. This takes us to a pastoral strategy which was to offer, where possible, adaptation or substitution rather than prohibition alone. While actual dancing was seen as irredeemable, inappropriate songs and dubious speech could be replaced with reading, reciting and authorized singing.[195] However, even substitution was not always successful, nor was clerical success inevitable: here some later anecdotes are suggestive. In the early eleventh century, Bernard of Angers wrote that he was at first shocked to learn that the monks of Ste. Foy at Conques allowed the local peasants to keep their vigils at the saint's shrine, singing *cantilenis rusticis*. He explains that the monks had decided

[193] *Adiecit etiam atque compulit, ut laicorum popularitas psalmos et hymnos pararet, altaque et modulata voce instar clericorum, alii graece, alii latine prosas antiphonasque cantarent, et non haberent spatium in ecclesia fabulis occupari*, *V. Caes.* 1.19.

[194] Caes. *Serm.* 75.2.

[195] Compare the education programme advised by Jerome for the infant Laeta, including the substitution of 'the sweet music of psalms' for worldly and shameful songs: *Turpia verba non intellegat, cantica mundi ignoret, adhuc tenera lingua psalmis dulcibus inbuatur*, Jer. *Ep.* 107.4.

this tolerance was the best way to keep the crowds coming and declares himself to have eventually been persuaded of this point of view – allowing the dodgy songs to continue *was* the best strategy for dealing with such simple folk.[196] Somewhat closer in time to Caesarius, Venantius Fortunatus' *Life of Radegund* includes an anecdote that features local musicians, singing and playing cithars, this time adapting *sacred* songs in a rather more worldly direction.[197] However seriously we take such a tale, it reminds us again that cultural interactions and adaptations could work in various directions. Popular culture was at times adapted, appropriated and indeed *interpellated* by elites and institutions.

In this chapter I have explored a model of popular culture, associated with *scurrilitas* and disreputable bodily movement, that is very much an ideological construction, built from the not always congruent currents of traditional elite and contemporary ascetic thought. However, that is not to say that it bears no resemblance at all to real-life behaviour and indeed ongoing social and cultural change. While traditional locations for large-scale entertainment had increasingly disappeared, alternative, less formal performance and participation could take their place.[198] As we saw, Valerian of Cimiez worried that members of his own congregation had themselves become performers, to the detriment of their spiritual standing. 'Do-it-yourself' entertainment was also clearly not limited to urban settings, as we shall see most clearly in Chapter 6, where we will look at the social and economic meanings of festive performance.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have looked at the ways in which clerical discourse in southern Gaul, in particular the sermons of Caesarius of Arles, both constructed and contested popular culture. Popular culture was stigmatized through the use of several different, but complementary, discursive strategies. It was associated with *rusticitas*, with lower-class peasants. Popular culture was also associated with *scurrilitas*, as unauthorized and as inherently disreputable or *infamis*. It was associated with femininity and with improper gender roles. Finally, it was associated with the profane, the 'pagan' and the 'superstitious'. At the same time, through the use of would-be authoritative discourse, the bishop embarked upon his own programme

[196] Cited in Hamilton 2013: 261; *Liber miraculorum S. Fidis* II.2.
[197] Ven. Fort. *Vita Radegundis* 36 (*MGH SRM*. 2 (ed. B. Krusch, 1888): 375); I owe this reference to Lisa Bailey; see Bailey 2016: 133.
[198] Val. Cim. *Serm.* 1.7.

of cultural communication (which we have looked at in terms of a model of 'democratization of culture') and substitution. I have argued further that complaints about *rustic* behaviour, as well as being targeted at social elites, can also be related to the behaviour of real-life members of the non-elite, who had new access to consumer goods in the countryside of late antique southern Gaul, a development unwelcome to an aristocratic bishop.

It is important not to let Caesarius have the last word. Firstly, this ecclesiastical discourse was not as widely, let alone as successfully, diffused as Caesarius would have wished. Secondly, the highly ideological discourse of Caesarius provides just one part of the dialectic in which popular culture was constructed. Having spent this chapter building up a picture that gives the view 'from the pulpit', as it were, the next chapter will take a different approach to looking at the activities of the people of late antique southern Gaul. In what follows, I shall attempt to contextualize the behaviours of the laity as part of an analysis that seeks to understand late antique popular culture in its own context, in its own terms: not just those of bishops.