Augustinian Studies 49:2 (2018) 247–276
doi: 10.5840/augstudies201862146

Jerusalem as *Caelum Caeli* in Augustine*

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Abstract: The city of Jerusalem is the focal point of Augustine's exegesis of the Psalms of Ascent. In *Enarratio in Psalmum* 121, Augustine presents Jerusalem as a collective unity contemplating God's being. The city is thoroughly established in peace and love and participates intimately in the divine life. The essential features of the Jerusalem described in *Enarratio in Psalmum* 121 align neatly with the created intellectual realm of contemplation (*caelum caeli*) outlined in *Confessiones* Book 12. Both texts envisage a city that participates in the divine *idipsum*. This city is a creature so intimate with God's being that its creaturely mutability is checked. Both texts articulate this created intellectual realm as participating in God's eternity. In both cases, this participation is realized in contemplation: through the constancy of its vision, it is conformed to that which it sees. Finally, both the *aeterna Ierusalem* and *caelum caeli* are a communion—in fact, a city—united in love. In *Enarratio in Psalmum* 121, Augustine urges his congregants to join themselves to this edifice that is still under construction; in the *Confessiones*, he presents himself as a pilgrim groaning and longing with desire to be part of the Jerusalem that is above, his mother and *patria*.

Ierusalem . . . cuius participatio eius in idipsum[1]

* I completed this study under the aegis of the Augustine Institute at Villanova University in the spring of 2016. I am grateful to Fr. Allan Fitzgerald for the invitation to spend a wonderful semester at Villanova as the Patricia H. Imbesi Saint Augustine Fellow. I also thank Hans Boersma, Corine Milad, and the anonymous peer reviewers for their perceptive suggestions, which did much to improve this essay.

1. Ps. 121:3 (Vulgate).

Introduction

The city of Jerusalem features prominently in Augustine's mental geography. One survey of the bishop's handling of "Jerusalem" elaborates on no less than ten different ways in which the city features in Augustine's writings.[2] I want to propose an additional—and as yet unexplored—manner in which "Jerusalem" features in Augustine's thought. The aim of this article is to argue that the "Jerusalem" in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*en. Ps.*) 121 describes the same spiritual reality as does *caelum caeli*, which is detailed in *Confessiones* (*conf.*) Book 12. I suggest that, for Augustine, their participation in *idipsum* is essential to both "Jerusalem" and *caelum caeli*.

Quite naturally, Jerusalem is the focal point of Augustine's exegesis of the psalms of ascent.[3] These psalms, sung by Jewish pilgrims as they ascended to Jerusalem, are transposed by Augustine to bespeak the church's ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem. Augustine is attentive to the nature of the pilgrims' vision of the eternal city. The hope and joy radiating from these fifteen psalms speak both to the beauty that the pilgrims *already* see before them and their hope of a perfect

2. Thomas Renna, "Zion and Jerusalem in the Psalms," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 279–298.

3. Ascertaining the precise dates when *en. Ps.* 119–133 were preached as well as where they were preached is a challenge. The many thematic commonalities between *en. Ps.* 119–133 and the first twelve expositions of the *Io. eu. tr.* as well as the ten *ep. Io. tr.* has led most scholars to date the exposition of the psalms of ascent to sometime between 405 and 411; that is to say, during the challenging times of the Donatist controversies and before Augustine's all-consuming response to the Pelagians. Augustine is clear that the fifteen Psalm expositions constitute a unity and were preached sequentially. Pointing to lines of continuity with *Io. eu. tr.*, Seraphim Zarb, *Chronologia Enarrationum S. Augustini in Psalmos* (Valetta, Malta: St. Dominic's Priory, 1948), contended for dating the sermons on psalms of ascent to the winter of 411–412. Maurice Le Landais, "Deux années de prédication de saint Augustin: Introduction à la lecture de l'*In Iohannem*," *Études augustiniennes* 28 (1953): 7–95, also dates *en. Ps.* 119–133 on the basis of commonalities with *Io. eu. tr.* However, Landais dates these *enarrationes* to the winter of 415–416 because of what he suggests is a reference in *Io. eu. tr.* 6.8 to Emperor Honorius's 414 anti-Donatist laws. Finally, Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1965), suggests that the likely date is 407–408, based on what she contends is a reference in *Io. eu. tr.* 6.8. to the Theodosian Code from 405. The locale where the sermons were preached is either Carthage (cf. *Donatien de Bruyne*,"*Enarrationes* in Psalmos prêchées à Carthage," in *MA*, ed. Antonio Casamassa, vol. 2 [Rome: Tipographia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1930–31], 321–325) or Hippo (cf. Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, "La Prédication d'Augustin sur les Psaumes à Hippone," *Annuaire de l'école pratique des hautes études* 86 [1977]: 337–342). The preparation and transmission of *en. Ps.* on the psalms of ascent as well as the manuscript tradition and debate regarding where and when the sermons were preached is helpfully summarized by Gerald McLarney, *St. Augustine's Interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 69–95.

future sight of God's house from within. Augustine's *enarrationes* on the psalms of ascent (*en. Ps.* 119–133) articulate the current state of the pilgrim's vision of God as a limited, finite, but nevertheless real "sight" of God. In *en. Ps.* 121, Augustine presents Jerusalem as a collective unity contemplating God's being. The city is established in peace and love and, although created, participates so intimately in the divine life that its inherent mutability is checked. In *en Ps.*, Augustine never explicitly identifies Jerusalem with *caelum caeli*; nevertheless, I want to suggest that the essential features of the city described in *en. Ps.* 121 align neatly with the created intellectual realm of contemplation (i.e., *caelum caeli*) outlined in *conf.* 12.[4]

Aeterna Ierusalem in *en. Ps.* 121

The psalms of ascent are a "song of steps," explains Augustine, intended for those who ascend to heaven to share in the life of the "eternal Jerusalem" in the company of the angels, "our fellow-citizens." Jerusalem, insists Augustine, is "our own city." Now we are—but for a time—away from our homeland, "journeying on earth" away from our "compatriots" while on pilgrimage.[5] Nevertheless, the speaker of the psalm is encouraged by those "who have already seen that city" (*iam uiderunt ipsam ciuitatem*). In verse 1 of this psalm they urge him on: "I rejoiced over those who told me, 'We are going to the Lord's house.'" At the outset of the exposition, then, we already see that "Jerusalem" carries a host of meanings. Jerusalem represents heaven: it is the dwelling place of those in the heavenly city (both angels and saints), and, as such, it is the goal of those still sojourning on earth. At the same time, Jerusalem represents those who constitute the earthly church, who are already a part of Jerusalem.

The "Jerusalem" of *en. Ps.* 121 does *not* refer to the "earthly city" in Palestine, which is only a "shadow (*umbra*) of the real one."[6] For Augustine, this psalm speaks of the "eternal Jerusalem" (*aeterna Ierusalem*), and this is not to be understood as a gloss or a spiritual interpretation subsequently superimposed upon the literal meaning of the psalm. Rather, the literal, historical-grammatical meaning of the psalm is *aeterna Ierusalem*. "Our feet were standing in the forecourts of Jerusalem," sings the psalmist. To stand in the forecourts of the earthly Jerusalem would be no great thing, explains Augustine: the city was reduced to ruins, and the Lord himself

4. Unless otherwise indicated, what follows will employ the WSA translation of *en. Ps.* 121 by Maria Boulding. Cf. III/20: 13–28, and. for *conf.*, that of Henry Chadwick. See *Augustine, Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. *En. Ps.* 121.2 (CCSL 40: 1802, trans. Boulding [n.4], 14): "Sed est in caelo aeterna Ierusalem, ubi sunt ciues nostri angeli: ab ipsius ciuibus nostris peregrinamur in terra."

6. *En. Ps.* 121.3 (CCSL 40: 1803, trans. Boulding [n.4], 15).

condemned that city for killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her (Matt. 23:37).[7] Augustine does not acknowledge what seems for a contemporary reader to be the plain, historical occasion of this psalm of ascent, namely, the Jewish pilgrim's annual journey up to Jerusalem. Augustine could easily have distinguished between the literal and the spiritual meanings of the text, but he does not. Instead, he insists that the literal meaning intended by the psalmist was the Jerusalem above: "Let any notion of the earthly Jerusalem be banished from the mind of one who is in love, who is afire, who longs to reach that Jerusalem which is our mother, which the apostle calls our 'everlasting home in heaven' (2 Cor. 5:1)."[8]

Augustine proceeds to demonstrate the psalm's intended celestial referent from the grammatical structure of the text: "The Jerusalem that is being built like a city."[9] The words "being built" (*aedificatur*) make clear that the psalmist could not have intended the historical city in Palestine. Augustine explains, "When David said that, brothers and sisters, the city was already complete; it was not still under construction. The psalm must therefore be speaking of some other city which is being built even now."[10] Why would the psalmist be using the present tense except to speak of a construction project currently underway? Further careful grammatical exegesis underscores that the psalmist does not mean an earthly city: He does not say "a city being built," but rather, "*like* (*ut*) a city being built." Clearly, insists Augustine, the psalmist is not referring to an earthly city, but using a simile to refer to the *aeterna Ierusalem*.[11]

Augustine emphasizes the contemporaneity of his listeners with the city of which the psalmist speaks. If the city is now being built (*aedificatur*), then we are now being formed into that city, maintains Augustine: You are the "living stones" that Peter referred to as building up a spiritual house (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). The psalmist is urging you to rush and join yourself to that edifice:

> This is the city which is now being built. Stones are hewn out of the mountains by the hands of those who preach the truth, and squared to fit into an everlasting structure. There are still many stones in the builder's hands; he does not drop

7. *En. Ps.* 121.3 (CCSL 40: 1803, trans. Boulding [n.4], 15).
8. *En. Ps.* 121.3 (CCSL 40: 1803, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16) (emphasis in original): "absit ut de ista ierusalem sic cogitet qui sic amat, qui sic ardet, qui sic uult peruenire ad illam ierusalem matrem nostram, de qua dicit apostolus: 'aeternam in caelis.'"
9. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1803, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "Ierusalem quae aedificatur ut ciuitas."
10. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1803, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "fratres, quando dicebat ista dauid, perfecta erat illa ciuitas, non aedificabatur. nescio quam ergo ciuitatem dicit, quae modo aedificatur."
11. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. Boulding [n.4], 17): "Et quia aedificium spiritale similitudinem quamdam habet aedificii corporalis, ideo aedificatur ut ciuitas."

> them, for he means to shape them to perfection, ready to be built in with the rest into the fabric of the temple. This is the Jerusalem that is being built like a city. Christ is the foundation, for Paul the apostle says, 'no one can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.' (1 Cor. 3:11)[12]

In the exposition of this psalm, Augustine presents a variation on the theme of the *totus Christus*, the image that animates much of *en. Ps.* Here the same theology is constructed with the image not of a body comprising head and members, but of a city comprising a foundation and a structure, which together make up Jerusalem. Together, Christ and those belonging to him constitute *aeterna Ierusalem*. The blueprints for the Jerusalem "being built" are unique. Typically the foundations of a structure are anchored deep in the ground, bearing the weight (*pondus*) of the building. ("Look at the lofty, spacious basilica all around you. It was raised by physical work, and, because it is a matter of bodily labor, the builders laid the foundations underneath."[13]) But *aeterna Ierusalem* inverts this model. It is a spiritual city, and its *pondus* is love, which does not bear down, but draws upward. The architecture of ascent grounds its foundation above: "But if our foundation is in heaven, the weight of our building bears upward, toward heaven."[14]

Jerusalem: Participant in *idipsum*

Augustine's handling of "Jerusalem" in this exposition is unique in its emphasis upon the ontological status of Jerusalem. Augustine comments extensively on the line of the Psalm that reads, "It shares in the Selfsame" (*Cuius participatione eius in idipsum*). *Idipsum* is one of Augustine's favorite words to bespeak the ineffable being of God. Translating this word is fraught with challenges.[15] Perhaps the most

12. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1803–1804, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "ipsa ergo modo ciuitas aedificatur; praeciduntur de montibus lapides per manus praedicantium ueritatem, conquadrantur ut intrent in structuram sempiternam. adhuc multi lapides in manibus artificis sunt; non cadant de manibus artificis, ut possint perfecti coaedificari in structuram templi. est ergo ista ierusalem quae aedificatur ut ciuitas: fundamentum ipsius christus est. dicit apostolus paulus: fundamentum enim aliud nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, quod est christus iesus."

13. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1804, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "corpora aedificauerunt istam instructuram, quam uidetis amplam surrexisse, huius basilicae; et quia corpora aedificauerunt, fundamentum in imo posuerunt."

14. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1804, trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "Si autem fundamentum nostrum in caelo est, ad caelum aedificemur."

15. Jean-Luc Marion maintains that translating *idipsum* as "being itself" imposes a foreign metaphysic on Augustine's thought. Marion maintains, "There should be no difficulty in translating this term." He notes, "Obviously *idipsum* primarily means 'the same, [or] the same thing.'" Jean-Luc Marion, "*Idipsum*: The Name of God according to Augustine," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. Aristotle Papanilolaou and George Demacopoulos (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2008),

literal translation of *idipsum* is "the self-same one." However, this translation fails to capture the explicitly metaphysical (and ontological) connotations Augustine evokes when he uses the word. *Idipsum* occurs six times in Augustine's Psalter.[16] The richest metaphysical analysis of the term is found in *en*. *Ps*. 121, which has accurately been described as "a miniature tractate on St. Augustine's philosophy of God."[17] Given the philosophical weight that *idipsum* carries in this passage, I am translating *idipsum* as "being itself." As such, I am in agreement with Marie-François Berrouard's contention that *idipsum* is, for Augustine, "l'expression du mystère de l'être même de Dieu, immutable, éternel, absolument identique à soi."[18] I suggest Augustine's articulation of *idipsum* in *en*. *Ps*. 121 takes on five unique characteristics:

1. *Idipsum* must be expressed in an apophatic register.
2. *Idipsum* is eternal.

176. However, this translation is not as obvious for most commentators as it is for Marion. The challenge that faces most commentators in simply translating *idipsum* as "the same," is the recognition of the heavy metaphysical lifting that *idipsum* does in Augustine's thought. In this regard Takeshi Kato notes: "It is not unsurprising to find such a variety of translations of *idipsum*: l'être même (Bouissou-Tréhorel, Henry, de Labriolle, Cambronne); Être-en-soi (Courcelle); en Dieu (D'Andilly); lui-même (Moreau); eine sich Gleiche (Bernhart); Wesen selbst (Flasch); Er-selbst (Holl, Perl); the self-same (Pusey, Pilkington, Ryan, Chadwick); Being itself (Boulding); friendliness (Pine-Coffin); himself (Starnes); the same (Coxe); it-self (Yamada : soré-jishin in Japanese); the self-same (Watanabe: dôitu-sya in Japanese). Recently G. Madec, *Le Dieu d'Augustin* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 129–132, wrote, "'L'idpsum' est 'l'expression typique de l'Être Divin', comme dit Aimé Solignac, qui ajoute que la meilleure traduction *française* paraît l'Être même. Je hazarde 'l'Identique' . . . et je suppose qu'Augustin la tient de Prophyre." Takeshi Kato, "*Idipsum* in Augustine's *Confessions*," in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, ed. Lawrence Cross, Pauline Allen, and Wendy Mayer (Queensland: Australian Catholic University, 1999), 219n13.

16. Cf. Pss. 4:9; 33:4; 40:8; 61:10; 73:6; 121:3. In the Vulgate, Ps. 4:9 reads, "In pace, in idipsum, dormiam et requiescam." ("In peace, in Being-Itself, I will rest and fall asleep.") The person of faith, explains Augustine, is saying, "In peace, in Being-Itself, I will rest and fall asleep." *Idipsum* here bespeaks eternal unity and stability, *idipsum* is rest for those left fragmented by their desires for many temporal goods. A less metaphysical connotation of *idipsum* is found in Augustine's commentary on Ps. 33:4 (*exaltemus nomen eius in idipsum*). Augustine maintains that here *idipsum* means "unity." Other codices replace *in idipsum* with *in unum*, notes Augustine, but this is not deeply significant because it means the same thing (*hoc idem dicitur*). Here *idipsum* has the sense of praising God "together" or "at one." *en*. *Ps*. 33(2).7 (CCSL 38: 286–287). Other uses of *idipsum* in *en. Ps.* are less significant.

17. James Swetnam, "A Note on *In Idipsum* in St. Augustine," *Modern Schoolman* 30 (1952–1953): 329.

18. "Idipsum" in *Homélies sur l'évangile de saint Jean, Tractatus in Iohannis euangelium I–XVI*, Marie-François Berrouard, ed., Bibliothèque Augustinienne 71 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1993), 845.

3. *Idipsum* is identified with the *ego sum qui sum* of Exodus 3:14.

4. *Idipsum* underscores creaturely ontological dependence.

5. *Idipsum* becomes accessible in the *forma serui* of the incarnate Christ.

The Apophatic Idipsum

Idipsum eludes definition. In answer to the question, "What is *idipsum*?" Augustine can only answer, "It is *idipsum*" (*Quid est idipsum? Quomodo dicam, nisi idipsum*).[19] Augustine underscores the inability of human speech to grasp the ineffable: "Brothers, if you are able, understand *idipsum*. For whatever thing I will have said, I will not express *idipsum*."[20] Jean-Luc Marion rightly underscores the apophatic register in which Augustine articulates *idipsum* in *en*. *Ps*. 121: "The *idipsum*, thus, remains radically and definitively apophatic; it does not provide any essence, does not reach any definition, but only expresses its own inability to speak of God. Its own privilege comes, paradoxically, from this obvious lack of signification, which allows it to de-nominate without the pretention to define."[21] I am less convinced by Marion's insistence that Augustine abjures any metaphysical claims in *en*. *Ps*. 121.[22] The fact remains that it is simply impossible to read Augustine's

19. *En. Ps*. 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805). One is reminded of Augustine's assertion that God is more truly thought of than spoken of and more truly *is* than is thought of. "Verius enim cogitatur deus quam dicitur, et uerius est quam cogitatur." *trin*. 7.4.7 (CCSL 50: 255).

20. *En*. *Ps*. 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. is my own): "Fratres, si potestis, intellegite idipsum. Nam et ego quidquid aliud dixero, non dico idipsum."

21. Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 180.

22. The apophatic character of *idipsum* does not negate its ontological or metaphysical status. The whole point of Augustine's lengthy excursus on *idipsum* is precisely to underscore the distinction between creaturely being and the being of the Creator, which is *the* metaphysical and ontological claim that underwrites Augustine's excursus. Marion objects to translating *idipsum* as if it were *ipsum esse*. He claims *idipsum* should not be translated as "being itself," but as "the same" or "the same thing" (*l'identique*). He attributes the translation mistake of *idipsum* as "being" to lurking latent neo-Thomist impulses: "These slips in translation are, of course, not purely fortuitous, nor are they caused by inattention on the part of the translators, who are otherwise consistently excellent. On the contrary, they result from too much earnestness, not on the philological but on the conceptual level: the (neo-) Thomist de-nomination of the most proper name of God determines their understanding of the Augustinian de-nomination of God's name in such an indelible way that they do not refrain from correcting the latter through the former." Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 177. Augustine, insists Marion, "obviously did not know [the] usage and meaning" of metaphysics. Rather, according to Marion, Augustine operated with "a radically biblical and apophatic de-nomination." Later "metaphysical" understandings of *esse* (imported from the "Thomist system") are illegitimately and retrospectively read into Augustine's use of *idipsum.* Augustine's use of *idipsum* "should resolutely not be understood within the horizon of metaphysics." This would be to introduce the taint of "scholasticism" or (worse!) "devotedly neo-Thomist" metaphysical

use of *idipsum* in *en. Ps.* 121 (or his use of *idipsum* almost anywhere else) apart from the richly textured philosophical categories (ontological and metaphysical) invoked. Unlike Marion, I understand Augustine to articulate *idipsum* as functioning simultaneously within an apophatic register *and* within metaphysical categories (which I will attempt to unpack below).

The Eternal Idipsum

While *idipsum* retains its apophatic character, it is a fruitful spiritual exercise to strain speech, the mind, and the heart to say something about *idipsum*, maintains Augustine: "All the same, let us attempt to direct the gaze of our minds, to steer our feeble intelligence, to thinking about Being-Itself (*idipsum*), making use of certain words and meanings that have some affinity with it."[23] The first character of *idipsum* is that it is eternal. However, this is not to evoke any positive content *qua* divine "qualities." *Idipsum* exists simply, and exists always, and exists always in the same way. Augustine writes, "What, therefore, is *idipsum* except that which is? What is that which is? (*Quid est quod est?*) That which is eternal (*aeternum*)."[24] The eternity of *idipsum* is identified with that which is (1) immaterial and (on this account) (2) immutable. The corollary is that whatever is not *idipsum* has its existence tenuously—it is something that participates in *idipsum* and is, by definition, (1) material and (2) mutable.[25] Augustine writes, "For everything that is constantly changing does not truly exist, because it does not abide—not that it is entirely

concepts. Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 178. It is beyond the scope of this essay to enter into a full-orbed discussion of Marion's critique of metaphysics; suffice it to say that he seems to conflate "metaphysics" with a positivist, conceptualist, and essentialist conception of reality. That is to say, there is a latent assertion that any positive metaphysical statement is an attempt to conceptually "grasp" the essence of the divine being; it is the "pretention of having reached a univocal conceptual definition." Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 170.

23. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. Boulding [n.4], 18): "Conemur tamen quibusdam uicinitatibus uerborum et significationum perducere infirmitatem mentis ad cogitandum idipsum."

24. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. is my own): "Quid est idipsum? Quod semper eodem modo est; quod non modo aliud, et modo aliud est. Quid est ergo idipsum, nisi, quod est? Quid est quod est? Quod aeternum est."

25. All that is not God is material—even non-corporeal substances, such as the soul. Ronnie Rombs notes, "Augustine attributes matter even to spiritual substances. As the principle of potentiality from which God would subsequently form heaven and earth, matter serves as the 'stuff' that will become the manifold things of creation, whether physical or spiritual. There is a sense, then, in which 'materiality' serves, according to Augustine's way of thinking, as a basis for a thing's substantial existence." Ronnie Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell and His Critics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 127.

nonexistent, but it does not exist in the highest sense."[26] It is accurate to describe creation, in Augustine's conception, as equivalent with materiality and mutability.[27] The metaphysics operative in *en. Ps.* 121 contrasts the eternity of *idipsum* with creation shot through with materiality and mutability.

Idipsum: Ego sum qui sum

In the disclosure of the divine name to Moses in Exodus 3, God reveals himself as *idipsum* and in doing so tells Moses nothing about the divine substance. To contemplate *idipsum* as a creature is not possible: "You cannot take it in, for this is too much to understand, too much to grasp."[28] Augustine is intent on identifying the scriptural disclosure of the divine name (*ego sum qui sum*) with *idipsum*: "Ecce idipsum: Ego sum qui sum; Qui est, misit me ad uos."[29] The repeated use of *esse* in Exodus 3:14 functions, for Augustine, as a linguistic sign pointing to unity, stability, permanence, and simplicity.[30] Again, I am not convinced by Marion's

26. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. Boulding [n.4], 18): "Nam quod semper aliter atque aliter est, non est, quia non manet; non omnino non est, sed non summe est." Commenting on this passage, Lewis Ayres remarks, "Immutably is the true mark of divine existence and that which marks God as the source and end of all that exists." Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 203.

27. Creation does not contain within itself the cause of its existence. To be human is to have a distinct awareness of existing without possessing Existence. Joshua Nunziato puts this paradox well: "Creation does not bear within itself the principle of divine creativity. Only God does. And yet God bears creation within himself. Therefore, creation bears within itself nothing but the creativity that bears it. Creation bears the immaterial within its own materiality. And that is what it means to be created." Joshua Nunziato, "Created to Confess: St. Augustine on Being Material," *Modern Theology* 32 (2016): 367.

28. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. Boulding [n.4], 18): "Non potes capere; multum est intellegere, multum est adprehendere."

29. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805).

30. Lewis Ayres comments, "The treatment of eternity as the 'name' of God, and as synonymous with *esse* and with Exod. 3.14, reveals with particular clarity the significance of immutability." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (n.26), 204. Touchstones for this discussion include *s.*7.7, on the disclosure of the divine name in Exod. 3. Here too Ps. 101:27 features prominently:

> So now the angel, and in the angel the Lord, was saying to Moses when he asked his name, "I am who I am; this is what you shall say to the children of Israel: He who is has sent me to you" (Ex. 3.14). "Is" is a name for the unchanging (*incommutabilitatis*). Everything that changes ceases to be what it was and begins to be what it was not. "Is" is. True "is," genuine "is," real "is," belongs only to one who does not change (*esse est. uerum esse, sincerum esse, germanum esse non habet nisi qui non mutatur*). He alone has true "is" to whom it is said, "You will change them and they shall be changed, but you are the selfsame" (*tu autem idem ipse es*). (Ps. 101.27; [CCSL 41: 75, trans. Hill, WSA, *Sermons*, II/1, 237])

See also *en. Ps.* 134.4:

claim that the preponderance of Exodus 3:14 in *en. Ps.* 121 is a rejection of a "hierarchy of beings" (étants) in "ontological terms" in favor of a "hierarchy of immutability."[31] It is difficult to know how to engage with Marion on this score, as contrasting these hierarchies seems to present a false binary. God reveals himself to Moses within the language of being, and Augustine draws from this language a distinction between divine immutable being and created mutable beings. In fact, it would seem that a "hierarchy of immutability" presupposes a "hierarchy of being." Nor is it at all evident how the distinction between the mutable and the immutable does not, of necessity, imply recourse to the language of *esse* in either case.[32]

> The things he has made do exist; yet, when we compare them with him, we know that he alone is true being (*solus sit*). Thus he said, "*I AM WHO AM*," and, "Thus shall you say to the children of Israel, HE WHO IS has sent me to you" (Ex 3:14). He did not say, "I am the Lord, the omnipotent, the merciful, the just one," though, if he had said that, he would have spoken truly. Instead he set aside all those names that could be applied to God and answered that he was called Being-Itself, as though that were his name (*ipsum esse se uocari respondit; et tamquam hoc esset ei nomen*). "Thus shall you say," he ordered, "HE WHO IS has sent me." His very nature is to be (*ita enim ille est*), and so true is this that, when compared with him, all created things are as though they had no being. When not compared with him they do exist, for they derive their being from him, but compared with him they do not exist, because he is true being, unchangeable being, and this can be said of him alone (*uerum esse, incommutabile esse est, quod ille solus est*). (CCSL 40: 1940, trans. Boulding [n.4], 193)

Finally, see *trin.* 7.10:

> [God] is called being truly and properly in such a way that perhaps only God ought to be called being (*quod uere ac proprie dicitur ita ut fortasse solum Deum dici oporteat essentiam*). He alone truly is, because he is unchanging, and he gave this as his name to his servant Moses when he said, "I am who I am, and, You will say to them, He who is has sent me to you." (Exod. 3:14; CCSL 50: 261; trans. Hill, WSA, *The Trinity*, I/5, 228)

The essential features of this discussion are recapitulated in *Gn. litt.* 5.16.34 (*BA* 48: 420–422). A detailed chronology of Augustine's use of Exod. 3:14 is found in Emilie Zum Brunn, *St. Augustine: Being and Nothingness* (New York: Paragon, 1988), 119. See also the appendix to this book: "The Augustinian Exegesis of '*Ego sum qui sum*' and the 'Metaphysics of Exodus" (ibid., 97–118).

31. Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 184. According to Marion, Augustine is not interested in questions of ontology when he dwells at length on the implication of the divine name, *ego sum qui sum*: "What is at stake for St Augustine is something very different than the *Seinsfrage*. Even when he discusses the *ipsum esse*, St Augustine is never concerned with being." Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 188. For Marion, Exod. 3:14 functions in *en. Ps.* 121 as a manner of characterizing "the divine immutability in contrast to finite mutability of everything else. . . . God is therefore not being, but the immutable one, whose immutability is characterized by an *equivocity* without measure of being." Marion, "*Idipsum*" (n.15), 182.

32. Cf. Dominique Dubarle, *Dieu avec l'Etre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1968), 205–232; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (n.26), 200–208; Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 168–179.

Idipsum *and Ontological Dependency*

A fundamental relation of dependence on the part of the creature towards *idipsum* marks all created being. The question becomes, for Augustine, how ought I to respond to my creaturelines? To my thoroughgoing ontological instability? To my groundlessness—the "slipperiness" of existence? In a word, to the fact that I am a being given unto death? It is the response to this dependency that, for Augustine, is critical:

> "You will discard them like a garment and so they will be changed, but you are the Selfsame (*idem ipse es*), and your years will not fail" (Ps 101:27–28). He whose years will not fail (*deficient*), he alone is Being-Itself (*idipsum*). Do not our years fail (*deficient*) every day, brothers and sisters? Do they ever stand still? The years that have come exist no longer; those which are still to come have not existence yet. The years that have passed (*defecerunt*) have already failed (*defecturi*) us, and the years of our future will fail us in their turn. The same is true, brothers and sisters, even of a single day. Take today: we are talking now, at this moment, but the earlier hours have slipped away (*transierunt*) and the later hours have not yet arrived. When they have arrived, they too will slip away (*transibunt*) and fail (*deficient*). Are there any years that fail not (*deficient*)?[33]

Augustine speaks eloquently of the "slippage" and "failure" of time—of the mutability that marks all material creatures—and the description is unsettling: "No one has absolute being as of himself" (*idipsum nemo habet ex se*), insists Augustine.[34] The

33. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "Ergo hoc est idipsum de quo dictum est: Mutabis ea, et mutabuntur; tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient. Ecce idipsum, cuius anni non deficient. Fratres, nonne anni nostri quotidie deficiunt, nec stant omnino? Nam et qui uenerunt, iam non sunt; et qui futuri sunt, nondum sunt; iam illi defecerunt, et illi defecturi sunt. In hoc ergo uno die, fratres, ecce modo quod loquimur in momento est. Praeteritae horae transierunt, futurae nondum uenerunt; et cum uenerint, et ipsae transibunt et deficient. Qui sunt anni qui non deficiunt, nisi qui stant?" Augustine also fuses these two texts (Ps. 102:26–27 and Ps. 122:3) in *trin.* 3.8:

> Although subject to change, [the soul] is capable of sharing in that wisdom which is changeless (*incommutabilis sapientiae particeps esse*). In this way "its sharing in the selfsame" (*participatio eius in idipsum*), as the psalm says of all the saints, who go like living stones into the building of that eternal Jerusalem "in heaven which is our mother" (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22). The psalmist sings, "Jerusalem which is built as a city, whose sharing is in the selfsame" (*idipsum*) (Ps. 122:3). "The selfsame" (*idipsum*) here is to be understood of that supreme and changeless good which is God, and his wisdom and his will. Another psalm sings these words of praise to him: "You change the heavens and they are changed, but you are the selfsame" (*idem ipse es*). (Ps 102:26; CCSL 50: 133; trans. Hill, WSA, *The Trinity*, I/5, 131)

34. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 20). In *conf.* Augustine also describes the "borrowed" character of created existence, describing it as a "nothing something" (*nihil aliquid*).

human body is in constant flux: it moves, ages, and becomes diseased—in itself it cannot stand (*non in se stat*). Likewise with the soul (*anima*): we become distracted or change our minds; our desires pull the soul this way and that. The mind (*mens*) is mutable (*mutabilis*); it is not *idipsum*.[35] Such instability is, for Augustine, not in itself the problem—materiality and mutability are simply the DNA of creation. It is rather a question of the response to one's ontological dependency, and the only just creaturely response is humble confession of one's state of becoming. We could say that the devil, for Augustine, was the first existentialist. He fell by attempting to arrogate *idipsum* to himself, to undercut his participatory existence for existential independence.[36] The devil, then, offered this "fatal drink of pride" to humanity: "They too began to want to be their own selfsame (*idipsum*); they tried to be their own rulers, to exercise lordship over their own lives."[37]

The Incarnate Idipsum

The solution to the instability of created existence is humbly to seek ontological *terra firma* outside of oneself, to seek deeper participation in *idipsum*. Contemplative union with *idipsum*, suggests Augustine, offers stability, rest, and peace to existential angst. But how is one to participate in *idipsum*, particularly given the incommensurate nature between *idipsum* and the creature? How does it come to be that Jerusalem "shares in being itself" (*cuius participatione eius in idipsum*)? How is the participatory goal of this psalm of *ascent* realized? Augustine does not chart an upward path towards divine union through contemplative ascent (perhaps in the vein of Plotinus). Indeed, if Augustine's own experiences are any indication,

Even in the creative moment—in the movement from "nothing" to "something"—the "nothing" remains, so to speak, woven into the very DNA of the "something." Marion eloquently describes this reality: "Nothingness (*Le néant*), in the figure of *de nihilo*, does not hold merely the place of starting point for the created (as that from which it would have exited); it also holds the place of its material (as that of which it will always remain woven). The created does not emerge from nothing except by assuming it again at the heart of its very beingness. It should, then, be said, in a transitive sense, that the created is its nothingness and that it is so because God gives it to it." Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of St. Augustine*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 246. Cf. Nunziato, "Created to Confess" (n.27), 12; Natale Joseph Torchia, *Creatio ex nihilo and the Theology of St. Augustine: The Anti-Manichaean Polemic and Beyond* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 98.

35. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1806–1807).

36. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1807): "Qui uoluit ex se habere idipsum, ut quasi ipse sibi esset idipsum, lapsus est; cecidit angelus, et factus est diabolus."

37. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1807, trans. Boulding [n.4], 20): "Isti sibi uoluerunt idipsum esse; sibi principari, sibi dominari uoluerunt."

contemplative union this side of the eschaton remains fleeting and partial.[38] Instead, Augustine points to the Incarnation as the *uia* of ascent: "God looked for strong hearts when he said, *I AM WHO AM*; he looked for strong hearts and the keen, focused gaze of contemplation when he told Moses to say, *HE WHO IS has sent me to you*. But perhaps you do not yet practice contemplation. Do not be put off, do not despair. HE WHO IS willed to become a human being like you."[39] In a striking manner Augustine situates *idipsum*/*qui est* within the very heart of the mutable order. Being takes on becoming so that becoming can participate in Being. Augustine develops a kenotic theology of divine descent in the context of expositing a psalm of ascent. This "downward participation" is a mainstay of Augustine's theology of ascent and is likewise at work in *en*. *Ps*. 121.[40] What we may call an "inverted ascent motif" is *the* manner in which Augustine often considers the Incarnation.[41] If one is

38. Augustine's disillusionment with a Platonic philosophy of ascent is well known. In Book VII of *conf.* he remarks on the lack of humility in Platonic narratives of ascent, which despised the humility of the Incarnation and the humility requisite to accept such grace. In *conf*. 7.9.14, Augustine writes, "[T]hat 'the word was made flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:13–14), I did not read there." *conf.* 7.9.14 (CCSL 27: 101; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 121). While embracing the participatory metaphysic espoused by Plotinian philosophy, Augustine expresses less optimism with regard to the ability of the human person to arrive at his goal through a Platonic mode of *katharsis*. From the time of Augustine's earliest writings there remains an ineluctable tension between, on the one hand, a Platonic spirituality of ascent and, on the other hand, the recognition of the danger of self-assured pride in the idea that such an "ascent" is possible for fallen man. Cf. Gerald P. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 243.

39. *En*. *Ps*. 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "Firmitatem cordis quaesiuit, cum diceret: Ego sum qui sum; firmitatem cordis quaesiuit, et aciem contemplationis erectam, cum dixit: Qui est misit me ad uos. Sed nondum habes forte contemplationem: noli deficere, noli desperare. Qui est, uoluit esse homo, ut tu es."

40. Cf. David Meconi, "The Incarnation and the Role of Participation in St. Augustine's *Confessions*," *AugStud* 29 (1998): 61–75. Meconi notes that Augustine augmented his early Platonic account of participation to include Christ's descent to to participate in humanity (*participatione tunicae pellicae nostrae*; cf. *conf*. 7.18.24 [CCSL 37: 108]). Meconi writes, "This use of participation represents a significant turning point in Augustine's thought. An intellectual conversion has taken place. With this new ability to imagine an undivided, immutable essence participating in the imperfect, mutable contingents of this fallen world, Augustine is now able to speak of the perfect participating in the imperfect: that which-is taking part in that which-is-not." Meconi, "Incarnation and the Role of Participation" (n.40), 68. Cf. David Meconi, "Saint Augustine's Early Theory of Participation," *AugStud* 27 (1996): 79–96.

41. John Cavadini argues that the entire *trin.* serves precisely to highlight the ascent as a fruitful failure: "*De Trinitate* uses the Neoplatonic soteriology of ascent only to impress it into the service of a thoroughgoing critique of its claim to raise the inductee to the contemplation of God, a critique which, more generally becomes a declaration of the futility of any attempt to come to any saving knowledge of God apart from Christ." John Cavadini, "The Structure and Intention of Augustine's *De Trinitate*," *AugStud* 23 (1992): 106.

racked by existential angst—by the awareness of the "failure" of time—and cannot contemplate *idipsum*, maintains Augustine, one can rest in the reality of the Incarnation. Perhaps you reflect on "how you are tossed to and fro, and precluded from sharing in the Selfsame (*idipsum*) by the mutability of all human things (*mutabilitate rerum*) and the inconstant state of mortals."[42] Do not despair: "I am coming down to you because you cannot come up to me."[43] One cannot grasp *idipsum*: "Hold on instead to what he whom you cannot understand became for you. Hold onto the flesh of Christ" (*retine carnem Christi*).[44] The crisis of becoming is overcome by participating in *idipsum* through clinging to the flesh of Christ.

Augustine understands Philippians 2:6–7 ("though he was in the form of God . . . [he] emptied himself taking the form of a slave") as a type of Christological rule (*regula*) for reading scripture. Those passages that seem to suggest the inferiority of the Son on account of his visibility in the Incarnation are to be read as an expression of the *forma serui* that Christ "assumed" and not as a mitigation of Christ's divine nature as *forma dei* in which he is *idipsum*.[45]

The purpose of the Incarnation—of the assumption of the *forma serui*—is, for Augustine, that the believer may be led by faith to see the *forma dei* in which Christ is *idipsum*. Lewis Ayres explains that, for Augustine, the Incarnation has as its purpose "leading the just towards contemplation of the Trinity—his incarnate materiality draws us toward his nature as the immaterial and fully divine Son."[46]

42. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "quia tu modo fluctuas, et mutabilitate rerum et uarietate mortalitatis humanae percipere non potes quod est idipsum."

43. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "Ego descendo, quia tu uenire non potes."

44. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805, trans. Boulding [n.4], 18): "Retine quod pro te factus est, quem non posses capere. Retine carnem Christi." Commenting on this passage, Lewis Ayres writes, "[T]his flesh will take us to the city that shares in the *idipsum*." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (n.26), 205.

45. Drawing on Alois Grillmeier, Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (n.26), 146, describes this exegetical principle as Augustine's "Panzer," which he deploys with force in numerous Christological controversies. Cf. *trin.* 1.7.14 (CCSL 50: 45); *trin.* 2.1.2 (CCSL 50: 81). Hubertus Drobner has argued that the various terms used by Augustine to express Christ's "assumption" of human nature have their origin in the context of ancient theater, in which an actor "assumed" another person's *prosopon*. Hubertus Drobner, *Person-Exegese und Christologie bei Augustinus: zur Herkunft der Formel "Una Persona"* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1986), 140. For a discussion of Phil. 2:6–7 in Augustine's theology, see Albert Verwilghen, *Christologie et spiritualité selon saint Augustin: L'hymne aux Philippiens* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985); idem, "Le Christ médiateur selon Ph. 2, 6–7 dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin," *AugAHI* 41 (1991): 469–482.

46. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (n.26), 147.

Temporal knowledge and sight of Christ necessarily fall under the auspices of faith, but are ordered toward the contemplation of "being itself."

In summary, *idipsum* in *en. Ps.* 121 is identified above all by its ontological otherness. As such, it is articulated principally in the apophatic register: *idipsum* is eternal, which is to say, not mutable or material. Further, Augustine expresses *idipsum* through metaphysical categories, particularly by exploring the divine self-disclosure of Exodus 3:14: "*ego sum qui sum*." He underscores the ontological dependence that marks the naked awareness of one's state as "becoming"—that "today" never "stands" (*stat*), but "slips" and "fails." To be a creature is definitively not to possess *idipsum* for oneself, but to have borrowed existence. It is to be held in being—to receive being as gift. Participation in *idipsum* can be received only through the modality of the *forma serui*.

Jerusalem in the exposition on Psalm 121 is, above all, marked by its participation in *idipsum*. Augustine writes, "The city that shares in the Selfsame (*idipsum*) shares in that stability, and because it does so the speaker in the psalm, who is running toward the city, cries out, "Our feet were standing in the forecourts of Jerusalem"; for there all things stand and nothing passes away."[47] Jerusalem is not *aeterna* by its own nature, but stands (*stat*) in the stability and permanence of *idipsum*.

Caelum Caeli

The character of "Jerusalem" in *en. Ps.* 121 bears a remarkable resemblance to Augustine's account of *caelum caeli* in the *conf.* I will now consider how Augustine understands *caelum caeli* and, finally, will argue that *caelum caeli* described in *conf.* Book 12 is the same spiritual entity that Augustine calls "Jerusalem" in *en. Ps.* 121. Augustine tentatively advanced the hypothesis of *caelum caeli* in his early writings and never again considers it seriously.[48] It receives its most extensive

47. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1806, trans. Boulding [n.4], 19–20): "ipsius stabilitatis participat illa ciuitas cuius participatio est in idipsum. Merito ergo, quia illius stabilitatis fit particeps, dicit iste qui illuc currit: Stantes erant pedes nostri in atriis Ierusalem. Omnia enim ibi stant, ubi nihil transit."

48. A passing reference to *caelum caeli* is found in *s. dom. m.* 2.13.44 (CCSL 35: 135), where this realm is described as dwelling "*in firmamento spiritali*." Apart from *conf.*, description of *caelum caeli* is limited to *Gn. litt.* 1.9.15 (*BA* 48: 100), 1.9.17 (*BA* 48: 104), 1.17.32 (*BA* 48: 126), all of which are commented on below. As such, discussion of this intellectual created realm is limited to Augustine's early writings. There is, however, a passing reference in *ciu.*11.33 (CCSL 48: 353) in which the "company of the demons" is contrasted with the "company of the angels" who dwell in the (notably plural) "heavens of heavens" (*caelis caelorum*).

treatment in *conf.* 12.[49] The *caelum caeli* is not advanced (at least in the first place) on account of its metaphysical purchase; rather, it is seen by Augustine as a fitting speculative hypothesis in line with a literal reading of scripture,[50] which indicates a heaven and earth (an earth which is "formless and void") created before time and motion.[51] What then would this "heaven and earth" be like, which scripture describes as "invisible and unorganized" (*inuisibilis et incomposita*), if there were as yet no time and thus no motion?[52] (Time for Augustine, following Aristotle, is the measure of motion.) Without time there is no mutability or change.[53] Augustine advances an interpretation of the creation account in which God creates a realm outside of time—the "heaven and earth" of Genesis 1:1—which is logically (not temporally) antecedent to the physical creation. There are, then, three created "realms" for Augustine: (1) the "earth" of Genesis 1:1; (2) the physical cosmos in time and space; and (3) the "heaven" of Genesis 1:1. It is fruitful to explore these three degrees of created being as outlined in *conf.* 12.

Informa materia

Augustine proceeds to relate the idea of a "formless matter" (*informa materia*)—the "stuff" out of which the material order was made. Creation is a two-step process: God first calls into being formless matter, and he subsequently imposes form onto this matter.[54] This first formless "stuff" of creation has no color, no shape,

49. Helpful literature on *caelum caeli* includes Jean Pepin, "Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression 'Caelum Caeli' dans le livre XII des *Confessions* de S. Augustin," *Bulletin du Cange* 23 (1953): 185–274; Aimé Solignac, "Caelum caeli," in *AugLex*, ed. Cornelius Mayer et al., 5 vols. (Basel: Schwabe, 1986–), 1:702–704; Roland Teske, "The Heaven of Heaven and the Unity of St. Augustine's *Confessions*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (2000): 29–45.

50. The "literal reading" of scripture is not, for Augustine, the meaning the original author intended, but what today we might call a close reading or a ruminative reading (or a "deep read" in Maryanne Wolf's phrase). Thus a literal reading requires the reader to take the words precisely as they appear on the page, not attending to metaphors or other standard figures of speech, or even punctuation. Cf. *Gn. adu. Man*. 2.2.3 (CSEL 91: 120–121).

51. As James O'Donnell points out, "No verse of scripture is quoted and echoed so frequently in *Conf.*" *Augustine: Confessions*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 3:302. "Heaven and Earth" are linked 114 times in *conf.* and 58 times in Book 12.

52. *Conf.* 12.3.3 (CCSL 27: 217–218).

53. The mutability of the world is apparent, explains Augustine, in the fact that "passing time can be perceived and measured." See *conf.* 12.8.8 (CCSL 27: 220; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 250): "in quo ipsa mutabilitas apparet, in qua sentiri et dinumerari possunt tempora, quia rerum mutationibus fiunt tempora." Likewise, a little later, he notes, "It is absolutely impossible for time to exist without changes and movements." *conf.* 12.11.14 (CCSL 27: 223; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 252).

54. Hilary Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and St. Augustine," in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1954), 277, is helpful here: "The bringing together of the

no body, no spirit.[55] It is nothing, but not absolute nothingness (*omnino nihil*).[56] Without shape or form (*species*), this first creation had a "kind of formlessness" (*quaedam informitas*).[57] Although *informa materia* is the "stuff" of matter, it is not accessible to sense perception.[58] Nevertheless, it is not like a Platonic form, such as justice or life (which is also inaccessible to sense perception).[59] Indeed, it is the opposite—it is pure matter without any form. If Augustine seems to be haplessly groping towards a definition of *informa materia*, this is because there is no definition—there is no "nature" (*sine specie*) to describe. Nonetheless, it is out of this "invisible and unorganized" "stuff" that the beautiful world was made.[60] Formless matter stands in sheer potency to God's creative word calling it into act.[61]

While *informa materia* is, ontologically speaking, at the greatest possible remove from the realm of the forms, they share a degree of intellectual inaccessibility. In both cases, the mind must be stripped of picture thinking in order to conceive of creation outside of time and space. There is a constant temptation, suggests Augustine, to impose "horrible forms" (*horribiles formas*) on unformed matter when this "stuff" is, in fact, "the privation of all form" (*priuatione omnis formae*)[62] The intellectual challenge of conceiving formless matter recalls Augustine's long struggle to comprehend immaterial concepts (i.e., God, the soul, heaven, angelic life, virtues, etc.). In *conf*. Books 5 and 7 Augustine details the difficulty he had

philosophical doctrine of matter and form and the Christian doctrine of creation resulted in a doctrine of creation in two stages (not necessarily successive in time but distinguishable in thought), the creation of unformed matter and its information by the Creator."

55. *Conf*. 12.3.3 (CCSL 27: 218).
56. *Conf*. 12.3.3 (CCSL 27: 218).
57. *Conf*. 12.3.3 (CCSL 27: 218).
58. *Conf*. 12.5.5 (CCSL 27: 218).
59. *Conf*. 12.5.5 (CCSL 27: 218).
60. *Conf*. 12.4.4 (CCSL 27: 218). Perhaps an analogue is to be found in Ambrose's account of creation. Cf. C. M. Van Winden, "St. Ambrose's Interpretation of the Concept of Matter," *VigChr* 16 (1962): 205–215.
61. *Conf*. 12.7.7 (CCSL 27: 219). A similar exegesis of the creation narrative is found in *Gn. litt.*, in which the "heaven" referred to in the first verse of Genesis "is to be understood as the spiritual creation already made and formed . . . which is the highest thing among bodies. Now it was on the second day that the solid structure was made, which again he called 'heaven'; while by the name of earth, invisible and shapeless, and by the dark abyss the incompleteness and lack of perfection of bodily reality was signified, out of which those time-bound things would be made, the first of them being light." *Gn. litt*. 1.9.15 (*BA* 48: 100–102; trans. Teske, WSA, *On Genesis*, I/13, 174).
62. *Conf*. 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 218).

disentangling his mind from Manichean materialism:[63] "I found it easier to suppose something deprived of all form to be non-existent than to think something could stand between form and nothingness (*inter formam et nihil*), neither endowed with form nor nothing, but formless and so almost nothing" (*nec formatum nec nihil, informe prope nihil*).[64] Augustine's intellectual challenge of coming to terms with immaterial realities mirrors his challenge of understanding formless matter.

Mutable Creation

Higher up the ontological chain, Augustine inquires into the nature of created bodies, which are marked above all by their mutability. Bodies have a being, which will cease to be; they return to the elements.[65] Augustine writes, "For the mutability of changeable things is itself capable (*capax*) of receiving all forms into which mutable things can be changed. But what is this mutability?"[66] The protean nature of material existence also leaves this realm hard to define, for here there is no stable "is" to define: "If one could speak of 'a nothing something' (*nihil aliquid*) or a 'being which is non-being' (*est non est*), that is what I would say."[67] Above all,

63. Cf. *conf.* 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 218–219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 248): "cuius antea nomen audiens et non intellegens narrantibus mihi eis, qui non intellegerent, eam cum speciebus innumeris et uariis cogitabam et ideo non eam cogitabam; foedas et horribiles formas perturbatis ordinibus uoluebat animus, sed formas tamen, et informe appellabam non quod careret forma, sed quod talem haberet, ut, si appareret, insolitum et incongruum auersaretur sensus meus et conturbaretur infirmitas hominis; uerum autem illud quod cogitabam non priuatione omnis formae, sed comparatione formosiorum erat informe, et suadebat uera ratio, ut omnis formae qualescumque reliquias omnino detraherem, si uellem prorsus informe cogitare et non poteram"; "[T]he truth is that earlier in life I heard the word ["formless"] but did not understand it, and those who spoke to me about it [the Manicheans] did not understand it either. I used to think of it as having countless and varied shapes, and therefore I was not thinking about matter at all. My mind envisaged foul and horrible forms (*foedas et horribiles formas*) nevertheless. I used to use the word formless (*informe*) not for that which lacked form (*careret forma*) but for that which had a form such that, if it had appeared, my mind would have experienced revulsion from its extraordinary and bizarre shape, and my human weakness would have been plunged into confusion. But the picture I had in my mind was not the privation of all form, but that which is relatively formless by comparison (*comparatione formosiorum erat informe*) with more beautiful shapes. True reasoning convinced me that I should wholly subtract all remnants of every kind of form if I wished to conceive the absolutely formless. I could not achieve this."

64. *Conf.* 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 248).

65. *Conf.* 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 219): "intendi in ipsa corpora eorum que mutabilitatem altius inspexi, qua desinunt esse quod fuerant et incipiunt esse quod non errant."

66. *Conf.* 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 248): "Mutabilitas enim rerum mutabilium ipsa capax est formarum omnium, in quas mutantur res mutabiles. Et haec quid est?"

67. *Conf.* 12.6.6 (CCSL 27: 219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 249): "Si dici posset "nihil aliquid" et "est non est", hoc eam dicerem."

matter is a capacity: it stands in potency, waiting to be informed. It holds its being (*qua* capacity) tenuously—in a constant state of receptivity towards the Creator: "Where could this capacity come from except from you, from whom everything has being insofar as it has being?"[68] At this point, Augustine confesses God to be immutable; not one thing here and another there, but always very being itself (*idipsum*): "*Itaque tu, domine, qui non es alias aliud et alias aliter, sed id ipsum et id ipsum et id ipsum*."[69] Augustine repeats *idipsum* three times, followed by the threefold repetition of *sanctus*.[70]

The entire hierarchy of created existence comes *de nihilo*. But some elements of creation are closer to *nihilo* than others. Or, to put it another way, some creatures *de nihilo* participate more intimately in *idipsum* than others. The *informa materia*, which was "invisible and unorganized," was "almost nothing" (*totum prope nihil*). In Augustine's delightful phrase, "You made this next-to-nothing out of nothing."[71] Higher up the ladder of being is the material order made out of this unformed matter. This includes the physical heaven and the physical earth created on the second and third days, when the waters above the firmament were separated from the waters below and the dry land was separated from the sea. ("And God called the firmament Heaven" [Gen. 1:8]; "God called the dry land Earth" [Gen. 1:10].) The physical heaven and earth created on the second and third days are shaped out of the formless matter described in the first verse of Genesis. The matter of the physical heaven and earth is more fully formed; act gives definition to what would otherwise be unmitigated potency. The mutability of this created realm is—to a greater extent—checked by participating more immediately in *idipsum*.

Caelum Caeli

The highest realm of creation is the "heaven" referred to in Genesis 1:1. This "heaven" was created before time and is distinct from the physical heaven made on

68. *Conf.* 12.7.7 (CCSL 27: 219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 249): "Et unde utcumque erat, ut species caperet istas visibiles et compositas, et unde utcumque erat, nisi esset abs te, a quo sunt omnia, in quantumcumque sunt?"

69. *Conf.* 12.7.7 (CCSL 27: 219).

70. Some manuscripts do not contain the thrice repeated *idipsum*. Following the Maurist translators and most critical editions, I have retained the threefold *idipsum*, which seems to function as a parallelism to the threefold *sanctus* (likely a liturgical reference and a reference to Isa. 6:4 and Rev. 4:8).

71. *Conf.* 12.8.8 (CCSL 27: 220; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 250): "Tu enim, domine, fecisti mundum de materia informi, quam fecisti de nulla re paene nullam rem."

the second day of creation. The "heaven" of Genesis 1:1 is the "heaven of heaven" (*caelum caeli*), referred to by the psalmist: "The heaven of heaven belongs to the Lord, but the earth he has given to the sons of men" (Ps. 113:16).[72] Of all created being, *caelum caeli* participates most intimately in *idipsum*. Augustine writes,

> No doubt the "heaven of heaven" which you made in the beginning is a kind of creation in the realm of the intellect. Without being coeternal with you, O Trinity, it nevertheless participates in your eternity. From the sweet happiness of contemplating you, it finds power to check its mutability. Without any lapse to which its createdness makes it liable, by cleaving to you it escapes all revolving vicissitudes of the temporal process.[73]

Here we have the first of a series of theological articulations of *caelum caeli* in *conf.* 12. Augustine emphasizes its creaturely status. *Caelum caeli* is "made" (*fecisti*); it is not an overflow or diffusion of the divine life. Indeed, Augustine underscores that it is not eternal (*the* divine attribute); rather, *qua* creature, *caelum caeli* is, by definition, mutable (*mutabilitatem*). Its slide back into *nihil* is forestalled only by its constant turning in contemplation towards the God in whom it receives ontological stability.

Augustine is intent on ensuring that there is no confusion between the created realm of wisdom (*caelum caeli*) and Eternal Wisdom. The intellectual realm created before time is the pre-existent wisdom referred to by scripture. ("Wisdom was created before everything" [Sir. 1:4].) This wisdom is not the divine Wisdom ("coeternal and equal with you"), but a created wisdom:

> Evidently "wisdom" in this text is that which is created (*creata est*), an intellectual nature (*intellectualis natura*) which is light from contemplation of the light. For although created, it is itself called wisdom. But just as there is a difference between light which illuminates and that which is illuminated, so also there is an equivalent difference between the wisdom which creates and that which is created. . . . So there was a wisdom created before all things which is a created thing, the rational and intellectual mind of your pure city (*mens rationalis et*

72. *Conf.* 12.2.2 (CCSL 27: 217; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 246): "Caelum caeli domino: terram autem dedit filiis hominum." O'Donnell comments, "The interpretations of scripture proposed by scripture are always peculiarly authoritative (if often problematic) for Augustine." O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* (n.52), 302.

73. *Conf.* 12.9.9 (CCSL 27: 221; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 250): "Nimirum enim caelum caeli, quod in principio fecisti, creatura est aliqua intellectualis, quamquam nequaquam tibi, trinitati, coaeterna, particeps tamen aeternitatis tuae, ualde mutabilitatem suam prae dulcedine felicissimae contemplationis tuae cohibet et sine ullo lapsu, ex quo facta est, inhaerendo tibi excedit omnem uolubilem uicissitudinem temporum."

> *intellectualis castae ciuitatis tuae*), our "mother which is above and is free" (Gal. 4:6) and is 'eternal in the heavens.' (2 Cor. 5:1)[74]

All three realms—unformed matter, created being in time and space, and *caelum caeli*—are created. That is to say, they have borrowed existence realized in varying degrees. The nature of created reality, then, is that it *receives* its being; it does not *have* its being. As Augustine puts it, "You were, the rest was nothing" (*tu eras et aliud nihil*).[75] This is the fundamental distinction that pertains between the only begotten (God from God) and creation:

> In the beginning, that is from yourself (*de te*), in your wisdom which is begotten of your substance (*quae nata est de substantia tua*), you made something and made it out of nothing (*fecisti aliquid de nihilo*). For you made heaven and earth not out of your own self (*non de te*), or it would be equal to your only-begotten Son and therefore to yourself. It cannot possibly be right for anything which is not of you (*de te*) to be equal to you. Moreover, there was nothing apart from you out of which you could make them, God one in three and three in one.[76]

The distinction between God and all created being is one of origin, and this distinction is articulated by means of pro-Nicene categories. The Word is generated *de te*, while creation, including *caelum caeli*, comes into being *de nihilo*. The difference between *de te* and *de nihilo* is the difference between immutability and mutability.[77]

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74. *Conf.* 12.15.20 (CCSL 27: 225–226; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 255–256): "sed profecto sapientia quae creata est, intellectualis natura scilicet, quae contemplatione luminis lumen est; dicitur enim et ipsa, quamvis creata, sapientia, sed quantum interest inter lumen quod inluminat et quod inluminatur, tantum inter sapientiam quae creat et istam quae creata est. . . . ergo quia prior omnium creata est quaedam sapientia, quae creata est, mens rationalis et intellectualis castae civitatis tuae, matris nostrae, quae sursum est et libera est et aeterna in caelis."

75. *Conf.* 12.7.7 (CCSL 27: 220; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 249). Joshua Nunziato, "Created to Confess" (n.27), 367, helpfully comments on this passage: "God originates from God (*de te*). Indeed, God is born of God as the eternal beginning in whom all of creation is borne. The 'only-begotten' (*unigenitus*) is from God precisely because he is God. In contrast, creation originates as something (*fecisti aliquid*) in the only-begotten wisdom of God (*in principio, quod est de te*)—not from this wisdom's divine beginning. Summarizing: creation comes to be from nothing in the God who is from God."

76. *Conf.* 12.7.7 (CCSL 27: 219; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 249): "in principio, quod est de te, in sapientia tua, quae nata est de substantia tua, fecisti aliquid et de nihilo. Fecisti enim caelum et terram non de te: nam esset aequale unigenito tuo ac per hoc et tibi, et nullo modo iustum esset, ut aequale tibi esset quod de te non esset. Et aliud praeter te non erat, unde faceres ea, deus, una trinitas et trina unitas."

77. This critical distinction between created wisdom and Eternal Wisdom is also at work in the only other place where Augustine considers *caelum caeli* at length, namely, *Gn. litt.* 1.17.32 (*BA* 48: 126; trans. Teske, WSA, *On Genesis*, I/13, 183):

The following chart outlines Augustine's ontological hierarchy:

Augustine's Ontological Hierarchy

Nihilo Being

Creation *ex nihilo*

A. *Informa Materia*	B. *Mutable Creation*	C. *Caelum Caeli*
• Formless matter	• In time and space	• Matterless form
• Nearly pure potency	• Potency and act	• Nearly pure act
• "Earth" of Gen. 1:1	• "Heaven and Earth" of Gen. 1:8; 1:10	• "Heaven" of Gen. 1:1

Created being, for Augustine, exists on a continuum between potency and act. Augustine's richly textured exegesis of the first verse of Gen. suggests there are degrees of receiving being *ex nihilo*. The less form being has, the nearer it is to *nihilo*; thus, *informa materia* is marked only by potency, waiting the impress of God's creative form. In contrast, being that possesses form to the highest degree—*caelum caeli*—is nearly pure act. Between these two poles is creation in time and space; the mutable realm that exists as mixture of potency and act.

Aeterna Ierusalem and *Caelum Caeli*

We are now well positioned to consider *caelum caeli* of *conf*. Book 12 in relation to the Jerusalem of *en*. *Ps*. 121. The key features of *caelum caeli* are integrated in *conf*. 12.11.12:

> Again you said to me, in a loud voice to my inner ear, that not even that created realm, the "heaven of heaven," is coeternal (*coaeterna*) with you. Its delight is

> When that eternal and unchangeable Wisdom, you see, which was begotten, not made, transfers itself into spiritual and rational creatures, as it does into holy souls, so that being thus enlightened they can themselves become sources of light, there is produced in them a kind of infection of shining, glowing intelligence; and this can be taken as made light (*facta lux*), made when God said, "Let light be made," provided there was already a spiritual creation (*creatura spiritalis*), which was signified by the word "heaven," (*caeli*) where is written, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." This was not a corporeal heaven (*corporeum caelum*), but the incorporeal heaven of the corporal heaven (*caelum incorporeum caeli corporei*), set that is above every kind of body, not by degrees of space, but by the sublimity of its nature.

> exclusively in you. In an unfailing purity it satiates its thirst in you. It never at any point betrays its mutability (*mutabilitatem*). You are always present (*praesente*) to it, and it concentrates all its affection on you. It has no future to expect. It suffers no variation and experiences no distending (*distenditur*) in the successiveness of time. O blessed creature, if there be such: happy in cleaving (*inhaerendo*) to your felicity, happy to have you as eternal inhabitant and its source of light! I do not find any better name for the Lord's "heaven of heaven" (*caelum caeli*) (Ps. 113:16) than your House. There your delight is contemplated without any failure (*defectu*) or wandering away to something else. The pure heart enjoys absolute concord and unity in the unshakable peace of holy spirits, the citizens of your city in heavens above the visible heavens.[78]

Three constitutive elements of *caelum caeli* are likewise essential features in Augustine's description of "Jerusalem" in *en. Ps.* 121.

Participating in Eternity

First, both *caelum caeli* and "Jerusalem" receive profound ontological stability on account of a freely willed desire to "stand" within God's being. They never "fall back" into the state of "becoming," proper to their nature (*mutabilitatem suam nusquam*), but enjoy the "constant presencing" of eternity by sharing in the divine life.[79] Augustine underscores that this highest created realm remains exactly that: created. Caused by God's creative act, it is not of itself eternal. Both *en. Ps.* 121 and *conf.* 12 insist on the ontological distinction between God who is eternal and the creature who is mutable. In three consecutive paragraphs (*conf.* 12.11.11–12.11.12), Augustine appeals to the authority of a personal, divine revelation, in which the Lord spoke to him "with a loud voice in my inner ear" (*uoce forti in*

78. *Conf.* 12.11.12 (CCSL 27: 222; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 251–252): "Item dixisti mihi uoce forti in aurem interiorem, quod nec illa creatura tibi coaeterna est, cuius uoluptas tu solus es te que perseuerantissima castitate hauriens mutabilitatem suam nusquam et numquam exerit et te sibi semper praesente, ad q`uem toto affectu se tenet, non habens futurum quod expectet nec in praeteritum traiciens quod meminerit, nulla uice uariatur nec in tempora ulla distenditur. O beata, si qua ista est, inhaerendo beatitudini tuae, beata sempiterno inhabitatore te atque inlustratore suo! Nec inuenio, quid libentius appellandum existimem caelum caeli domino quam domum tuam contemplantem delectationem tuam sine ullo defectu egrediendi in aliud, mentem puram concordissime unam stabilimento pacis sanctorum spirituum, ciuium ciuitatis tuae in caelestibus super ista caelestia."

79. Matthew Lamb puts this well, "The eternal is no apersonal permanence; the eternal is inter-personal presence." Matthew Lamb, *Eternity, Time, and the Life of Wisdom* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 52. For a discussion of Augustine's exposition of eternity as *totum esse praesens*, see Gerald P. Boersma, "Monica as Mystagogue: Time and Eternity at Ostia," in *Wisdom and the Renewal of Catholic Theology: Essays in Honor of Matthew L. Lamb*, ed. Thomas P. Harmon and Roger W. Nutt (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 104–125.

aurem interiorem).[80] The revelation distinguishes the uniqueness of God's eternity from the inherent mutability of *caelum caeli*.[81] Precisely as a creature, *caelum caeli* is mutable, but its mutability is checked by an intense, loving, and freely chosen embrace of God's being.[82]

Likewise, in *en. Ps.* 121, Augustine explains that one who "shares in the Selfsame (*idipsum*) . . . confesses that he is not what God is and that he holds from God whatever good he can claim to have."[83] We have already seen Psalm 101:26–27 feature prominently in *en. Ps.* 121. Augustine uses this text to establish a contrast between finite mutability ("You will discard them like a garment, and so they will be changed") with God's immutability ("But you are the Selfsame [*idipsum*], and your years will not fail [*deficient*]"). Jerusalem participates by grace in the stability of God. Those sojourning on earth already claim Jerusalem above as "our city" but do not yet experience this share in eternity; they urge one another on, "Let us run to the place where we are to be built in."[84] In *conf.* 12, *caelum caeli* is identified as God's house, in which God's life is experienced for all days. Augustine explains, "and

80. *Conf.* 12.11.11–12.11.12 (CCSL 27: 221–222; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 251–252. John Peter Kenney rightly notes that the "dominical audition" passages in *conf.* 12 "amplify scripturally what he had already come to know through unmediated contemplation." John Peter Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 141. Indeed, what Augustine is told by a loud voice *in aurem interiorem* is what he discovered in the ecstatic experiences of Ostia and Milan, namely, the real distinction between Creator and creature. Kenney writes, "Once again the interior audition offers metaphysical clarity. In this case a sharp line of ontological demarcation is set down between God and all else." Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity* (n.80), 141.

81. *Conf.* 12.11.11 (CCSL 27: 221; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 251): "Already you have said to me, Lord, with a loud voice in my inner ear, that you are eternal. 'You alone have immortality' (1 Tim. 6:16), for you are changed by no form or movement, nor does your will undergo any variation at different times"; "Iam dixisti mihi, domine, uoce forti in aurem interiorem, quia tu aeternus es, solus habens immortalitatem, quoniam ex nulla specie motu ue mutaris nec temporibus uariatur uoluntas tua." This phrase, *uoce forti in aurem interiorem*, is subsequently repeated two times: first, in Augustine's description of God's eternity (*conf.* 12.15.18 [CCSL 27: 224–225]) and towards the end of *conf.*, when he recounts his discussion of the *caelum caeli* (*conf.* 13.29.44 [CCSL 27: 268]).

82. Armstrong notes, "The essential element in St. Augustine's account of the *spiritualis creatura* is of course his insistence that it is a creature, made by God's free act and only delivered from the consequences of its intrinsic creaturely *mutabilitas* and raised above time and change by his free gift of grace." Hilary Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter" (n.54), 280–281.

83. *En. Ps.* 121.8 (CCSL 40: 1808; trans. Boulding [n.4], 22): "qui est particeps in idipsum. quis est qui participat in idipsum? qui confitetur se non esse quod deus est, et ab illo habere quod bonum potest habere."

84. *En. Ps.* 121.4 (CCSL 40: 1804; trans. Boulding [n.4], 16): "illuc ergo curramus, ubi aedificemur."

what is its life but you? and what are your 'days' but your eternity, as 'your years which do not fail (*deficient*), because you are the same (*ipse es*)'" (Ps. 101:28).[85]

Jerusalem and *caelum caeli* are both described as God's dwelling place—"your House." By freely choosing to make space for the divine presence, this realm comes to share in God's eternity despite its temporal nature: "[A]lthough not coeternal with you, nevertheless [it] experiences none of the vicissitudes of time because, ceaselessly and unfailingly, it cleaves to you."[86] John Peter Kenney expresses the a-temporal character of *caelum caeli* well: "Not eternal, the *caelum caeli* is nevertheless not in time, never distended into the fragmentation of temporal succession. It occupies a middle zone of contingent temporality, having the potential for discrete, sequential moments in time, but forestalled from actualizing that option by its joyful adherence to God."[87] Augustine is clear that this highest realm of creation, most proximate to God, nonetheless remains derived and wholly other from God. It is, he states, definitively not *idipsum*: "*Vnde ita est abs te, deo nostro, ut aliud sit plane quam tu et non idipsum*."[88]

Contemplative Participation

The second corresponding element between Jerusalem and *caelum caeli* is the mode in which this intellectual realm participates in the divine life. Loving contemplation is the manner by which it remains in the presence of *idipsum*, which checks its mutability. The intensity and active agency with which *caelum caeli* binds itself to the divine life is expressed in the passionate phrase *toto affectu se tenet*.[89] This realm cleaves (*inhaerendo*) to God's felicity and, without failure (defectu), contemplates God's delight (*contemplantem delectationem*).[90] A little further on, Augustine continues, "Without any cessation of its contemplation

85. *Conf.* 12.11.13 (CCSL 27: 222; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 252): "Et quae uita eius nisi tu? Et qui dies tui nisi aeternitas tua, sicut anni tui, qui non deficiunt, quia idem ipse es?"

86. *Conf.* 12.11.13 (CCSL 27: 222; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 252: "quamuis non sit tibi coaeterna, tamen indesinenter et indeficienter tibi cohaerendo nullam patitur uicissitudinem temporum." A few paragraphs further on, Augustine writes, "We do not find time either before it or even in it, because it is capable of continually seeing your face and of never being deflected from it. This has the consequence that it never undergoes variation or change. Nevertheless in principle mutability is inherent in it. This is why it would grow dark and cold if it were not lit and warmed by you as a perpetual noonday sun (Isa. 58:10) because it cleaves to you with a great love." *conf.* 12.15.21 (CCSL 27: 226; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 256).

87. Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity* (n.80), 142.

88. *Conf.* 12.15.21 (CCSL 27: 226).

89. *Conf.* 12.11.12 (CCSL 27: 222).

90. *Conf.* 12.11.12 (CCSL 27: 222).

(*contemplationis*) . . . it experiences unswerving enjoyment of your eternity and immutability."[91] Only a purely intellectual creature can contemplate *idipsum* steadily and without any distraction.[92] As such, *caelum caeli* is a "kind of creation in the realm of the intellect."[93] It is an "intellectual, non-physical heaven where the intelligence's knowing is a matter of simultaneity—not in part, not in an enigma, not through a mirror, but complete, in total openness, 'face to face'" (1 Cor. 13:12).[94] This "House of God," Augustine continues, is "not made of earth," it is "not corporeal," nor is it the product of a "celestial mass." Its nature is "spiritual."[95] Only an immaterial, spiritual creature can with such constancy be intimately and stably united to the divine life. This intellectual realm of created wisdom is always turned towards its source within which it lives and receives being.[96] In its ongoing dynamic tendency—its stretching out (*tendentia*)—towards *idipsum*, it eclipses its creaturely

91. *Conf.* 12.12.15 (CCSL 27: 223; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 252–253): "sine ullo defectu contemplationis . . . non mutatum tua aeternitate atque incommutabilitate perfruatur."

92. It is worth recalling Augustine's own struggle to keep his contemplative gaze fixed on *idipsum* as an embodied temporal creature: "But I did not possess the strength to keep my vision fixed. My weakness reasserted itself, and I returned to my customary condition." See *conf.* 7.17.23 (trans. Chadwick [n.4], 127; for the Latin, see CCSL 27: 107): "sed aciem figere non eualui et repercussa infirmitate redditus solitis."

93. *Conf.* 12.9.9 (CCSL 27: 221; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 250): "creatura est aliqua intellectualis."

94. *Conf.* 12.13.16 (CCSL 27: 223–224; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 253): "Sic interim sentio propter illud caelum caeli, caelum intellectuale, ubi est intellectus nosse simul, non ex parte, non in aenigmate, non per speculum, sed ex toto, in manifestatione, facie ad faciem."

95. *Conf.* 12.15.19 (CCSL 27: 225; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 255): "Haec est domus dei non terrena neque ulla caelesti mole corporea, sed spiritalis et particeps aeternitatis tuae, quia sine labe in aeternum."

96. Hilary Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter" (n.54), 278, has pointed out the Plotinian staging for Augustine's doctrine of *caelum caeli*: "St. Augustine had not a very wide gap to bridge in order to bring Plotinus's doctrine of 'intelligible matter' into effective contact with Christian thought." On the same page, Armstrong suggests that parallels ought to be sought, not between the derived second hypostasis (*Nous*) and the second person of the Trinity, but, rather, between *Nous* and the *caelum caeli*: "The lower hypostasis [*Nous*] is timelessly produced by the higher as an unformed, unbounded, and indefinite potentiality and timelessly turns back to it in contemplation and so, on Aristotle's psychological principle 'becomes what it thinks' and is informed and filled with definite content." Nevertheless, it seems Augustine's speculation has its *point de départ* in Christian revelation as Aimé Solignac points out in his commentary on *conf.*, "Pour conclure, il vaut mieux reconnaître que la notion du *caelum caeli*, telle que l'expriment les *Confessions*, reste malaisée à définir. Le plus simple est d'y voir une synthèse d'éléments plotiniens et d'éléments chrétiens. Plus précisément, le *caelum caeli* est une donnée de la foi chrétienne—les allusions scripturaires en font foi—mais cette donnée s'exprime dans une metaphysique plotinienne qui ne lui est pas parfaitement adaptée." Aimé Solignac, *Les Confessions*, *BA* 14: 597.

mutability. In the immediacy of its contemplative gaze ("face to face") *caelum caeli* becomes (by reception) that which it sees.[97]

In *en. Ps.* 121, contemplation is also the mode by which one participates in *idipsum*. By applying the "keen edge of the mind" (*erigit aciem mentis*) and turning from the "murk of the flesh" (*deponit caliginem carnis*), the mind can see being itself (*mentis ad cogitandum idipsum*).[98] And, in the next paragraph, Augustine reminds the reader that a firm heart (*firmitatem cordis*) and a keen gaze of contemplation (*aciem contemplationis*) are required if *idipsum* is to be seen.[99] Of course, as we have seen, this stability belongs to Jerusalem ("The city that 'shares in the Selfsame' [*idipsum*] shares in that stability."[100]) it is not yet experienced by those still longing for Jerusalem, those still "being built spiritually" into that city. Instead, those on pilgrimage experience the distention of time and the "years that fail everyday"; they experience how profoundly they are "precluded from sharing in the Selfsame (*idipsum*) by the mutability of all human things and the inconstant state of mortals."[101] Commenting on the line in the psalm, "Thither have the tribes ascended; the tribes of the Lord, the testimony to Israel," Augustine explains that the etymology of the word "Israel" means "seeing God." However, Augustine continues, a more literal translation of "Israel" would be "the seeing one is" (*utrumque: est, uidens Deum*).[102] Augustine writes,

> No one *is* in himself, for human beings are inconstant and subject to change, unless they participate in him who is *idipsum*. The person truly *is* when he sees God. He *is* when he sees Him Who Is, for, in seeing Him Who Is, the creature comes to be according to his measure. Thus he becomes Israel, for the one seeing God is Israel.[103]

97. Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter" (n.54), 280, writes, "What we have here, in fact, is a wonderful Christian transposition and adaption of the Plotinian doctrine of *Nous* applied to the Created Wisdom, the Heavenly City, the company of the blessed spirit."

98. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1805).

99. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1806). "*acies contemplationis*" suggests a vision that is immediate and direct, not mediated by images and concepts proper to discursive reasoning.

100. *En. Ps.* 121.6 (CCSL 40: 1806; trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "ipsius stabilitatis participat illa ciuitas cuius participatio est in idipsum."

101. *En. Ps.* 121.5 (CCSL 40: 1806; trans. Boulding [n.4], 19): "et mutabilitate rerum et uarietate mortalitatis humanae percipere non potes quod est idipsum."

102. *En. Ps.* 121.8 (CCSL 40: 1808; trans. Boulding [n.4], 22): "Israel, uidens Deum interpretatur; immo diligentius discusso uerbo, sic interpretatur Israel: est, uidens Deum."

103. *En. Ps.* 121.8 (CCSL 40: 1808; trans. is my own): "Quia homo in se non est; mutatur enim et uertitur, si non participet eius qui est idipsum. Tunc est, quando uidet Deum. Tunc enim est, quando uidet eum qui est; et uidendo eum qui est, fit et ipse pro modo suo ut sit. Ergo ipse est Israel, Israel est uidens Deum."

The Plotinian contemplative motif of becoming "like unto that which is seen" is operative both in the exposition of *caelum caeli* in *conf*. 12 and in *en*. *Ps*. 121; this motif is realized by Jerusalem and *caelum caeli* to a much greater degree than creation existing in time and space. In both cases, contemplation is the cause by which this realm participates in *idipsum*.

A Unity in Love

The third way in which the "Jerusalem" of *en*. *Ps* 121 and *caelum caeli* map onto one another is that both are presented as a collective unity in love. As such, the language of a "city" (*ciuitas*) predominates in both texts. The "concord," "unity," and "peace" enjoyed by the "citizens of your city in heavens above the visible heavens"[104] comports with the "peace of Jerusalem" for which the psalmist prays.[105] Both in *en*. *Ps*. 121 and in *conf*. 12, Augustine moves freely between describing this intellectual realm as "God's house" and as the "heavenly city." That which is signified in both cases is not so much the physical structure of a house or city, but is the unity shared by a family or community.[106] The emphasis in both texts is placed on the communal character of this spiritual realm.[107] Kenney writes, "The blessed souls of the *caelum caeli* are to be seen as engaged in joint intellection of God, simultaneous in their mental grasp of that higher level and free from any mediation."[108] "Great crowds at Christ's right hand," maintains Augustine, "make up the population of the city."[109]

Both the speaker of *conf.* and the expositor of the psalm stress that they do not yet experience this peace. Indeed, both texts evoke the "longing" for, and "remembering"

104. *Conf*. 12.11.12 (CCSL 27: 222; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 252): "ciuium ciuitatis tuae in caelestibus super ista caelestia."

105. Cf. *en*. *Ps*. 121.10–14 (CCSL 40: 1811–1813 trans. Boulding [n.4], 25–28).

106. Aimé Solignac, "Caelum caeli" (n.49), 1:702, writes, "'Domus' ne signifie pas 'maison' au sens de 'demeure,' mais au sens collectif de 'famille.'" Roland Teske, "Heaven of Heaven" (n.49), 38, notes that Augustine refers to *caelum caeli* "in the singular as a blessed creation, a mind most harmoniously one, but also in the collective plural as the home of the blessed spirits, citizens of God's city."

107. Given what we have seen about the contemplative and intellectual character of this realm its corporate character may seem unexpected. Armstrong comments, "[W]ho except a Christian steeped in the thought of Plotinus would pass so naturally, in a single sentence, from speaking of the *spiritalis creatura*, the company of angels, as *caelum* and *domus dei* to speaking of it as *mens*?" Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter" (n.54), 280.

108. Kenney, *Contemplation and Classical Christianity* (n.80), 143.

109. *En*. *Ps*. 121.12 (CCSL 40: 1812; trans. Boulding [n.4], 27): "multi ad dexteram positi facient populum ciuitatis illius."

of, this "pure city" (*castae ciuitatis*).[110] The voice of both texts is that of a pilgrim not yet within the confines of Jerusalem, the city of peace, God's house: "O House full of light and beauty! 'I have loved your beauty and the place of the habitation of the glory of my Lord' (Ps. 25:7–9), who built you and owns you. During my wandering (*peregrinatio*) may my longing be for you! I ask him who made you that he will also make me his property in you, since he also made me."[111]

At the outset of *en. Ps.* 121, Augustine describes the "holy love" (*amor sanctus*) that draws the soul up in its "longing" for eternal reality (*ad aeterna inflammat*) and a "desire" for that which does not pass or die. The psalmist "longs to fly away" (*uolare uult*) to "live in holy fellowship with the angelic citizens of the eternal Jerusalem."[112] This love and desire are, as yet, not realized: "In heaven is the eternal Jerusalem, where dwell the angels, our fellow-citizens (*ciues nostri*). For a while we are absent from those compatriots of ours (*ciuibus nostris*), while we are journeying (*peregrinamur*) on earth. On our pilgrimage (*in peregrinatione*) we sigh, but in our own city we shall rejoice."[113] The speaker of the psalm, like the speaker of *conf.*, has seen a vision of the eternal Jerusalem and urges others to join him in seeking this city as their goal: "I rejoiced over those who told me, We are going to the Lord's house."[114] In this psalm, suggests Augustine, we hear "those who cheer us on and have seen our homeland (*patriam*) before we have."[115] In *conf.*, Augustine gives personal expression to this longing. He writes of himself "groaning with inexpressible groaning (Rom. 8:20) on my wanderer's path (*in peregrinatione*), and remembering (*recordans*) Jerusalem with my heart lifted up (*sursum corde*) towards it—Jerusalem my home land (*patriam*), Jerusalem my mother (Gal. 4:26)."[116]

110. *Conf.* 12.15.20–21 (CCSL 27: 226; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 256).

111. *Conf.* 12.15.21 (CCSL 27: 226; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 256): "O domus luminosa et speciosa, dilexi decorem tuum et locum habitationis gloriae domini mei, fabricatoris et possessoris tui! Tibi suspiret peregrinatio mea, et dico ei qui fecit te, ut possideat et me in te, quia fecit et me."

112. *En. Ps.* 121.1–2 (CCSL 40: 1801; trans. Boulding [n.4], 13–14): "uiuat in sancta societate angelorum ciuium in aeterna Ierusalem."

113. *En. Ps.* 121.2 (CCSL 40: 1802; trans. Boulding [n.4], 14): "Sed est in caelo aeterna Ierusalem, ubi sunt ciues nostri angeli: ab ipsis ciuibus nostris peregrinamur in terra. In peregrinatione suspiramus, in ciuitate gaudebimus. Inuenimus autem et socios in ista peregrinatione, qui iam uiderunt ipsam ciuitatem, et inuitant nos ut curramus ad illam."

114. *En. Ps.* 121.2 (CCSL 40: 1802; trans. Boulding [n.4], 14).

115. *En. Ps.* 121.2 (CCSL 40 1802; trans. Boulding [n.4], 14): "Qui enim ea nobis dicunt, priores uiderunt ipsam patriam, de longinquo clamantes ad posteriores: In domum domini ibimus: ambulate, currite."

116. *Conf.* 12.16.23 (CCSL 27: 227; trans. Chadwick [n.4], 257): "gemens inenarrabiles gemitus in peregrinatione mea et recordans Hierusalem extento in eam sursum corde, Hierusalem patriam meam, Hierusalem matrem meam." The language of "pilgrimage," of a home, and of *patria* lead

Conclusion

When holding Augustine's exposition of "Jerusalem" in *en. Ps.* 121 next to the exposition of *caelum caeli* of *conf.* 12, we discover a surprising degree of commonality. While Augustine's mature corpus never again interacts with the idea of *caelum caeli*, in *en. Ps.* 121 we are again presented with a vision of a city that participates in the divine *idipsum*. This city is a creature so intimate with God's being that its creaturely mutability is checked. Both texts articulate this created intellectual realm as participating in God's eternity. In both cases, this participation is realized in contemplation—through the constancy of its vision, it is conformed to that which it sees. Finally, both *aeterna Ierusalem* and *caelum caeli* are a communion—a city—united in love. This intellectual realm is not perfectly stable and simple as is *idipsum*; indeed, this realm remains a city under construction, a city "being built." It is a creature that confesses its creatureliness, its ontological dependency and inherent mutability, and in the confession of its participatory existence receives stability in *idipsum*. In *en. Ps.* 121, Augustine urges his congregants to join themselves to the edifice under construction, and in *conf.*, he presents himself as a pilgrim groaning and longing with desire to be part of the Jerusalem above, his mother and *patria*.

Ronald Teske to conclude that *caelum caeli* is "not merely the present home of the angels who did not fall and the future home of the souls of the blessed, but was once the home of each of us, a home from which we have fallen and from which we are on pilgrimage." Teske, "Heaven of Heaven" (n.49), 40. Teske makes a compelling case that Augustine's *longing* for Jerusalem, his *groaning* while journeying away from it, and the active *remembering* of his fatherland and his mother imply "that he was once there, for one cannot love what one does not know, one cannot remember what one has not somehow experienced, and one cannot call his fatherland a land one has never known." Teske, "Heaven of Heaven" (n.49), 42. Unlike Teske, I do not see the emphasis on "remembering" *caelum caeli* as evidence that Augustine held to a Plotianian account of the "fall of the soul" at the time of writing *conf.* The Plotinian cadence, woven deep into the fabric of *conf.* (most especially in the discussion of *caelum caeli* in *conf.* 12), lends initial credence to Teske's argument. However, a Plotinian account of the "fall of the soul" simply cannot be squared with Augustine's continued insistence throughout *conf.* 12 on *creatio ex nihilo* as *the* demarking line between the creature and the Creator. The "remembering" of Jerusalem does not (of necessity) require a metaphysical, cosmic "fall of the soul." Augustine's "remembering" is better understood as an expression of spiritual proximity to (or participation in) an experience to which one was not physically present. This "remembering" comports with broader conceptions of *anamnesis* in Jewish and Christian spirituality.