

The vocative's calling?

The syntax of address in Latin

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For centuries the vocative case has been the cause of amused puzzlement both to learners of Latin and learners of other languages. Winston Churchill famously recalled being introduced to the Latin language and coming across the vocative case for the first time:

(1) 'What does it mean, sir?'

'It means what it says. Mensa, a table. Mensa is a noun of the First Declension. There are five declensions. You have learnt the singular of the First Declension.'

'But,' I repeated, 'what does it mean?'

'Mensa means a table,' he answered.

'Then why does mensa also mean O table,' I enquired, 'and what does O table mean?'

'Mensa, O table, is the vocative case,' he replied.

'But why O table?' I persisted in genuine curiosity.

'O table, – you would use that in addressing a table, in invoking a table.' And then seeing he was not carrying me with him, 'You would use it in speaking to a table.'

'But I never do,' I blurted out in honest amazement.

'If you are impertinent, you will be punished, and punished, let me tell you, very severely,' was his conclusive rejoinder.

(Churchill 1930: 25)

One can readily understand his astonishment, for it is indeed not often that one wants to address a table. Nevertheless, there are some important issues raised by looking at the phenomenon of the Latin vocative case, and it seems that traditional analyses of the vocative case do not provide a complete account of its use. This study is a preliminary investigation and is necessarily limited by the corpus on which it is based, namely Plaut. *Bacch.*, *Pseud.*, Ter. *Phorm.*, Cic.

* I gratefully acknowledge invaluable comments and criticisms on this and earlier versions of this paper from Prof. A. Morpurgo Davies, Dr. J. Penney, Mr. J. C. Smith, Prof. M. Maiden and Dr. D. Cram. Any errors which remain are, of course, my own. This work is supported by an AHRB grant.

Brut. and Petron. *Sat.* 28-78 (a total of 403 examples in approx. 60,000 words of text). However, the data cast doubt on the adequacy of some existing views, and several avenues are suggested for further investigation which could lead to a more helpful and precise analysis.

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In order to study the use of the vocative,¹ first one must identify vocative forms. Classical Latin has a morphologically distinct vocative in only one class of nouns, namely second declension nouns in *-us*.² In all other singular nouns and all plural nouns the vocative is formally indistinguishable from the nominative. To isolate examples of these nouns in the vocative case (i.e., to be sure that a given example is vocative and not nominative), a number of different tests can be applied.

The case of a noun appearing in a phrase may be made clear by phrase-internal agreement shown on elements which do have a distinct vocative:³

(2) *homo lepidissime* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 323)
you dear delightful man

(3) *bone vir* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 1145)
good man

(4) *mi pater insperate* (Plaut. *Rud.* 1175)
dear father, father un hoped for

The interjection *o!* commonly accompanies addresses and exclamations; it is reasonable to assume that a form which could be either nominative or vocative is in fact vocative when accompanied by *o!*⁴

¹ By 'use' I mean the structures involved with and surrounding a vocative when we find one. I intend to say nothing about what determines whether one uses a vocative or not, nor do I intend to say anything about what one decides to call someone if one does use a vocative ('o great king!', 'my liege!' etc.). Both are fascinating sociolinguistic problems and have been discussed thoroughly by Dickey (1996). I limit my observations to the *grammatical* form of the relevant construction(s).

² In Plautus one also finds a vocative *puere* ('boy', e.g. at *Pseud.* 170, 241, 242, etc.), but second declension nouns in *-er* generally have vocative *-er*. The only other distinct vocative forms in Latin are in some nouns of Greek origin.

³ Throughout this paper, I take examples from my corpus, supplemented with further material where necessary.

- (5) *o Troia, o patria, o Pergamum, o Priame ... senex* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 933)
O Troy! O fatherland! O Pergamum! O old man, Priam!

Context can also make it possible to disambiguate a non-distinct case form. Where a doubtful case form appears close or adjacent to a second person pronoun in a clearly different case and cannot be explained in any other way, it is reasonable to analyse the form in question as vocative:

- (6) *vobis, mulieres, hanc habeo edictionem* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 172)
Women, I have an announcement for you.

We can see, then, that it is possible to gather evidence for the use of the vocative case, not just where we find the *-e* or *-i* ending but sometimes also where the form is not distinct. Further morphological discussion beyond the principles for identifying examples is not essential for a consideration of the syntax (although observations about the syntax could eventually help to identify vocative examples). More detailed treatment of the issues together with consideration of the problem of indistinct second declension vocatives in *-us* (such as *meus*, *deus* and *populus*) can be found in Dickey (2000), Wackernagel (1912), Löfstedt (1956: 1.91-106), and Svennung (1958: 252).

What is worth pointing out, is that the internal syntax of a Latin phrase headed by a vocative element is unsurprising. A noun phrase in the vocative has an internal structure not discernibly different from that of a noun phrase in any other case.⁵ For example, an attached genitive is perfectly possible:

- (7) *perimites adulescentum* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 364)
blight of the youth!
- (8) *senex minimi preti* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 444)
you old man of no worth!
- (9) *homo nihili* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 1187)
you worthless man!

Moreover, as we saw above, case agreement within the phrase (e.g. on qualifying adjectives etc.) is regular:

⁴ A neuter noun in such circumstances could also be accusative and accordingly could be a *thing exclaimed over*.

⁵ This said, there are semantic constraints which limit the evidence; vocative phrases are most commonly headed by a proper noun, which can rarely be the host for a genitive.

- (10) *bone serve* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 775)
you good slave!
- (11) *mi pater insperate* (Plaut. *Rud.* 1175)
dear father, father unhoped for
- (12) *Tiberine pater, te, sancte, precor* (Livy 2.10)
O father Tiber, thee, holy one, I pray.

What continues to puzzle scholars, however, is what one might call the external syntax of the vocative phrase, i.e. how it is connected with and interacts with the syntax of any utterance with which it occurs. Before looking at Latin examples, it is instructive to consider the standard views of the phenomenon. (One word of caution is essential at this stage: many scholars use the terms ‘address’ and ‘vocative’ interchangeably and/or ambiguously to refer both to relevant case forms and to syntactic/pragmatic function. However, the distinction is absolutely critical. For the sake of precision, I use ‘vocative’ to refer to case forms and ‘address’ to refer to a pragmatic/syntactic function. In the following quotations, the distinction is not necessarily so rigorously observed.)

The most common view is that a vocative phrase is independent of any sentence which it may accompany:

- (13) Vocatives are ... an interesting grammatical category, again underexplored. Vocatives are noun phrases that refer to the addressee, but are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of a predicate; they are rather set apart prosodically from the body of a sentence that may accompany them.

(Levinson 1983: 71)

- (14) “Vocatives do not appear as dependents in constructions, but rather they stand outside constructions or are inserted parenthetically.” (Hjelmsev 1935: 4) They are unlike other cases in that they do not mark the relation of dependents to heads. For these reasons, vocatives have not always been considered cases.

(Blake 1994: 9)

It is worth dwelling on these views because they are, in a sense, no more than a *via negationis*. They exclude the vocative phenomenon from the explanatory domains of syntax and semantics, mainly on the theoretical grounds that the function of address does not parallel other functions which syntactic and/or semantic theory can encompass. Although this may seem intuitively reasonable,

it still does not in any way offer a good explanation for how the vocative phenomenon itself works.

Cautious advances towards such an explanation can be seen in the following:

- (15) [T]he vocative [should] be recognized as a construction in which the dominant element is not case but person.

(Fink 1972: 65)

- (16) [The] vocative marks a participant-role in the act of speech, whereas the other cases mark syntactic relationships between constituents of sentences.

(Vairel 1981: 440)

Such views point towards a potential analysis which is discourse-based, and we will return to some more detailed justification for an analysis on this level in due course.

First, however, let us compare actual Latin usage with a canonical description of the usage of the vocative:

- (17) The Vocative stands apart from the construction of the sentence, with or without an Interjection.

(Kennedy [1888] 1946: §202)

In fact, a far more detailed taxonomy of vocative usage can be developed. The following is offered based solely on examples where distinctive vocative morphology is found; it applies equally well, however, to non-distinctive forms and might be useful in disambiguating them. The classification is not intended in itself to offer an analysis, merely to highlight the range of data which needs to be accounted for.

The first group I term ‘isolative’. They are distinguished by the vocative phrase (NP) standing alone, without a sentence; it may, however, be strengthened with various particles (*o*, *euge*, *eheu*, etc.):

- (18) *euge, homo lepidissime*. (Plaut. *Pseud.* 323)

Wonderful, you dear delightful man!

A second group can be distinguished by the fact that they occur with a sentence which contains an explicit second person element; these I term ‘quasi-appositional’. We can further subdivide this group into three types. There are examples where the vocative NP is adjacent to a second person pronoun or adjective:

- (19) *nunc Calidore te mihi operam dare volo.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 383)
Now, Calidorus, I want you to assist me.
- (20) *itur ad te, Pseudole.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 453)
They're coming at you, Pseudolus.
- (21) *bene sit tibi, Charine.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 714)
Good luck to you, Charinus.
- (23) *quo magis tuum, Brute, iudicium probo, ...* (Cic. *Brut.* 120)
I therefore praise your judgement the more, Brutus, ...
- (24) *id tu Brute iam intelleges, cum in Galliam veneris.* (Cic. *Brut.* 171)
You, Brutus, will realise this presently, when you come to Gaul.

There are examples where there is no second person pronoun or adjective, but the vocative NP is adjacent to a second person verb:

- (25) *quid fles, cucule?* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 96)
Why do you weep, cuckoo?
- (26) *i, puere, prae* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 170)
Boy, go before me!

A final subgroup consists of examples where there is a second person element but the vocative NP is not immediately adjacent to that element:

- (27) *tuam amicam video, Calidore.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 35)
I can see your girlfriend, Calidorus.
- (28) *hoc tibi ille, Brute, minus fortasse placuit quam placuisset, ...* (Cic. *Brut.* 327)
This perhaps pleased you, Brutus, less than it might have done, ...
- (29) *nunc hoc tibi curandumst, Chrysale.* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 691)
Now you'll have to sort this out, Chrysalus.

The third major group of examples is what I term 'directional'. These are where a vocative NP occurs with a sentence which contains no overt second person element:

(30) *est misere scriptum, Pseudole.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 74)
It's woefully written, Pseudolus.

(31) *odium igitur acerrimum patris in filium ex hoc, opinor, ostenditur, Eruci, quod hunc ruri esse patiebatur.* (Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 52)
So then, I suppose, Erucius, this violent hatred of the father against the son is shown by allowing him to remain in the country.

The final group of examples consists of 'oaths'. These can themselves be isolative or with a sentence, and that sentence may or may not contain a second person element. However, what is important is that the vocative phrase is not coreferential with any second person element present in the sentence:

(32) *di immortales, non Charinus mihi hic quidem, sed Copiast.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 736)
Ye immortal gods, I see this is not Chariness but Profusion!

(33) *o Zeu, quam pauci estis homines commodi.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 443)
O Zeus, how few you men with the proper spirit are!

This last usage is not uncommon, but it is limited to a very small set of lexical items indeed. The two examples given seem to be the most common, and may be thought to have been lexicalized as interjections. One or two other proper names from myth were lexicalized as intensifying interjections (e.g. *edepol, ecaster, hercle*) probably via this stage.

The distribution of the examples in my corpus between these groups is: isolative 10.9%, quasi-appositional 66.5%, directive 20.6%, and oaths 2.0%.

Working from these four groups of vocative patterns, one can look at what connections, if any, exist between a vocative NP and a sentence with which it occurs. In turn, this will shed light on the kinds of structure which might explain the position of the vocative case in Latin syntax, and of the address function in a linguistic system. Inevitably the isolative configuration provides very little from which to proceed to a syntactic analysis, and the nature of the group of oaths (especially the possibility that they may be lexicalized) means that they too are not a good starting point.

Instead, we turn to the two other groups, whose patterns are shown by the figures to be frequent in the evidence. The questions that these raise are two. First, are the patterns (especially the high frequency of the quasi-appositional group) purely the result of chance? In other words, are these groups to be explained by analysing them as consisting of a sentence accompanied by some isolative vocative phrase? This is how they must be analysed on the basis of

Kennedy's description in (17) above, and indeed it is essentially how they would be analysed on the basis of the other standard *via negationis* views. Is it the case, then, that the use of the vocative case in general can be discussed without reference to a sentence with which it co-occurs?

The second question raised concerns whether the quasi-appositional group and the directional group can or should be analysed in the same way. A unified final account is highly desirable but the surface distinctions between these two configurations may be the result of significant structural differences and so may be informative about the structures involved.

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Let us now consider the matter of function. In drawing the terminological distinction between the vocative case and the address function, we raise a number of more fundamental questions concerning whether address is the only function that the vocative case is used for, whether address can be expressed in other ways, and most crucially what address actually is.

A way into tackling these questions is immediately apparent from the taxonomy I have just outlined. Vocatives, perhaps unsurprisingly, are often found next (or at least very close) to second person pronouns or adjectives; we can, therefore, investigate what other elements can occur in this kind of position or relation with respect to second person elements in order to establish either a parallel or contrast with the use of the vocative case.

In this position, we very often find the quasi-appositional vocative as I described above; however, we also find case agreement that is just like apposition in parallel first and third person constructions. In other words, there appears to be a syntactic alternation in these second person examples between strictly appositional case agreement on the one hand and quasi-appositional vocatives on the other.

(34) *vides igitur ut ad te oratorem, Brute, pervenerimus ...* (Cic. *Brut.* 231)

So, Brutus, you see that this has brought us all the way down to you, the orator, ...

(34') *sed amico homini tibi quod volo credere certumst.* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 1156)

But to a good friend like you — I'm going to own up to what I want.

(35) *nunc, Calidore, te mihi operam dare volo.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 383)

Now, I want assistance from you, Calidorus.

(35') *istactenu' tibi, Lyde, libertas datast | orationis.* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 168-9)

Thus far you, Lydus, have been given freedom of speech.

(35") *principium, Hedytium, tecum ago ...* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 188)

I'll begin with you, Hedytium, ...

Furthermore, the patterns are even more striking with adjectives; in general an adjective agrees in gender, number and case with the head it qualifies. (Strictly speaking, an agreeing adjective is not in apposition, but there are nonetheless justifiable parallels between the above examples of nouns in case agreement with the second person element and the examples below involving adjectives; the same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the examples above and below where case agreement is not present.)

(36) *verum ego te amantem, ne pave, non deseram.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 103)

But never fear! I won't desert you, my loving master.

(36') *cavendumst mihi aps te irato.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 473)

I must beware of you in your wrath.

(36") *egone ut opem ferre putem posse inopem te mi?* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 638)

Could I think that you, unsupplied as you are yourself, would be able to supply me?

(37) *heus chlamydate, quid istic debetur tibi?* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 1139)

Hey you in the cloak! What are you after there?

(37') *o stulte, stulte, nescis nunc venire te.* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 814)

O you poor poor idiot, you don't know you are being sold this moment.

(37") *nisi scio probiorem hanc esse, quam te, impuratissime.* (Plaut. *Rud.* 751)

But I do know that she's better than you are, dirty beast.

What is evident, then, is that there is variation in case usage. Moreover, this is not free variation but a consistent alternation between, on the one hand, elements that are semantically in apposition and, on the other hand, elements that are not. The above examples (34) and (36) show that the relation expressed by apposition corresponds to meanings such as '(in your state of) being, being on this occasion, in your capacity as'; it therefore affects the meaning of the sentence as a whole. The sentence would not mean the same if it were omitted. In contrast, the quasi-appositions seem to use any available description of 'you'; importantly, though, each adds nothing new to the meaning of the sentence it is accompanying because it does not alter the meaning of the second person element. The sentence would therefore mean the same if it were omitted.

We can tell that this is the case because, for example, the apposition relation must refer to the whole set of individuals referred to by 'you' (which in the plural can include the addressee(s) *and* others) whereas the quasi-apposition applies only to the individual(s) so indicated; crucially this can lead to number

disagreement (as well as the case disagreement we have also seen) in the quasi-appositional construction, exemplified in (38) and (39) below — in apposition, however, case and number agreement are obligatory, as we saw in the examples above:

(38) *ego vobis, Geta, alienus sum?* (Ter. *Phorm.* 545)

But, Geta, am I not one of you (the family)?

(39) *tum, igitur, dum licet dumque adsum, loquimini mecum, Antipho, / contemplamini me.* (Ter. *Phorm.* 549-50)

So, then, while it is still possible and while I am still here, you (pl.) talk with me, Antipho, look at me.

As well as being semantic, apposition is uncontroversially also a syntactic relation and construction.⁶ What I have dubbed quasi-apposition, however, is clearly altogether different semantically (its omission does not affect the meaning of the accompanying sentence); consequently we have no grounds here for treating it as syntactically the same either. This view is confirmed by the alternation in number agreement.

Indeed, if anything emerges from this alternation and distribution, it seems to be that the vocative in quasi-apposition stands outside the phrase with which superficially it appears to be connected. If we now bring into consideration the isolative and directional vocative groups, we can see that what unites all three groups is (part of) the traditional view, namely that the vocative case is indeed used to express address.⁷ This function is quite evidently distinct from apposition, and, from the evidence we have seen, in Latin these functions have different surface realisations; they arguably therefore do not share an underlying structure.⁸

⁶ I take it to involve the element in apposition being in the same phrase as the element it is in apposition to; more precisely, it is dominated by the maximal projection of that element, a state of affairs which has some significance for the semantics.

⁷ There is no doubt that the isolative and directional vocatives express address inasmuch as they indicate the addressee; moreover, in quasi-apposition we can see that the vocative is referring to the addressee only, even when the second person element refers to others in addition.

⁸ *Contra* Fink (1972: 65), who argues that the vocative is genuinely in apposition to a second person element, and that the vocative is the second person form of the noun which is invariable for case.

In fact, the independence of a vocative in quasi-apposition is such that it can appear outside a subordinate clause that contains the only second person element of the sentence:

- (i) *'Chrysalus mihi usque quaque loquitur nec recte, pater, / quia tibi aurum reddidi et quia non te defraudaverim.'* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 735-6)

Because we cannot tie the isolative and directional vocatives to any overt second person element (there being none present) and because furthermore we recognize quasi-appositional vocatives to be at the very least outside the phrase of the second person element they seem to accompany, it is easy now to see (a) why all three groups of vocatives can indeed be analysed together, if we wish, and (b) why they might be regarded as outside of the domain of the syntax of the sentence.

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We have seen some evidence to justify a view that the vocative is outside the normal explanatory domain of syntax (i.e. it isn't in apposition). However, in being apparently 'extrasyntactic' (or, better, 'extrasentential') we expect it to be subject only to a very limited number of constraints, none of which should be truly syntactic.

Other types of incontrovertibly extrasentential material include cries of pain (conventionalized linguistic ones like 'ouch') and parenthetical remarks. In some senses these seem to be altogether unconstrained. A cry of pain (whether non-linguistic 'aaarrghh!' or conventionalized 'ouch') can interrupt any unit of speech that is normally coherent, even words and very possibly syllables.⁹ I am not aware of any phonological (or indeed pragmatic) constraint on the position, form or 'content' of such exclamations; however, in having reflex (i.e. subconscious) roots, this is hardly surprising. Nor am I aware of any internal grammatical structure within even conventional exclamations of pain.

A similar view might be taken of exclaimed urgent commands (e.g. 'watch out!', 'don't do that!') intended to warn someone of imminent danger. These, though made consciously (and having internal syntactic structure), may also interrupt even very small units, usually coming between words but conceivably interrupting them also.¹⁰ They seem to have very limited positional constraints.

However, arguably neither of these categories need have (and in fact normally will not have) any connection with the utterance which it interrupts. This lack of connection between the interrupted utterance and the interjection or

Chrysalus keeps talking at me everywhere, and quite meanly, father,
all because I handed the gold over to you and did not defraud you.

⁹ By 'interrupt' we must understand 'cause to be broken off before complete', i.e. it's not relevant whether the unit is resumed after the interruption. We are interested in the kind of constituents that are too fundamental to be broken in each case.

¹⁰ It is worth bearing in mind that just because these kind of extra-sentential elements are *able* to interrupt smaller units, they need not necessarily do so and may often be found between words.

parenthetical is typical: there may coincidentally be a connection, but it is not required in order to license the presence of the parenthesis. The same is true of larger, more complex, parentheticals. These do tend to have an explanatory connection or relation, but it is not obligatory that they do:

- (40) The time has come — and I have seen the evidence — for all good men to come to the aid of the party.
- (40') The time has come — there are plenty of empty seats at the front — for all good men to come to the aid of the party.

However, leaving aside the cries of pain (which I take to lack internal structure), we can notice some patterns associated with parentheticals:

- (a) ability to interrupt freely;
- (b) absence of connection;¹¹
- (c) no limit on the number present (beyond those concerned with interpretability).¹²

If we assume that the vocative is indeed syntactically and semantically free, as the traditional views claim and as our considerations earlier suggest, we might expect it to fall among these other extrasentential elements — and to obey the same very limited constraints. However, it is not clear that either vocatives or addresses are so unlimited.¹³

Specifically, addresses cannot interrupt freely, and do not have this complete freedom of placement. In Latin, for example, there are three typical positions for the vocative, namely sentence-initial, sentence-final and in second position in a sentence.¹⁴ These make up 76% of the examples in the corpus. Of the remaining

¹¹ Under this heading we might also note that a parenthesis has to be self-contained. It cannot simply be divided into two or more parts and inserted discontinuously. One possible reason for this is the fact that it is not systematically connected with anything surrounding it, let alone with another parenthesis.

¹² Parentheses can occur between any pair of elements in a sentence and between as many such pairs as the speaker wants. However, a parenthesis between every such pair (or even between a large number of them) is ruled out by the same interpretability constraint that limits long sequences of genitive dependents, relative clauses, etc.

¹³ In what follows I give English examples, conscious of the question begged. However, because I am arguing for constraints from the unacceptability of certain patterns, there are obviously no genuine Latin examples available. That said, I have found no Latin evidence that demonstrates the acceptability of any of the patterns that I claim to be unacceptable.

¹⁴ By 'second position' I mean after the first coherent constituent (such as a noun phrase etc.), possibly with any immediately following unaccented words (unaccented *te* etc.).

Fraenkel (1965) uses the placement of the vocative to identify cola in Latin (and Greek) periods — his data and analysis strongly support the hypothesis that groups of words of a

24%, over half come between two clauses (usually the main clause and a subordinate clause, i.e. large syntactic constituents); smaller constituents such as noun phrases appear not to be broken by a vocative, although there are examples of parentheses breaking up even noun phrases:

- (41) *...cum homine mirifico — ita mehercle sentio — Dionysio...* (Cic. Att. 4.11.2)
 ...with that wonderful man (for by Hercules that is how he seems to me) Dionysius...

What is most striking, however, is that the vocative when second usually seems to follow a topical constituent; this might suggest that in fact the vocative is in initial position before some topicalisation operation:

- (42) *alii, Lyde, nunc sunt mores.* (Plaut. Bacch. 437)
 They're different, Lydus, the customs nowadays.

There remains considerable scope for investigating these patterns to see whether the vocative might be reduced to a single sentential position, but what is clear is that the vocative cannot be said to have the same degree of freedom of placement as cries of pain or even other (structured) parentheses.

Second, addresses actually do have some *necessary* connection with the accompanying utterance through something in the discourse context, viz. they must refer to the addressee(s) and are unacceptable if they do not. Since the addressee in question must specifically be that of the utterance they accompany, there is a consistent connection between the two *in a systematic way* — this cannot be said of the other parentheticals, where any connection is optional. We saw this most clearly in the quasi-appositional examples above: the referent of the second person element, while not limited to or determined by the vocative, cannot and must not exclude the addressee as named by the vocative. The acceptability of an address is determined by the utterance that appears to 'contain' it. We contrast, then, addresses with parentheticals whose acceptability is not dependent in this way on the surrounding utterance.¹⁵

Finally, the number of addresses is not unconstrained, in contrast to parentheticals. Let us consider (43) and (43')

- (43) The time has come, Mary, for all good men to come to the aid of the party.
 (43') The time has come for all good men, my friend, to come to the aid of the party.

certain size and coherence (both syntactic and correspondingly phonological) cannot be broken up by an address.

¹⁵ A parenthesis can even have a different addressee from that of the containing utterance, cf. (40').

‘Mary’ and ‘my friend’ are both fine alone as addresses, and there are at least these two positions in this sentence where an address is acceptable. The difference between address and parentheses is brought out in (44):

- (44) *The time has come, Mary, for all good men, my friend, to come to the aid of the party.

If the address is parenthetical in (43) and (43'), they should be able to be combined as in (44), which is unacceptable. If we assume for the sake of argument that addresses are parenthetical, we must treat ‘Mary’ and ‘my friend’ as two separate insertions, because parentheses may not be discontinuous (cf. n. 11 above).

Let us consider the two possible interpretations of (44) that I give in (45) and (45'):

- (45) *The time has come, Mary_i, for all good men, my friend_j, to come to the aid of the party.
 (45') *The time has come, Mary_i, for all good men, my friend_i, to come to the aid of the party.

If (45) is said to only one person, we expect it to be ruled out as unacceptable because it is inconsistent with the discourse situation (a general pragmatic constraint). However, even when there are two suitable people present to be addressed, (45) is unacceptable. Furthermore, the coreferential alternative (45') ought (if addresses are parenthetical) to be fine, so long as at least one person is present to be addressed.

There appears, then, to be a constraint ruling out more than one address phrase.¹⁶ We certainly do not want to claim that there can never be more than one parenthetical inserted in a sentence (so long as each could stand as a parenthetical alone in its own right), so what we have, then, seems to be some

¹⁶ Contrast:

- (ii) The time has come, Mary_i, my friend_i, for all good men to come to the aid of the party.

Ignoring the punctuation, I take ‘Mary, my friend’ here to be a single address phrase insertion, rather than two separate insertions (which would have different intonation); the single phrase insertion is acceptable, but I suspect that it would be unacceptable with the double insertion intonation.

The acceptability of the following, then, depends on the acceptability of a conjoined address phrase without any (overt) conjunction:

- (ii') ?The time has come, Mary_i, my friend_j, for all good men to come to the aid of the party.

kind of constraint that applies to addresses only and not to parentheses in general. We might reasonably conclude from this that addresses are simply not parentheses,¹⁷ as we did from the ‘connection’ argument above.

It is hard, of course, to make the case for this uniqueness constraint in Latin, because Latin can allow phrases to be discontinuous. Even phrases which are undeniably phrases (and genuine syntactic constituents at that) can be split:

- (46) *non habes venalem amicam tu meam Phoenicium?* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 341)
 You don’t have my girl Phoenicium up for sale, do you?

It is difficult to tell, therefore, whether the address in the following, for example, constitutes one or two phrases:

- (47) *o fortunate, cedo fortunatum manum, | Simo.* (Plaut. *Pseud.* 1065-6)
 O you lucky man, give me your blessed hand, Simo!

However, such examples are very few and far between; moreover, they never seem to occur in positions where both have to be taken with the same sentence (i.e. because they are both totally contained within it).¹⁸ Usually, in fact, they can be resolved satisfactorily into two separate sentences by minor adjustments to the punctuation.

¹⁷ In fact, this is a slight simplification. A sentence like (45) might be acceptable where the number of people present is more than one. However, the acceptability seems to derive from the conflation of (43) and (43’) as a result of coordinated conjunction. Compare:

- (iii) Here are your presents: I’m giving you this, Mark, you this, John, and you this, Mary.
 (iii’) ... I’m giving you this, Mark, and I’m giving you this, John, and I’m giving you this, Mary.

I am less certain that (45’) is ever acceptable, although certain ostensible addresses appear to be able to withstand such (repeated coreferential) insertion, e.g. ‘Sir’ or ‘Ma’am’.

¹⁸ We might note that this is one point where the group of oaths from the earlier taxonomy is relevant. It is possible to have both a vocative oath and a vocative address in Latin even in the same sentence; but if the oath is a lexicalized adverbial prayer rather than an actual address (i.e. this is fossilized vocative morphology), then this is unsurprising:

- (iv) *pro di immortales, Chrysale, ubi mist filius?* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 244)
 Ye immortal gods, Chrysalus, where is my son?

In fact, it is worth pointing out that in the texts considered oaths occur exclusively in sentence initial position although we might have expected them to have a greater freedom of placement even than addresses. It is not clear to what extent their position reflects (a) the position in which they were typically found before they were lexicalized (and thus indicative of the unmarked or at least typical position for vocatives), (b) the position of such emphatic elements, and (c) other factors determining Latin word order.

A comparison, then, of addresses with parentheses and other obviously extrasyntactic/extrasentential elements has yielded some crucial differences. Taking the three broad differences between parentheticals and addresses together, we are driven towards a view which gives address some kind of structural relation to any sentence it accompanies. (I do not doubt, incidentally, that addresses can be parenthetical on occasions — but these differences suggest that it would be unwise to consider them always to be parenthetical and therefore constrained in this way purely through chance or coincidence.) What this relation appears to be, moreover, is a syntactic (and not just referential) one, there being a requirement for (a) coherence and (b) uniqueness of this element, both of which are useful diagnostic tests for syntactic constituents.¹⁹

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A natural intuition, and one which we have used already, is to associate the use of the vocative case in some way with discourse. While all linguistic acts are in a sense inseparable from a discourse and its context, the address function is one which is solely concerned with articulation of these (e.g. initiating dialogue, marking turn-taking etc.). What is more, its link with morphology and consequently the use of forms according to syntactic rules is demonstrable. It is obvious, for example, that some pronouns or adjectives could never be used in address; furthermore, it seems unlikely to be a coincidence that these lexical items also lack a vocative form.²⁰ One instance of this is *tuus*, which necessarily refers to something other than the addressee inasmuch as it refers to something *belonging to* or otherwise *associated with* the addressee.²¹ Another, perhaps more telling, example is *quis* and its adjective *qui* where the same morphological and semantic gaps are found.

¹⁹ The very fact that languages like Latin have distinctive vocative morphology which is used in these systematic ways is a further argument in favour of a syntactic relation (just as the other morphological case forms in Latin express relations which are both syntactic and semantic).

²⁰ In Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, Brother William of Baskerville mocks mediaeval grammarians as the kind of people who would debate the significance of just such morphological niceties, but the question begged by such a debate is not an unimportant one:

(v) 'But those were times when, to forget an evil world, grammarians took pleasure in abstruse questions. I was told that in that period, for fifteen days and fifteen nights, the rhetoricians Gabundus and Terentius argued on the vocative of "ego" and in the end they attacked each other, with weapons.' (Eco [1980] 1984: 312)

²¹ The absence of a vocative for *tuus* might conceivably be accidental (cf. English 'your honour', 'your majesty' etc.), but the importance of a discourse model cannot be overstated.

If we think about English, we note that one can ask a question about almost any element in a sentence. The constraints on which elements can be questioned, however, are germane to the vocative problem. Some adverbs, for example, can be questioned:²²

- (48) She ran quickly down the street.
(48') How did she run down the street? Quickly.

However, so-called higher or sentential adverbs cannot be questioned:²³

- (49) Luckily he ran down the street (which was why the bus didn't hit him).
(49') How did he run down the street? *Luckily.

In fact, those adverbials most closely tied to the discourse (e.g. speech act adverbials such as 'honestly, frankly' and evaluatives such as 'luckily, fortunately, happily' etc.) cannot even admit simple degree questioning:

- (50) Frankly they're going to win.
(50') How are they going to win? *Frankly.
(50'') *How frankly are they going to win?

Many of these characteristics are shared by address phrases in English:

- (51) Mary, the door's open.
(51') *Who, the door's open?
(51'') *Which Mary, the door's open?

One can question an address phrase but only indirectly (cf. matrix verb questioning for higher adverbials):²⁴

²² Cinque (1999) is a very full treatment of the syntax and semantics of adverbials, from which I summarize some relevant points.

²³ Both here and in the subsequent argument I naturally exclude the type of question which asks for the repetition of part of an utterance because the hearer suspects that it may have been misheard; such questions are always available to ask about any element whatsoever, even function words:

(vi) A: He's poor but he's honest.
B: He's poor *what* he's honest?
A: [I said, "He's poor] *but* [he's honest!]

²⁴ This test applies only to a limited degree to apposition, which is a relationship between two elements. Moreover, apposition is always optional and so a sentence is grammatical without it. To leave one of these elements in place and ask after some optional coreferential other

- (52) Who was/is told (that) the door was/is open? Mary.
 (52') How frankly were they told that they were going to win?

Cinque (1999) argues for a place within the syntax of a sentence for adverbials (even the sentential ones), and whether or not one accepts his particular structural analysis, it does not seem controversial to regard these elements as syntactically 'intrasentential' (integrated in and within the sentence). That address phrases parallel this pattern means that there is a convincing model from which to argue that they too (being discourse-associated elements) can be regarded as intrasentential, i.e. not completely independent of any sentence they accompany.²⁵

In fact, to return to the contrast with parentheses introduced above, we can see that even the *possibility* of questioning a vocative in any way at all makes more explicit its connection with the accompanying utterance. A similar manner of question cannot be applied to parentheses, where a question involving the containing sentence is not systematically (if indeed ever) available — addresses (and so vocatives) on the other hand can only, it seems, be asked about using such a question.

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To draw general conclusions about the issues involved in considering the vocative case and the address function is quite impossible at this stage. However, it seems that the evidence points towards a more refined analysis than before. Starting out from an elementary taxonomy of Latin data involving elements in the vocative case and the traditional 'theory' about these which places the vocative case and/or address function outside the realms of a sentence's syntactic structure, we have seen that it is possible to argue for some

element makes it unclear what kind of answer is expected; arguably the answer is already present in part in the question. Nonetheless, such a question becomes less bad if the field of apposition is indicated through a 'degree' question:

- (vii) You, the carpenter, open the door.
 (vii') *You, who, open the door?
 (vii'') ?You, which carpenter, open the door?

²⁵ Of course, if an address were indeed a clause completely independent from the sentence, we would also expect it to be unable to be questioned. However, the similarity of patterning in matrix clause questioning suggests that the parallels should not be ignored. Further arguments in support of this parallelism concern the fact that speech act adverbials are cross-linguistically first in the ordering of higher adverbials, i.e. they must occur in the most peripheral adverbial positions in a sentence (typically as the first element, sometimes as the last); related to this is the fact that they do not appear (with the same meaning) in subordinate clauses. Address phrases have similar characteristics, some of which we have seen.

kind of structural integration in Latin which connects the use of the vocative case with the address function into a single position. A functional semantic alternation between address and apposition — in Latin made evident by morphological alternations between vocative and non-vocative elements —, then, can be paralleled and explained by what appears to be a syntactic alternation, between this address position and those positions usually accepted for appositional elements. The consequences of this theory remain to be spelled out in terms of formal syntactic structure, but the parallel with higher speech act adverbs may prove to be particularly relevant.

By combining the study of usage, meaning and function we have identified an outline for an overall account of the vocative phenomenon, at least for Latin, which comes out of a discourse-oriented approach. Moreover, we now see that the traditional or standard views were not in themselves wrong but that the situation is more complex than previously realized. No longer should the vocative case be a source of puzzlement, but a topic for renewed enquiry.

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