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		A Study of Confessions the Educational System in the Schools of Thagaste and Madauros in Light of Augustine's	
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Abstract Through this research paper, we aim to shed light on two of the most prominent schools in Algeria during the Roman period, specifically in the fourth century AD, namely the schools of Thagaste and Madauros. These institutions gained wide renown due to the nature of their educational curricula applied in the learning process. They represented a fundamental cornerstone in shaping and refining the intellectual character of a number of African literary elites who trained and studied there. Thanks to the strength of their instruction, these schools enabled writers to leave a clear imprint and a significant legacy on Latin literature, producing some of its most eminent figures across various fields—beginning with the author and Platonic philosopher Lucius Apuleius, continuing with Martianus Minneus Felix Capella and Maximus of Madaura, and culminating in Aurelius Augustinus. There is no doubt that the fame attained by these African writers was underpinned by a solid and rigorous educational system. It is this very system that Augustine allows us to glimpse in the first and seconds books of his Confessions. In recounting his early schooling at Thagaste and Madauros, Augustine provides valuable testimony regarding the nature of the lessons delivered to students, the strict discipline observed in these schools, and the content of their curricula. Drawing on the Confessions, which—though not the sole testimony on the subject—remain a fundamental source, this study seeks to highlight two essential points - The nature of the educational system practiced in the two schools and the distinctiveness of these schools and their place within the Romano-African cultural landscape.			
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Introduction

The school constituted the fundamental pillar and the primary foundation for shaping individuals and preparing them for various functions. Its spread in Africa coincided with Roman policy, which was keen on establishing such institutions throughout the settlements, covering not only major cities but also small municipalities. This expansion aimed to meet the needs of Roman citizens and Italian settlers, while also serving as an instrument for the diffusion of Romanization among Africans under the guise of a noble civilizing mission. Through these schools, Rome sought to disseminate the ideals of the urbs Romana, implement its settlement and pacification policy, attract and

1039 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025

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Hassina Hallak

win over local populations on the one hand, and on the other, create a Romanized elite that could be relied upon to enforce its policies and secure its objectives, acting as a buffer against uprisings or direct military confrontation.

Access to education, however, was not open to all. It remained largely restricted to a specific social class - members of the local elite or the sons of landowners - who could afford the considerable expenses of schooling. Their primary motivation was to secure prestigious administrative positions for their children within the Roman system or to ensure their upward mobility within the Roman social hierarchy. Those privileged enough to enter the Roman schools benefited greatly from the lessons offered, as evidenced by the emergence of a number of distinguished writers who excelled in the septem artes liberales, especially rhetoric and oratory. Their talent and fervor -often compared by Roman observers to the heat of the African climate - enabled them to revitalize Latin literature at a time when it had declined in Rome, turning Africans into its champions and leading figures. They retained their African identity either through stylistic particularities in their writings or in the attitudes that marked their presence both in their homelands and even at the very heart of Rome.

This intellectual distinction was closely tied to the nature of the curricula and the African schools themselves, whose educational systems were rooted in Latin and Greek literature, with an emphasis on classical Latin. Among these, the schools of Thagaste and Madauros acquired renown across the ancient world, as they were associated with figures who left an enduring imprint on Latin letters. Chief among them was Lucius Apuleius of Madauros, celebrated for his Platonic philosophy and rhetorical brilliance, which are manifest in his works *Florida* and his literary masterpiece *Metamorphoses* in the second century AD. The legacy of Madauros continued in the fourth and fifth centuries with Martianus Capella, author of *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (The Marriage of Philology and Mercury), and Maximus of Madaura, known for his correspondence with Augustine. Above all, Aurelius Augustinus provided us with invaluable testimony regarding the educational system in African schools during the fourth century. His *Confessions* -particularly Books I and II -constitute perhaps the only direct source we possess on the subject, shedding light on the structure of schooling and the nature of instruction.

Building upon this context, the present paper seeks to investigate the educational character of the schools of Thagaste and Madauros, with particular attention to Madauros¹, which has recently been the subject of debate on social media concerning its classification as one of the oldest universities in North Africa during antiquity. Our aim is to correct this widespread misconception by undertaking a critical reading of Augustine's *Confessions*, as he was himself a student of these schools. Their curricula played a decisive role in shaping his theological personality, ultimately making him a cornerstone of Catholic Christian thought and the founder of the African Church. Accordingly, the central research problem of this study lies in examining the nature of the educational system practiced in the schools of Thagaste and Madauros, and in identifying their characteristics through the lens of Augustine's *Confessions*, the only source that directly addresses this topic.

1. Aurelius Augustinus

Aurelius Augustinus was born in Thagaste², one of the most prominent inland cities of Roman Numidia, which retained its significance and economic importance throughout the fourth century CE. He was born on 13 November 354 CE into a family of notable social standing. His father, Patricius, belonged to the class of decurions (décurions), members of the municipal council responsible for tax collection. He was also a minor landowner, possessing a small agricultural estate in Thagaste. However, the repercussions of the economic crisis and the fiscal reforms introduced during the reigns of Diocletian (Caius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus, 284-305 CE) and Constantine (Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus, 306-337 CE) severely undermined the position of small landholders, gradually placing their estates under the protection of Roman authorities³.

¹ Madaurus: Early history limited; Apuleius places it within King Syphax's territory, later under Masinissa after 203 BCE, and incorporated into Africa Nova after Juba I's defeat (46 BCE). Eventually became part of the Africa Proconsularis, reorganized under Septimius Severus (193-211 CE), and later a colony named Colonia Flavia Augusta Vetrarorum Madaurensium (Favius Théodose, 395-997 CE). Location near Numidian-Gaetulian border debated: Monceaux favors Numidian proximity, while Dalbéra and Longrée suggest "Gaetulian" refers to nomadic Musulamii tribes (Harrison S.J., Apulius, p.9; Apulée, Apologie XXIV, Note 8; Dalbéra & Longrée, 2019, p.15)

² Thagaste: Numidian city, mentioned by Pliny the Elder as a free city (*Plin., H.N., V, 4, 4*), later a municipium with Roman citizenship before 212 CE. Inscriptions attest to local elites (judges, priests, mithani) and council titled Ordo Splendidissimus (C.I.L. VIII, 5145, 5146, 5150). Important Christian episcopal see; bishops include Alypius, friend of Augustine (Lancel, S., St Augustin, p.19).

³ Al-Mubakkir, Mohamed. Ancient North Africa: The Movement of the Circumcellions and Its Relation to Donatism (305-429 CE), Casablanca : Al-Najah Al-Jadida Press, 2009, p. 67.

Augustine himself confirms this social reality in his Confessions, where he portrays his father in the following words: « My father was a modest citizen of Thagaste, who spent beyond his means on our upbringing¹ ». His social condition compelled him to endure recurrent financial crises, which hindered his ability to provide fully for his son's education.

Augustine's father was named Patricius and the cognomen Aurelius, signifying his belonging to a Romanized family. This led S. Lancel to propose a possible Italian settler origin, perhaps descending from colonists established in Thagaste. Yet, in the absence of conclusive evidence, such a hypothesis remains tenuous, as most scholars affirm his local African origin. Patricius lived as a pagan throughout his life and received baptism only on his deathbed, in accordance with his wife's wishes².

In contrast, the local origins of Augustine's mother, Monica, are far easier to establish, particularly since her name appears to derive from that of the Numidian deity Monna, whose sanctuary is attested not far from Thagaste³. Raised in a Christian household, Monica received strict religious instruction from an early age and remained firmly attached to the traditional practices of the African Church. Such practices led many intellectuals to describe the African Church as essentially conservative, especially given its adherence to ancient customs such as fasting on Saturdays, and the performance of rituals like funeral banquets (repas funèbre) held at the tombs of the dead⁴.

Devoted to the service of Patricius, whom she later married, Monica nevertheless displayed a remarkable openness of mind. Despite her profound piety, she did not hesitate to engage with certain worldly concern - most notably her determination to provide her son with a classical pagan education, which she regarded as an effective means to prepare his mind and heart for eventual conversion to the Christian faith⁵.

In Book IX of the Confessions, Augustine offers a vivid portrait of his mother, highlighting the strength of her character and the depth of her influence upon him, especially during his formative years. He writes : « I loved to be with her as with all mothers, but she was far more than all of them⁶ ». She shared with him his anxieties and inner turmoil, and over time came to embody for him the straight path, even the very voice of God. For this reason, he never allowed himself to speak harshly to her or treat her with severity, not even when she expelled him from her home during his adherence to Manichaeism⁷.

As for his family, Augustine had a brother named Navigius, whose name appears in the Cassiciacum Dialogues at Ostia (Aoste), where he remained at his mother's bedside during her final days. He also had a sister, probably named Perpétua, about who little is known apart from the fact that she married, was widowed, and later devoted her life to the Church. Eventually, she became the head of a community of consecrated women in Hippo Regius, following Augustine's elevation to the episcopate there⁸.

Augustine himself benefited greatly from his mother's care and attention, as her eldest son, particularly regarding his education. To this end, she and her family embraced a life of austerity and frugality in order to secure the expenses of his studies, even resorting to wearing worn-out clothing. This state of social hardship and economic decline stemmed from the deterioration of his father's agricultural activities, which led Augustine to regard labor in the fields, gardening, and farming as among the most arduous experiences faced by humankind⁹.

2. Biographical Note on the Author of The Confessions

¹ Saint Augustin, Confessiones, II, V, Trad., Pierre De Labriolle, les belles lettres, Paris, 2021.

² Lancel S., Entre l'africanité et Romanité ; le chemin d'augustin vers l'universel, « Actes du colloque international Alger-Annaba, 1-7 avril 2001 » p.p.75.76.

³ Lancel S., Entre l'africanité et Romanité ; le chemin d'augustin vers l'universel, « Actes du colloque international Alger-Annaba, 1-7 avril 2001 » p.p.75.76.

⁴ Augustine, Confessions, VI, 2

⁵ Brown P., la vie de saint Augustin, Trad de l'Anglais Par : Marrou Jeanne, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1971, p.33

⁶ Les Confessions IX, 9, 22

⁷ Brown P., op-cit, p.34.

⁸ Boisson B., Saint Augustin le bonheur d'être chrétien, 2016, p. 19

⁹ Augustine, De Genesi ad Litteram, VIII, 8, 15-18

The Confessions are considered among the great literary works that have held a prominent place among readers and have been transmitted from generation to generation. They are regarded as one of the finest writings of Saint Augustine, representing his literary masterpiece, which enjoyed widespread acclaim and readership. Most studies agree that the period of its composition extends from 397 to 401 CE¹.

Augustine makes one of the rare references to the dating of the work in Book VIII, where he acknowledges the significant role played by Sulpicianus in his conversion to Christianity, mentioning the date of 4 April 397, which coincided with the death of Saint Ambrose. It is therefore unlikely that Augustine began writing the Confessions before this date, as he was still engaged in preaching activities in Carthage and did not return to Hippo Regius until the autumn of that year². This dating aligns with the assessment of the French scholar P. Labriolle, who stated in his introduction to the Confessions that Augustine likely began writing the work in late 397 or early 398, at the age of forty-three or forty-four, that is, eleven years after receiving baptism³.

It can be stated that the first nine books of the Confessions were written before the end of 397 CE, presenting a coherent literary form. Augustine then paused his writing for several reasons, including the time-consuming correspondence with his friend, the Bishop of Milev, Severus, and to gauge the type of readers who had access to some of the copies published at that time⁴. These readers appear to be those he referred to in Book X when he stated: « *I have no need for people to read my confessions, for they are a curious sort, eager to know the faults of others, yet lazy in correcting their own... but the righteous enjoy hearing the mistakes I committed in the past and from which they were able to free themselves* »⁵.

the remaining three books (10–13) required a longer period of composition, as they addressed theological themes with the Scriptures as their central focus. Augustine notes this in his Retractions, stating that the first ten books pertained to himself, while the remaining book⁶.

In his Retractions, Augustine further explains that the first nine books serve as a recollection of his memories and the significant events he experienced between Thagaste and Milan, covering his early life up to the age of thirty. These books were originally intended as an autobiography. The remaining books (10–13) follow a reflective and introspective approach, focusing on the Scriptures and their content. This begins with a discussion on the purpose of the Confessions, and in Book XI, Augustine addresses the issue of creation in its broad sense, the nature of time, and the creation of the soul, concluding with meditations on God⁷.

In Book XII, he continues the discussion from the previous book, examining matter and how God created it, including the universe, the heavens, and the earth. The final book, Book XIII, concludes with a prayer to God, reflections on goodness, the Trinity, and spiritual beings, as well as the need for God on the part of humans, animals, and plants, while also revisiting the errors of the Manichaeans⁸.

3. The Nature of the Educational System at the School of Thagaste

Augustine grew up in a harsh social environment due to the economic decline, which negatively affected the inhabitants of Thagaste. Despite this social hardship, a form of competition emerged among families, particularly those of higher social standing, to provide the best education for their children. Education represented one of the primary paths through which Africans could achieve success, distinction, and social advancement within the Roman social hierarchy. For this purpose, Augustine's father, Patricius, sacrificed to provide him with this elite education, covering all his expenses and ensuring that his academic needs were met throughout his long period of study⁹.

Moreover, before the fourth century CE, Thagaste benefited from economic development, reflected in the construction of various urban and civic structures, which made the process of Romanization visible throughout the city, particularly through the spread of cultural and educational institutions. Thagaste had a single school that

¹ Lancel S. Saint Augustin, Fayard, 1999, p. 290

² Lancel S. Saint Augustin, p. 290.

³ Labriolle P., Les confessions, les belles lettres, Paris, 2021, p. 4.

⁴ Lancel S. Saint Augustin, p. 290

⁵ Augustine, Conf., X, III

⁶ Augustine, Les Rétracta., II, 6–1

⁷ Les Conf., X–XIII

⁸ Les Conf., X–XIII

⁹ Brown P., op-cit, p. 359

opened its doors to families able to pay for their children's education, among whom was Augustine, who received his early education at the School of Thagaste¹.

In the first book of his Confessions, Augustine provides a clear account of the educational system followed at the School of Thagaste. This account is considered one of the rare, if not the only, testimonies documenting the educational practices in African schools during the primary and secondary stages. His early education (Primae Litterae) primarily focused on learning and mastering speech, a skill he acquired through his natural intelligence and acuity from an early age by observing and repeating words in his environment².

The content of primary education was dry and highly literary, centered on the detailed study of classical authors such as Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106–43 BCE), Vergil (Publius Vergilius Maro, 70–19 BCE), Sallust (Caius Sallustius Crispus, 86–34 BCE), and Terence (Publius Terentius Afer, 190–159 BCE). Notably, this curriculum was primarily literary and did not include subjects such as philosophy, sciences, or history³. Augustine confirms this, noting that the initial stages emphasized learning the basics of reading (Legere), writing (Scribere), and arithmetic (Numerare), the latter involving counting and repetition of numbers⁴.

From the outset of his education, Augustine exhibited a strong passion for learning Latin, doing so voluntarily and without pressure or threat of punishment from his teacher. This self-driven learning allowed him to later recognize the principles of correct pronunciation, which were often taught incorrectly according to the classical rhetorical rules, such as the mispronunciation of the word *Hominem*⁵. He criticized the school's rhetorical system (Scholorum grammaticurum) and described its teachers as « merchants of rhetoric »⁶.

After mastering letters and grammar, students progressed to exercises based on classical texts, producing analogous written works. Augustine recounts practicing such exercises by rewriting a text by Vergil about the goddess Juno, successfully completing these tasks and impressing his classmates⁷.

The early educational system relied heavily on memorization, which caused Augustine fatigue and aversion, as he notes : « *I did not love studying, but I was compelled to do it* »⁸. This approach strained the mind and made learning another language, especially Greek, difficult. Greek was the secondary official language of the Roman administrative institutions and the language of the educated elite, mastery of which was essential for social advancement⁹.

Learning Greek posed the greatest challenge for Augustine, as it was unfamiliar in his social environment. Wealthy families employed nannies or slave-teachers fluent in Greek, but Augustine lacked such guidance and had to learn it later in life, causing considerable effort¹⁰. He recalls his aversion to Greek literature, especially Homeric myths, which he found heavy despite their grace and charm¹¹.

Augustine also describes the strict internal regulations at the School of Thagaste, including corporal punishment for neglecting assignments or memorization. He often prayed to God to protect him from his teacher's wrath¹². Students were compelled to memorize the adventures of the Trojan hero Aeneas and to feign emotion over Queen Dido's death, illustrating Augustine's belief that rigid and violent teaching methods hinder a love of learning¹³.

Nevertheless, this education allowed him to access classical and Greek philosophical texts translated into Latin, especially works by Cicero, which he found exemplary. He admired Vergil's writings as flawless, comparing their words to finely crafted vessels, and regarded these classical authors as extraordinary examples of rhetorical power,

¹ Augustine, Les Conf., II, V

² Augustine, Les Conf., X, III

³ Brown P., op-cit, p. 40

⁴ Augustine, Les Conf., I, XX

⁵ Augustine, Les Conf., II, V

⁶ Augustine, Les Conf., I, XXI

⁷ Augustine, Les Conf., I, XVII

⁸ Augustine, Les Conf., I, XVI

⁹ Lancel S., op-cit, p. 34

¹⁰ Lancel S., op-cit, p. 34 ; Les Conf., I, XX

¹¹ Les Conf., I, XXIII

¹² Les Conf., I, XVI

¹³ Les Conf., I, XX–XXIII

capable of captivating and instructing readers¹. Augustine acknowledged the value of this training : « *The merit of those higher lessons was great, for they enabled me to read any document that came into my hands and to write what I wished* »².

He completed his primary education at the School of Thagaste at the age of fifteen, having enrolled at seven. Recognizing his talent, his parents sent him to Madaurus to continue his secondary education.

4. The Nature of the Educational System at the School of Madaurus (365–369 CE)

The nature of the School of Madaurus can be reconstructed through the educational stages of Augustine as recounted in his *Confessions*. These stages largely reflect the standard school system across the provinces of the Roman world. After the primary stage (*Prima Litterae*), which was extremely limited in scope as previously noted, students would continue their education up to the age of sixteen at most, either in their hometown if secondary education was available or otherwise in a neighboring town³.

Augustine left Thagaste upon completing the primary stage and moved to Madaurus, marking a clear progression to a higher educational level. Vossing (K. Vossing) suggests that Augustine's transfer to Madaurus may have occurred even before finishing his primary studies in Thagaste, due to his exceptional performance there, prompting his father to send him to Madaurus. Secondary education was not available in all provinces and was largely restricted to the elite - children of senatorial or wealthy families. Augustine's father, Patricius, belonged to the middle rank of the *honestiores*, small landowners who could legalize their property and participate in municipal councils under the law of Constantius II (342 CE). This financial and social standing allowed Patricius to temporarily send Augustine to Madaurus with a servant assigned to accompany him for the duration of his studies⁴.

Augustine began his studies in Madaurus around 365 CE. This phase represented his secondary education, focusing on Latin rhetoric under the guidance of a *Grammaticus*⁵. Information about this stage is scarce, as Augustine does not clearly distinguish between his primary education in Thagaste and his secondary education in Madaurus in the second book of his *Confessions*. He only references Madaurus incidentally when describing his early idleness after returning from the city and the time he spent there studying literature and rhetoric⁶.

From these references, one can approximate the curriculum in Madaurus. Secondary education aimed to provide advanced literary culture, emphasizing the interpretation of classical texts and mastery of eloquent speech - a skill Augustine had begun developing in his primary stage⁷. The *Grammaticus*'s primary task, according to Sextus Empiricus, was to enable students to interpret the works of ancient poets, especially Greek authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Menander, and Euripides, as well as prose writers including Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato⁸. Quintilian similarly confirms that elite education focused on interpreting poetry and prose, training in correct delivery, and cultivating excellence in style⁹. Such literary training had a direct influence on Augustine's later works, including his letters, where his mastery of rhetoric and poetic organization is evident¹⁰, and in his theological treatises such as *De Trinitate*, where he ranks poetry among virtuous deeds immediately after God¹¹.

Augustine retained vivid memories of Madaurus, where he experienced joy and exposure to religious practices absent in Thagaste. The city remained a center of paganism, whose numbers and activities increased under Emperor Julian (361–363 CE), despite the memory of local Christian martyrs such as Miggin and Namphamo,

¹ Augustine, *L'Utilité de Croire*, 6,3 ; *De Beata Vita*, 14,31 ; *Discours sur les Psaumes*, 136,3

² *Les Conf.*, I, XX

³ Marrou, H.I., *Histoire de l'éducation dans L'Antiquité*, « le monde romain » ; T.,2, éditions du Seuil, Paris,1948, pp. 161-162

⁴ Lancel S., op-cit, pp. 21-22

⁵ Vossing Konard, *Saint Augustin et l'école antique traditions et ruptures*, « Actes de premier Colloque international, Alger-Amnaba-1-7 Avril 2001, « le philosophe Algérien Saint Augustin ; Africaineté et universalité »,p.76.

⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, II, IX

⁷ Ryan Topping N.S., *Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's Early theology of Education*, the catholic university of America Press, Washington D.C.2012,p.25

⁸ Empiricus, *Against the Grammarians*, I, 58

⁹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, I, 4,7; I, 5,1

¹⁰ Augustine, *Epistulae*, CCLIX, 1-2

¹¹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VIII, 3

executed under Commodus in 180 CE. He was also influenced by statues and religious ceremonies in the forum and streets of Madaurus, which left a lasting impression on him¹.

His studies in Madaurus lasted about five years, fulfilling his parents' ambition for him to excel in rhetoric: «*I fulfilled my father's desire to deliver the best speeches and persuade the ears of listeners*»². He returned to Thagaste in the autumn of 369 CE, physically matured and socially elevated, which pleased his father, while his mother remained concerned for his moral conduct. His parents aimed to nurture his social and intellectual development rather than prematurely marry him, eventually planning to send him to Carthage for higher studies. Financial constraints, however, delayed this, leaving him a year without formal study, during which he indulged in minor transgressions, including petty theft³.

These accounts illuminate the educational systems of both Thagaste and Madaurus. The rigor and structure of these schools profoundly influenced the African intellectual elite during the Roman period, shaping figures from Lucius Apuleius to Augustine himself. Despite his high status and later position as a teacher and orator in Milan, Augustine ultimately returned to Thagaste and eventually became bishop of Hippo Regius, demonstrating the enduring importance of African cities in the lives of their citizens.

Conclusion

Aurelius Augustinus' Confessions reveal several crucial aspects regarding the nature of education in Roman Africa and its impact on the formation of the intellectual and literary elite:

1. **Cultural Prominence of African Cities:** The Confessions underscore the leading role of African cities during the Roman period, particularly from the second century CE, in establishing a distinct literary and cultural civilization. Cities such as Thagaste and Madauros functioned as cultural hubs that disseminated classical Roman culture while simultaneously preserving African identity, as reflected in the language and literary creativity of African authors.
2. **The Role of Schools in Shaping the African Elite:** Thagaste and Madauros were pivotal in shaping the intellectual and literary elite of North Africa. Their rigorous educational systems, grounded in classical literature, honed students' rhetorical and analytical skills and enabled a profound understanding of classical texts. This is evidenced in the works of prominent figures such as Lucius Apuleius and Aurelius Augustinus, whose writings enriched Latin literature while reflecting a distinct African imprint.
3. **The Confessions as a Mirror of Educational and Cultural Reality :** The text serves as a unique document that illustrates the educational methods employed in African schools, the curricula, approaches to teaching Latin and Greek, disciplinary practices, and the role of family support. It provides insight into how social and economic environments influenced students' academic trajectories and the relationship between education and social strata.
4. **Educational Challenges and Personal Initiative:** Augustinus' experiences reveal the difficulties faced by students, including the strict memorization of Greek, which fostered resilience and self-directed learning. This illustrates that disciplined instruction, though demanding, was fundamental in cultivating intellectual excellence, highlighting the value of independent and motivated study in developing critical thinking.
5. **Schools' Influence on Intellectual and Religious Identity:** These schools played a decisive role in shaping Augustinus' intellectual and spiritual development, linking classical education with personal and religious growth. They contributed to refining his rhetorical and cognitive abilities, ultimately preparing him to become a central figure in Christian thought and a leading voice in the African Church.
6. **Reassessing Modern Misconceptions:** Analysis of the Confessions allows for the correction of contemporary misunderstandings regarding Madauros' status. Contrary to some social media claims, Madauros was a highly esteemed secondary school rather than a university in the modern sense. Nevertheless, its educational and cultural

¹ Ryan Topping N.S., op-cit, p.40

² Augustine, Confessions, II, IX

³ Lancel S., op-cit, p. 40 ; Augustine, Confessions, II, IX

influence was substantial in shaping the African elite. This study demonstrates that the education provided in the schools of Thagaste and Madauros was instrumental in cultivating the intellectual and literary elite of Roman Africa. It highlights how rigorous classical instruction, integrated with African cultural elements, not only enhanced students' literary and cognitive skills but also preserved their cultural identity. Consequently, these institutions enabled African thinkers to make significant contributions to literature, philosophy, and theology within both African and broader Roman contexts.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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