

**Césaire d'ARLES, *Œuvres conciliaires avec commentaries*,
préface de Mgr Christophe Dufour, trad. franç. Yves
Lefauconnier, Venelles, Éditions Aux sources de la
Provence, 2020, 265 pp.**

The *Cahiers de Césaire d'Arles* seek to promote the work of a great bishop of the Church of Gaul, a contemporary of Clovis. To do this, as explained on the back cover, this new collection makes copyright-free texts accessible, as well as private communications and documents not yet published on the work of Saint Caesarius of Arles (470-542). In this way it intends to accompany his proclamation as doctor of the universal Church.

This volume offers a French translation of the acts of the six councils over which Caesarius of Arles presided during his long episcopate (502-542): Agde (506), Arles IV (524), Carpentras (527), Orange II (July 529), Vaison II (November 529) and Marseilles (533). In addition, it includes the *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*, a collection of canons written between 476 and 485, well known through the work of Charles Munier. The *Statuta* is known to us in a threefold tradition: Gallic, Italian and Spanish (with interpolations). The tripartite ordering and the succession of the primitive canons has been preserved and indicates that it followed the hispana collection. It includes: 1) prologue (examination of the candidate elected to the episcopacy and *profession fidei* that distinguishes the *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* of Gennadius of Marseilles); 2) disciplinary canons (canons 1-89) following the plan of the apostolic constitutions; 3) succinct but very precise ritual of ordinations and of benedictions of persons (canons 90-102), following the Western non-Roman and so-called Gallican style – bishop, priest, deacon, subdeacon, acolyte, exorcist, lector, porter, psalmist, virgins, widows, spouses. The *Statuta* constitute a major document for Canon Law and the liturgy of the Vth century in the Gallo-Roman Church. It is a work of reform, whose orientation is ascetical, presbyteral, and antidiaconal, addressed to the episcopate and clergy of Provence. Its presence in the canonical collections assured its wide dissemination.

The texts translated and annotated by Yves Lefauconnier are based on the Latin critical edition produced by Dom Germain Morin (1861-1946) at the Maredsous Abbey editions in 1942. A brief introduction precedes the acts of each council. As a reminder, only four of them appear in the volume of *Sources chrétiennes* (nr. 353) devoted to the Merovingian councils.

As Bishop Christophe Dufour points out in his preface, bishop Caesarius is one of those “*great bishops, firm in the Catholic faith, pioneers in the structuring of dioceses and parishes, solid and wise in the government of the Church, in the midst of a changing world*” (p. 8). The councils he presided over during his episcopate concerned liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and theology. Various issues are addressed.

The Council of Agde was a regional synod held in September 506 at Agatha or Agde, on the Mediterranean coast east of Narbonne, in the Septimania region of the Visigothic Kingdom, with the permission of the Visigothic King Alaric II.

The Council met under the presidency of Bishop Caesarius of Arles. It was attended by 35 bishops.

The Council of Agde promulgated 47 canons on ecclesiastical discipline. In general, its canons shed light on the moral conditions of the clergy and laity in the historical region of Septimania at the beginning of the transition from Roman social order within the Roman province of Gallia Narbonensis to that of the Visigoth migrants. They are also of some importance for the study of certain early ecclesiastical institutions.

Its canon 7, forbidding ecclesiastics to sell or alienate the property of the church from which they drew their living, seems to be the earliest indication of the later system of benefices. In Canon 9, the Council ruled that if married deacons or priests wish to return to marital relations, they should be deprived of all of their ecclesiastical dignities and offices; those, however, who were unaware of the prohibition, could be allowed to retain their office if they abstain in the future. In Canon 10, a cleric was forbidden to visit women to whom he was not related, and could have in his house only his mother, sister, daughter, or niece. A bishop was not to ordain anyone a deacon who was not yet twenty-five years old. In order to be ordained a priest or bishop, one had to be at least thirty years of age. If a young married man wished to be ordained, he required the consent of his wife (Canon 16). Marriage between cousins was also forbidden.

The Council of Agde (506) wanted “*to put order in the Catholic Church*” and impose a “*turn of the screw*” (p. 25). Thus he reaffirms the authority of the bishop over clerics and lay people. In addition, he warns against deviant practices, particularly with regard to sexuality (p. 26).

Since 507, Arles and part of Narbonne have come under the control of the king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric, who at the same time exercises a guardianship over Visigothic Spain, as the grandfather of the young Amalric. Saint Caesarius brought together the provincial council of 524 there on the occasion of the dedication of the church of Sainte-Marie hors-les-murs. Thirteen bishops and four priest-delegates subscribed with him to the acts of the council.

With *Hispana*, old collections qualify this council as the Third Council of Arles. Sirmond having given a previous council makes it the IVth, numbering preserved by the modern collections. But these numbers are worthless from the historical point of view, since the so-called Second Council of Arles is in reality a canonical collection. The Council issued four canons. These canons deal chiefly with the conferring of orders.

The Council of Arles (524) raises the question of the recruitment of bishops and priests.

The Council of Carpentras (527), whose acts are brief, explains to what extent “*a bishop can or cannot take control of the goods of a parish*” (p. 60).

Bishop Caesarius, who had already presided over the Council of Agde in 506, united in a few years at least three provincial councils, which took important disciplinary measures (Arles in 524, Carpentras in 527, Vaison in 529), as well as a council, held at Orange in 529, which intervened in dogmatic matters. We retain these councils, which took general measures, but we omit the council of Marseilles of 533, which had to judge the bishop of Riez, Contumeliosus.

The Council of Carpentras gathered together around the metropolitan of Arles, Césaire, fifteen bishops of the province. The bishop, Agricius, who would have had to explain himself on the ordination of a priest to which he had proceeded, did not observe the probationary year, although summoned, did not come and sent me no delegate. A synodal letter, signed by the sixteen bishops and addressed to the culprit, condemned him and prohibited him from celebrating the divine liturgy for a year, in application of canons 2 and 3 of the Council of Arles of 524. On February 3, 528, Pope Felix IV wrote to bishop Caesarius his approval of the acts of the council.

The only canon promulgated by the council tends to protect the ecclesiastical patrimony against the excessive claims of certain bishops. A new question posed by the development of rural churches, to which generous donors had allocated significant resources. In the name of the old principle, recalled by the Council of Agde, which maintained the unity of the patrimony of the Church, entrusted to the management of the bishop, the latter sometimes claimed to dispose of these goods. Canon 15 of the first Council of Orléans in 511 had already tried to partially save the patrimony of the local churches, by reserving two-thirds of the offerings for the local clergy. But the land patrimony remained at the disposal of the bishop. Hence the very modest measure taken at Carpentras.

The council of the province of Arles was held in July 529 in Orange on the occasion of the dedication of the basilica built by the prefect of the praetorium of the Gaul, Liberius, who, with other lay personalities, subscribed to the acts of the council.

Of the twenty-five canons of the council, the first eight reproduce fragments of the *Capitula S. Augustini*, the others are borrowed from Prosper of Aquitaine. Bishop Caesarius sent the acts of the council to Felix IV. This one having died in September 530, it was his successor, Boniface II, who addressed to the metropolitan of Arles on January 25, 531 a letter confirming the conciliar dispositions. Having received this confirmation, Caesarius composed a preamble for the acts of the council and an anthology in seventeen chapters, borrowed from Ambroise, Jerome and Augustine, relating to the matters dealt with in the canons of the council.

The council gathered around the metropolitan of Arles thirteen bishops, ten of whom had already taken part in the council of Carpentras in 527. It is the first council of Gaul to have ruled on questions of faith, condemning the errors of the semi-Pelagians on grace and free will. A former monk from Lerins, bishop Caesarius was in fact opposed to this doctrine, supported in particular by another monk from Lerins, Fauste de Riez. The importance of this second Council of Orange is great for the history of dogma. The Council of Trent (Sessio VI – *De iustificazione*) will still refer to its canons.

The Council of Orange II (529), confirmed by Pope Boniface II, specified the relationship between human nature and supernatural grace. This teaching, assumed later by the Councils of Trent, Vatican I and Vatican II, participates in the explanation of the dogma and makes Césaire of Arles “*the doctor of Christian freedom*” (p. 9).

The Council of Orange of July 529 had not dealt with disciplinary questions. Bishop Caesarius convened a new council on November 5, which was to be dedicated to them. The meeting took place in Vaison, a town which the Council of Carpentras had chosen for a council scheduled for 529, but which does not seem to have taken place.

The council promulgated five canons, three of which (canons 1, 3 and 5) declare that they want to resume foreign, Italian, African and Eastern usages. In the preamble to the acts of the council, the Fathers themselves seem to recognize their lack of disciplinary scope. The first two canons relate to the formation of young readers and to the conditions of preaching. The other three concern the liturgy.

The council gathered around the metropolitan of Arles, Bishop Caesarius, eleven bishops, among whom did not appear that of Vaison, Aletius. Apart from the metropolitan, there are only five bishops who had sat in Orange a few months earlier. They are the bishops of Toulon, Aix, Avignon, Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and Orange.

The Council of Vaison II (529) introduced into Gaul elements of the liturgy (Kyrie, Sanctus, Gloria) called upon to span the centuries. Moreover, it mentions the right of the priest to pronounce the homily.

The acts of the Council of Marseilles (533) constitute “*the report of a canonical process*” (103).

The collection also includes four contributions that shed light on various aspects of these councils. An unfinished study by Dom Joël Courreau (1936-2001) offers an in-depth analysis of the acts of Orange II. In an article entitled *les “apports et réformes de Césaire d’Arles à l’Église universelle”*, Mgr Dominique Le Tourneau shows what was the influence of the legislation promoted by the Bishop of Arles on the canonical collections, the *Decree of Gratien* and more generally the law of the Catholic Church. While he evokes “*Césaire d’Arles et le «post-pélagianisme» gaulois*”, Jeremy Delmulle sheds light on how the decisions of Orange II qualify Gallic Augustinianism. Finally, Marc Heijmans presents the suffragans of Caesarius of Arles (502-542) from a dozen lists of subscribers.

The acts of these councils constitute a formidable tool to better know the Church of the 6th century and the figure of Caesarius of Arles. But they also offer valuable testimony to the sources of canon law, the reform of the Church and the search for holiness. Thus, in his exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* (2018), after evoking the teaching of the second Council of

Orange, in nr. 56, Pope Francis concludes: “Only on the basis of God’s gift, freely accepted and humbly received, can we cooperate by our own efforts in our progressive transformation. We must first belong to God, offering ourselves to him who was there first, and entrusting to him our abilities, our efforts, our struggle against evil and our creativity, so that his free gift may grow and develop within us: “I appeal to you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Romans 12, 1). For that matter, the Church has always taught that charity alone makes growth in the life of grace possible, for “if I do not have love, I am nothing” (I Corinthians 13, 2).

The purpose of the *Cahiers de Césaire d’Arles* is to provide students, researchers and the general public with copyright-free texts, as well as private communications and communication not yet published on the work of Bishop Caesarius of Arles.

Pr. Prof. dr. Constantin RUS

Anthony KALDELLIS, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, Harvard University Press, 2019, 392 pp.

Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium is a critical book that shatters assumptions foundational to the field of Byzantine studies for centuries. For all its importance, however, the contents of this volume should not be a surprise to scholars of Byzantium. The author, Anthony Kaldellis¹, has been telegraphing his argument about the subject for years in an avalanche of articles and books. In *Romanland*, he sets out to argue that the Byzantine Empire “was a Roman polity populated overwhelmingly by identifiable ethnic Romans and a number of ethnic minorities” (p. 271).

This seemingly simple statement undercuts the standard explanation of the nature of Byzantium as a multiethnic empire, with serious implications

¹ Anthony Kaldellis is Professor and Chair of the Department of Classics at The Ohio State University. He is the author of many books, including *The Christian Parthenon*, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, and *The Byzantine Republic*, which have been translated into French, Greek, and Russian.