CAESARIUS OF ARLES

The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul

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INTRODUCTION

Christianization in the late Roman and early medieval west was a process of slow, incomplete, inconsistent, and sometimes reversible social and religious change. It required not just the conversion of elites, the building of churches, or the founding of bishoprics and monasteries, but the widespread adoption of a Christian self-identity and a Christian system of values, practices, and beliefs. Unlike baptism or "conversion," which could be imposed from above, the social and religious changes required by christianization could not be put into effect without the consent and participation of local populations. The process of christianization was therefore reciprocal. Although its goals and strategies were established by theologians and its promotion entrusted to lay and clerical elites, its primary actors were the peasants and townspeople who made up local communities and who chose by their very way of life which of the church's teachings to accept, which to reject, and which to adapt for their own ends.

The power of local communities to define their own religious and cultural practices meant that the forms of christianization they chose to enact often differed from the program of christianization proposed by the official church. This occurred primarily because, unlike the traditional religion it sought to replace, Christianity had not arisen from within local culture, but had been imported from the outside and imposed on local populations, especially in the countryside. It was not in its origins a "community" religion, whose boundaries coincided with the boundaries of the local community and whose practices conformed to local traditions, attitudes, and expectations. It was rather an "organized" religion, whose well-defined hierarchy, strict criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and highly regulated code of conduct and belief had all been devised by outside religious specialists and were in many ways ill-suited to the demands of local

communities.[1] The result was that the Christianity practiced in local communities, while remaining an organized religion in many respects, also took on many of the characteristics of a community religion. Variously opposed and abetted by the clergy, this process was driven largely by the efforts of lay men and women to refashion Christianity according to their own expectations and traditions. The making of local communities into Christian communities thus entailed the making of Christianity into a community religion.

It would be difficult to find a better focus for studying these reciprocal processes of christianization than the life and writings of Caesarius, bishop of Arles from 502 to 542. As a monk, church reformer, bishop, and preacher, Caesarius devoted himself to the work of christianization with an ability and a vigor that few of his contemporaries displayed. He preached constantly to urban and rural congregations, not only in favor of Christian forms of worship, almsgiving, and spirituality, but also, according to his biographers, "against the evil of drunkenness and lust, against discord and hatred, against anger and pride, against the sacrilegious and fortune-tellers, ... worshippers of trees and springs, and vices of different kinds" (*vita* I. 55).[2] The originality of his message lay not in its content, which was based largely on the teachings of earlier churchmen, above all Augustine, but in the skill with which it was codified, simplified, and relentlessly propagated to a wide variety of audiences. But Caesarius's importance in the history of christianization goes well beyond the subject of his own efforts to christianize the population, although attention in the past has usually been confined to this subject. Through his writings, especially his sermons, we can also detect the community resistance

[1] For the difference between "organized" and "community" religions, see J. Davis, "Introduction," in *Religious Organization and Religious Experience*, ed. J. Davis, Association of Social Anthropologists, Monograph 21 (London, 1982), 1–8. The same distinction is often made between ethnic, local, or traditional religions on the one hand, and universal or world religions on the other, H.-D. Kahl, "Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters. Bausteine für eine Phänomenologie bis ca. 1050," in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, II, part 1, *Die Kirche des Früheren Mittelalters*, ed. K. Schäferdiek (Munich, 1978), 26–35; R. Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa* 41 (1971), 85–108: 85; J. D. Y. Peel, "Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies: Ijebu and Buganda," *Past and Present* 77 (1977), 108–41: 108; W. A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981), 3–22.

[2] Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Some translations of Caesarius's sermons have been adapted from M. M. Mueller, *Caesarius of Arles. Sermons* (Washington, D.C., 1956–73).

his efforts evoked, the persistence of traditional practices, and the community's own efforts at self-christianization. Thus, by studying Caesarius, we can also study the community he sought to transform, and so fill in a portrait of Christian bishops and their communities in post-Roman Gaul that has up to now depended heavily on the writings of Gregory of Tours.[3] By focusing on Provence rather than on the Frankish heartland of central and northern Gaul, we may shed light on a more thoroughly romanized world with its own traditions and modes of life, which remained in regular communication with Rome, Ravenna, and the eastern Mediterranean, and resisted incorporation into the Merovingian realm longer than most other parts of Gaul. By concentrating on the writings of a preacher steeped in the traditions of Lérins rather than a hagiographer devoted to St. Martin, we may call attention to a strategy of christianization in which the power of rhetoric was more highly esteemed than the potency of relics, and to a measurement of christianization that does not equate its progress with the success of a local saint's cult. At the same time, because Christianity as a "cultural system" claimed for itself an exceedingly broad domain,[4] and because Caesarius's own career cannot be separated from the contemporary political situation, we shall also touch on a wide variety of problems in the social, political, and cultural history of late fifth- and early sixth-century Gaul.

Although it had long been the subject of commentary by his editors, Caesarius's career as a monk and pastor did not receive its first sustained critical attention until 1884, when Urbain Villevieille published his *Histoire de Saint Césaire, évêque d'Arles*.[5] This was followed in 1892/93 by Bruno Fürchtegott Gellert's accurate and succinct "Caesarius von Arelate."[6] These early efforts were soon superseded, however, by Arthur Malnory, *Saint Césaire, évêque d'Arles* (Paris, 1894), and Carl Franklin Arnold, *Caesarius*

[3] See for example the excellent studies by L. Pietri, *La Ville de Tours du IVe siècle au VIe siècle: naissance d'une cité chrétienne* (Rome, 1983); R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985); and I. N. Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1979), 61–76.

[4] C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1975), 87–125.

[5] Aix-en-Provence, 1884.

[6] Part 1, "Das Leben des Caesarius," *Programm des städtischen Realgymnasiums zu Leipzig*, Progr. Nr. 553 (Leipzig, 1892), 3–48, and part 2, "Seine Schriften," *Jahresbericht des städtischen Realgymnasiums in Leipzig*, Progr. Nr. 554 (Leipzig, 1893), 3–30.

von Arelate und die gallische Kirche seiner Zeit (Leipzig, 1894). Although both studies remain in demand, as recent reprints demonstrate, Arnold's more critical positivist approach has better endured the test of time, and still offers much of value, especially on chronology, prosopography, and ecclesiastical politics. An important shortcoming affecting both books was the inferiority of available editions for the study of Caesarius's life and work. This was partially remedied by Bruno Krusch in 1896 with the publication of an improved edition of the bishop's *vita*, accompanied by a learned introduction to his career.[7] A further step was taken in 1937 with the publication of a new edition of Caesarius's sermons by Germain Morin,[8] which more than doubled the size of the corpus.[9] Five years later, having already edited a number of other works by Caesarius, and taking particular account of Samuel Cavallin's studies of his *vita* (Lund, 1934, 1936),[10] Morin published a second volume containing Caesarius's *vita*, testament, monastic rules, letters, councils, and theological treatises.[11] The publication of these volumes spawned a flurry of articles and books in the post-war period on Caesarius's preaching, pastoral care, and theology.[12] Notable among these was Henry G. J. Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France During the Sixth Century* (Rome, 1950), which relied heavily on Caesarius's sermons for its details about church order and pastoral practice in sixth-century Provence. More recently, new editions and translations of Caesarius with important introductions and notes have been made available in *Sources chrétiennes* by Marie-José Delage,

[7] *Vitae Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis Libri Duo*, *MGH SRM*, III, 433–501.

[8] For his remarkable career, see G. Ghysens and P.-P. Verbraken, *La Carrière scientifique de Dom Germain Morin (1861–1946)* (Steenbrugge, 1986). On his aims and methods, see G. Morin, "Mes principes et ma méthode pour la future édition de saint Césaire," *RBen* 10 (1893), 62–78, and idem, "Comment j'ai fait mon édition des œuvres de saint Césaire d'Arles," *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* 58 (1938), 225–32.

[9] *Sancti Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia*, I, *Sermones* (Maredsous, 1937), repr. *CCSL* 103–4 (Turnhout, 1953). A concordance to the reprint is now available on CD-ROM in the *Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts*, published by Brepols (Turnhout, 1991).

[10] Especially, *Literarhistorische und textkritische Studien zur Vita S. Caesarii Arelatensis* (Lund, 1934), and "Eine neue Handschrift der Vita S. Caesarii Arelatensis," *Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund, Årsberättelse = Bulletin de la Société Royale des Lettres de Lund* (1935–36), 9–19. Cavallin also published a concordance to Krusch's edition of the *vita Caesarii* in *Vitae Sanctorum Honorati et Hilarii* (Lund, 1952).

[11] *Sancti Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia*, II, *Opera Varia* (Maredsous, 1942).

[12] An annotated bibliography can be found in G. Terraneo, "Saggio bibliografico su Cesario vescovo di Arles," *La scuola cattolica* 91 (1963), Suppl. bibliogr. 272*-94*.

Césaire d'Arles. Sermons au peuple (Paris, 1975–86), and Adalbert de Vogüé and Joël Courreau, *Césaire d'Arles. Œuvres monastiques*, I, *Œuvres pour les moniales* (Paris, 1988). Yet despite sustained interest in Caesarius over the years, no full-length study of his life and work has appeared since 1894.

This book seeks to fill that gap. At the same time, while necessarily building on the work of its predecessors, it attempts to avoid the triumphalism that has characterized much of the study of Caesarius in the past. Ever since Caesarius was first depicted by Cesare Baronio in the late sixteenth century as a great helmsman piloting the church amidst the waves of barbarian invasion and heretical attack,[13] he has consistently been portrayed as an agent of stability and orthodoxy in troubled times, "the fearless shepherd of a truly threatened flock troubled by catastrophes" in a recent description by Friedrich Prinz.[14] This book offers an alternative view of the bishop. Rather than treating him as the unquestioned representative of an already thoroughly christianized community, it focuses on his efforts to create precisely such a community. Rather than assuming that his main achievement was to sustain the religious *status quo*, it points to his controversial role as a proponent of reform. It devotes as much attention to his failures as to his successes, and as much analysis to the audience he sought to persuade as to the ideas and practices he sought to instill. It is neither a biography of Caesarius, strictly speaking, nor a study of his theology, but an examination of the history of christianization in the place and time so well illuminated by his writings.

The book begins with an account of Caesarius's birth in 469/70, his career as a junior cleric in Chalon-sur-Saône and his sojourn as a monk at Lérins. Chapter 2 surveys the history of Roman and late Roman Arles to provide the background for Caesarius's efforts to christianize and therefore disrupt and transform the city's existing culture. Chapter 3 discusses Caesarius's relocation to Arles in *c.* 495, his rapid promotion to deacon, priest, and abbot, and his education as a reformer under Julianus Pomerius. Chapter 4 is devoted to Caesarius's consecration as bishop of Arles in 502 and his stormy career under its Visigothic masters until 508, when an Ostrogothic administration replaced them. In Chapter 5 we

[13] C. Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, VI (Rome, 1595), 192, sub anno 453.

[14] F. Prinz, "Die bischöfliche Stadtherrschaft im Frankenreich vom 5. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert," in *Bischofs- und Kathedralstädte des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. F. Petri (Cologne and Vienna, 1976), 1–26: 13.

examine the long peaceful period of Ostrogothic administration (508–36), which saw Caesarius's greatest achievements as a politician, pastor, monastic founder, and reformer. The following three chapters explore his efforts at christianization and their limitations. Chapter 6 studies the diverse means of persuasion Caesarius employed to promote the values, practices, and beliefs of an "organized" Christianity. Chapter 7 examines the resistance his efforts called forth at the center of local society, primarily the urban population, while Chapter 8 examines resistance at the periphery, primarily among the peasantry, which took the form of a community religion that the bishop defined as "paganism." In Chapter 9 we discuss the transition from Ostrogothic to Frankish rule in Provence, the deterioration of Caesarius's political position after 536, his death in 542, and the fate of his reforms, his monastery, and his city under the Merovingians. The final chapter is devoted to Caesarius's considerable impact on the Carolingian reforms, which helped to create the kinds of Christian communities he had aimed to create, but at the cost of transforming Christianity itself into the community religion he had sought to repress.

Before we begin, it is necessary to discuss the most important sources for this study, the *vita* and *sermones* of Caesarius. At first glance, the genres of hagiography and homiletics might seem to offer the least promising materials for the writing of history. Yet, as we shall see, these are precisely the forms of available evidence best equipped to illuminate the complex relationship between the citizens of Arles and their bishop. Composed by churchmen well informed about their audiences, and designed as instruments of persuasion themselves, the *vita* and *sermones* of Caesarius can be interpreted to reveal the ideas and actions of those they were meant to convince, seldom accessible by other means.[15] As Emilio Gabba has written: "The fact that they addressed themselves to an audience which was all-embracing and not necessarily educated meant that Christian authors had to have not only direct experience of the life of a Christian community, but also a real feeling for its problems; otherwise they stood no chance of being understood in practical terms, concerned as they were with moral and religious themes. Their writings thus allow one to recognise

[15] On the possibility of using such forms of literature to investigate a largely non-literate "popular" culture, see A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. J. M. Bak and P. A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1988), 1–38.

and reconstruct the realities of contemporary situations, even where problems are formulated in moral terms and the aim is to portray an ideal society – as it should be and not as it was."[16]

The *vita* of Caesarius was composed within seven years of the bishop's death by five clerics of his acquaintance.[17] It consisted of two books. The architect of the work as a whole and the principal author of Book I was Cyprianus, bishop of Toulon (*c.* 517–*c.* 545) and a close associate of Caesarius. He was assisted in the composition of Book I by Firminus, bishop of Uzès (*c.* 534–*c.* 552), and Viventius, bishop of an unknown see (*c.* 541–*c.* 548). Book II in turn was composed by two diocesan clerics who had attended Caesarius since their adolescence, Messianus, a priest, and Stephanus, a deacon. The division of the *vita* into two books was intended to take advantage of the interests and capacities of its authors, who had acquired different kinds of knowledge about Caesarius on the basis of their different ecclesiastical ranks and duties. Thus, the authors of Book I, who knew Caesarius as a bishop and metropolitan, concentrated on official aspects of his monastic and clerical career, such as his training as a monk at Lérins, his political leadership of Arles, his travels outside the diocese, and his achievements as a preacher, a wonder-worker, and a monastic founder. The authors of Book II, on the other hand, portrayed Caesarius as he would have appeared to the local clergy. They recounted local, public activities such as his healings and exorcisms, his journeys to rural parishes, and the events surrounding his death and burial, as well as more private events, such as his dreams, his visions of Jesus, and his dinnertime conversations with the local clergy.

Cyprianus and his fellow clerics first undertook to write the life of Caesarius at the request of Caesaria the Younger, a close relation of Caesarius, who was serving at the time of his death as abbess of the convent he had founded in Arles. Like many other hagiographers, therefore, they designed the work, at least in part, to promote the interests of a monastery.[18] But as admirers and supporters of Caesarius, they also composed the *vita* to edify

[16] E. Gabba, "Literature," in *Sources for Ancient History*, ed. M. Crawford (Cambridge, 1983), 1–79: 74.

[17] For a useful introduction, see G. Sticca, "La biografia di Cesario vescovo di Arles, 470–549," (Tesi di Laurea, University of Turin, 1954).

[18] W. Klingshirn, "Caesarius's Monastery for Women in Arles and the Composition and Function of the 'Vita Caesarii'," *RBen* 100 (1990), 441–81.

anyone who read or listened to the work, to celebrate their own association with the bishop, and to defend the bishop's reputation from attack by rivals. In addition, they tried to promote after Caesarius's death the controversial reform ideas he had promoted all his life. The intended audience for the work must have included, besides the nunnery, succeeding bishops of Arles and their clergy, members of the Frankish royal family, and the population of Arles, but how wide a group the *vita* actually reached in late antiquity can no longer be determined. Clearly it was preserved and read in the women's monastery in Arles and in other closely related monasteries during the late sixth and early seventh centuries, but beyond these uses, the work's readership and influence remain unknown.[19]

Like other saints' lives, the *vita* of Caesarius is a valuable source for the mental world of its authors and their immediate audience.[20] Unlike many other saints' lives, however, the *vita* also serves as a valuable source for the career of its subject. It was written soon after his death by men deeply familiar with his life, who claimed to draw their information from reliable sources: Caesarius himself, their own eyewitness observations, and the eyewitness observations of others (*vita* I. 1; II. 1). While such claims are a commonplace of hagiography, the *vita* itself largely substantiates them. Quotations from Caesarius's sermons (*vita* I. 18, 54, 61; II. 5) and stories plausibly based on his own narration (*vita* I. 6, 29) can be identified throughout the work. Details supplied by one or another author are on many occasions of just the sort he was in a position to observe (*vita* I. 51; II. 6, 13–15, 19, 22). Reliance on the eyewitness testimony of others is confirmed in several instances by the naming of informants (*vita* II. 10–12, 41). In addition to these sources, the authors of the *vita* made use of the oral traditions they heard at various places. The edifying and amusing story of Benenatus and his daughter, for instance, was told at the Basilica of the Apostles in Arles (*vita* II. 24). These traditions were supplemented and elaborated by stories modeled directly on the Bible (*vita* II. 13) and on earlier saints' lives, especially the *vita* of Caesarius's predecessor Hilarius (*vita* I. 27; II. 49–50: cf. *vita Hilarii* 18, 28–29). Although the authors were no doubt responsible for some of these borrowings, in other cases the actors themselves may

[19] Ibid., 452–53, 474–80.

[20] F. Lotter, "Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse aus hagiographischen Quellen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 229 (1979), 298–356: 298–305.

have modeled their behavior on biblical or patristic *exempla*.[21] It is for such reasons that the *vita Caesarii* can be considered trustworthy not only for the values and beliefs of its authors and audience, but also for the reconstruction of the life and work of Caesarius.

The sermons of Caesarius pose a different set of problems. That they survive at all is the result of his conviction that bishops, and under certain circumstances priests and deacons, should preach, and that many would not or could not do so unless they were given prepared sermons to recite to their congregations (*serm.* I. 15; *vita* I. 54), a practice Augustine had recommended for clergymen unable to compose sermons themselves.[22] Caesarius therefore assembled written copies of his sermons into collections, which he presented to bishops and other clerics, with orders to disseminate these further (*vita* I. 55; *serm.* 2). Distributed throughout "the Frankish lands, Gaul, Italy, Spain, and other provinces" (*vita* I. 55), these sermon collections formed the basis of collections surviving to the present.

But how had Caesarius's sermons come to be written down in the first place? And what was the connection between the sermons he delivered to his congregation and the versions he gathered into collections and distributed to other bishops? A comparison with Augustine's *sermones ad populum* is instructive. Written copies of these were made by stenographers (*notarii*) who recorded his sermons as they were delivered.[23] Although Augustine may have revised some of them subsequently, his alterations were probably slight, and his sermons thus appear in their present form as virtual transcripts of what he said to his congregation, or at least of what the *notarii* were able to record.[24] As such, they are filled with references to specific persons, places, and events, indications of date and place of delivery,[25] and descriptions of conditions of delivery, such as the eruption of applause.[26]

The recording of Caesarius's sermons, by contrast, depended on

[21] G. Scheibelreiter, "Der frühfränkische Episkopat: Bild und Wirklichkeit," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983), 131–47: 136–37.

[22] *doctr. christ.* IV. XXIX. 62.

[23] Possidius, *vita Augustini* 7. See in general, R. J. Deferrari, "St. Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons," *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922), 97–123, 193–219, and C. Mohrmann, *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin* (Nijmegen, 1932), 21–26.

[24] M. Pellegrino, "General Introduction," in *The Works of Saint Augustine*, ed. J. E. Rotelle, part 3, *Sermons*, I (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1990), 18.

[25] For details, see P.-P. Verbraken, *Etudes critiques sur les sermons authentiques de Saint Augustin* (Steenbrugge, 1976).

[26] Deferrari, "St. Augustine's Method," 193–211.

his own desire to furnish other clergymen with ready-made sermons for preaching. Caesarius probably had stenographers take down the sermons he delivered in Arles,[27] but then, in order to create more widely useful "generic" sermons, he revised these much more thoroughly than Augustine had done. He eliminated references to local persons, places, and events, and left out information about date and place of delivery, since these details were irrelevant to his purpose. His revision was not so complete, however, as to eliminate any connection between the sermons that left his scriptorium and those he delivered in Arles. In the first place, some references to specific conditions of delivery remain in his surviving sermons. In one sermon, for instance, Caesarius refers to a man possessed by the devil who had interrupted church services the Sunday before and caused great fear among the congregation (*serm.* 79. 1). In another sermon, he complained that there were women "even in this city" who honored Jupiter by refusing to spin wool on Thursdays (*serm.* 52. 2). In yet another, rather lengthy sermon, he indicated that he would stop speaking and resume his theme the following day, "on account of the poor, who are hurrying off to work" (*serm.* 91. 8); the next day he continued where he had left off (*serm.* 92. 1).[28] Moreover, although Caesarius's sermons contain no external indications of date, *Sermon* 6 can be shown from internal evidence to have been delivered shortly after the siege of Arles in 507/8. Likewise, although few sermons offer any evidence of the place of delivery, *Sermon* 233 can be shown to have been originally delivered to the monks "in Blandiacensi monasterio," the location of which is unknown.

But it is not just surviving references to conditions of delivery that testify to the connection between Caesarius's written sermons and the versions he originally delivered. The whole logic behind his distribution of sermons to clergymen outside Arles rested on the assumption that similar conditions prevailed elsewhere. Unlike classical orators, whose written speeches for various reasons often differed remarkably from the versions they actually delivered,[29] Caesarius had his sermons written down precisely so that they

[27] For the existence of ecclesiastical *notarii* in Arles, see *vita* 1. 21.

[28] See also *serm.* 146. 4.

[29] The classic example is Cicero's *pro Milone*. After receiving a copy of the speech as later revised by Cicero, Milo commented from his exile in Marseille that he was fortunate it had not been delivered in the same form at the trial; otherwise he would not be enjoying the seafood delicacies of Provence, Cassius Dio XL. 54. 3.

could be delivered again in similar circumstances. They were designed to address the same kinds of problems Caesarius faced and to offer the same kinds of solutions. There was no reason for any large-scale revision in either content or style. Caesarius had composed the themes and arguments of his sermons for the diocese he knew best; he could not have composed more effective sermons on any other basis. Moreover, his sermons were already suitable for delivery in other dioceses. Their length suited conditions at Arles and presumably elsewhere, and their syntax and diction made them accessible to educated and uneducated listeners alike (*serm.* 86. 1), especially when they were delivered with a pronunciation that conformed not to their classically correct orthography, but to the vernacular Latin spoken by both preachers and congregations.[30] All this would suggest that the sermons Caesarius distributed to outsiders were very close to those he delivered in Arles.

Yet Caesarius's sermons are afflicted with an additional problem for the historian. Many contain extensive verbatim borrowings from other patristic homilies, ranging in extent from a few sentences to virtually the entire sermon. At issue here is not only the value of such borrowings as evidence, but more fundamentally the possibility that the sermons in which they appear were products of the study rather than the pulpit, and do not reflect a close connection between the preacher and his audience. In exploring this problem, it is first important to note that Caesarius's use of borrowed material varies widely from sermon to sermon. Morin's edition is divided into three categories on this basis. The 149 sermons of Class I, which make up 62·6 % of the total, are those Morin considered original compositions by Caesarius; in these, direct borrowing was kept to a minimum. Class II, with 52 sermons (21·8 %), consists of sermons Morin believed to have been modeled on the sermons of others, but within which he found a substantial number of passages attributable to Caesarius's style of speech or thought. Class III (37 sermons, 15·5 %) contains sermons that are essentially copies of earlier models, but display evidence of minimal reworking by Caesarius, for instance in an introduction or conclusion. Although we have most often relied for evidence on sermons in the first class, which clearly maintain the closest

[30] R. Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance* (Liverpool, 1982); on his thesis, see the papers in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. Wright (London and New York, 1991).

connection to Caesarius's world, we have also used sermons in the second and third classes, since these too supply valuable information, especially when they can be compared with their models. It is, for instance, on the basis of Caesarius's addition of just three words – "Natalis Domini imminet" ("Christmas is approaching") – to a sermon originally delivered by Augustine on the occasion of his ordination as bishop (Augustine, *serm.* 339; Caesarius, *serm.* 231. 3) that we can surmise that Caesarius was ordained a bishop just before Christmas in 502. Indeed, we may generally assume that whenever Caesarius borrowed from other preachers, he did so because he believed that this material was relevant to the audience he addressed, not because he was incapable of producing material of his own.[31]

But if we are to maintain a close connection between Caesarius and his audience, even in the case of derivative sermons, we must ask how his sermons were composed and delivered. Did Caesarius compose them mentally in advance and deliver them extempore or did he dictate them beforehand and deliver them from verbatim memory? That this question mattered in Christian preaching is clear from the case of Atticus, bishop of Constantinople from 406 to 425. According to the church history of Socrates, "formerly while a presbyter he had been accustomed, after composing his sermons, to commit them to memory, and then recite them in the church; but by diligent application he acquired confidence and made his instruction extemporaneous and eloquent."[32] As Augustine explained in the *de doctrina christiana*, extemporaneous preaching was superior because it allowed the preacher to adjust his message to the reactions of his audience, "which is not possible for those who preach what they have prepared in advance and memorized verbatim."[33]

Caesarius's biographers tell us that he delivered his sermons *memoriter*, "from memory" (*vita* I. 54; II. 20). This does not necessarily refer to verbatim memory, however, since *memoriter* in patristic Latin and particularly in the sermons of Caesarius can refer to either of the two divisions of memory treated in ancient rhetorical handbooks: "memory for things" (*memoria rerum*) or

[31] See in general, L. Cracco Ruggini, *Economia e Società nell' "Italia Annonaria"* (Milan, 1961), 13–16.

[32] Socrates, *historia ecclesiastica* VII. 2, *PG* 67: 741, trans. A. C. Zenos, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, II (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979).

[33] *doctr. christ.* IV. x. 25.

"memory for words" (*memoria verborum*).[34] While professional orators employed both forms of memory in the composition of a speech, it was memory for things that they used for its actual delivery; memory for words was used only in quoting others or in delivering a particularly intricate passage.[35] Given the rules of classical and Christian rhetoric and Caesarius's pastoral concern for instructing his audience, it makes sense to argue that he delivered his sermons extemporaneously, even those containing derivative material. It is not difficult to imagine how he did this. For Caesarius, patristic texts were nearly as worthy of study and emulation as the Bible, and he was prepared to use them as creatively as he used the scriptures.[36] Having memorized a wide variety of patristic sermons, he could draw upon these in his own preaching, just as he did the Bible, selecting appropriate passages, abbreviating and paraphrasing where necessary, and improvising ad libitum. Such extensive memorization was certainly not beyond Caesarius's capacities. His biographers noted his "wonderfully retentive memory" (*vita* I. 9) and the facility with which "he recited in succession countless *exempla* from the divine books. He did this as if he were reading what he knew out of a book, not as if he were drawing forth what he had once read from the storehouse of his memory" (*vita* I. 16).

The scope and accuracy of his verbatim memory allowed Caesarius to freely manipulate both biblical and patristic texts, and thus to create sermons that exactly suited the conditions of delivery he faced. Sermons composed in this way could remain faithful to their original sources while still taking into account (and reflecting) reactions of perplexity, indifference, skepticism, or hostility from the audience. The advantage of this explanation is that it allows for the kind of interaction with his audience that was essential for propagating a Christian system of values and beliefs. In addition, it takes account of classical and patristic habits of composition, and in particular the use of "active memory," not

[34] For the two kinds of memory, see *ad Herennium* III. xxiv. 39, and Caesarius, *serm.* 22. 1. For *memoriter* in the sense of *memoria verborum*, see Augustine, *de catechizandis rudibus* iii. 5; Fulgentius of Ruspe, *ep.* 11. 2, ed. J. Fraipont, *CCSL* 91; and Caesarius, *serm*, 9. 1, 16. 2, 130. 5, 136. 1, and 238. 1. *For memoriter* in the sense of *memoria rerum*, see Gregory the Great, *ep.* VI. 19, and Caesarius, *serm.* 19. 6, 22. 1, 23. 2, 36. 1, 74. 4, 104. 6.

[35] M. J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 196–208. This excellent study has influenced much of my discussion of memory in Caesarius's sermons.

[36] On Caesarius's attitude to his biblical and patristic sources, see Delage I, 94–117.

only to recall what was stored in the mind but equally important to create something new out of memorized material.[37] Finally, for the historian, such an explanation allows the full range of Caesarius's sermons to be used as evidence for what he believed his audience needed to hear.

Yet the most serious problem with using Caesarius's sermons as historical sources might seem to lie precisely in the normative character of the genre itself. The bishop delivered sermons to instruct and convince his audiences of what ought to be, not to describe what actually was.[38] And while his use of the analogy is understandable, it is impossible to take at face value Caesarius's claim that his preaching was "like a mirror," which revealed to his people the details of their sinful behavior (*serm.* 42. 6). For 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. But sermons could only persuade if they related what ought to be to what actually was. Caesarius was a master of this skill, and used a wide variety of analogies from daily life to make his point. It is therefore precisely as instruments of rhetoric and polemic that his sermons constitute irreplaceable sources of evidence. In expressing what he thought his audience agreed with or took for granted, Caesarius's sermons point to the issues on which a consensus existed. In expressing what he thought they disagreed with, they provide evidence of points of dissent. In describing behaviors he disapproved of, they provide evidence of what people were actually doing. Of particular value is his frequent practice of anticipating objections to the doctrines and practices he preached in order to refute them, a rhetorical technique that often suggests, in the bishop's view, the reasons members of his congregation advanced for their disagreement with him. These constitute the only available fragments of his congregation's views, and they would not have had any rhetorical effect at all if they did not represent the authentic views of at least some in the community. For these reasons, despite their flaws as sources, the sermons of Caesarius provide us with the best available evidence for the values, practices, and beliefs of his congregation. The fact that they were composed with particular audiences in

[37] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 189–220.
[38] Cracco Ruggini, *Economia e società*, 9–10.

mind, and delivered under particular conditions and at particular times, guarantees their value as sources for these audiences, conditions, and times, even when they are the only sources available. Combined with other literary, documentary, and archaeological evidence, they constitute a precious resource for the study of Caesarius and the people of Arles.