

RESEARCH ARTICLE

From volition to reportativity: the reportative uses of Latin *volo* in synchrony and diachrony (with remarks on German *wollen* and French *vouloir*)

Francesca Dell’Oro 

LILEC, Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna
Email: francesca.delloro@unibo.it

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Abstract

This paper presents a corpus-based investigation of Latin *volo* ‘to want’, arguing that it exhibits previously overlooked reportative uses from at least the 1st century BCE, whereby speakers attribute beliefs, opinions, or statements to an external source. Focusing on third-person present-tense forms (*vult*, *volunt*) across a corpus spanning from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE, the study analyses the semantic, pragmatic, and morphosyntactic properties of these constructions, as well as their diachronic development. Reportative *volo* is shown to emerge from ambiguous contexts where volition and doxastic stance overlap – especially in small-clause constructions with subject coreferentiality or passive infinitives of verbs of opinion. Diachronically, it is proposed that the doxastic component – implicit in volitional uses and anchored in the volitional subject – becomes explicit, when the anchoring of an external doxastic source shifts from outside (i.e. the opinion of others) to the volitional subject, who is then reinterpreted as an evidential source. Comparisons with German *wollen* (and to a lesser extent with French *vouloir*) contextualise this development within a broader grammaticalisation path from volition to evidentiality. While *wollen* is already grammaticalised as a reportative marker, Latin *volo* offers novel diachronic and structurally distinct evidence for this cross-linguistic trajectory.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known cross-linguistic fact that volition lexemes can evolve into grammaticalised markers, as shown, e.g., by the diachronic development of the future construction (see Kuteva et al. 2019: 453–454 and references therein), necessive modality (see Kuteva et al. 2019: 454–455 and references therein) and free-choice markers (e.g., Haspelmath 1997). Other developments are less known, either because they have been less thoroughly investigated or their study has remained confined to a single language (see, e.g., Dell’Oro 2025a). A case in point is the reportative use of Latin *volo* ‘to want’, as illustrated in example (1).

Such reportative use may be contrasted with the volitional use of example (2). Unless otherwise indicated, the translations of Latin passages are taken from the Loeb Classical Library database. Glosses and translations from other languages are the author's own, unless otherwise specified. Where relevant, examples may be preceded or followed by contextual material translated into English. To distinguish the concept of volition from the English verb *to want*, I use small capitals (WANT).¹ The abbreviations used in the glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules.²

- (1) (*Iam de Platonis inconstantia longum est dicere, qui in Timaeo patrem huius mundi nominari neget posse, in Legum autem libris quid sit omnino deus anquiri oportere non censeat.* 'The inconsistencies of Plato are a long story. In the *Timaeus* he says that it is impossible to name the father of this universe; and in the *Laws* he deprecates all inquiry into the nature of the deity.')

vero sine corpore ullo deum vult esse
really without body.ABL any.ABL god.ACC want.3SG be.INF

'he holds that god is entirely incorporeal' or, as justified below, 'according to him, god is entirely incorporeal' (Cic., *N. D.* 1, 30, second translation mine)

- (2) *quocirca examen ubi volunt considerare, eum ramum*
wherefore swarm.ACC where want.3PL settle.INF this.ACC bough.ACC

aliam=ve quam rem oblinunt hoc
other.ACC=OR any.ACC thing.ACC smear.3PL this.ABL

admixto apiastro.
mix.PTCP.PRF.ABL balm.ABL

'So they smear with this substance, mixed with balm, the bough or other object on which they want the swarm to settle'. (Var. *R.* 3.16.23)

The reportative uses of Latin *volo* remain largely underrecognised. Notably, in their discussion of the evidential uses of French *vouloir* 'to want', Landvogt and Goldschmitt (2008: 255) assert that Latin lacks a reportative ('citationnel') use of *volo*.³ Contrary to their claim, the main aim of this paper is to demonstrate both the presence and the emergence of the reportative use of *volo* in Latin.

By contrast, the reportative use of German *wollen* is well studied. Compare example (3) with example (4).

- (3) *Er will damals gehört haben, daß Ausländer bis zu*
He want.3SG then heard have.INF that foreigners to to

6000 Mark für einen 'Umverteilungsantrag' zahlen würden.
– mark for a.ACC 'Umverteilungsantrag' pay.INF would.3SG

¹ In the Latin examples, I distinguish between 'u' and 'v', regardless of what appears in the Loeb edition.

² The abbreviation IMPF and PPF have been added for the Latin imperfect and pluperfect, respectively.

³ It must be specified that Landvogt and Goldschmitt look for an exact morpho-syntactic equivalent of the Present-Day German reportative construction. This requires coreferentiality of the subject along with a perfect past tense in the complement clause. For the presence of such a construction in Latin, cf. Section 3.1.4.

‘Self-reportedly, he heard at the time that foreigners would pay up to 6,000 marks for a “redistribution application”’.

(Zeit 74 – example from Diewald 1999: 225, translation mine)⁴

- (4) *Wir beide wollen das Lemma ‘Alte Maße und Gewichte’ verbessern.*
 We both want.3PL the lemma ‘Alte Maße und Gewichte’ improve.INF
 ‘We both want to improve the lemma “Alte Maße und Gewichte”’.
 (WDD19, Wikipedia-Korpora in DeReKo–2020-II)

The historical development of the evidential uses of German *wollen* has received limited attention beyond the domain of Germanic studies. As this investigation will show, the study of the two verbs, Latin *volo* and German *wollen*, can offer valuable mutual insights.

The more extensive synchronic investigation into the evidential uses of German *wollen* enables two clarifications that are also pertinent to Latin *volo*. First, it should be emphasised that evidential *wollen* does not function as a verb of saying. As demonstrated by Remberger (2023: 54–59), the saying event associated with reportative *wollen* is neither at-issue nor eventive. Rendering evidential *wollen* with the adverb ‘self-reportedly’ can help to avoid ambiguity, an approach that will also be applied to Latin (see example 1). Second, while ‘to claim’ is a possible translation of evidential *wollen*, it is not always appropriate. The dissociation of the speaker at time 0 from the speaker at time 1, whose statement is being reported, does not form part of the semantics of evidential *wollen*, but may emerge as a pragmatic inference (Remberger 2023: 48–50). As we shall see in Section 3.1.3, reportative *volo* exhibits similar behaviour, although it is not possible to rely on native speakers’ judgements. To circumvent this issue, I draw upon contextual and cotextual evidence. On the side of the differences, it is worth noting that Latin reportative *volo* displays specific constructions not attested for Present-Day German reportative *wollen*. Most notably, as illustrated by example (1), reportative *volo* does not require coreferentiality between its subject and that of the complement clause.

The second aim of this paper concerns the suggested role of a doxastic component in the pathway from volition to evidentiality. According to a hypothesis recently reformulated by Remberger (2023, see also Remberger 2010, 2011, as well as Heim 1992 and von Stechow 1999 for the original formulation in relation to English *to want*), the evolution of German *wollen* from volition to evidentiality is made possible by the presence of a doxastic component in its semantics:

[...] *the intermediate step between the bouletic conversational background (volitional modality) and the reportative conversational background (evidentiality) is the doxastic conversational background (of belief or thought) already present in the root interpretation of WANT (all of them anchored to the subject x_{subj}).* (Remberger 2023: 64)

I argue that the case of Latin *volo* provides a valuable contribution to this hypothesis from outside the German family. In fact, all the Latin reportative examples are clearly doxastic,

⁴ Diewald (1999: 225) suggests the following paraphrase for (3): *Er sagt: ‘Ich habe damals gehört, daß Ausländer bis zu 6000 Mark für einen Umverteilungsantrag zahlen würden’* (‘He says: “I heard at the time that foreigners would pay up to 6,000 marks for a redistribution application”’). However, it should be specified that evidential *wollen* does not function as a verb of saying. See below in this section.

as they convey the opinion of the reportative source. In addition to providing an inter-linguistic foundation to the presence of a doxastic component in verbs of volition, it contributes complex diachronic evidence that points to a less linear developmental path (see Section 3.2).

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology and addresses certain terminological issues; Section 3 presents the analysis of Latin *volo* across pre-Classical, Classical and early Late Latin; Section 4 offers a tentative comparison with the German data, alongside some preliminary observations on French, for which new data is also introduced; Section 5 presents the conclusions and outlines a series of *desiderata*.

2. Methodology and terminological issues

With respect to Latin *volo*, no previous investigation of the reportative uses was available (see, however, Dell'Oro 2025b). Accordingly, the investigation began with an examination of dictionary entries. Unfortunately, the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* – the most complete reference lexicon for Latin – has not yet produced the relevant lemma. Therefore, for a first overview, I relied on the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (henceforth *OLD*). I have adopted a corpus-based approach, focussing on present forms, as they are the most common ones for the reportative use according to the examples collected in the *OLD*.⁵ As a corpus, I have used all the texts of the section *Antiquitas* of the *Library of Latin texts*. This section comprises texts predating the year 200 CE that are attested through the manuscript tradition. Note that this valuable tool does not allow the user to find concordances by lemma, but only by words. I have queried the corpus with respect to the present indicative forms *vult* with the variant *volt* ‘(he/she/it) wants’ (3rd person singular) and *volunt* ‘(they) want’ (3rd person plural). I have also considered the negative forms *nevult* ‘(s)he does not want’ (3rd person singular) and *nolunt* ‘(they) do not want’ (3rd person plural). The queries returned 531 passages for *vult*, 230 passages for *volt*, 521 for *volunt*, one passage for *nevult*, and 61 passages for *nolunt*.

Before turning to the analysis of the Latin passages, it is necessary to clarify the use of certain terms in this paper.

First, the term ‘reportative’ is preferred over ‘quotative’. It must be acknowledged that terminological consensus on these terms is lacking in the field of evidentiality. As Vanderbiesen (2014: 170) notes: ‘[t]raditionally, this opposition is defined in terms of whether the author is explicitly construed: whereas quotatives mention the exact author, reportives do not (cf. e.g. Mushin 2001: 71; Plungian 2001: 352; Aikhenvald 2004: 64, 177)’.⁶ However, ‘[u]sually, a quotative is defined as marking a *verbatim* (i.e. direct) quotation of another speaker, and indeed this is the sense in which the word “quote” is generally understood’ (Vanderbiesen 2014: 170).⁷ In the passages analysed here, the evidential source is consistently present. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that the content is reproduced *verbatim*, especially in instances where the boundary between reported speech and reported thought is indistinct. To avoid the potentially misleading

⁵ This statement requires confirmation through a broader corpus investigation.

⁶ See also Kuteva et al. (2019: 28).

⁷ I refer to Vanderbiesen (2014) for its outline of the uses of the terms ‘quotative’ and ‘reportative’ in the literature.

implications of the term ‘quotative’, which may evoke the notion of direct quotation, the term ‘reportative’ is used.⁸

Second, the term ‘reportative’ encompasses here both reported speech and reported thought. From a cognitive perspective, the distinction between the two may be inherently blurred, as reported thought represents a form of verbalised cognition. Conversely, content presented as reported speech reflects, at least to some extent, the mental verbalisation of its source. Furthermore, from an interlinguistic standpoint, Casartelli (2023) has demonstrated that some languages employ the same markers for reported speech and reported thought, thereby pointing to a degree of contiguity between the two domains and their respective grammatical encoding.⁹

Having clarified the use of the term ‘reportative’, it is now necessary to outline how the participants related to the reported event are identified and referred to. To prevent confusion regarding the speaker (or writer or thinker) involved when a verb of volition functions reportatively, the individual who reports a propositional content attributed to someone else will be referred to as the ‘speaker/writer/thinker at T_0 ’, where T_0 (with $T = \text{time}$) represents the time of the enunciative act. This figure is to be distinguished from the ‘speaker/writer/thinker at T_1 ’, namely, the referent of the syntactic subject of the volitional verb in the languages under analysis.

In the (mostly literary) texts from which the attestations of *volo* are drawn, it is not always possible to clearly differentiate between speaker, writer, and thinker. Therefore, unless the distinction is possible and necessary, ‘speaker’ will be used as a cover term encompassing all three figures.

I now turn to the semantic classification of the reported content, with particular attention to how modality is construed. I adopt here a restrictive use of the term ‘modality’, referring to the use of markers of necessity, possibility, and volition to qualify a state of affairs as neither positively nor negatively factual. This approach aligns with the definition of modality proposed by van der Auwera and Plungian (1998, though volition is not considered in their account), Narrog (2012), and Nuyts (2016). This choice carries two important implications. First, there is no need to derive volition from possibility nor necessity, as is required by alternative frameworks such as the Kratzerian model (cf. Remberger 2023: 48–49). Second, evidentiality is excluded from the definition of core modality adopted here, although it is acknowledged as a closely related and partially overlapping domain. Consequently, the evidential developments investigated in this study are situated within the domain of post-modality (in the sense of van der Auwera and Plungian 1998). A post-modal meaning or function is one that evolves from a modal meaning, with the original modal meaning potentially persisting to varying degrees or becoming entirely bleached.¹⁰

Finally, it is important to clarify that, within the formal approach to modality, the term ‘epistemic’ pertains strictly to knowledge, whereas, in the functional-typological framework adopted here, ‘epistemic’ refers to the speaker’s stance regarding the *likelihood* of an event

⁸ Vanderbiesen (2014) suggests the use of ‘quoportative’. In French ‘citationnel’ (Goldschmitt 2007) is used.

⁹ For example, in Hinuq, a Nakh-Dagestanian language, the quotative enclitic =*ʎen* can be employed to report thought when introducing the complement of a verb of thinking (Casartelli 2023: 307, based on Forker 2013: in particular, 614–615).

¹⁰ One of the peer reviewers asked to specify what ‘pre-modal’ means in the case of *want*. One of the pre-modal meanings from which volition lexemes may develop is ‘to lack’, as in the case of Eng. *want*. Cf., for instance, Gettliffe 2021.

occurring (e.g., Nuyts 2016). Such assessments of probability are grounded in knowledge, evidence, and belief, which render these concepts and their associated uses closely interwoven. However, to enhance clarity, I use the term ‘doxastic’ (from Ancient Greek *dóxa* ‘opinion’) to denote meanings specifically related to thought, opinion, or belief.¹¹

3. Latin *volo*: analysis and results

This section presents an analysis and discussion of the reportative construction with *volo*, examined from both synchronic (3.1) and diachronic (3.2) perspectives.

3.1. Synchronic results

The main features of the reportative construction with *volo* are outlined here, drawing on the reference dictionary mentioned in Section 2, as well as on corpus analysis. The discussion is structured around four principal areas: non-discreteness (3.1.1); frequency and diaphasic distribution (3.1.2); semantics and pragmatics (3.1.3); and morphological and syntactic features (3.1.4).

3.1.1. Non-discreteness

The distinction between volitional meaning and reportative function is not discrete for Latin *volo*. This point can be illustrated using the following passage:

(5) *ex quibus si id confecissent quod volunt,*
 by that.REL.ABL if it achieve.SBJV.PPF.3PL that.REL want.3PL

ut in lingua Latina esset anomalia
 that in language.ABL Latin.ABL be.SBJV.IMP.3SG anomaly

‘Even if by their arguments they had achieved what they wish, namely that in the Latin language there would be Anomaly’ (Var. *L.* 9.65)

Here, Varro discusses the viewpoint of those who maintain that anomaly exists in the Latin language. *Volunt* in example (5) conveys volition and is not, strictly speaking, reportative. Accordingly, it is not included among the relevant passages of the corpus. Nevertheless, the propositional content introduced by *ut* and anticipated by the pronoun *quod* ‘this’ conveys the opinion of those individuals, albeit in the form of a wish. Thus, *volunt* retains its volitional meaning while serving to introduce the opinion of those individuals corresponding to the syntactic subject of *volunt*. This opinion is presented by Varro as a wish – that is, how these individuals would like matters to be (‘that Anomaly would exist in the Latin language’) – a point of view that Varro himself does not share (for the semantics and pragmatics of reportative *volo*, see Section 3.1.3). It should be stressed that most examples discussed here involve two distinct subjects, whereas cases of coreferential subjects will be addressed in Section 3.1.4.

This example demonstrates that in Latin *volo* there is no absolute separation between volitional meaning and reportative function, as both appear to be simultaneously present in

¹¹ It is worth noting that some scholars define the reportative uses of German *wollen* as epistemic (Öhlschläger (1989) and Woźnicka (2020), among others).

example (5). This raises the question of whether, in other cases, a clearer distinction between volitional and reportative meanings can be drawn – bearing in mind that the reported propositional content reflects how the speaker or thinker at T₁, as the original source, wishes others to perceive the world. This issue is developed in Section 3.2, where a diachronic outline is proposed.

While it is important to recognise that a volitional meaning may still be present when *volo* is used with a reportative function, the following test may help to assess whether *volo* in the third person tends towards a volitional meaning or a reportative function. The test is based on a yes/no answer to the question: ‘Is the volitional entity, who is the syntactic subject of the volitional verb, able to bring about the desired event or state of affairs?’ If the answer is affirmative, as in example (2) – which is repeated here as (6) – there is a volitional source and *volo* functions as a volitional verb. If the answer is negative, *volo* may be used with a reportative function. Moreover, if *volo* introduces a propositional content that can be paraphrased as a statement, then it has a reportative function.

(6) *quocirca examen ubi volunt considerare, eum ramum*
 wherefore swarm.ACC where want.3PL settle.INF this.ACC bough.ACC

aliamve quam rem oblinunt hoc
 other.ACC=OR any.ACC thing.ACC smear.3PL this.ABL

admixto apiastro.
 mix.PTCP.PRF.ABL balm.ABL

‘So they smear with this substance, mixed with balm, the bough or other object on which they want the swarm to settle’. (Var. R. 3.16.23)

As described in (6), an individual who wishes a bee swarm to settle in a certain place can influence the animals’ behaviour to achieve this goal. In the case of a reportative use, however, the source of the propositional content is unable to act to bring about the event, regardless of how much they wish it to be true. In (7), whether or not there is a significant difference between the sense of seeing and that of hearing is primarily a matter of opinion.¹²

(7) *et tantum inter duos sensus interesse volunt, ut ...*
 and so_much between two.ACC senses.ACC to_be_different.INF want.3PL that
 ‘And do they claim that there is such difference between the two senses, so that ...’
 (Var. L. 9.16.21)

A similar line of reasoning can be applied to example (1), which concerns the opinion as to whether god is immaterial. At most the only aspect upon which the volitional entity can act is the opinion of other individuals. I develop this hypothesis in Section 3.2. The non-coreferentiality between the subject of *volo* and that of the verb in the complement clause plays an important role, as the wishing entity is not necessarily involved in the event described in the complement clause, as illustrated by examples (1) and (2) = (6). Conversely, co-referentiality may give rise to ambiguity, as shown in Section 3.1.3.

¹² Interestingly, one peer reviewer suggested that Latin *volo* has a highly vague meaning. While the investigation of this issue lies beyond the scope of this paper, it must be emphasised that semantic vagueness alone cannot account for the emergence of the specific reportative uses of Latin *volo*.

It is important to emphasise that the distinction between the two uses correlates to the presence or absence of control on the part of the volitional entity. The differentiation between the volitional meaning and the reportative use of Latin *volo* is also closely linked to the nature of the event described in terms of lexical aspect. As discussed in Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, a notable pattern emerges whereby reportative uses of *volo* predominantly occur with stative predicates – that is, those denoting situations in which a state of affairs simply holds or does not. In such cases, opting between alternatives reflects an evaluative stance or belief rather than an exercise of agency by the volitional entity. No instances involving prototypical actions nor prototypical accomplishments have been identified in the data consulted thus far. However, verbs denoting achievements – in Vendlerian terms (Vendler 1957) – or close to this event type (see Dowty 1979) are not entirely excluded from reportative constructions with *volo*. I have identified in the corpus examples (8)–(11) reported below, to which examples (16) and (17) may be added. The syntactic subject of the complement clause is inanimate (the sea) or lacks specificity (the universe), thereby reducing the degree of agency and volitionality.

- (8) *volt enim, quod nemo negat,*
want.3SG indeed that.REL nobody deny.3SG

quicquid natum sit interire
anything.ACC bear.PTCP.PRF.ACC be.SBJV.3SG perish.INF

‘For he holds what nobody denies, that whatever has been born perishes’ (Cic. *Tusc.* 1.32)¹³

- (9) *Pythagorei e numeris et mathematicorum initiis*
Pythagoreans from numbers.ABL and mathematicians.GEN principles.ABL

proficisci volunt omnia.
proceed.INF want.3PL all.ACC

‘The Pythagoreans hold that the universe originates out of numbers and the first principles of the mathematicians’. (Cic. *Luc.* 118)

- (10) *A Mossylico promunturio Atlanticum mare incipere vult Iuba*
from Mossylites cape.ABL Atlantic.ACC sea.ACC begin.INF want.3SG Juba
‘Juba holds that at Cape Mossylites begins the Atlantic Ocean’ (Plin. *Nat.* 6.175)

- (11) *in Cypro eum reperiri volunt metallis ...*
in Cyprus.ABL it.ACC find.INF.PASS want.3PL mines.ABL

unum argenteo colore, alterum aureo.
one.ACC of_silver.ABL colour.ABL other.ACC of_gold.ABL

‘It is claimed that in the mines in Cyprus two kinds of pyrites are found, one having the colour of silver and the other of gold’. (Plin. *Nat.* 36.137)

Although further investigation is warranted, a tentative hypothesis may be advanced: the reportative function appears to correlate with the absence of control and, to a lesser extent,

¹³ Lat. *interire* does not necessarily correspond to an achievement verb, but, in this example, such an interpretation seems plausible. For the semantic aspect of verbs of dying, see Botne 2003.

goal-orientedness. Stative predicates lack both features, while accomplishments embody both. Activities typically entail control without goal-orientedness, and achievements display the reverse configuration. For further discussion of the semantic features of reported events, see Section 3.1.3.

3.1.2. Frequency of reportative uses and diaphasic distribution

Within the Antiquitas section, the reportative use is very rare. The figures vary according to the authors and the genres they practise. Cicero (106–43 BCE) is the first author to employ reportative *volo* with any notable frequency. He is also the sole author within the Antiquitas section whose works span genres as diverse as speeches (i.e., the written – and reworked – versions of the speeches delivered in court), (real, non-fictional) letters (i.e., a more informal type of written production), and rhetorical and philosophical treatises. Among these three genres (namely speeches, letters, and treatises), the use of reportative *volo* appears clearly associated with the scientific discourse of the treatises, as shown in Table 1. Ambiguous passages have also been taken into account. Out of 355 occurrences of the selected forms *vult*, *volt*, *volunt*, and *nolunt*, the presence of reportative uses is significant only in the treatises.¹⁴ This result casts doubt on whether the reportative uses of *volo* are less well attested before Cicero due to the nature of the textual sources available to us.

Reportative uses are limited to 57 occurrences (i.e., 16.06% of the total occurrences) in Cicero's works. Among the genres, they appear predominantly in the treatises (92.98%) and only rarely in the speeches (5.26%) or letters (1.75%). Reportative uses are thus clearly associated with the genre of treatise in Cicero's works. If we consider other authors, we rarely find reportative uses, with the notable exception of Pliny the Elder, who also practises the genre of treatise. However, in the case of Seneca the Younger, who authored a considerable number of treatises, only two occurrences of reportative uses are attested, both in treatises. Therefore, the use of *volo* to report the spoken or thought content of other individuals is also a matter of personal and stylistic preference. The figures in Table 2 illustrate the frequency of reportative uses among a selection of authors.

3.1.3. Semantics and pragmatics of reportative *volo*

As outlined in Section 3.1.1, there is no clear-cut distinction in Latin between *volo* conveying volition and *volo* marking reported content. A similar ambiguity arises in the distinction

Table 1. Reportative uses of *vult*, *volt*, *volunt*, and *nolunt* in Cicero's works, by genre

	Reportative uses		Non-reportative uses
	57× (16.06%)		298× (83.94%)
Treatises	Speeches	Letters	
53× (92.98%)	3× (5.26%)	1× (1.75%)	

¹⁴ The form *nevult* is not attested in Cicero's works.

Table 2. Frequency of reportative uses in selected authors

Caesar	0%
Seneca the Younger	1.27%
Varro	2.32%
Livy	3.3%
Celsus	8.33%
Cicero	16.06%
Pliny the Elder	28.57%

between reported thought and reported speech. In fact, even the surrounding context is often insufficient to disambiguate between a verb of propositional attitude and a verb of saying. For instance, the following passage (12) – presented above as example (9) – is reproduced here with its preceding context. Both types of verbs are represented: *dixit* ‘he said’ occurs twice, while *censet* ‘he thinks’ appears once.

- (12) = (9) (*Thales ... ex aqua dixit constare omnia. ... is enim infinitatem naturae dixit esse e qua omnia gignerentur. ... Plato ex materia in se omnia recipiente mundum factum esse censet a deo sempiternum.* ‘Thales ... said that all things are made of water. ... he (Anaximander) said that there exists an infinity of substance from which the universe was engendered. ... Plato thinks that the world was made by god out of the all-containing substance, to last for ever’.)

Pythagorei e numeris et mathematicorum initiis
 Pythagoreans from numbers.ABL and mathematicians.GEN principles.ABL

proficisci volunt omnia.
 proceed.INF want.3PL all.ACC

‘The Pythagoreans hold that the universe originates out of numbers and the first principles of the mathematicians’. (Cic. *Luc.* 118)

It must be also specified that in a predicative construction (small clause) – namely, when *volo* is used with a passive perfect participle (henceforth PPP) in the construction ‘*vult/volunt* + PPP’ – *volo* appears more akin to a verb of thinking than to a verb of saying, as shown by example (13). For the constructions shared by volitional *volo* and *dico* ‘I say’, see Section 3.1.4. Small clauses likely contributed to the development of the reportative function, as illustrated in Section 3.2.

- (13) *qui necessitate motus animorum liberatos volunt*
 who necessity.ABL motion.ACC minds.GEN freed.ACC want.3PL
 ‘those who think / *say the motions of the minds released from necessity’ vs ‘those who think / hold / say that the motions of the minds are released from necessity’ (Cic. *Fat.* 39, translations mine)¹⁵

¹⁵ One of the peer reviewers pointed out that the manuscript reading is *animos* and that *animorum* constitutes a conjecture. However, the small clause remains present. The translation would be: ‘...who hold the minds released from all necessity of motion’.

The semantics of reportative *volo* is neutral. For instance, in the passage presented as example (12), the verbs *dico*, *volo*, and *censeo* are used to introduce opinions that are not entirely compatible. The speaker at T_0 does not display greater disbelief towards the content introduced by *volo* than towards that introduced by the other two verbs. However, since the propositional content is not endorsed by the speaker at T_0 , a conversational implicature may arise, resulting in a pragmatic effect of non-commitment on the part of the speaker with regard to the propositional content. It is worth noting that I have not found *volo* used in the first person to express the speaker's point of view, whereas this is possible with *dico* and *censeo*. As explained in 3.2, the dissociation of the speaker at T_0 from the propositional content of the speaker at T_1 also underpins the diachronic development of the reportative construction. It should be noted that co-referentiality between the subject of *volo* and that of the verb of the complement clause is more likely to entail a dissociation of the speaker at T_0 from the reported content, as outlined in Section 3.1.4.

Another notable semantic feature of the Latin reportative construction with *volo* is the atemporal or tenseless reading of the reported content, when the verb in the complement clause is in the present. The validity of the proposition is not anchored to any specific point in time – past, present, or future. For instance, in example (1), the incorporeal nature of the divinity holds true independently of temporal reference. This interpretive pattern is not restricted to *esse* 'to be': in example (12), the idea that all things originate from numbers and the first principles of the mathematicians is presented as a timeless truth, equally valid in the past, present, and future. See also the aspectual properties of the reported event outlined in Section 3.1.1. This configuration renders the reportative *volo* construction particularly well-suited to the genre of philosophical and scientific treatises, as it enables the author to present different views. Moreover, this semantic property of reportative *volo* is at odds with the intrinsic non-anteriority requirement (e.g., Remberger 2010: 169, 2011: 22) of verbs of volition. In fact, these verbs typically introduce alternative worlds located in the future, and possibly in the present. An exception, however, is discussed in Section 3.1.4: when the verb in the complement clause is in a past tense, the reference may be to the past.

3.1.4. Morphology and syntax of the reportative construction with *volo*

While the corpus investigation in this paper is confined to the present tense, it is important to emphasise that past tenses are also compatible with the reportative use, as illustrated by the following examples in the imperfect (14) and the perfect (15):

(14) *mentem volebant rerum esse iudicem*
 mind.ACC want.IMPF.3PL things.GEN be.INF judge.ACC
 'the judge of things was, they (the Academics) held, the mind' (Cic. *Ac.* 1.30)

(15) *Alii voluptatem finem esse voluerunt,*
 others pleasure.ACC end.ACC be.INF want.PRF.3PL

quorum princeps Aristippus
 who.REL.GEN.PL founder Aristippus

'Others have held that the end is pleasure; their founder was Aristippus...' (Cic. *Luc.* 131)

Reportative *volo* in the present tense combines almost exclusively with present infinitives, as already shown by examples (1), (7)–(12). However, perfect infinitives are occasionally

attested and so compatible with reportative *volo*, as shown by examples (16) and (17). It is worth noting that, in both passages, perfect infinitives in the active form alternate with perfect infinitives without *esse* in the passive form, thus formally reducing the infinitival structure to a small clause. These passive forms can convey passive voice, as in the case of *repertas*, or reflect the deponent nature of the verb, as in the case of *usum*. For the importance of small clauses in the development of the reportative function, see Section 3.2. It is also worth emphasising that the volitional component is damped by the presence of perfect infinitives. As mentioned in Section 3.1.2, WANT-verbs, when used in their basic volitional sense, exhibit an intrinsic non-anteriority requirement. The use of *volo* with a perfect infinitive precludes a volitional interpretation.

- (16) *alii primum aeruginem invenisse utilissimam emplastris ...*,
others first.ACC copper_rust.F.ACC find.INF.PRF most_useful.F.ACC plasters.ABL

alii utroque usum medicamento volunt.
others both.ABL use.PTCP.PRF.ACC remedy.ABL want.3PL

‘Some have it that he (Achilles) was the first to find out that copper-rust is a most useful ingredient of plasters ..., while others hold that he used both remedies’. (Plin. *Nat.* 25.42)

- (17) *Litteras semper arbitror Assyrias fuisse, sed alii apud Aegyptios a Mercurio, ut Gellius, alii apud Syros repertas volunt, utrique in Graeciam*
others among Syrians find.PTCP.PRF.F.ACC.PL want.3PL both in(to) Greece

attulisse e Phoenice Cadmum sedecim numero,
import.INF.PRF from Phoenicia.ABL Cadmus.ACC 16 number.ACC

quibus Troiano bello Palameden adiecisse
that.REL.DAT.PL Troian.ABL war.ABL Palamedes.ACC add.INF.PRF

quattuor hac figura ΖΥΦΧ, totidem post eum
4 this.ABL shape.ABL ΖΥΦΧ, as_many after him

Simoniden melicum ΨΞΩΘ,
Simonides.ACC lyric_poet.ACC ΨΞΩΘ

quarum omnium vis in nostris recognoscitur. Aristoteles decem et octo priscas fuisse et duas ab Epicharmo additas ΧΖ quam a Palamede mavult.

‘I am of opinion that the Assyrians have always had writing, but others, e.g. Gellius, hold that it was invented in Egypt by Mercury, while others think it was discovered in Syria; both schools of thought believe that Cadmus imported an alphabet of 16 letters into Greece from Phoenicia and that to these Palamedes at the time of the Trojan war added the four characters ΖΨΦΧ, and after him Simonides the lyric poet added another four ΨΞΩΘ, all representing sounds recognized also in the Roman alphabet. Aristotle holds that the primitive alphabet contained 18 letters, and that Ψ and Ζ were added by Epicharmus more probably than Palamedes’. (Plin. *Nat.* 7.192)

It is worth noting that in example (17), the compound verb *malo* ‘to prefer’ – from *magis* + *volo* – is used to report the perspective of Aristoteles.

In the investigated corpus, reportative *volo* never governs a complement clause in the subjunctive, i.e., a conjugated verb. This marks a notable difference with volitional *volo*, which can govern either an infinitive or a subjunctive. Specifically, *volo* with a volitional meaning may take an infinitive (with a coreferential subject), an accusative-and-infinitive construction, or a subjunctive clause.¹⁶ I suggest connecting this behaviour of reportative *volo* with the declarative function of the reportative uses. A verb such as Latin *dico* ‘I say’ can govern a subordinate clause in the subjunctive (introduced by *ut* or *ne*, cf. *OLD*: s.v. *dico*). However, it is most often used with the infinitive with or without the subject of the subordinate clause in the accusative (Cuzzolin 2013: 23).¹⁷ Reportative *volo* behaves in a similar way. It is worth recalling contexts such as that in example (5) where the *ut*-clause in the subjunctive has an expletive function with respect to the pronoun *quod*, and *volo* retains a volitional meaning.

Reportative *volo* can fall within the scope of negation, though this use is extremely rare. I have found only one clear occurrence, i.e., example (18).¹⁸

(18) *quum ab illis eo nomine dissentiant, quod*

in conjectura rerum latentium nolunt esse medicinam;

in conjecture.ABL things.GEN hidden.GEN.PL NEG.want.3PL be.INF art.ACC

ab his eo, quod parum artis esse in observatione experientorum credunt.

‘... for in so naming themselves Methodici, they dissent from the former because they believe that Art is not conjecture about hidden things, and from the latter because they think that in the observation of experience there is little of an Art of Medicine’. (Cels. 1 prooemium)

Cf. also example (19), in which *volunt* governs a comparative construction whose first member has negative polarity (*non tam esse*), while the second has positive polarity (*quam videri*).

¹⁶ For accusative-and-infinitive clauses with *volo*, which may be either declarative or non-declarative, see Pinkster (2021: 171–172 and 139–140). I am grateful to one of the peer reviewers for drawing my attention to this point. The reportative uses are declarative. For (volitional) non-declarative uses of the accusative-and-infinitive, see examples (24)–(27).

¹⁷ It is a fact that in Latin, from the oldest records onwards until almost to Proto-Romance, the regular way to express a subordinate clause after a verb of saying or thinking was a particular construction known as *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* [...].

¹⁸ Cf. also the following passage:

(i) [*sc. Epicurus*] *Xenocraten audire potuit (quem virum, dii immortales), et sunt qui putent audisse*

ipse non vult: credo, plus nemini.

he_himself NEG want.3SG believe more anyone.DAT

Pamphilum quendam Platonis auditorem ait a se Sami auditum ...

‘He might have heard Xenocrates – by heaven, what a master! – and some people think that he did, but he himself denies it, and he ought to know! He states that he heard a certain Pamphilus, a pupil of Plato, at Samos [...]’ (Cic. *ND* 1.72). In my view, it is necessary to supply here the infinitive *audisse* as governed by *vult* (‘According to Epicurus, he (himself) did not hear Xenocrates’). If this is correct, this example would constitute another instance of negation scoping over reportative *volo*.

(19) *istorum ... qui omnia non tam esse*
 these.GEN who.PL all.PL NEG so_much exist.INF

quam videri volunt?
 than (see.INF.PASS >) seem.INF want.3PL

‘of these thinkers who hold that everything does not so much exist as seem to exist?’
 (Cic. *Luc.* 44)

The incidental construction ‘*ut* + reportative *volo*’ (cf. examples 20 and 21) is rarely attested in the investigated corpus. I provide here a couple of examples:

(20) *Ipse Hamilcar, Mars alter, ut isti volunt.*
 he.himself Hamilcar Mars second as those want.3PL

‘Hamilcar himself, a second Mars, as those men have it’ (Liv. 21.10.8)

(21) *de omni animi, ... perturbatione, morbo, ut Graeci volunt*
 about whole.ABL soul.GEN disturbance.ABL disease.ABL as Greeks want.3PL

‘with the whole subject of disturbance – ‘disease’ as the Greeks prefer – of the soul’.
 (Cic. *Tusc.* 3.6)

In most cases, reportative *volo* has a subject distinct from that of the infinitive in the accusative-and-infinitive clause, as seen in all the preceding examples of reportative *volo*. However, the reportative use is also compatible with a coreferential subject. As mentioned in Section 3.1.1, such coreferential constructions are highly ambiguous between a volitional interpretation and a reportative function, as illustrated by example (22). See also the discussion of the diachronic perspective in Section 3.2.

(22) *Ipse hostis Teucros insigni laude ferebat*

se ... ortum antiqua Teucrorum
 him(self).ACC sprung.PTCP.PRF.ACC ancient.ABL Teucrians.GEN

a stirpe volebat
 from stock.ABL want.IMPF.3SG

‘Foe though he was, he often lauded the Teucrians with highest praise and he claimed that he was sprung from the Teucrians’ ancient stock’ (Verg. *A.* 1.626)

The use of *ferebat* ‘raised’ together with *insigne laude* ‘through outstanding praise’ hints at the verbal action of praising. In keeping with this, *volo* can be interpreted here as having a reportative function. It is worth noting that there is probably an added nuance of boasting.

In cases of coreferentiality, the volitional meaning is not absent – likely because the referent encoded as the syntactic subject may still be perceived as exerting a degree of control over the event introduced by *volo*. This volitional component contributes to presenting the propositional content as valid for the speaker at T₁ (who desires it to be true, cf. the discussion in Section 3.1.1), but in some cases as invalid from the perspective of the speaker at T₀ (who does not agree).

Example (23), which contains a small clause, can be interpreted either with a volitional meaning – ‘those who want themselves (to be) *populares*’ – or with a reportative function ‘those who are self-reportedly *populares*’. Cicero adopts a negative attitude towards such

individuals, whom he does not regard as genuine friends of the people, as is evident from the remainder of the passage, the English translation of which is provided below the glossed example. Accordingly, the translation of *volo* with 'claim' is particularly fitting here.

- (23) *qui vero se populares volunt...*
 who really them(elves).ACC members_of_the_popular_party.ACC want.3PL
 'But those who pose as friends of the people' or 'want (to be / to be perceived as) *populares* / who claim to be *populares*' (Cic. *Off.* 2.22.78, alternative translations mine)

The text continues as follows: '(and who for that reason either attempt to have agrarian laws passed, in order that the occupants may be driven out of their homes, or propose that money loaned should be remitted to the borrowers, are undermining the foundations of the commonwealth: first of all, they are destroying harmony, which cannot exist when money is taken away from one party and bestowed upon another; and second, they do away with equity, which is utterly subverted, if the rights of property are not respected.)'

The following section explores the emergence of the reportative function of *volo* from a diachronic perspective.

3.2. The diachronic view from volition to opinion

The corpus analysis reveals that the forms *vult/volunt*, when conveying volitional meaning, may sometimes express a desire concerning how one wishes to be perceived by others (cf. examples 24, 25, 26, and 27), as well as how one desires things to be perceived by others (cf. examples 28, 29, 30, and 31).

- (24) *qui se popularis haberi volunt*
 who them members_of_the_popular_party.ACC consider.INF.PASS want.3PL
 'those who wish to be considered members of the popular party' (Cic. *Catil.* 4.10)

- (25) *tales=que oratores videri facit,*
 such=and orators (be-seen>)seem.INF.PASS make.3SG

quales ipsi se videri volunt.
 as they_themselves them(elves) (be-seen>)seem.INF.PASS want.3PL
 'and causes the orator to seem such a man as he wills to seem'. (Cic. *Brut.* 142)

- (26) *horum, qui misericordes videri volunt*
 those.GEN who.REL.PL pitiful see.INF.PASS want.3PL
 'those who wish to be thought pitiful' (Sen. *Cl.* 2.6.2)

- (27) *neque rationalibus se, neque experimenta tantum*
 NEG reasoners.ABL them NEG experience.PL only

spectantibus adnumerari volunt
 look.PTCP.ABL class.INF.PASS want.3PL
 'They do not want to be classed with reasoners from theory, nor with those who look to experience only' (Cels. 1 prooemium)

- (28) *Ab Ap. Claudio praetore retractum quidam*
 by Appius.ABL Claudius.ABL praetor.ABL bting_back.PTCP.PRF.ACC some

videri volunt
 see.INF.PASS want.3PL

‘Some want it to appear that it was brought back by the praetor Appius Claudius’.
 (Liv. 10.25.13)

- (29) *et quidam medici saeculi nostri, sub auctore,*
 and some physicians time.GEN OUR.GEN under leader.ABL

ut ipsi videri volunt, Themisone, contendunt...
 as they_themselves see.INF.PASS want.3PL Themison.ABL argue.3PL

‘And some physicians of our time, under the leadership – as they themselves want to appear – of Themison, argue...’ (Cels. 1 prooemium)

- (30) *volunt enim nos ita putare*
 want.3PL indeed us so think.INF

‘(Your invitation to act as witness is likely to have had a purpose.) That is what they want us to think / they want us to think this way’ (Cic. *Att.* 14.3.2, literal translation mine)

- (31) *... dicere quod C. Verres ... maxime existimari vult,*
 say.INF that.REL Caius Verres very_strongly believe.INF.PASS want.3SG

Siculos hoc a me non petisse
 Sicilians.ACC this.ACC by me.ABL NEG ask.INF.PFV

‘(If you dare) to assert that the Sicilians have not asked me to come forward – a thing which your pretended enemy Verres would particularly like us to believe’ (Cic. *Div. Caec.* 12)

From a morphosyntactic perspective, the first construction involves coreferentiality between the subjects of *vult/volunt* and the infinitive, whereas the second construction features an accusative-with-infinitive clause and lacks coreferentiality. In the first construction, the infinitive is invariably passive, which is also usually the case in the second. The passive infinitive is typically *videri* ‘(to be seen >) to seem’. I have identified 37 instances of *videri* with *volunt* (7.05%) and 24 instances with *vult/volt* (5.04%). Other passive infinitives such as *haberi* ‘to be considered’, *adnumerari* ‘to be classified’ and *existimari* ‘to be judged’ may also occasionally occur (cf. examples 24, 27 and 31, respectively). In the second construction, only a few rare cases involve an active infinitive (e.g., *putare* in example 30).

For the semantics, compare example (24), where *volo* unambiguously conveys volitional meaning, with example (23), in which the *volo*-construction is ambiguous between a volitional and a reportative interpretation. More generally, see also example (19), where *volunt* has a reportative function and the construction illustrates an interesting contrast between being and appearing in the subordinate clauses.

A very early instance of this construction, expressing the desire to (not) be perceived in a certain way, is attested in Plautus. In the comedy *Rudens*, volitional *volo* combines with the passive construction *nobiles fieri* ‘to be made known, famous’, as shown by example (32):

- (32) ... *innocentum, qui se scelere*
 innocent.GEN.PL who.REL.PL themselves.ACC crime.ABL
fieri nolunt nobiles.
 make.INF.PASS NEG.want.3PL famous
 ‘the innocent, who do not want to become famous as victims of crime!’ (Pl. *Rud.* 618)

Terence offers another very early example of *volo* associated with others’ perception, as illustrated in example (33). This instance is particularly noteworthy, as it reveals a dissociation between the desires of certain individuals and the opinion of the speaker at T_0 . The last clause, *nec sunt*, underscores the contrast between how these individuals wish to be perceived and the speaker’s divergent view. Although more indirect and nuanced, this example also points to an early underlying association between volition and opinion.

- (33) *est genus hominum, qui esse primos se*
 be.3SG kind men.GEN who.REL.PL be.INF first.ACC themselves.ACC
omnium rerum volunt, nec sunt
 all.GEN things.GEN want.3PL NEG be.3PL
 ‘there is a kind of men that wish to be the first in everything, but they are not’. (Ter. *Eu.* 248)

Passages combining volitional *volo* and a verb of opinion are not particularly numerous in the corpus, as noted earlier in this section. However, it is worth emphasising that doxastic and reportative uses of *volo* are themselves rare, as illustrated in Section 3.1.2. More significantly, such instances of volitional *volo* in conjunction with a verb of opinion tend to emerge during the same period as the emergence of the reportative construction, that is, in the 1st century BCE. These uses of volitional *volo* may have contributed to the formation of a strong conceptual link between volition and opinion, with the volitional verb expressing an individual’s genuine desire and the verb of opinion indicating how matters are perceived by the (syntactic) subject of *volo*. Small clauses may have facilitated the emergence of ambiguity between volitional *volo* and *volo* functioning in a sense akin to a verb of opinion (see Pinkster 2015: 190–191).¹⁹ The diachronic semantic and syntactic development may have unfolded in four steps, as suggested here:

1. *x* wishes to be seen as *z*, cf. example (24) reported here as (34):

- (34) *qui se popularis haberi volunt*
 who them members_of_the_popular_party.ACC consider.INF.PASS want.3PL
 ‘those who wish to be considered members of the popular party’ (Cic. *Catil.* 4.10)

¹⁹ A complication one encounters when examining individual instances is that with these verbs the accusative and infinitive is common as well, and one may hesitate whether the expression at hand is an accusative and infinitive clause without the infinitive *esse* or a combination of an object and a complement [...].

2. *x* wishes *x z* (and believes to be *z*), cf. example (23) reported here as (35):

- (35) *qui vero se populares volunt...*
 who really them(elves).ACC members_of_the_popular_party.ACC want.3PL
 ‘But those who pose as friends of the people’ or ‘want (to be/to be perceived as) *populares*/who claim to be *populares*’ (Cic. *Off.* 2.22.78, alternative translations mine)

3. *x* wishes/believes *y z*, cf. example (13) reported here as (36):

- (36) *qui necessitate motus animorum liberatos volunt*
 who necessity.ABL motion.ACC minds.GEN freed.ACC want.3PL
 ‘those who hold that the mind is released from all necessity of motion’ (Cic. *Fat.* 39)

4. *x* believes/affirms that *y* is *z*, cf. example (19) reported here as (37):

- (37) *istorum ... qui omnia non tam esse*
 these.GEN who.REL.PL all.PL NEG so_much exist.INF

quam videri volunt?
 than (see.INF.PASS >) seem.INF want.3PL
 ‘of these thinkers who hold that everything does not so much exist as seem to exist?’
 (Cic. *Luc.* 44)

Coreferentiality (stages 1 and 2) and the small-clause structure (stages 2 and 3) likely played a crucial role in the diachronic development. In small clauses with coreferentiality (stage 2, e.g., *se populares volunt*), the accusative (*se*) simultaneously refers to the experiencer of the desire (i.e., the referent coded as the syntactic subject of *volo*) and the theme to whom the desired state (to be/to be seen as *populares*) applies. Semantically, this small clause is inherently ambiguous between the meaning ‘to be *populares*’ (copular construction) and the meaning ‘to be seen as *populares*’ (passive construction), thereby blurring the boundary between one’s own volition and opinion and the opinion of others. Subsequently, when coreferentiality is absent (stage 3), the subject of *volo* can be interpreted as both the experiencer of volition and the source of opinion. In other words, the source of opinion on the experiencer of volition shifts from being external – expressed by a dedicated opinion verb in the passive – to being internal and encoded by the volitional verb itself. In fact, in step 3, the verb *volo* functions as an opinion or reportative verb. In stage 4, the reportative function no longer requires either coreferentiality or a small-clause structure to emerge.

This diachronic hypothesis is not incompatible with the view that WANT-verbs may encompass both a bouletic and a doxastic conversational background (see Section 1). Indeed, this very feature may have facilitated the semantic development of *volo* from an implicit doxastic component to an explicit one. The key point for the diachronic account is that the doxastic component anchored to the subject of *volo* becomes explicit in certain constructions, such as those of stage 3, while it was still implicit in stages 1 and 2.

With regards to the presence of a doxastic component – though further research on this point is needed – it is worth noting that there are also instances of *volo* in which the verb

conveys doxastic meaning, resembling a verb of thinking, without fulfilling any reportative function. Cf. the following example:

- (38) *cuius vis lenissimum esse somnum? pueri an senis?*
 who.GEN want.2SG most_light be.INF sleep child.GEN or elderly.GEN
 ‘Who do you think is the most sensitive to noise during sleep – a child or an elderly person?’
 (Sen. *Con.* 7.5.3, translation mine)

Before drawing the conclusions of this investigation, it is worth noting that deontic constructions such as that featured in example (39) may also have contributed to the development of explicitly doxastic and reportative uses of *volo*. However, such constructions are rare in the dataset. This may be attributable to the methodology, as this investigation was restricted to third-person singular and plural forms. See, for instance, example (40) which features *volo* in the first person. The use of *volo* in deontic contexts may have been significant, inasmuch as it involves propositional content as in example (39). The issue warrants further investigation.²⁰

- (39) *volunt etiam vaporem calidum ore recipi*
 want.3PL also steam.ACC hot.ACC mouth.ABL take_in.INF.PASS
 ‘they also order hot steam to be inhaled by the mouth’ (Cels. 4.9)
- (40) *oratos vos omnes volo...*
 pray.PTCP.PFV.PASS you.ACC.PL all.ACC.PL want.1SG
 ‘I should like you all to be persuaded...’ (Ter. *Heaut.* 26)

In the next section, I summarise the main findings concerning the reportative uses of *volo*, before offering some reflections on the well-studied German verb *wollen* and a few brief remarks on the much less examined French verb *vouloir*.

3.3. Synthesis of findings on Latin *volo*

The analysis of *volo* in Latin shows that its reportative use is semantically ambiguous (Section 3.1.1), rare and genre-dependent (Section 3.1.2). There is no sharp separation between volitional and reportative meanings: *volo* often retains a volitional nuance even when reporting others’ opinions. This blending reflects an underlying doxastic background, as has been hypothesised for WANT-verbs in other languages. Genre matters significantly: reportative uses concentrate in treatises (e.g., those by Cicero and Pliny the Elder).

Semantically (Section 3.1.3), reportative *volo* introduces others’ beliefs or views neutrally, without implying endorsement on the part of the speaker at T₀. Ambiguity is stronger when there is coreference between the subject of *volo* and the governed infinitive.

Morphosyntactically (Section 3.1.4), reportative *volo* governs almost exclusively infinitives (mainly present, more rarely perfect); does not govern subjunctive clauses, unlike volitional *volo*; sometimes appears in small-clause structures (with an adjective or a PPP, e.g., *liberatos volunt* in example 14); allows negation, although negative reportative uses are

²⁰ For small clause structures with deontic meaning, see Orlandini (1986).

extremely rare; occurs mainly in present tense, but perfect and imperfect forms are also compatible with the reportative function.

Diachronically (Section 3.2), the reportative construction likely evolved from expressions of self-presentation ('want themselves to be seen as X') using passive infinitives (*videri, haberi*) or small-clause structures ('want themselves X') to the attribution of opinion ('hold that X is true'). The explicit source of opinion shifts from being external (*videri, haberi*) to being explicitly anchored to the subject of *volo*. Overall, reportative *volo* illustrates how verbs of volition may shift towards expressing doxastic and then evidential functions, offering a valuable point of comparison with the developments observed for German *wollen*.

4. Latin *volo* vis-à-vis German *wollen* (with some notes on French *vouloir*)

Latin *volo*, German *wollen*, and French *vouloir* share a common origin from the Proto-Indo-European root * $\text{u}_{\text{el}}\text{h}_1$ - 'to choose' (*LIV*: s.v. * $\text{u}_{\text{el}}\text{h}_1$ -). Their ancient common origin does not imply that they had to follow the same development in their historical evolution. However, possible relationships still need to be explored. First, the relationship between the reportative uses of *volo* and those of *vouloir* has not yet been addressed. It is logical to think that Latin uses could have been continued by French *vouloir*, but this hypothesis has not yet been tested. Though this paper is not directly concerned with this point, investigating the emergence and functioning of reportative *volo* constitutes a necessary step towards a detailed account of the use of reportative WANT in the Romance languages. Second, the earliest constructions attested for German are similar to those attested for Latin, a point that has been overlooked in the previous research on the subject, which has been mainly speculative in its diachronic reconstruction. Third, it is worth trying to understand whether the emergence of the reportative uses can be traced back to some shared elements of the semantics of volition, i.e., elements that could also be relevant in a cross-linguistic perspective.

To advance research on the aforementioned points – though they do not constitute the focus of this paper – Section 4.1 outlines the state of the art regarding the reportative uses of German *wollen* and French *vouloir*, adding some new data for the latter. In fact, it should be emphasised that the data and findings available from previous research, particularly in relation to French *vouloir*, remain far from exhaustive. My objective is not to address these gaps directly, but rather to provide a brief overview of the findings and associated issues.

4.1. Previous research on reportative German *wollen* and French *vouloir*, with some desiderata

To my knowledge, after Diewald (1999: in particular, 424–428), the most detailed diachronic account of the evolution of German *wollen* from volitional to reportative marker remains that of Fritz (2000: 274–278, cf. also Woźnicka 2020). It is worth stressing that Fritz (2000) specifies that a new investigation based on a larger corpus is necessary.

According to Fritz (2000), the earliest attestations of the use of German *wollen* with a reportative function are to be found in Notker's writings (i.e., in Old High German). See example (41). However, the construction is different with respect to that usual nowadays which is illustrated in example (3), in which the subject of *wollen* is the same as the subject of the past infinitive *gehört haben* 'to have heard'. In example (41) *wollen* features a syntactic

subject – *viele* ('genuoge') – which is different from the subject in the subordinate clause introduced by *daß* ('daz') 'that' – the toponym 'taneos' (i.e., Tanis). In this respect, Old High German *wollen* more closely resembles Latin *volo* than it does its modern continuation.

- (41) *bediu uuellen genuoge . daz taneos si . nomen*
 at_that want.3PL many that taneos be.SBJV.3SG noun

ciuitatis in-declinabile . so uuiêo andere chéden
 town indeclinable so as others say.3PL

also dêr fôre stât . tanis nominatiuum . taneos genitiuum.
 so for_this stay tanis nominative taneos genitive

'in regard to this, according to many, the word *Taneos* is an indeclinable place name, while others, assert that *Tanis* is a nominative, *Taneos* a genitive'.²¹

(Notker 1981 Ps. 77, 43, ed. Tax, p. 282, l. 2–4)

The translation relies on the working hypothesis – also adopted for Latin – that the reportative component is neither at-issue nor eventive. As with Latin *volo* (see Sections 1 and 3.1.3), it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between speech, writing, and thought.

The diachrony of the later phases has not yet been clearly reconstructed for German *wollen*. With reference to example (42), which is dated to the 16th century and displays subject coreferentiality, Diewald (1999: 427) acknowledges that the reportative reading of *wollen* is still contextually supported (see *spricht* 'says'), but she already attributes the reportative component to the semantics of the verb.²² This issue remains unresolved and further investigation is required to trace the earliest emergence of the coreferential use of reportative *wollen*.²³ However, as the non-anteriority requirement (cf. Section 3.1.3) is not met in this example, it does not represent a prototypical volitional use.

- (42) *Das das kindlin Jesus nit allein on*
 That the child Jesus NEG only without

seiner eltern wissen /
 his parents know.INF

da hinden zu Jerusalem bleybet / sonder
 there back in Jerusalem remain.3SG but

²¹ Original orthography is retained here for both Old High German and Latin.

²² Indeed, one of the peer reviewers pointed out that this example is ambiguous between a reportative function and a volitional meaning. Cf. below in the text.

²³ With respect to the diachronic pathway, Fritz (2000: 278) suggests that the coreferential construction derives directly from the non-coreferential one, following the model of the German verb *sollen* 'should, shall'. According to Fritz, the coreferential constructions could have served as bridging constructions when their meaning was ambiguous between thought and speech. By contrast, Diewald (1999: 424–425 fn. 57) suggests that the non-coreferential construction is not the precursor of the coreferential one, relying on syntactic grounds (biclausal vs monoclausal structure). In my view, the separation suggested by Diewald – based on issues related to the definition of modality in terms of grammaticalisation and auxiliarisation – does not account for the potential influence that one construction may have exerted on the other. The investigation of this issue, however, lies beyond the scope of this paper.

will auch recht damit thun haben / vnd spricht [...].
 want.3SG also reason with_that done have and speak.3SG
 ‘That the child Jesus does not only remain back there in Jerusalem without the knowledge of his parents, but also wants/thinks to have done right and speaks [...].’
 (Dietrich 1972 p. 122, 33–34, translation mine)

With respect to semantics, Diewald (1999: 424, 427) offers a compelling hypothesis – namely, that the reportative function derives from the volitional meaning of the verb, understood in terms of factuality. The reportative reading is triggered when the speaker at T₀ conveys that the speaker at T₁ *wants* their proposition to be factual. This interpretation which remains speculative for German *wollen* find a parallel in the Latin data, as we have seen in Sections 3.1.3 and 3.2. Indeed, Diewald’s hypothesis is also compatible with the presence of a doxastic component. If a speaker wants their proposition to be accepted as factual, they also believe (or wish to appear to believe) in the truth of its propositional content (see von Fintel 1999).

It is also important to note that in Present-Day German, when the infinitive governed by *wollen* is in the present tense, a high degree of ambiguity arises. See example (43). Out of context, the meaning of (coreferential) *wollen* in this instance is markedly ambiguous. A parallel may be drawn with Latin *volo*, which similarly tends to occur with the present tense. As shown in Sections 3.1.3 and 3.2, *volo* likewise tends to be ambiguous in contexts involving subject coreferentiality.

- (43) *Peter will krank sein.*
 Peter want.3SG ill be.INF
 ‘Peter, self-reportedly, is ill’.
 ‘Peter wants to be ill’. (Example and translations quoted from Remberger 2023: 50)

An unsettled issue in the history of German *wollen* is whether the reportative value can be the result of a semantic calque from Latin *volo*. See Fritz (2000: 275) and, for an earlier comparison of German and Latin data, von Monsterberg-Münckenau (1886: 11).

Diewald (1999: 228 fn. 54) reports that no instances of reportative *wollen* were attested in the corpus she used. Both Diewald (1999: 228) and Vanderbiesen (2014: 173) associate the reportative uses of German *wollen* with specific diaphasic contexts, such as judicial and journalistic discourse. This may suggest another possible parallel with Latin *volo* (see Section 3.1.2). However, precise statistical corpus data are currently lacking for German *wollen*.

The reportative uses of French *vouloir* have been discussed by Gougenheim (1971: 256–257), Goldschmitt (2007: 257–258, 275–278) and Goldschmitt and Landvogt (2008). The meaning ‘to assert, claim, peremptorily support (something)’ is provided in the *Trésor de la langue Française informatisé* (henceforth *TLFi*), s.v. *vouloir*.

Gougenheim (1971) employs the concept of ‘pretension’ to account for uses such as that illustrated in example (44). This instance, which dates back to the 14th century, may represent the earliest attestation of the reportative use of *vouloir* in French. It is worth noting that there is coreferentiality between the subject of *vouloir* and that of the infinitive, and that *vouloir* appears in the past tense.

- (44) [...] le comte d(e) Artois [...] que le dit Messire Robert
 the county of Artois that the said sir Robert

vouloit avoir gagné [...]

want.IMPF have.INF won.PTCP.PRF

‘[...] the county of Artois [...], which, according to the said Messire Robert, he (himself) has obtained [...]’.

(Froissart I 1835, 54, p. 47)

I have found some later examples (cf. examples 45 and 46) of the construction by querying the corpus FRANTEXT.

- (45) (*On les brusla en la chambre du commun.* ‘They were burnt in the common room.’)
Les autres veulent que ce fust en la chambre mesme où...
 The others want.3PL that that be.PRF in the chamber same where
 ‘According to others, it was in the same room where...’

(...*la Roine avoyt fait nourrir ses enfans à la mamelle...* ‘the Queen had her children breast-fed...’) (FRANTEXT S245 | René de Lucinge – *Dialogue du François et du Savoy sien*, 1593)

Example (46) shows a certain degree of ambiguity between volitional meaning and reportative function:

- (46) (*je confesse volontiers que les livres de nostre religion, où est comprinse la sagesse celeste de Dieu, non seulement ne sont point fardez de couleurs rhetoriques, mais aussi qu’ils n’ont point une telle apparence que peuvent desirer gens lettrez. Au reste je dy que ceulx qui en tiennent moins de compte pour cela, sont par trop chagrins et difficiles à contenter,* ‘I willingly confess that the books of our religion, in which the celestial wisdom of God is understood, are not only not adorned with rhetorical colours, but also that they do not have such an appearance as people of letters might desire. In addition, I say that those who consider them of lesser value for that reason are too sullen and difficult to please’)

et que ceulx qui soubz ceste couverture veulent
 and that those who under this cover want.3PL

que l’ autorité en soit moindre,
 that the authority of.them be.SBJV.3SG less

sont par trop iniques et ingrats.

be.3PL too.much iniquitous and ungrateful

‘...and that those according to whom under this cover their authority is less, are too iniquitous and ungrateful’.

(FRANTEXT R967 | Jean Calvin – *Des scandales*, 1550)

Given the current state of research on French *vouloir*, it is not yet possible to establish any precise parallel with Latin *volo*. Further investigation is required to clarify the evolution from Latin to French, as well as the subsequent diachronic development of French *vouloir*. By contrast, it has been possible to draw some parallels between reportative *volo* and reportative

German *wollen*, while also delineating the limits of such a comparison. Reportative German *wollen* has become a highly grammaticalised verb, permitting only specific constructions (coreferentiality, past infinitives), whereas Latin *volo* did not reach the same degree of grammaticalisation.

Conclusions

In this paper I have presented a corpus-based analysis of the hitherto unexamined reportative uses of Latin *volo*. This has involved a discussion of the inherent non-discreteness between its volitional meaning and its reportative function; its distribution within the corpus and across genres (Section 3.1.2); its semantic and pragmatic values (Section 3.1.3); and its morphosyntactic behaviour (Section 3.1.4). I have also proposed a diachronic hypothesis for Latin *volo*, according to which a doxastic source shifted from being explicitly external (i.e., attributed to the others) to being explicitly internal, located within the volitional entity that would later become the source of reported speech or thought. Furthermore, I have reviewed the current state of research on other reportative (volitional) verbs – particularly German *wollen*, and to a lesser extent French *vouloir* – highlighting the need for further diachronic and comparative investigation.

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