

FRUGALITAS IN SAINT AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine writes, "*Frugalitas*, they say, truly, is the mother of all virtues"¹. Hence, we cannot imagine that the concept of *frugalitas*, which is often translated as 'frugality', has little importance. Though the word *frugalitas* does not often appear in his works, (indeed, in his known extant writings, we find it along with its cognates 22 times) we do not find it repeated in any single work except in *De beata uita*, in which the church father employs it in eight different passages. From Augustine's infrequent use of *frugalitas*, we could easily dismiss it as being unimportant and note only that he happened to fancy it when he wrote *De beata uita*. After all, in this dialogue, he does concentrate on that word's exact meaning, and when the term is first introduced, just after the dedicatory passages to Theodorus, Augustine immediately seeks to uncover its meaning by looking at the word's etymology: "The virtue which is opposite this vice (wickedness) is called *frugalitas*. Thus, this latter word (*frugalitas*) is from 'fruit' (*frux*), that is, from something 'productive' or something 'fruitful', (*fructus*) because of a certain fecundity of rational souls...."². *Frugalitas*, thinks Augustine, comes from the word for 'fruit', but not just those that grow in the fields, but also 'fruit' in the sense of the 'fruits' of one's labors. *Frugalitas* is not likened to our notion of 'frugality' here, but instead refers to another quality which clearly surpasses it. Thus, I suggest that to believe that Augustine only means 'frugality' by *frugalitas* is an error, for the concept of *frugalitas* seems to have a greater significance and a correct understanding of this term is necessary to understand fully the message of *De beata uita*.

Contemporary translators have given us various renderings of *fru-*

¹ "Merito etiam uirtutum omnium matrem multi frugalitatem esse dixerunt"; *De beata uita* IV,31: CCL XXIX,82. Translations, where given, are my own. I must thank Dr. Vernon Bourke (St. Louis University), Dr. Lee Rice (Marquette University) and Fr. Roland Teske, S.J. (also Marquette) for their helpful suggestions and guidance in earlier drafts of this paper, and Fr. T. J. van Bavel, O.S.A., for his critical and sympathetic suggestions for the final draft.

² "Cui uitio quae contraria uirtus est, frugalitas nominatur. Vt igitur haec a fruge, id est a fructu propter quamdam animorum fecunditatem..."; *De beata uita* II,8: CCL XXIX, 70.

galitas. The more usual translation is, of course, 'frugality'³, although another translation reads 'worth'⁴, and a more recent translation, not yet published, suggests 'fruitfulness'⁵. None of these renderings, however, carry with them the connotation of being the 'mother of all virtues' or the 'fecundity of souls'. The danger exists, then, that a reader of a translation of *De beata uita* would miss a central point of the dialogue unless a clearer understanding of *frugalitas* were more explicitly developed in the translation.

In order to gain a better understanding of this word, it is necessary that we should examine how it is used, not only in *De beata uita*, but also in Augustine's other writings. In addition, a more complete exploration would demand that we also glean the works of other Latin writers for a more thorough appreciation of *frugalitas*. What we will discover is that though its polysemous use may well have been understood in context by the Latin-speaking reader, this sense is not available in our modern languages through any one rendering of *frugalitas*.

I. ORDINARY SENSES OF *FRUGALITAS*

In the introduction, I suggested that *frugalitas* has at least two levels of meaning which may not be so evident to us today. That a single word have diverse senses is not too unusual for we have many terms today which are no less polysemous. A simple example might be 'ruler' which can be a leader of a group or a measuring stick; a more complex example would be 'feminism' which in ordinary conversation refers to the advocacy of equal social and political rights for women, but for the philosopher, it could refer instead to an alternate method of doing philosophy. We normally do not confuse the meanings of these words because they are most often quite patent to us in their contexts, although the philosopher may have to make clear the distinction between the two senses of 'femi-

³ See for example, *De beata uita*. Tr. Ludwig SCHOPP. In *Fathers of the Church*. Vol. I. New York: CIMA Publishing, 1948 or *De beata uita*. Tr. Francis E. TOURCHER, S.T.M., O.S.A. Philadelphia: Peter Reilly Company, 1937. A Spanish translation uses *frugalidad* [see *De beata uita*. Tr. P. Victorino CAPÁNAGA, O.R.S.A. In *Obras de San Agustín*. Vol. I. Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1950] while a French translation uses *frugalité* [see *De beata uita*. Tr. R. JOLIVET. In *Oeuvres de saint Augustin*. Vol. IV. Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1948]. These may likewise be rendered as 'frugality' in English.

⁴ See *De beata uita*. Tr. Mary T. CLARK. In *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.

⁵ Fr. T. J. van Bavel, O.S.A., informs me that Jean Doignon, in his translation (1986) for the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 4/1, coins the word *fructuosité* (cf. pp. 69 & 141).

nism' when addressing the non-philosopher. Nevertheless, it should be plain that the context of the usage of a term is paramount to our understanding that word⁶.

If my thesis is correct, namely that there are at least two levels of meaning for *frugalitas*, then contexts other than those found in *De beata uita* will be important for us to examine, since to ignore its other references would leave the discussion less than complete. Therefore, before pursuing possible understandings of *frugalitas* in that dialogue, I turn my attention not only to the other passages in which Augustine uses this term, but also to other writers who similarly use it.

One of the more common interpretations we can ascribe to *frugalitas* would be 'meagerness' or 'sparsity'. This is seen in Augustine's more instructional writings. It receives a brief mention in one sermon in which he is exhorting his congregation to forego the meager pleasures of this world so that they might better be prepared for the exquisite pleasures of the world to come. He compares them to two different meals — one sparse and the other sumptuous: "And who does not despise the delights of a single lunch, by chance more meager and more frugal, if it is said to him, 'Unless you will restrain yourself, you will not come to that most bountiful and rich dinner?'"⁷ Likewise, Seneca makes use of this term in a similar way when referring to modest dining⁸. In the other two instances, Augustine is writing to those who live in religious communities, and in both cases he reminds the members that some of their number have come from plush lifestyles and rather than be thought weak for their inability to conform to the harshness of the cloister, those members should be congratulated for the long way they have come in embracing a more meager and even abstemious life⁹. I think in these cases, it is clear that *fruga-*

⁶ W. V. O. Quine argues that the basis of natural language is the sentence and that terms are abstractions from sentences. W. V. O. QUINE, *Word and Object*. Cambridge, MA: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960.

⁷ "Aut quis non contemnat delicias unius prandii, forte pauperioris et frugalioris, si dicatur ei, nisi te continueris, non uenies ad illam cenam latissimam et opimam?"; *Sermo* XLV,2: CCL XLI,516-517.

⁸ Compare "... numquid uestis tua domusque dissentiant, numquid in te liberalis sis, in tuos sordidus, numquid cenes frugaliter, aedifices luxuriose..."; *Epistula* 20.3.2. See also *Epistula* 95.32.4, *Dialogue* 10.18.4.5 and *Epistula* 122.16.4. I cannot find a single passage in Cicero which refers it to culinary activity.

⁹ "Et si eis, qui uenerunt ex moribus delicatioribus ad monasterium, aliquid alimentorum, uestimentorum, [stramentorum], operimentorum datur, quod aliis fortioribus et ideo felicioribus non datur, cogitare debent quibus non datur, quantum de sua saeculari uita illi ad istam descender[un]t, quamuis usque ad aliorum, qui sunt corpore firmiores, frugalitatem peruenire nequierint"; *Regula tertia uel praeceptum* lin. 58-63. *La Règle de saint*

litas can be rendered as something like our usual understanding of 'frugality', though the above examples seem to emphasize the poorness of frugality; that is, it is contrasted with "latissimam et opimam" (most copious and rich), and this denotes a certain lack of good things or even a privation. Seneca notes that it is a hardship on one given to luxury and also tells us that it is like a voluntary poverty¹⁰.

Frugality, however, really has a positive connotation, and today we think of the frugal person as thrifty or economical. This usage, which is more similar to our own, is found in two different works, and I think it is best represented in Augustine's letter to Paulus in which he upbraids his fellow bishop for living beyond his means: "The thriftiness of your church might not be able to sustain you in that profession you are dedicated to live"¹¹. Another reference suggests a similar theme; in *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine writes about the man who seeks nothing other than what he may properly receive from his work — to look for more would be wasteful¹².

In all the above examples, the use of *frugalitas* seems to refer to an understanding of frugality much like our own insofar as it implies both scarcity and thriftiness (one, a negative quality, and the other, positive). This could easily be Seneca's 'voluntary poverty' mentioned earlier¹³. The most common mention of *frugalitas* outside of *De beata uita*, however, deals with the virtue of restraint, and though the case could be made that restraint is included in our notion of frugality, it is not a usual synonym for that word. In these other examples, we find a constant pairing of *frugalitas* with other words which do connote some kind of moral reserve. It is conjoined to *sobrietas* (sobriety)¹⁴, *temperantia* (temperance) and *modestia* (moderation)¹⁵, and *castitas* (chastity) and *continentia* (self-control)¹⁶. Likewise, *frugalitas* is contrasted to *carnis concupiscentia* (carnal

Augustin. Tr. Luc VERHEIJEN. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1967, pp. 417-437. Cf. *Epistula* CCXI,9: CSEL 57,362. This letter is nearly word for word a repetition of the Rule.

¹⁰ Compare SENECA "Luxurioso frugalitas poena est, pigro supplicii loco labor est"; *Epistula* 71.23.1; and "Non potest studium salutare fieri sine frugalitatis cura; frugalitas autem paupertas uoluntaria est"; *Epistula* 17.5.2.

¹¹ "... et in ea professione uiuere dicaris, cui frugalitas ecclesiae tuae sufficere non possit ..."; *Epistula* LXXXV,2: CSEL 34,395.

¹² See *De libero arbitrio* III,xiv,40: CCL XXIX, 299.

¹³ See CICERO: "Homines sunt tota ex Asia frugalissimi, sanctissimi, patres familias sue contenti, aratores, rusticani..."; *Pro Flacco* 71,8.

¹⁴ See *Epistulae* XXXVI,x,23: CSEL 34,53; CLXXXIX,7; CSEL 57,135.

¹⁵ See *Enarratio in Psalmum* CXLVI,1,2: CCL XL,2122.

¹⁶ See *Epistula* XCI,3: CSEL 57,429; *De baptismo* III,xviii,25: CSEL 51, 251-252.

concupiscence)¹⁷. Each of these enumerated qualities bears a sense of restraint, and although the restraint may refer to different goods or activities — drinking, eating, sexual pleasures, lack of inhibitions, etc. — nevertheless, the notion of discipline or restraint still applies.

This sense is also close to that present in other Latin writers who also pair *frugalitas* with other and similar virtues: for example, Seneca joins it with *temperantia*¹⁸ and *abstinentia* (abstinence)¹⁹, while Cicero also matches it with *castitas*²⁰. Again, we see in the non-Christian writers who use this term the same connotations of control and restraint. The reserve we can impute to 'frugality' in these many common usages might best be explained by our present sense of the judicious use of resources in which the pleasures (resources of a sort) are well meted out by an ordering power which could equally be categorized as a species of 'thriftiness'. *Frugalitas* can be understood in such ordinary contexts to have a meaning which is not too unlike our modern sense of 'frugality'. Seneca appears to use the term in this ordinary sense of ordering more often than Cicero²¹.

Before moving on to an examination of the possible special and peculiar uses Augustine makes of *frugalitas* in *De beata uita*, there are two other passages which include this term that will aid us in our attempts to understand better Augustine's meaning. One of these texts is that (almost infamous) sermon in which he advises those with weak stomachs not to drink water, but instead to take wine rather than a more refined or even exotic drink²². To do otherwise gives the impression of not being

¹⁷ See *Contra Iulianum* VI,xv,46: PL 44,849.

¹⁸ See *Epistula* 87.4.8.

¹⁹ See *Epistula* 49.12.1.

²⁰ See *Oratio in Verram* 2.1.137.2.

²¹ Compare, for example, SENECA: "Non est per se magistra innocentiae solitudo nec frugalitatem docent rura, sed ubi testis ac spectator abscessit, uitia subsidunt..."; *Epistulae* 94.69.4 and "Frugalitatem laudare coepisti, quae sic a nostris moribus resiliuit ut illos nec habere, nec damnare..."; *De natura deorum* 4a.pr.10.6, with CICERO: "...quae est eadem moderator, a me quidem paulo ante appellata frugalitas, quae te turpiter et nequiter facere nihil patietur"; *Tusculanes* 4.36.7.

²² The text reads: "How much better it would be, if a weak stomach cannot tolerate drinking water, that it should be sustained by an ordinary and familiar wine rather than seek other beverages that have never seen the grape harvest nor passed through a wine press, not so that a more refined drink be chosen, but so that *frugalitas* be rejected". "Quanto enim honestius, si stomachi infirmitas aquam potare non tolerat, vino usitato et modico sustentur, quam quaerantur vina quae vindemiam nesciunt, quae torcularia non noverunt; non ut potus mundior eligatur, sed ut frugalior improbetur"; *Sermo* CCX,ix,11: PL 38,1053. Fr. Roland Teske, S.J., of Marquette University, has suggested to me that *vina* may refer not to 'wines' per se, but to other special beverages, perhaps distilled, from other fruits and drunk during Lent instead of the regular wines. St. Augustine

frugal, that is, not having integrity, since local wine is likely to be just as good as any other beverage from unknown presses. In this sense, *frugalitas* has the connotation of appropriateness or even integrity, a sense found also in Cicero²³.

The other citation which can add to our understanding is from Augustine's *Contra Iulianum*. In this passage, which is rather long, he contrasts several opposing qualities, and he crosses *frugalitas* with *inopia*²⁴ which might best be rendered as 'poverty' or 'lack of resources'. By this opposition, we infer from Augustine that he does not necessarily associate *frugalitas* with any kind of poorness or scarcity. I believe that this citation presents us with a notion of plenitude which is not included in the translation of *frugalitas* as 'frugality', but is better understood when it is rendered as 'fullness'²⁵.

Frugalitas, then, plainly has several different connotations, but, as seen in the above citations save the last two, it can generally be rendered by our word, 'frugality'. However, that it has more than one connotation does not mean that it will have only one meaning. That is, nearly all the different connotations of 'frugality' still can be equally understood by the single word — 'frugality'; and so in those contexts mentioned, we have a sense of the writers' purposes when the word is used. The word is used in a very ordinary sense. It is, very simply, much like our own 'frugality', and we can understand its exact connotation by the text in which it is found.

If, however, *frugalitas* does have more than one level of meaning, then the different senses will not be explicitated in one single contemporary term. Two or more expressions may be required for rendering its significance. As the word 'feminism' has both an ordinary and a special

exhorts his hearers to *frugalitas*: during Lent, when people were wont to forsake their usual wines, many chose of instead a simpler, more humble drink, one that was in every sense of the word, more refined. This counters the idea of *frugalitas* and the purpose of Lenten penitential practices. The preceding line of the text makes this clear: "Sunt etiam qui vinum ita non bibunt, ut aliorum expressione pomorum alios sibi liquores, non salutis causa, sed iucunditatis, exquirant: tanquam non sit Quadragesima piaie humilitatis observatio, sed novae voluptatis occasio"; *ibid.*

²³ For example: "...nihil aliud in eo quod reprehendi possit inuenio nisi quod homo frugalissimus atque integerrimus te, hominem plenum stupri flagiti sceleris, domum suam inuitauit..."; *Oratio in Verram* 2.2.110.9.

²⁴ See *Contra Iulianum* VI,15,46: PL 44,849.

²⁵ This sense of fullness may be implied in *De beata uita* as Licentius opposes 'fullness' to 'neediness': "Fullness, if one can say so, seems to me correctly to be the opposite of want"; "Plenitudo, inquit Licentius, si dici potest, uidetur mihi recte opponi egestati"; *De beata uita* IV,30: CCL XXIX,82.

philosophical sense, I propose that the same is true of *frugalitas*.

One clue that aids us in assigning two levels of meaning to a term is to notice how often and in what circumstances it is used. If it is rarely used, but then appears many times in a single conversation or written document, we can determine that this usage is likely to be somewhat singular. Since, therefore, we see that Augustine seldom uses the word *frugalitas* except in *De beata uita*, this should be the first clue that it takes on a special meaning in this work. That *frugalitas* does deserve special consideration in this context is the argument of the following section.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL SENSES OF FRUGALITAS

In *De beata uita*, which purports to be an informal after-dinner conversation among friends, there is much of what we might think belongs to a more technically philosophical discourse: terms are carefully defined, meanings are compared and contrasted, and statements are more precisely examined. With regard to the word, *frugalitas*, this was not the case in the other citations. In those writings, the term was usually endowed with a common sense meaning which did not require that it be especially defined or examined. This is contrasted in this dialogue where Augustine and his companions make an effort to discover the authentic meaning of *frugalitas*. As was noted in the introduction, there is an immediate attempt within the dialogue to establish the word's etymological sense, to establish it as that virtue from which the other virtues flow, and to posit in the word *frugalitas* an understanding of fullness, worth, or fruitfulness.

Augustine is not the only ancient to ascribe a bountiful notion to *frugalitas*. It is certain that he was familiar with Cicero because he either directly refers to the orator or closely follows his works at several points²⁶, and Testard does note these passages²⁷. Also, as Brown notes, Augustine would have been perfectly happy to lean on the authority of the non-Christian authors²⁸. Thus, that Cicero similarly derived *frugalitas* should come as no great surprise: "*Frugalitas*, I think, comes from the

²⁶ See, for example, his references to Cicero: *De beata uita* II,8,10; III,22; IV,26,31; CCL XXIX,70,71;77;79,82, respectively.

²⁷ See Maurice TESTARD, *Saint Augustine et Cicéron*. 2 Vols. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1958, II, 8-9. Testard, however, does not comment on the co-incidence of the use of the word *frugalitas* and instead focuses on Augustine's reliance on Cicero for the etymology of *uirtus* and *nequitia*; *ibid.* I, 210. In fact, though these latter two words do find a place in Testard's index of words, *frugalitas* is not listed at all.

²⁸ Peter BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, 102.

word 'fruit', and nothing better comes from the earth than this"²⁹. Again, we get a sense of plenitude which is not to be found in the usual understanding of 'frugality'.

Furthermore, besides the allusions to plenitude, there is also in the definitions another sense of *frugalitas*, and that is its opposition to nothingness or worthlessness (*nequitia*)³⁰. In both cases, *frugalitas* is directly contrasted not only to *nequitia* (worthlessness), but both writers tell us that *nequitia* is derived from *nequidquam* (not anything or nothing)³¹. Again, there is a different level of meaning for *frugalitas* than what is usually found in common usage.

However, 'to cut to the chase', we should now look toward the end of the dialogue. In the following section, Augustine refers the readers to Cicero, and I think it well worth it to quote Augustine fully:

"Indeed, Cicero, in agreeing with them [the ancients], says in the popular orations, 'Let one take it as he wish, for my part, I judge the highest virtue to be *frugalitas*, that is, moderation and temperance'... — ... But because *frugalitas* is customarily said to be *parsimonia* ['thriftiness'] in the common language, he clarified what he meant by adding the following two words — moderation and temperance"³².

This is not much different from what we find in Cicero when he attempts to find the Latin equivalent for the Greek term, *sophrosyne* and informs the reader that *frugalitas* has two separate levels of meaning. There is an ordinary sense used popularly to signify 'frugal', and a special one which is common to the other virtues — fortitude, justice, and prudence — yet, it also transcends them and even regulates them³³. What we

²⁹ "Frugalitas, ut opinor, a fruge, qua nihil melius e terra"; *Tusculanes* 3.8.18.

³⁰ Compare *Tusculanes* 3.8.18 to *De beata vita* II,8; IV,30,31: CCL XXIX,70;82, respectively.

³¹ On these passages, Testard points out that while Augustine does not exactly cite Cicero word for word, the inconsistencies are not problematic: "Les citations qui se veulent approximatives, sont inconstantes les unes par rapport aux autres, ce qui semble assez naturel"; TESTARD, I, 266; cf. I, 278.

³² "Quibus consentiens Tullius etiam in populari oratione ait: 'ut uolet quisque accipiat; ego tamen frugalitatem, id est modestiam et temperantiam, uirtutem maximam iudico'.... Sed propter uulgarem loquendi consuetudinem, qua frugalitas quasi parsimonia dici solet, duobus consequentibus quid senserit inlustrauit subiciendo modestiam et temperantiam ..."; *De beata uita* IV,31: CCL XXIX,82.

³³ The reader may wish to check Cicero's text, and so I include it here: "Veri etiam simile illud est, qui sit temperans — quem graeci *sophron* appellant eamque uirtutem *sophrosyne* uocant, quam soleo equidem tum moderationem appellare, non numquam etiam modestiam; sed haut scio an recte ea uirtus frugalitas appellari possit, quod angustius apud graecos ualet, qui frugi homines *chresimos* appellant, id est tantum modo utilis; at illud est latius; omnis enim abstinentia, omnis innocentia (quae apud graecos

see quite plainly is that *frugalitas* has two distinct levels of meaning. One might better be rendered as 'thriftiness' (*parsimonia*); and the other is some all-encompassing virtue which includes the other virtues and yet still is a distinct virtue³⁴. Just as Cicero does not try to translate *sophrosyne* into Latin, but leaves it in the original Greek, it may be best to try to find no modern equivalent of *frugalitas* when it is used in this special sense and leave it untranslated so that the modern reader recognizes it as a unique concept³⁵.

Now it is easily understood that *frugalitas* can be rendered as "the mother of all virtues"³⁶. In its ordinary sense, it does mean 'frugality', but it also has another much grander meaning, and its context in *De beata uita* should inform us that this is how it is employed in this dialogue. This grander sense, on the other hand, because of the word play the writers use in deriving *frugalitas* from *frux* and *fructus*, and by opposing it to *nequitia* which they derive from *nequidquam*, may be better rendered by 'fruitfulness', especially when *frugalitas* has been contrasted to *inopia*³⁷, but even this translation does not seem to capture the fullness of what it meant by the term. I want to suggest that *frugalitas*, though perhaps not able to be translated by a single English word, is best rendered by the phrase 'well-orderedness and propriety', and this is the sense which is implied in the dialogue.

On this point, we again find Augustine referring to Cicero. *Fruga-*

usitatum nomen nullum habet, sed habere potest *ablabeia*; nam est innocentia adfectio talis animi quae noceat nemini) — reliquas etiam uirtutes *frugalitas* continet. Quae nisi tanta esset, et si iis angustiis quibus plerique putant teneretur, numquam esset L. Pisonis cognomen tanto opere laudatum.... frugi appellari solet, eo tris uirtutes, fortitudinem, iustitiam, prudentiam, *frugalitas* complexa est (etsi hoc quidem commune est uirtutum; omnes enim inter se nexae et iugatae sunt): reliqua igitur est quarta uirtus sit ipsa *frugalitas*. Eius enim uidetur esse proprium motus animi adpetentis regere et sedare semperque aduersantem libidini moderatam in omni re seruare constantiam. Cui contrarium uitium *nequitia* dicitur"; *Tusculanes* 3.8.16-18.

³⁴ For a discussion of Cicero's account of *frugalitas* and *sophrosyne*, see Helen NORTH, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*, (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology. Vol. XXXV). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966, 266-268.

³⁵ Clark does just this in her translation, and in the Budé Translations of Cicero into French, the translators do not translate *frugalitas* except when it is not used in this special sense.

³⁶ Clark writes "matter of all the virtues" [Clark, 190]. This may compare with Cicero. Cf. CICERO: "... reliquas etiam uirtutes *frugalitas* continet"; *Tusculanes* 4.16.36.

³⁷ See *Contra Iulianum* VI,xv,44: PL 44,849.

litas consists of both *modestia* and *temperantia*³⁸. As such, it implies a certain amount of well-orderedness and propriety. This might be thought similar to the previous common sense of *frugalitas* translated as 'frugality', where it was seen to mean 'restraint', but here there is an important difference. *Frugalitas* is not just restraint, but is the proper amount: "Moreover, where there is moderation and temperance, there is neither more nor less... both too much and too little are not proper to measure"³⁹. It is what makes the person 'just right'; too much or too little of anything represents an imbalance or want⁴⁰, and any privation for Augustine can refer only to evil and non-being. Indeed, we remember that *frugalitas* is contrasted to *nequitia/nequidquam*, and find that Augustine writes, "Therefore, in these two opposites, that is, *frugalitas* and *nequitia*, these two notions seem to stand out: being and non-being"⁴¹. More than its being opposed to 'nothingness', *frugalitas* is the source of virtues precisely because its orderliness well regulates them so appropriately that none of them are allowed to become excessive or deficient. In this way, it is close to the Greek quality of *sophrosyne*, though Cicero tells us that *frugalitas* has an even wider meaning. I believe that it was in this sense that Augustine used the term in his sermon about drinking wine, and it is this sense which I insist that he uses when speaking of *frugalitas* in *De beata uita*.

III. CONCLUDING NOTES

Sophrosyne has no real counterpart in our contemporary language, and, consequently, some translators will often try to impart to their readers a sense of that word through context, comparisons, and other means. To alert the reader that this is a special term, they almost never translate it, but often leave it untranslated within the text. *Frugalitas*, on the other

³⁸ Compare *De beata uita* IV,31: CCL XXIX,82 to *Tusculanes* 3.8.16-18, both cited above.

³⁹ "Vbi autem modus est atque temperies, nec plus est quicquam nec minus ... a modo autem et plus et minus aliena sunt"; *De beata uita* IV,32: CCL XXIX,83.

⁴⁰ North suggests that Augustine was always influenced by his wide swings between restraint and excess, and so a virtue like *frugalitas* might naturally be more prevalent in his works than in those of other Latin writers [North 379]. A virtue which regulates even an excess of virtue might be attractive, if North is correct about Augustine's temperament, for such a person as the bishop of Hippo.

⁴¹ "Ergo in his duobus contrariis, hoc est frugalitate atque nequitia, illa duo uidentur eminere, esse et non esse"; *De beata uita* IV,30: CCL XXIX,82. Cf. *De beata uita* IV,31: CCL XXIX,82.

hand, can be rendered, and well too, by the contemporary notion of 'frugality', but then this is only one level of meaning of that Latin word has. There is that ordinary sense in which *frugalitas* does mean 'frugality', and this is often used, and the everyday contexts make clear that sense. Indeed, we most often find this understanding of *frugalitas* in letters and speeches (sermons) which are not meant to be academic treatises.

There is, however, a philosophical level of meaning for *frugalitas*, and this, though it is more complex to grasp, has a more specialized and precise meaning. It does include in it the concept of 'frugality', but it also includes much more. 'Fruitfulness' or plenitude is implied, but even greater than that, I believe that it refers to a principle of ordering or appropriateness which sets limits, not only for things negative such as vice, passion, or appetite, but also for those good qualities such as virtue. This is why Augustine and his companions can agree that it is the source of other virtues, and this is why, I believe that, although we do not see it often used in other places, it plays a crucial role in *De beata uita*, for it can be only the *frugalissimi* who are truly happy. These alone are the well-ordered people in whom all behavior is appropriate, and they are the ones who know both the order of themselves and also the order of the universe around them. These alone are able to achieve the *beata uita*.

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¹ T. KRÄMER, *In voce Abraham in Antiquitate*, Bonn, 1902, pp. 11-12; K. BORDISSER, *In voce Abraham in Theologiae Antiquitate*, Bonn, 1911, pp. 11-12.

² O. BORDISSER, *Abraham in Antiquitate et in Theologiae Antiquitate*, Bonn, 1911, pp. 11-12; K. BORDISSER, *Theologiae Antiquitate*, Bonn, 1911, pp. 11-12.

³ SCHEFFÉ, III.