

Abstract - FIEC 2009

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b) Preferred panel

Continuity and Change in Late Antiquity

c) Title

Apuleius' and Augustine's Prose Style: Rupture or Continuity?

d) Abstract

Many aspects of Augustine's prose can be understood as the continuity of the style of Seneca's philosophical "predication" and language of interiority. Less studied is the link between Apuleius' and Augustine's style. My analysis will follow a suggestion made by Michael von Albrecht (*Meister Römischer Prose*) in the chapter devoted to Apuleius' prose.

There are some characteristics that give to Apuleius' style a clear detachment from the common language, a sort of "artificiality": the predominance of "participial style"; the taste for rhetorical playing with words, both formal and semantic; finally, what could be called an "adjectival style", that is the preference for adjective instead of genitive constructions, which makes the prose gain in "crypticity" (*rosarius* is quite less precise than the "objective" *rosarum*). Such stylistic devices are linked to Apuleius' intention of narrating a story that bears a meaning much deeper than the literal one: the reader gets the impression that it is necessary to penetrate the objective facts and to catch their deeper meaning; so to say, these facts convey an invitation to religious conversion (cf. also the Isiac redemption at the end of the novel).

In the same way – so suggests von Albrecht – the Latin language will become in the Christian use an "artificial" language (and the less it was actually spoken, the more artificial it became), a "symbolic" means of expressions. Such a language will be used by Christians to tell facts that must be read not only literally, but also in their deep meaning. From this point of view I will take into consideration the stylistic devices used by Augustine in an episode of the II book of the *Confessions* (when he stole some pears from an orchard, as he was young), an episode which is intended by the writer to be an objective fact which conveys a more profound meaning and invites the reader to think on the badness of human nature.