

THE PARALINGUISTIC IN AUGUSTINE'S *CONFESSIONS*. SPEECH ACQUISITION, GROANING, WAILING, WEEPING AND SINGING

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Twenty-two words into the Augustine's *Soliloquies* –published in 387, shortly after the author's conversion back to Christianity– we arrive at the first main clause of the work: *ait mihi subito sive ego ipse sive alius quis*. The use of a third-person verb alongside a first-person subject is striking; if not discordant, it sets up strange harmonies. How can this be a soliloquy at all, if the speaker is unable to identify a single self to address?

The problem of language continued to fascinate Augustine when he came to write the *Confessions* ten years later; and there is a similar preoccupation with the sheer difficulty of using language as a vehicle for theology. Early in the first book he considers the nature of the God he is addressing: *summe, optime, potentissime, omnipotentissime* (1.4.4). The virtual tautology of this final superlative is often pointed out; when God is the essence of all the qualities predicated of him, how is any description or invocation possible? The same passage ends with an explicit warning about the proper use of language: *vae tacentibus de te, quoniam loquaces muti sunt*. These *loquaces* are generally taken to be the Manichees, fluent dialecticians with a generous store of mythology; but, as O'Donnell has remarked, 'The oxymoron [*loquaces/muti*] has puzzled'.¹ Some of the difficulty may be resolved if we take *mutus* in the well-attested sense of the Greek ἄλογος 'foolish' or 'irrational', making the overall sense 'those who apparently use language, but without the exercise of reason'.² The other adjective also deserves attention; while *loquax* may be an acceptable translation of the Greek λογικός in the sense 'vocal, endowed with speech', it does not capture the equally-important sense 'rational, endowed with reason'.³ Moreover, the pejorative connotations of the suffix *-ax* (as in *audax, edax, fugax, rapax*) means it is at best a loaded translation even in the former sense.⁴

¹ O'DONNELL, J., *Augustine. Confessions*, Oxford 1992, vol. 2, 27.

² Compare the frequent use of *garrire* 'to chatter away' (often used of talking birds) of Augustine himself and other Manichees (4. 15. 26; 5. 6. 10; 6. 4. 5).

³ For a recent treatment of this topic, see GERA, D. L., *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization*, Oxford 2003, especially 182-212.

There are many possible approaches to the question of language in the *Confessions*; semantic theory, speech and writing, the use of Greek, the role of metaphor being just a few obvious examples.⁵ Our present concern, however, will be with phenomena at the edge of language; what we may call broadly the paralinguistic. In particular, we will examine three key episodes in the *Confessions*; his acquisition of language as a toddler, the occasion of his leaving his mother Monica in Africa to go to Rome, and his account of the death of his mother. In connexion with the last two, we will consider Augustine's attitude to non-linguistic expressions of emotion –groaning, wailing, and weeping– and to singing, of which language is a part but not the whole. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which his attitude towards them forms part of his wider systems of belief.

The Acquisition of Language

The processes by which Augustine acquired language are treated in some detail at various instances in Book One of the *Confessions*. The first stage in his reconstruction is that of gestures and cries which are intended to represent his inner meaning:

Confessions 1.6.8: *et voluntates meas volebam ostendere eis per quos implerentur, et non poteram... itaque iactabam membra et voces, signa similia voluntatibus meis... non erant vere similia*. Even at this stage, there are philosophical and theological dimensions to his inarticulacy. The anaphora of *voluntates... volebam* exemplifies the difficulties of self-knowledge and the infinite recursus of the will which are so important in the later books of the work. God is his will (*Confessions* 12.28.38); humans, however, are often incapable of forming a 'full wish' (*plena voluntas*) and so incapable of acting on the rational impulse of the mind (8.8. 19-8. 9.21). How, then, can *voluntas* be the object of *velle*?

Then there is the question of the *voces* uttered by the infant Augustine. In his commentary *de Genesi ad Litteram* 1.15.21, Augustine describes the sound made by babies as an *informis vox*, a 'shapeless' or 'ugly' noise: [*infans*] *prius emittit informem vocem, quam possit postea conligere atque in verba formare*. If we import this definition into Book One of the *Confes-*

⁴ On other loaded translations in Augustine (e. g. *fabulosus* for μυθικός, *contentiosus* for ἀγωνιστικός, see BURTON, P., "The Vocabulary of the Liberal Arts in Augustine's *Confessions*", VESSEY, M.; POLLMANN, K. (edd.), *Augustine and the Disciplines*, Oxford (forthcoming).

⁵ For a formal philosophical survey of Augustine's thought on language, see KIRWAN, C., "Augustine on the nature of speech", EVERSON, S. (ed.), *Language* (Companions to Ancient Thought: 3), Cambridge 1994, 188-211.

sions, we may again see an overlap with the themes of the later books. Much of Book Twelve is taken up with the opening verses of Genesis, *terra erat invisibilis et incomposita* –in Greek ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκευάστος also translatable as *sine specie et informis*. The process of creation, for Augustine, involves the imposition by God of *forma* and *species*, the key Neo-Platonist concepts of form and beauty, on a shapeless world– a process replicated by in the child's imposition on language on mere noise.

The arrival of boyhood, then, is marked by the acquisition of language. Augustine himself makes explicit the familiar etymology of *in-fans* as 'non-speaker'.⁶ However, language acquisition also has other and more ambivalent results. At *Confessions* 1.8.13, Augustine summarizes the relationship between language acquisition and wider social integration: *Sic cum his, inter quos eram, voluntatum enuntiandarum signa communicavi et vitae humanae procellosam societatem altius ingressus sum pendens ex parentum auctoritate nutuque maiorum hominum*. *Societas* is often a two-edged word for Augustine: some fifteen years later, in writing *The City of God*, he would write variously of the *societas mortalium*, *societas angelorum*, *societas daemonum*, and *societas diabolica*.⁷ In the *de Ordine* (2.35) he had written positively about language as the product of reason and the precondition for stable society.⁸ Here in the *Confessions*, it is human society which imposes language on its members, not *vice versa*; that 'society' may be no more than a bond of mutual self-interest. This impression is strengthened by the adjective *procellosa*; Augustine makes frequent use in the *Confessions* of the Old Testament imagery of the sea as a primal force held in check by the power of Yahweh,⁹ often as a metaphor for the human condition.

Furthermore, language involves a submission to authority –a key concept in Augustine, and again an ambiguous one. Within Latin linguistic theory the concept has a long pedigree. Authority, custom (*consuetudo*), reason (*ratio*), form an acknowledged triad in Latin linguistic theory as far back as Quinti-

⁶ *Confessions* 1. 8. 13: *non enim eram infans, qui non farer, sed iam puer loquens eram*. A similar etymology is found in Greek also; compare the twelfth-century *Etymologicum Magnum* s. v. μείραξ, Παρὰ τὸ εἶρω, τὸ λέγω, γίνεται εἶραξ. ὅθεν εἰράκιον καὶ μείράκιον. καὶ πλεονασμῶ τοῦ Μ, μείραξ, ὁ δυνάμενος ἤδη λέγειν.

⁷ See e.g. *City of God* 5. 17. 39; 10. 9. 43; 10. 11. 36.

⁸ *De Ordine* 2. 35: *...illud quod in nobis est rationabile ...quia ... nec homini homo firmissime sociari posset, nisi colloquerentur... vidit esse imponenda rebus vocabula*. For the intellectual background to this, see DUCHROW, U., *Sprachverständnis und biblisches Hören bei Augustin*, Tübingen 1965, 94-95.

⁹ The adverb *procellose* is found (again in an anthropological context) at 13. 20. 28: *genus humanum profunde curiosum et procellose tumidum et instabiliter fluidum*. See CLARK, G., "Adam's Womb (Augustine, *Confessions* 13. 28) and the Salty Sea", *PCPhS* 42, 1996, 89-105.

lian, as Vivien Law observed.¹⁰ We have just seen how Augustine has already moved away from his earlier view of reason as the inventor of language. Here *auctoritas* is assigned a prominent role; but this term too is problematic. *Auctoritas* is traditionally the language of the *auctores*, the classic authors. It had long been pointed out that these *auctores* did no more than use the custom (*consuetudo*) of their day; in Quintilian's formula (*Inst.* 1.6. 43), *et sane quid est aliud vetus sermo quam vetus loquendi consuetudo*. Law also pointed out to the similarities between this and Augustine's own formulation at *de Doctrina Christiana* 2.13.19: *quid est ergo integritas loquendi, nisi alienae consuetudinis conservatio loquentium veterum auctoritate firmatae?* Augustine's definition, however, is notably more negative about *consuetudo* than is Quintilian; even in one's native tongue, it is always 'foreign' (*alienae*). We may note also that while Quintilian retrojects *consuetudo* into the past, Augustine projects *auctoritas* into the present; it is his parents –uneducated African provincials– who are his first *auctores*.

Augustine's views on authority, then, are delicately balanced. Indeed, as O'Donnell points out, authority mostly 'appears in benevolent guise' in Augustine's early works, despite a 'lingering anxiety' he occasionally displays.¹¹ In particular, the authority of the Christian Scriptures is one of his proofs of its validity, against the polemics of the Manichees. This is typically portrayed as an instance of the divine economy οἰκονομία, *administratio*, *dispensatio*) of the world; God, the good estate-owner, intervenes both directly and through his 'bailiffs' (Moses and other Scriptural writers in the past; Christian bishops and preachers in the present) to see that it is kept in some kind of order.¹² There are obvious differences between the sort of 'authority' enjoyed by the Scriptures and that enjoyed by any specific language; but the mere fact that Augustine can use the same term of both suggests we should be prepared to see authority in a positive light.

¹⁰ In Varro, the tetrad of reason, authority, custom, and nature is found. Quintilian and later grammarians drop nature from the list. See LAW, V., "Auctoritas, Consuetudo and Ratio", BURSILL-HALL, G. L.; EBBESEN, S.; KOERNER, K. (edd.), *de Ortu Grammaticae. Studies in Medieval Grammar and Linguistic Theory in Memory of Jan Pinborg*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1990, 191-207.

¹¹ O'DONNELL, J., *l.c.*, volume 2, 60.

¹² The language of divine economy in the *Confessions* has not, to my knowledge, been fully explored. For some initial references to the key terms, see *Confessions* 11.2. 2; 12. 23. 32; 12. 27. 37 (*dispensatio*); 12. 16. 23; 12. 26. 36; 12. 31.42 (*administratio*).

Augustine Abandons Monica. Groaning, Wailing, and Weeping

We turn now to the scene in Book Five of the *Confessions* where the young professor Augustine, fed up with his rowdy students in Carthage, leaves Africa to go to Rome. To avoid an emotional farewell with his mother, he leaves her at the shrine of S. Cyprian by the harbour in Carthage, pretending he has an appointment with a friend. He then slips away secretly by night before his mother can see him off. Monica is distraught:

Confessions 5.8.15: [mater] me profectum atrociter planxit... sed fefelli eam violenter me tenentem... et evasi... illa autem mansit orando et flendo... Flavit ventus et implevit vela nostra et litus subtraxit aspectibus nostris, in quo mane illa insaniebat dolore et querelis et gemitu implebat aures tuas... flebat et eiulabat atque illis cruciatibus arguebatur in ea reliquarium Evae, cum gemitu quaerens quod cum gemitu pepererat...

The passage is a famous one, not least for the invitation it gives for a reading of the *Confessions* as a 'spiritual *Aeneid*';¹³ there are probably echoes also of Tobias 10: 4,9: *flebat igitur mater [iuvenis] irremediabilibus lacrimis... et cruciatur spiritus [parentum]*. Monica's response is clearly portrayed as excessive, even unhealthy (*insaniebat*). It is also characterized through a number of paralinguistic activities: *planctus*, *querela*, *gemitus*, *fletus*, and *eiulatus*.¹⁴ These activities form part of an evolving tradition on the correct use of language and the human voice.

On the question of groaning, Augustine inherited a set of complex ideas from both classical and Christian sources. Cicero had already laid down in the *Tusculanae Disputationes* (2.55) that although groaning might on occasion be appropriate for a man, *eiulatus* was always inappropriate even for a woman (*ingemiscere nonnumquam viro concessum est... eiulatus ne mulieri quidem*). Later Stoicism distinguished 'passion' (πάθος) from 'pre-passion' (προπάθεια), a distinction exploited by various Christian authors to explain Biblical references to apparent displays of passion by Jesus and others. Au-

¹³ See BENNET, C., "The Conversion of Vergil. The *Aeneid* in Augustine's *Confessions*", *REA* 34, 1988, 47-69; the subject is more cautiously treated by MacCORMACK, S., *The Shadows of Poetry. Vergil in the Mind of Augustine*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1998, 96-100. Most discussion concentrates on Book Four of the *Aeneid*, but no less important is the allusion to Aeneas' final words to Dido at *Aeneid*. 6. 465, *siste gradum teque aspectu ne subtrahere nostris*; it is Augustine who is the shade here.

¹⁴ If we are right in discerning echoes of Tobias 10, then it may be apposite to quote Tobias senior's response to his wife's crying: *tace et noli turbari*; reticence and self-control go together.

gustine might have argued that groaning represented a 'pre-passion', rather than a passion proper; but he does not. Indeed, it has been persuasively argued by Sorabji¹⁵ that he misunderstood the account of the distinction, and rejected any real difference at all. This left him with a problem explaining the apparent instances of emotion in the Scriptures, which, by the time he wrote Book Fourteen of *The City of God*, he had resolved by developing his own theory of emotions, according to which they were not opposed to reason, but ought rather to follow it:

*Sed cum rectam rationem sequantur istae affectiones, quando ubi oportet adhibentur, quis eas tunc morbos seu vitiosas passiones audeat dicere? Quam ob rem ipse dominus... abhibuit eas ubi adhibendas esse iudicavit... Verum ille hos motus certae dispensationis gratia ita cum voluit suscepit animo humano, ut cum voluit factus est homo.*¹⁶

It is unclear whether Augustine had already arrived at this view when writing the *Confessions* in the late 390s. He would, however, have been familiar not only with Cicero's version of Stoic μετριοπάθεια, but also with a distinctly Biblical understanding of what it is to groan. In Pauline theology, groaning is characteristic condition of the world as it waits for the end of time.¹⁷ The notion that a fallen world, having drifted from its primal rational order, rightly evokes a semi-inarticulate response, appears to have prompted Augustine's paraphrase of Genesis 3: 16 (*multiplicans... gemitum tuum et in tristitiis paries filios*).¹⁸

If groaning is in some circumstances acceptable, we have seen how Augustine was at least familiar with traditions in which wailing (*eiulatus*) was not. Again, the language is gendered: *eiulatus* might in Cicero's formulation

¹⁵ SORABJI, R., *Emotion and Peace of Mind. From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, Oxford 2000, 343-356, 372-384.

¹⁶ *City of God* 14. 9. We may note that Augustine makes emotions consistently the object of will and judgement (*iudicavit, voluit*); that (again) the notion of economy is invoked (*dispensationis gratia*); and that he implicitly evokes the classical notion of τὸ πρέπον *Idcorum (ubi oportet, ubi adhibendas)*.

¹⁷ Romans 8: 22-6, *omnis creatura ingemiscit et parturit usque adhuc . . . et ipsi intra nos gemimus... ipse spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus*; 2Corinthians 5: 2-4, *in hoc ingemiscimus habitationem nostram... cupientes... qui sumus in hoc tabernaculo ingemiscimus gravati*. Compare George Herbert's 1633 poem *Sion*: 'All Solomons sea of brasse and world of stone/ Is not so deare to thee as one good grone'.

¹⁸ Genesis 3: 16 is variously translated in the Latin traditions; the form cited here is apparently the form most familiar to Augustine. See FISCHER, B., *Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinische Bibel. 2. Genesis*, Freiburg 1951-4. The anaphora here may be influenced by Genesis 3: 19, *terra es et in terram ibis*.

be improper even for a woman, but it is presumably more likely from a woman also. It is also distinctly non-human, or at least not the sound of anyone past infancy, being (like an infant's wailing) characteristically 'shapeless' or 'unformed' and irrational; compare Augustine's own description of it at *Sermo* 288.3: [*eiulatio*] *informis quidam sonus est... sine aliqua ratione intellectus*. The same may be said of *querela*, 'moaning', often associated with birds and other 'irrational animals'. If Monica was Augustine's first teacher of the *ars loquendi*, then it is his pursuit of a rhetorical career which has reduced her to literal speechlessness.

Curiously, Monica's weeping might be viewed less negatively than her wailing. Weeping is famously recorded of Jesus himself (John.11:35), an incident cited by Augustine in his account of the emotions in Book Fourteen of *The City of God*, and only one of numerous occasions in the Scriptures where weeping is described or even recommended. It is particularly associated with Monica's concern for Augustine during his Manichee period (compare the anonymous bishop's description of him as *filius istarum lacrimarum* at 3.12.21), and again linked with *gemitus* in Augustine's account of his grief at his childhood friend's death (4.7.12). In the latter passage it is 'groaning and tears' which provide what little rest he finds (*in eis solis aliquantula requies*); given the importance of *requies* as a *Leitmotif* of the work, this is surely a positive assessment, given the overall movement of the *Confessions* from restless searching at the beginning to the cosmic Sabbath rest at the end. His final decision to embrace Christianity and celibacy is likewise marked by a 'shower' and 'rivers' of tears (8.12.28), further positive imagery.

Augustine's attitude towards weeping may be set against a wider debate in contemporary Christianity about the extent to which weeping is a legitimate response to a fallen world, and the extent to which it represents a regrettable loss of self-control and articulacy. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the two versions of Sulpicius Severus' letter to his mother-in-law Bassula describing the death of Martin of Tours (*Epistola* 3, *PL* 20.181-5). The Verona version of the text reads: *tum virginum chorus fletu abstin[uit] prae pudore... siquidem fides flere prohiberet, gemitum tamen extorquebat affectus... ignoscere fletibus*. Here weeping is treated as something to be abstained from; but presumably it is not *per se* culpable not to abstain. At worst, it is a venial offence; while groaning is inevitable (at least for females). However, the vulgate text of the passage adds a gloss, *quia et pium est gaudere Martino, et pium est flere Martinum*. This suggests a quite different response, a Christianity in which emotional outbursts are a religious duty.

The Death of Monica.

We move now to another great set-piece passage of the *Confessions*, the death of Monica in Book Nine. Monica dies; Augustine shuts her eyes, and forces himself not to cry. However, his fifteen-year-old son Adeodatus does burst out crying –and is restrained by the adults present. Then Augustine’s friend Evodius seizes a *psalterium* and starts singing a psalm, to which the whole company sing the response. Thereupon, as the funeral arrangements are made, Augustine gives a disputation on a topic suitable for the occasion.

Confessions 9.12.29-31... *puer Adeodatus exclamavit in planctu atque ab omnibus nobis coercitus tacuit. hoc modo etiam meum quiddam puerile, quod labebatur in fetus, iuvenali voce cordis coercebatur et tacebat... psalterium arripuit Evodius et cantare coepit psalmum, cui respondebamus omnis domus 'misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi domine'... ego... quod erat tempori congruum disputabam.*

This passage is remarkable not least for its emphasis on the correct use of language and paralinguistic. Augustine’s heart speaks with an ‘adult voice’, iuvenali voce; while Adeodatus, at the end of his boyhood, still has ‘something childish’ about him (*quiddam puerile*), and is compelled (rather than persuaded) by his elders to be silent. The word *auctoritas* is not used here, but the principle is clearly at work, and its ambiguity is nicely illustrated; it is not ideal, but it is the best restraint available given that Adeodatus had not reached the full adult exercise of reason.

Next, Evodius seizes the *psalterium* (*psalterium arripuit*). The verb *arripere* offers a fascinating case-study to students of Christian Latin. It seems to occur with particular frequency in the Christian authors; and whereas in classical Latin it may refer to good or bad actions, its connotations in Christian authors are almost universally good, denoting decisive spiritual actions. In the *Confessions* it occurs outside this passage four times, the object being once the contemplative life (8.6.15) and three times the Scriptures (7.21.27; 8. 10. 24).¹⁹ When words are revalorized in this way in the Christian writers, it is usually through their use in a familiar Biblical passage. Unusually, there seems to be no one Biblical source for this; the best candidate is Matthew 11:12, *ab Iohanne baptista regnum caelorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud*.²⁰

¹⁹ This positive use of *arripio* is perhaps especially visible in the hagiographic literature. Compare, for instance, the two instances in Sulpicius Severus’ *Life of Martin*: at 9. 5, Martin is elected bishop of Tours after an anonymous layman seizes on (*arripuit*) a prophetic verse of Scripture; at 17.5, Martin rescues (*arripisset*) a householder from the savage demon lurking in his atrium.

The *psalterium* too has connotations of its own. For O’Donnell this is ‘clearly the Psalm-book, not the instrument.’ However, Evodius could surely have sung a psalm from memory; and if the term refers to the musical instrument, then it is one rich in symbolic associations. Classical philosophers from Plato onward generally preferred stringed instruments to wind instruments, as tending to soothe rather than to arouse the passions.²¹ Stringed instruments in particular are useful for illustrating how musical harmonies work according to mathematical ratios, and hence how the pleasures of the sensible world are really expressions of underlying immaterial truths; ideal for Augustine the Christian Platonist. Moreover, the ‘ten-stringed instrument’ has already been used by Augustine as a metaphor for the Ten Commandments (*Confessions* 3. 8.16: *et vivitur male adversus tria et septem, psalterium decem chordarum, decalogum tuum*); thereby linking mathematics and music to ethics and revelation. The responsorial nature of the singing also has its symbolism, being at once dialogic and univocal. Augustine’s own disputation, though a solo performance, has a similarly dialogic character (*disputatio* = ὁ δῖόλογος).

But even so, Augustine does not yet achieve full closure. Not satisfied with the consolation of philosophy, he also seeks the consolation of bathing, having heard that baths are so called in Greek because they expel anxieties (βόλλει τὰ ἄνια):

Confessions 9.12.32-3. *audieram inde balneis nomen inditum, quia graeci balanion dixerint, quod anxietatem pellat ex animo... lavi et talis eram qualis priusquam lavissem... deinde dormivi et evigilavi et non parva ex parte mitigatum inveni dolorem meum... recordatus sum veridicos versus Ambrosii tui. tu es enim*

*deus, creator omnium
polique rector, vestiens
diem decoro lumine,
noctem soporis gratia,
artus solutos ut quies
reddat laboris usui
mentesque fessas allevet
luctuque solvat anxios*

...

²⁰ More remotely, perhaps 1 Timothy 6: 12, *apprehende vitam aeternam in qua vocatus es*.

²¹ See entry by FERGUSSON s.v. ‘music’ in FERGUSSON, E. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early*

et nunc, domine, confiteor tibi in litteris: legat qui volet, et interpretetur ut volet, et si peccatum invenerit, flevisse me matrem exigua parte horae... non inrideat sed potius... pro peccatis meis fleat ipse . . .

It is a remarkable aberration on Augustine's part to have thought that a visit to the baths would help, solely on the basis of a Greek etymology. Everything we have seen so far in the *Confessions* suggests a strong sense of the arbitrary nature of language, and a healthy disrespect for Greek cultural supremacists. The appeal to etymology itself is reminiscent of those found in the older traditions of Latin linguistic theory, in particular Books 2-7 of Varro's *de Lingua Latina*.²² At all events, it proves unhelpful: a misunderstanding not only of the nature of baths, but also of language.

More useful is the second musical interlude: Ambrose's hymn *Deus, creator omnium*. This hymn is a key intertext for our reading of the *Confessions*. The first line is both a straightforward Biblical citation, and a contradiction of the position Augustine had held as a Manichee; all creation is the work of a single good God. It is also a line which he had already discussed in the *de Musica* 6.2.2: *deus creator omnium, istos quattuor iambos quibus constat et tempora duodecim ubinam esse arbitraris... an quia notus versus est, in memoria quoque nostra hos numeros esse fatendum est?* Notable here is his emphasis on the form of verse and music as lying within the hearer's memory, rather than in the externals of their performance (compare *Confessions* 11.27.35 *et seq.*). The consolation Augustine derives from the hymn comes from his recollection of it (*recordatus sum*).

Ambrose's hymn is thematically important also as an example of Augustine's wider concern about singing in the *Confessions*. We first encounter it in Augustine's description of his arithmetic lessons at school, where he observes how 'one and one are two, two and two are four' was an *odiosa cantio*, a nasty little ditty.²³ On music in church he is ambivalent. Ambrose himself, no less, introduces to Milan the oriental custom of antiphonal psalm-sing-

Christianity, New York/London 1997. The relevant passages are Plato, *Res publica* 399E; *Leges* 669E; Philo, *Noe* 2. 126; Porphyry, *de Abstinencia* 2, 34.

²² Note in particular the Varroian technical use of *indere* 'to put a name' on something; originally a semantic extension on the basis of ἐπιτίθημι, and by Augustine's day apparently obsolete except in this sense.

²³ The 'popular' character of *cantio* as opposed to *carmen* does not, of course, in itself mean that the word necessarily had pejorative connotations. However, the evidence of the relevant entry in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (III. 286. 75ff) suggests that alongside a neutral sense ('song') there was a tendency among some Christian authors to reserve it for unfavourable contexts. So alongside examples of *cantio* referring to the Psalms of David, we find also two examples of *obscaenae cantiones* in Arnobius, *meretriciae cantiones* in Eustathius, *vinolenta cantio* in Augustine himself.

ing (with the two halves of the congregation singing alternate verses), when the Catholic congregation is under threat from Justina, the Arian mother of the boy-emperor Valentinian (*Confessions* 9.7.15). This is a success as an emergency measure, and as a result becomes current throughout the west. Elsewhere, however, Augustine is wary of the pleasure that can be had from listening to a skilled performer chanting in church, quoting as his authority Athanasius of Alexandria:

Confessions 10.33.50: *Aliquando autem hanc ipsam fallaciam immoderatus cavens erro nimia severitate... ut melos omne cantilenarum suavium, quibus Davidicum psalterium frequentatur, ab auribus meis removeri velim atque ipsius ecclesiae, tutiusque mihi videtur, quod de Alexandrino episcopo Athanasio saepe mihi dictum commemini, qui tam modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem psalmi, ut pronuntianti vicinior esset quam canenti... magisque adducor non quidem irretractabilem sententiam proferens cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesia... tamen cum mihi accidit, ut me amplius cantus quam res, quae canitur, moveat, poenaliter me peccare confiteor...*

The language here is carefully chosen. The art of music is often described formally as *peritia modulandi* or similar; and *modus* is to be observed both in chanting (*modico flexu*) and in one's wariness about its charms (*immoderatus cavens*). And the distinctive phrase *melos cantilenarum* may recall another instance of the ambivalent nature of music in a recent work of Augustine's: in the *de Ordine* (1.8.22) he describes how his friend Licentius, while on retreat, is reproved by Monica for psalm-singing (*laete et garrule*) in the lavatory: *ipsum cantilenaem modum nuper hauserat et amabat... melos inusitatum*. Augustine's recollection of Ambrose's hymn here is clearly of a very different order.

Augustine's mourning for his mother finally takes the form of weeping (*confiteor... flevisse me*) – a fact which is recalled with a certain anxiety about his readers' potential response (*legat qui volet, et interpretetur ut volet, et si peccatum invenerit... non inrideat sed... fleat ipse...*). The debate within Christian circles on the moral status of weeping has been touched on above; it appears that Augustine had not yet reached the positive evaluation of the emotions found in the *The City of God*. It is notable also that his concerns focus on various other linguistic and paralinguistic topics: reading (*legat*), intentionalism (*volet*), and laughter (*inrideat*). But these lie outside our present scope.

Conclusion

It is perhaps an ethical commonplace that one's control of one's language is a metonymy for one's wider capacity for self-control and self-definition. However, the ramifications of this commonplace were explored in some depth in ancient thought.

Augustine is by no means the first or only intellectual reconsider these traditions of reflection on language and the paralinguistic from a Christian standpoint, or to apply their insights to his reading of the Scriptures. However, he is arguably the most important thinker to do so, and certainly the most influential. Our reading of the *Confessions* is enriched if we attempt to discern the way he has adapted them in his own discourse on language.

FACTORES CONDICIONANTES EN LA EXPRESION DE LA "POSESIÓN" EN LATÍN CLÁSICO Y TARDÍO*

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0. Introducción

Sobre la cuestión enunciada en el título de este trabajo existen controvertidas opiniones: algunas de ellas¹ son ofrecidas más como hipótesis que como hechos demostrados; otras² expresan tendencias generales que un análisis más promenorizado de los textos puede matizar. Por otra parte, un estudioso del tema como H. Seiler, señala en su monografía dedicada a la posesión³ que: (1) "many languages show more than one verb of POSSESSION: translation equivalents of the copula, of 'to be', 'to have', 'to belong', 'to grasp', etc. Neither the number of such elements nor the choice among them is accidental; but the rationale still remains to be discovered"⁴. Más re-

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¹ Así, entre otros, HEINE, B., *Possession. Cognitive sources, forces, and grammaticalization*, Cambridge 1997; KULNEFF-ERIKSSON, K., *On 'have' in Ancient Greek. An investigation on ἔχω and the construction εἶναι with a dative as expressions for 'have'*, Lund 1999; BALDI, P.; CUZZOLIN, P., "Towards a new historical Syntax of Latin", MOUSSY, C. (ed.), *De lingua Latina novae quaestiones*, Louvain 2001, 211-214.

² Cf., p.ej., FREEZE, R., "Existentials and other Locatives", *Language* 68,3, 1992, 553-595; GARCÍA-HERNÁNDEZ, B., "El dativo con *sum* y la vulgarización de la noción de posesión", *RSEL* 22,2, 1992, 325-337; GARCÍA-HERNÁNDEZ, B., "Die komplementäre Beziehung zwischen *mihi est* und *habeo*", *IF* 98, 1993, 186-199; GARCÍA-HERNÁNDEZ, B., "La expresión de la noción verbal de posesión del Latín al romance", CALLEBAT, L. (ed.), *Latin Vulgaire-Latin tardif IV*, Hildesheim 1995, 323-336; ISO, J. J., "La construcción *sum* + dativo y *habere* + acusativo como expresión de la posesión", TORREGO, M. E.; QUETGLAS, P. J.; ESPINILLA, E. (edd.), *Sintaxis del dativo latino*, Barcelona 1995, 61-72.

³ SEILER, H., *Possession as an operational dimension of language*, Tübingen 1983, 62.

⁴ Ciertamente SEILER, H. (1983), *l.c.*, 62-64; 78; 80; 83-84 alude a algunos criterios que pueden ayudar a la identificación de las condiciones que llevan a utilizar una estructura concreta para expresar la noción posesiva, como p.ej., la alienabilidad, el contacto, el control, etc.; en un estudio posterior ("The operational basis of possession. A dimensional approach revisited", BARON, I.; HERSLUND, M.; F. SØRENSEN [edd.], *Dimensions of Possession*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2001, 37), el mismo autor propone la ±proximidad con respecto al hablante como posible criterio condicionante en algunas lenguas. Una opinión mucho más generalizadora y escéptica es la de ROUVERET, A., "Points de vue sur le verbe être", ROUVERET, A., "Être" et "Avoir". *Syntaxe, Sémantique, typologie*, Saint-Denis 1998, 62: "à l'intérieur d'une langue donné, le choix entre les formes syntaxiques disponibles est tout autre qu'aléatoire".