

Rhythmical clausulae in the letters of Saint Augustine

In two studies, we employed statistical models to test for the presence of rhythmical forms in the clausulae, or sentence-endings, of late imperial Latin prose¹). The results of our tests revealed that the *cursus mixtus*, a system integrating metrical and accentual rhythms, was the preferred clausular style in such Christian authors as Minucius, Cyprian and Arnobius (third century) and Ennodius (fifth century) and in secular writers of the third to fifth centuries like Ausonius, Symmachus and the authors of the *Panegyrici latini* and the Theodosian law-codes. Christian writers of the fourth to early fifth centuries, namely Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, show more diversity in their choice of rhythms. Our limited survey of their corpora detected the *cursus mixtus*, the purely accentual *cursus*, metrical only rhythms, and even the absence of deliberate rhythm altogether²).

The *cursus mixtus*³) is the term used by modern researchers to describe the system of clausular rhythm that combined the accentual forms of the *cursus* simultaneously with the traditional metrical patterns derived from Cicero and the Asiatic school. There are three standard forms of the *cursus*⁴) — *planus*, *tardus* and *velox*⁵). Each of these forms

¹) S.M. OBERHELMAN and R.G. HALL, "A New Statistical Analysis of Accentual Prose Rhythms in Imperial Latin Authors", *Classical Philology* 79 (1984), 114-130 (hereafter, "Analysis"); "Meter in Accentual Clausulae in Late Imperial Latin Prose", *Classical Philology* 80 (1985), 214-227 (hereafter, "Meter"). We followed up these articles with two specialized studies: Hall and Oberhelman, "Rhythmical Clausulae in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the *Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*", *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985), 201-214 (hereafter, "Codex"); "Internal Clausulae in Late Latin Prose as Evidence for the Displacement of Metre by Word-Stress", *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986), 505-526 (hereafter, "Internal Clausulae"). We acknowledge with deep appreciation Thomas Habinek and Michael Roberts for their constructive criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper.

²) For details about the individual works surveyed here, see the Table in "Meter", pp. 222-223.

³) For a bibliography on the *cursus mixtus*, see *ibid.*, p. 216 note 11.

⁴) For a bibliography on the *cursus*, see Tore JANSON, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the 9th to the 13th Century* (Stockholm, 1975), pp. 128-131.

⁵) There are other patterns of the *cursus*, notably the *trispondaicus*, *medius* and *dispondaicus*. They are, however, rare in occurrence and should be considered irregular clausulae. See OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Analysis", p. 115 note 6, and HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Internal Clausulae", pp. 508 and 520.

may be thought of in terms of the distance between and after the last two word-accents of a clausula⁶). The *planus* consists of two unaccented syllables between the final accents and one unaccented syllable after the last (*purúmque servári*)⁷). The *tardus* comprises two unaccented syllables between the two accents and two unaccented after the final accent (*aetátem profícimus*). The *velox* finds four unaccented syllables between the two accents and one following the last (*fácere voluísti*)⁸).

The metrical rhythms of the *cursus mixtus* are largely confined to four patterns: cretic-spondee (*dilectiōnē mīttēnda*); ditrochee (*álterum rēspūédum*); dicretic (*negārē nōn pōssūmus*); and cretic-tribrach (*fāmā nōn tǎcūit*)⁹). In the system of the *cursus mixtus*, these metrical patterns fall under the three accentual rhythms: there is a very high coincidence of accent and ictus¹⁰), as well as an exact correspondence of the number of

⁶) JANSON, *Prose Rhythm*, p. 52.

⁷) For a good discussion of the various typologies and forms of the three standard cadences, see G. LINDHOLM, *Studien zum mittellateinischen Prosarhythmus: Seine Entwicklung und sein Abklingen in der Briefliteratur Italiens* (Stockholm, 1963), pp. 39-54.

⁸) JANSON, *Prose Rhythm*, p. 52, points out that W. MEYER, "Die rhythmische lateinische Prosa" in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zum mittellateinischen Rhythmus*, II (Berlin, 1905), pp. 234-286, was correct in his belief that the *cursus* system was described only in these terms and was not concerned with typology. Cf. L. LAURAND, *Études sur le style des discours de Cicéron, avec une esquisse de l'histoire du "cursus"*, 2nd edition. III (Paris, 1927), p. 357. M.G. NICOLAU, *L'origine du "cursus" rythmique et les debuts de l'accent d'intensité en latin* (Paris, 1930), p. 109, and "Notes sur l'histoire du 'cursus' rythmique", *ALMA* 7 (1932), 38, was incorrect on his insistence on strict typological forms of the *cursus* in imperial Latin prose. See also OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Analysis", p. 115 note 7.

⁹) The cretic-tribrach was not favored by Cicero; we found only 21 occurrences of it in 908 of Cicero's clausulae that we sampled. But it does become a desired clausula in the prose of imperial Latin; in fact, it is the third most frequent metrical form in some of the *Panegyrici latini*. The increase of popularity can be traced to the coincidence of the metrical scheme and the accentual pattern (*cursus tardus*). Moreover, the cretic-tribrach became viewed as a resolution of the cretic-spondee of Cicero; cf. M.C. HERRON, *A Study of the Clausulae in the Writings of St. Jerome* (Washington, D.C., 1937), p. 7, and K. BRAZZEL, *The Clausulae in the Works of St. Gregory the Great* (Washington, D.C., 1939), pp. 14-15.

¹⁰) H. HAGENDAHL, "La prose métrique d'Arnobé. Contributions à la connaissance de la prose littéraire de l'Empire", *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift* 42 (1937), 74-75; NICOLAU, *L'origine*, pp. 57-82; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edition, p. 889; M. NOVOTNÝ, *État actuel des études sur le rythme de la prose latine*, *Eus*, Supplementa V (Lwów, 1929), pp. 63-66. The issue of an ictus in metrical prose is, to say the least, complicated and unresolved. See M.G. NICOLAU, "Quelques considérations sur l'ictus et sur ses rapports avec l'accent", *REL* 7 (1929), 148-169; L.P. WILKINSON, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 142-148; and W.S. ALLEN, *Accent and Rhythm: Prosodic Features of Latin and Greek; A Study in Theory and Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 341-342 with notes. We use here the term ictus merely to denote the first syllable of each metrical unit in a prose clausula; e.g., in the clausula *Caesarem misit* we place an ictus on *Cae-* and *mi-*, which are respectively the first syllables of the cretic and of the spondee.

syllables required for both the metrical and accentual forms. For example, the clausula *defensioñē nōtīssīmi* contains both a *cursus tardus* and a dicretic: the two rhythms have a common caesura (after the second syllable of the first word) and an identical number of syllables (six); moreover, the two accents correspond to the first syllables of the two cretics. Likewise, the *cursus planus* clausula *tāntūs ēst mūndus* has a caesura-placement and number of syllables common to its corresponding metrical scheme, the cretic-spondee, and the accents on *tantus* and *mundus* coincide with the first syllables of the cretic and spondee units. The system of the *cursus mixtus* permits two exceptions to the coincidence of accent and ictus: in the cases of the *cursus velox* combined with a cretic-spondee (*pābulūm rēfrēnābar*) and the *cursus planus* with a ditrochee (*commovēndūm vālēbit*).

In sum, the ideal *cursus mixtus* displays the following simultaneous occurrences of accentual and metrical patterns: under the *cursus planus* falls the cretic-spondee (*mōrtē pāllēscunt*); under the *cursus tardus*, the dicretic or cretic-tribach (*tēmpūs ādvēnērīt* or *īpsā stūltītia*); and under the *cursus velox*, the ditrochee (*spātium dēpūtātur*). It is not uncommon for the ditrochee to occur with the *cursus planus* (*servōrūm tuōrūm*) or for the cretic-spondee to fall under the *cursus velox* (*quaerēbat nōn vōlūptātem*)¹¹).

In previous studies we examined Augustine's *Confessiones*, *Epistulae*, and *De civitate dei*¹²). Of these, the *Confessiones* show no deliberate

¹¹) In the *cursus mixtus* system, the clausula occasionally may be structured only from an accentual bias, without regard for a metrical scheme, and at other times may be formed only quantitatively. For example, *hōmīnē pōtest* renders no metrical form, but is a good *cursus planus*. On the other hand, *exhāuriēbār māgis* yields a dicretic, but accentually can be taken only as a *cursus dispondaicus*, a rare and irregular form. The metrical nature of this latter clausula becomes more obvious when one notes that the author, by employing a more regular word-order, could have written a *cursus velox* with a ditrochee falling under the accentual scheme (*māgis exhāuriēbār*). For examples in the prose of the Christian Arnobius, see HAGENDAHL, "La prose métrique", pp. 70-73 and 76-77. A full treatment of the forms of the *cursus mixtus* in internal positions appears in HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Internal Clausulae", pp. 519-524.

¹²) See above, note 2. The prose rhythms of Augustine have been treated elsewhere. A partial bibliography is included: C. BALMUS, *Études sur le style de S. Augustin* (Paris, 1930), pp. 307-314; M.S. MULDOWNY, *Word-Order in the Works of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C., 1937), esp. pp. 124-126; T. SULLIVAN, *S. Aureli Augustini De doctrina christiana liber quartus* (Washington, D.C., 1930), pp. 138-143; F. DI CAPUA, "Il ritmo prosaico in S. Agostino", *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, II (Rome, 1931), pp. 607-764 (criticized by M.G. NICOLAU in REL 10 [1932], 487-489); M.J. BRENNAN, *A Study of the Clausulae in the Sermons of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C., 1947); G. REYNOLDS, *The Clausulae in the De civitate dei of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C., 1924); H. HAGENDAHL, *Augustine and*

rhythmical tendencies, while the other two display the forms of the *cursus mixtus*, though at a somewhat lower rate of incidence than found in other *cursus mixtus* works of the period. While we should beware of making judgments about the general clausular tendencies of any author until all of his works are studied, we may nonetheless come closer to understanding an author's intentions with regard to style, if we can make a more refined analysis of the rhythmical system in any individual work. This we have done in the case of Augustine's *Epistolae*.

The letters, which are datable from Augustine's conversion in A.D. 386 to his death in 430, span the greater part of his career and therefore would reflect his attitudes toward, and his use of, clausular rhythms better than any other work in his corpus. Augustine's datable letters traditionally have been published or acknowledged in an arrangement of three groups¹³): Group I covers the period following his conversion up to his elevation to the episcopate (386-95); the letters in Group II belong to the years 396-410 (the early episcopate); and those in Group III date from 411 to 430, when Augustine rose to even greater prominence by virtue of his actions and writings countering the doctrines of both Donatus and Pelagius. We have tested each group for individual rhythmical tendencies. The results of our tests are contained in the following Table.

TABLE I

	I 386-393	II 396-410	III 410-
A. Incidence of cursus forms			
1. Planus ó o o ó o			
(a) ó o o ó o			
purumque servari	48	78	117

the Latin Classics (Göteborg, 1967), pp. 591-592; H.I. MARROU, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), pp. 80-81; M. VERHEIJEN, "La theorie du rythme et la critique textuelle des Confessions de saint Augustin", *Archivo Agustiniano* 45 (1951), 5-9; and B.L. MEULENBROEK, *Metriek en rhythmiek in Augustinus' Cassiciacum-Dialogen* (Nijmegen, 1942).

¹³ See J.H. BAXTER, *Select Letters of St. Augustine* (London, 1930), pp. xlv-xlvi, for a discussion of the publication of the letters.

(b) ó o o ó o			
animus videt	20	23	40
(c) ó o o ó o			
opus est dici	18	20	29
(d) ó o o ó o			
patiebantur	10	21	21
(e) ó o o ó o			
nunc dormientem	2	5	4
(f) ó o o ó o			
non potes posse	0	1	2
Total	98	148	213

2. Tardus ó o o ó o o			
(a) ó o o ó o o			
aetatem proficimus	45	53	59
(b) ó o o ó o o			
similiter novimus	23	17	20
(c) ó o o ó o o			
naturam non abstulit	13	15	19
(d) ó o o ó o o			
quidem putandus est	5	8	8
(e) ó o o ó o o			
perpetientibus	4	0	0
(f) ó o o ó o o			
dum licet cupere	2	1	1
(g) ó o o ó o o			
intelligentior factus est	1	2	3
(h) ó o o ó o o			
quam difficilia	1	2	0
(i) ó o o ó o o			
perniciosum sit	3	2	1
(j) ó o o ó o o			
tunc et hoc transferant	0	0	1
(k) ó o o ó o o			
est ut existimo	0	0	1
Total	97	100	113

3. Velox ó o o o o ó o			
(a) ó o o o o ó o			
facere voluisti	31	78	101
(b) ó o o o o ó o			
praesentia tua frui	8	4	5
(c) ó o o o o ó o			
fingimus et putamus	2	9	18
(d) ó o o o o ó o			
statum est consequaris	2	11	8

(e) ó o o o o ó o			
hominem qui est Christus	0	0	1
(f) ó o o o o ó o			
praesumendum est id futurum	0	0	1
(g) ó o o o o ó o			
regeneratione	0	0	1
Total	43	102	135
Total of the three cursus forms	238	350	461

4. Irregular forms of the cursus

(a) Trispondaicus	ó o o o ó o			
(1) ó o o o o' o				
Christi repetatur	31	43	29	
(2) ó o o o o' o				
dicere permisit	12	6	4	
(3) ó o o o ó o				
appellaret et quam pulchrum	5	5	4	
(4) ó o o o ó o				
amandus est quam corpus	1	0	0	
(5) ó o o o ó o				
generatione	2	3	5	
(b) Medius	ó o ó o o			
(1) ó o ó o o				
esse dicitur	22	17	7	
(2) ó o ó o o				
per memoriam	3	2	3	
(3) ó o ó o o				
minus summo sit	3	1	2	
(4) ó o ó o o				
qua sunt omnia	1	0	1	
(5) ó o ó o o				
pulchritudinem	7	8	8	
(6) ó o ó o o				
ornaturi sunt	1	7	6	
(7) ó o ó o o				
si non feceris	0	0	1	
(c) Dispondaicus	ó o ó o			
(1) ó o ó o				
esse possit	36	22	25	
(2) ó o ó o				
frequentatur abs te	2	1	2	
Total of irregular forms	126	115	97	

5. Rare and non-accentual forms

(a) ó o o o ó o o			
existentibus irascimur	12	6	1
(b) ó o o o ó o o			
necessario venturus sis	1	0	0
(c) ó o o o ó o o			
mutabilis ut anima	2	0	0
(d) ó o o ó			
legere te	2	2	0
(e) Questionable cadences			
(1) hic quod non habebant	1	0	0
(2) illic de te agatur	1	0	0
Total of rare forms	19	8	1
Total of rare and irregular forms	145	123	98

Total number of clausulae 383 473 559

Proportion of the three cursus forms $238/383 = .621$ $350/473 = .740$ $461/559 = .825$

B. Incidence of common ^a metrical forms

1. Cretic-spondee - u - - x			
dilectione mittenda	73	120 ^b	176 ^b
2. Ditrochee ^c - u - x			
alterum respuendum	57	101	120
3. Dicretic - u - - u x			
negare non possumus	62	54	60
4. Cretic-tribach - u - u u x			
fama non tacuit	23	29	26
5. Dispondee - - - x			
aberit ignorantur	27	49	54
6. First paeon-spondee - u u u - x			
unde potuerunt	20	23	12
7. Fourth paeon-spondee u u u - - x			
asserert audebis	8	3	5
8. Trochee-cretic - u - u x			
consideranda sunt	20	22	26
9. Spondee-cretic - - - u x			
naturam non abstulit	23	18	12
10. Dactyl-spondee - u u - x			
atomos Epicuri	5	18	15
11. Dactyl-cretic - u u - u x			
commemorata sunt	10	2	5

12. Miscellaneous forms

(a) () () () () x			
facit animas	18	7	13
(b) - - () () x			
non inveniunt	11	3	6
(c) () () () - - () x			
aliud existimo	8	2	1
(d) All other forms	18	22	28
Total number of clausulae	383	473	559
Total number of the four metrical forms	271	304	382

Proportion of the four metrical forms $271/383 = .572$ $304/473 = .643$ $382/559 = .683$

C. Distribution of the four metrical forms under the accentual clausulae

1. Planus ó o o ó o

(a) Cretic-spondee - () - - x

(1) purumque servari	39	68	104
(2) tantus est mundus	8	12	19
(3) arbori vitae	7	10	23
(4) sentiebatur	1	2	3
(5) non voluntate	0	2	2
(6) non potes posse	0	1	2
Total	55	95	153

(b) Ditrochee - () - x

(1) commovendum valebit	4	7	5
(2) intellegendum	6	8	5
(3) nunc dormientem	2	2	1
Total	12	17	11

Total under the planus 67 112 164

2. Tardus ó o o ó o o

(a) Dicretic - () - - () x

(1) defensione notissimi	23	31	28
(2) cogitationibus irruant	7	6	11
(3) habere quam dicere	6	9	11
(4) prosus incertus est	3	4	0
(5) dum licet dicere	0	1	1
(6) tunc et hoc transferant	0	0	1
(7) est ut existimo	0	0	1
(8) apostoli verba sunt	0	0	2
Total	39	51	55

(b) Cretic-tribrach - ∪ - ∪ ∪ ×

(1) ipsa stultitia	8	12	15
(2) invicem faciunt	2	9	0
(3) omnino non valeo	6	5	4
(4) dum licet cupere	2	0	0
(5) non avaritia	0	2	0
Total	18	26	19

Total under the tardus 57 77 74

3. Velox ó o o o o ó o

(a) Ditrochee - ∪ - ×

(1) spatium deputatur	15	39	62
(2) animam corpus esse	4	1	2
(3) fingimus et putamus	2	5	12
(4) statum est consequaris	2	5	5
Total	23	50	81

(b) Cretic-spondee - ∪ - - ×

(1) pabulum refrenabar	3	6	9
(2) arbitror pati posse	1	0	2
(3) generum sit attendo	0	1	1
(4) eo sunt salutamus	0	1	2
Total	4	8	14

Total under the velox 27 58 95

Proportion of the three accentual clausulae with exact coincidence of accent and ictus

$$135/238 = .567\ 222/350 = .634\ 308/461 = .668$$

Proportion of the three accentual clausulae with the four metrical forms falling under them, irrespective of coincidence of accent and ictus

$$151/238 = .634\ 247/350 = .706\ 333/461 = .722$$

a. Metrical patterns which occurred less than five times in our sample are not included here. It should be kept in mind that we took only a random sample and did not investigate all of the clausulae in the letters — the standard procedure when inductive statistics are used.

b. The typology of the metrical forms is not needed. Since the prose rhythm is the *cursus mixtus*, it is important to know only the distribution of the metrical patterns under forms of the *cursus*.

c. Writers who employ the *cursus mixtus* are indifferent to the syllables preceding the ditrochee. Cicero, on the other hand, favored the cretic before the ditrochee; see A.W. DE GROOT, *La prose métrique des anciens* (Paris, 1926), p. 9 and *Die antike Prosarythmus* (Groningen, 1921), pp. 106-7.

The data indicate a remarkable usage of clausular rhythms by Augustine. Groups II and III of the letters clearly are structured on accentual lines. 74.0 percent and 82.5 percent respectively of the clausulae in these two groups display the three standard forms of the *cursus*. These frequencies are far beyond what we should expect in non-rhythmical prose: we have determined elsewhere¹⁴⁾ that a text void of conscious rhythmical tendencies in its clausulae will contain fortuitous standard forms of the *cursus* only in the range of 53-63 percent. Statistics tell us that, if Augustine's letters in Groups II and III were in fact non-accentual, the probability of observing such frequencies in random samples of 473 and 559 clausulae is less than one in 1000.

The clausulae in Groups II and III are structured not only along accentual lines but along metrical as well, that is, they indicate the presence of the *cursus mixtus*. About two-thirds of the clausulae in these letters contain one of the four standard metrical forms of the *cursus mixtus*: cretic-spondee, dicretic, cretic-tribach, and ditrochee. These frequencies are about twice what we should observe in non-metrical prose (36 percent) and are significantly higher than the expected occurrences of these forms in an accentual text void of metrical tendencies¹⁵⁾. On the basis of inductive statistics we can be 90 percent certain that such frequencies of metrical forms could not be expected unless there had been a deliberate attempt to accommodate them.

The data for the clausulae in Group I, on the other hand, show that there has been no conscious structuring of the clausulae from an accentual bias. Our statistical model developed elsewhere¹⁶⁾ demonstrates, with only a five percent margin of error, that the number of accentual forms in Group I is well within the range of occurrences expected for non-accentual prose. These same clausulae, however, are decidedly metrical¹⁷⁾ and display the Ciceronian system that had become standard in earlier imperial prose¹⁸⁾. So far the only other work

¹⁴⁾ See OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Analysis", pp. 117-120.

¹⁵⁾ See our discussion in "Meter", pp. 218-219, of the fortuitous metrical forms in the accentual treatises of Dante, Boccaccio and John of Salisbury.

¹⁶⁾ See OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Analysis", pp. 120-127.

¹⁷⁾ The reason for the higher proportion of the four metrical forms in Groups II and III than in Group I is simple. Since Augustine is striving for the *cursus mixtus* in the former groups, the accentual patterns have the effect of causing a proportionately higher number of trochaic and cretic forms, due to the laws of Latin accentuation. We have elaborated on this phenomenon in "Meter", pp. 217-219.

¹⁸⁾ Cicero, of course, had a much varied prose rhythm system and did not limit

written after A.D. 200 in which we have detected purely metrical cadences is Lactantius' *Institutiones divinae*¹⁹). Possible reasons for the use in Group I of Ciceronian rhythms, bereft of accentual patterns, are discussed below.

As Section C of Table I indicates, Augustine strove for a coincidence of accentual and metrical patterns in Groups II and III. Approximately 65 percent of the clausulae displaying the three standard forms of the *cursus* have a coincidence of ictus and accent, that is, an exact correspondence with one of the four metrical forms of the *cursus mixtus*. This frequency increases to over 70 percent when the ditrochee under the *cursus planus* and the cretic-spondee under the *cursus velox* are included. The rates of correspondence of ictus and accent do not approach those found in contemporary secular writings, but this is no doubt a manifestation of Augustine's desire to avoid excessive ornamentation in his clausulae — a subject to be dealt with below.

As we noted previously, some clausulae in a *cursus mixtus* system will display only accentual properties, others only metrical. This phenomenon holds true for the letters in Groups II and III. For example, the following clausulae make no sense metrically: *considerārē vōlūērat* (185.7.30)²⁰); *brēvīā fīēret* (199.2.29); and *gaudērē rēcīpēret* (187.7.30). They are, however, excellent forms of the *cursus tardus*. Other clausulae render good metrical forms but highly irregular cadences of the *cursus*. For example, the clausulae *expectātiōnēm tuām* (187.1.2), *sīngulārī mōdo* (187.3.10), and *īnvēnīrī pōtest* (194.4) are dicretics, but accentually can be defined only as forms of the highly irregular and infrequent *cursus dispondaicus*. Likewise, the clausula *ecclesiāe sībī crēdītae* (185.7.28), which could be analyzed as a form of the irregular *cursus medius*, should in fact be taken simply as a dicretic.

Given the clear evidence of the rhythmical patterns in Augustine's letters, the remainder of this study will deal with the following concerns: (1) an elucidation of certain philological phenomena and related aspects of the author's choice of word-order and vocabulary and employment of hiatus or elision in Groups II and III, based on an understanding of

himself to cretic and trochaic rhythms. Later writers, however, concentrated almost exclusively on these rhythms and, in effect, canonized them. See WILKINSON, *Artistry*, pp. 157-159, 162-163, and HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Codex", p. 201 note 4.

¹⁹) OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Analysis", p. 124, and "Meter", pp. 222, 235.

²⁰) For our quotation of the letters of Augustine, as well as our sampling, we used the CSEL five-volume edition of Al. Goldbacher (Leipzig, 1895-1923).

their rhythmical tendencies; and (2) a finer assessment of the nature of Augustine's clausulae, coupled with a comparative analysis of contemporary writers, which in turn will lead to a consideration of clausulae as one symbol in the cultural struggle between Christian and pagan in the late empire.

1.

A study of the clausulae in Groups II and III reveals that there has been a loss of distinction in the quantity of certain vowels and a lengthening in others²¹). To wit, final *-o*, which is generally long in classical and early imperial Latin, has become short in certain situations. A long *-o* is maintained in dative and ablative singular forms of the second declension and also in the nominative singular of third declension *-io* nouns, as in *persecutiō iūsta* (185.2.11) and *perturbatiō tīmēbātur* (213.1). A shortened *-o* is found, however, in the following four categories:

(a) the nominative singular of other classes of third declension nouns: *multitūdō sānctorum* (186.7.25) and *nēmō mōriātur* (185.2.11);

(b) adverbs: *aliquāndō vēxāntur* (185.2.7); *omnīnō cōrrigēre* (185.7.28); *profēctō trāctāndi* (201.2); and *quāndō dīcēbant* (187.3.9);

(c) verbal forms in the first person singular²²): *ādiūvāt quāesō te* (193.3.5) and *audēbō mē pīngēre* (186.12.40); and

(d) gerunds in the ablative singular: *ferēndō sērvīret* (185.5.19); *saeviēndō tērrēbant* (185.7.27); and *accusāndō mīserunt* (185.2.6).

Other changes in quantity may be noted briefly. The pronominal genitive singular ending in *-ius* now appears to display a short *-i-*, with the resultant shift in accent from the penult to the antepenult:

²¹) For a more complete discussion of this and other phenomena enumerated in this section, see HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Codex", pp. 208-210. The legal writings, which quite likely reflect the standard Latin language and the dominant rhythmical tendencies of the era, provide a useful point of comparison for Augustine's letters. In general the letters reflect philological and stylistic phenomena detected in the legal texts: any differences will be noted below.

When statistical data on Augustine's letters were compiled, we did not include cases of doubtful quantity and hiatus/elision. These clausulae were noted and then examined after the rhythmical tendencies had been determined.

²²) Although we did not detect any third conjugation *-io* verbs in our random survey of Augustine, we have observed that such verbs in other authors have a long *-o* in the first person singular present active indicative.

illius dixērim (185.1.4); *illius sed ipsorum* (208.5); and *illius venīremus* (187.9.30)²³. The perfect subjunctive and the future perfect indicative endings in the first plural (-*erimus*) and second plural (-*eritis*) show a long -i- in the penult and, as a consequence, receive the stress: *promissum est sumpsērīmus* (187.5.16); *potestātibus emērītis* (235.1); and *facere viderītis* (211.11)²⁴. Finally, the verb *do/dare* realizes a long -a- thematic vowel, most likely arising from its frequent appearance as a dissyllable, in which case the -a- lengthens from the force of the word-accent: *cētērīs dātūr* (193.4.9); *mērita nōstrā dāri* (194.3.7); and *ecclesiīs dātum* (185.4.17).

In the case of word-order, it is easily apparent that Augustine frequently structured his clausulae with a view toward the rhythms of the *cursus mixtus*. Word-order is clearly changed to effect a desired cadence, and the tendency to position the verb last in forgone in the interests of rhythm²⁵). A few examples will suffice. At 186.10.35 the verb is placed next to last in *quod facere per liberum iubēntūr arbitrium*, where a *cursus tardus* with cretic-tribrach is obviously intended. A more usual word-order of *liberum arbitrium iubēntur* or perhaps *arbitrium liberum iubēntur* (so as to avoid hiatus in the former) would have achieved the ditrochee but also the irregular *cursus trispondaicus* in each case. In *Epist.* 237 Augustine places the complementary infinitive either before or after the main verb to effect rhythm: *scripturas canonicas conēntūr expōnere* (5) and *illud quod hic ipsi sapiunt, occultārē cōnāntur* (7). Finally, in the following examples the periphrastic *sum* is set before its participle doubtless to achieve desirable rhythms: *a virginibus sunt faciendā nūptūris* (211.14); *errore decepti vel timōrē sūnt victi* (228.5); and *quaerērētūr ēs mīssus* (229).

Regarding the issue of hiatus and elision in Augustine's letters, our work with other texts of the era has taught this simple rule: once the specific rhythmical tendencies of a work are determined, hiatus is allowed if a desired clausula is obtained: otherwise, elision²⁶). Since it is clear that Augustine intended the *cursus mixtus* in Groups II and III of his letters, judgments about hiatus and elision become easy.

²³) Such forms did not turn up in our random survey of the legal texts.

²⁴) For similar practices in Arnobius and other late Latin authors, see HAGENDAHL, "La prose métrique", pp. 103-105. See also SULLIVAN, *Doctrina*, p. 139.

²⁵) For a discussion of the advocacy of these stylistic devices in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and in Cicero's *Orator*, see WILKINSON, *Artistry*, pp. 156-157, and HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Internal Clausulae", pp. 524-525. Augustine deals with the same phenomena in the *De doctr. christ.* 4.20.41. See also MULDOWNEY, *Word-Order*, pp. 124-126.

Est in final position is always elided, but not necessarily at other positions in the clausula. For example, *est* elides in *âtquē clārīssīma (e)st* (190.6.26), *indicārē diffīcīle (e)st* (199.11.42), and *inconsultius ādsērēndum (e)st* (202A.2.5). When not in the final position, *est* is elided in *iucundīssīmūm (e)st fēcīmus* (186.12.39), but not in *inputāndum ēst vōluntāti* (186.11.38), *consulta est ūnitātis* (204.2), and *intelligēndā ēst facta* (205.3.17).

Elision is freely employed at any place in the clausula, as rhythm dictates: *vallāt(o) ēt ōbstrīcto* (187.1.2); *fuīss(e) īn īnfērno* (187.2.6); *orācūl(a) īntēllēgens* (197.1); *mīserīcōrdī(a) ēt vērītātē* (186.6.17); and, with two elisions, *addīscēr(e) īn prōmptu (e)st* (199.12.46). At the same time, we see hiatus in *membrōrūm īn cōrpōre* (187.6.20); *loquēndō ēxpūgnent* (191.2); *ēssē ēxīstīment* (194.10.44); *âtquē ōpērāndi* (186.1.1); and *tuum laudārē īngēnūm* (202A.3).

Finally, the conjunctions *et*, *atque* and *-que* are used interchangeably to effect good forms of the *cursus mixtus*. There is no difference between *et* and *atque*, except in the rhythms rendered, in *volēbāt ēt pōtērat* (185.4.15), *esset âtquē fīrmāta* (185.7.25), and *prohibendo âtquē plēctēdo* (185.5.19). The enclitic *-que* is popular in the letters, since the word to which it is attached produces a trochee and simultaneously the first part of a *planus* or *tardus* cadence. Many clausulae, less acceptable rhythmically with *et* and *atque*, become so with *-que*. For example, *recte congruentērqū rēspōndērīm* (207) renders a *cursus tardus* with dicretic: had Augustine employed *et* or *atque*, the result would have been the *cursus tardus* with the uncommon spondee-dicretic²⁷).

2.

We may now turn our attention to distinctive features of the rhythmical patterns in each of the groups of letters. In so doing we will attempt to gauge Augustine's rhetorical allegiances and to understand his possible reasons for adopting different clausular styles or even variations within a particular style.

²⁶) For hiatus and elision in Augustine's works see MULDOWNNEY, *Word-Order*, pp. 126-127.

²⁷) *-ve* would seem to be used in the same way as *-que*; cf. *diis multis falsīsvē mīscērent* (187.8.29). We detected no clausulae with *-ve* in the legal texts.

In view of the trends readily apparent among most late Latin authors (the overwhelming dominance of the *cursum mixtus* and the emergence of the accentual *cursum*), any work of this era which displays purely metrical rhythms would appear anachronistic or, at least, highly reminiscent of classical and early empire prose. Even so, there can be no doubt that metrical systems are intended in Lactantius' *Institutiones divinae* and Augustine's early letters (Group I). While there is statistical certainty in our decisions about these writings, it is revealing to compare some figures. We have determined that the proportion of metrical forms in the *Institutiones* is 66.2 percent²⁸). Samples that we have taken from Cicero's *Catilinarians* and *Philippics* show rates of incidences of the four metrical patterns at 71.1 percent and 65.5 percent respectively²⁹). While the figures for Cicero and Lactantius are statistically compatible, there is a significant difference for the 57.2 percent for Augustine's Group I. The easiest explanation for this difference is the desire by Augustine to avoid a pronounced use of rhythm, as will be pointed out below.

But the foremost question is why Lactantius and Augustine chose to imitate the Ciceronian clausular system in these writings. In the case of Lactantius' *Institutiones*, the answer seems simple. In this work, which he addresses to educated pagans of his day, Lactantius does not stint in expressing his admiration for Cicero's style³⁰). His devotion to Cicero was so widely perceived that, at least by the time of the Renaissance, he was hailed as the Christian Cicero.

Augustine's attitudes toward Cicero and the rhetorical heritage are somewhat difficult to chart. It is well known that a work of Cicero (the now lost *Hortensius*) guided a youthful Augustine toward a love of philosophy. On the other hand, many regard his *Confessiones*, written c. 397-400, as a manifesto proclaiming his freedom from a dependence upon the pagan past³¹). The actual truth may not be so clear-cut. Roughly contemporaneously with the composition of the *Confessiones*, Augustine produced a rhetorical study, the *De doctrina christiana*, which represented his attempt to predicate a culture for Christian writers and speakers on the basis of sacred writers. Time and again in the *De*

²⁸) See OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Meter", p. 222.

²⁹) Ibid., p. 219.

³⁰) See, e.g., *Inst. div.* 2.3.4, 3.13.13, and 3.14.7.

³¹) See HAGENDAHL, *Augustine*, p. 715.

doctrina, Augustine cites Cicero, although not by name but, for example, by "*quidam eloquens*," as the authority in rhetorical matters³²).

In sum, the metrical clausulae detected in Augustine's early letters and in Lactantius' *Institutiones*, while not in accord with the clausular norms of the day, are quite likely instances of archaizing and are intended to recall metrical paradigms of Cicero himself. We may surmise that the letters of Group I were composed during a period in which Augustine had no qualms about his writings being identified with Cicero and the classical heritage.

Having demonstrated above that the *cursus mixtus* is present in Groups II and III of the letters, we may now refine further an appreciation of Augustine's practices by comparing these two groups with each other and with other writings of the era.

According to Table I, the incidence of the three common forms of the *cursus* in Group II (74.0 percent) is significantly lower than the figure determined for Group III (82.5 percent). The difference may be accounted for by the greater tendency in Group II to admit irregular patterns, especially the *cursus trispondaicus* and *cursus medius*. Stated differently, Augustine's later letters adhere more strictly to the standard forms of the *cursus*. The reasons for this increase in conformity are not readily apparent. We should not simply infer that Augustine became more adept at handling this admittedly complex system with the passage of time. As a former master of rhetoric at Thagaste and Carthage (not to mention stints at Rome and Milan), Augustine assuredly would have been well-versed in the clausular system commonly taught in the African schools since the early part of the third century³³).

A reasonable line of inquiry to account for the differences in rhythm among the three groups of letters would be the consideration of Augustine's changes of status and his possible resultant concern for image and acceptance. As a newly-elevated bishop (395), Augustine perhaps would want to avoid any archaic (and essentially pagan) element in his epistles³⁴). Accordingly, he would have abandoned the

³²) See, e.g., *De doct. christ.* 4.10.24, 12.27, and 17.34. Cf. G.L. ELLSPERMANN, *The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers Toward Pagan Literature and Learning* (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 233-234.

³³) See OBERHELMAN and HALL, "Meter", pp. 226-227, and HALL and OBERHELMAN, "Internal Clausulae", pp. 525-526.

³⁴) Sidonius Apollinaris too expresses reservations about the compatibility of versification and episcopal status (*Epp.* 9.12.1 and 16.3 vs. 57-84). We owe this reference to Michael Roberts.

metrical rhythms of his earlier letters for a style more in keeping with the usages of his day — the *cursus mixtus* of Group II. During the time period of Group III, Augustine was in the forefront of the Pelagian and Donatist controversies, and as such arose to greater prominence in the Church. Letters written in such circumstances would tend to be regarded more as public documents and thus deserving of the greater adornment and elegance achieved by stricter adherence to the three standard forms of the *cursus*. Such a scenario, albeit hypothetical, is offered as a possible guide to further research into the composition of the letters.

While we have been able to detect certain distinctions within the letters themselves, of greater significance and certainty are comparisons between the rhythms of Groups II and III and those in contemporary works. Accordingly, we give in Table II a list of figures for Augustine, the pagans Ammianus and Symmachus, and such non-sectarians as Ausonius, the authors of the *Panegyrici latini*, and the *Theodosian Code*. The results of a comparative analysis are instructive and revealing for an appreciation of Augustine's rhythmical and stylistic tendencies.

TABLE II

Author and Text	Proportion of the Three <i>Cursus</i> Forms	Proportion of the Four Metrical Forms	Rhythm Employed	Proportion of with exact coincidence of ictus & accent	Proportion of <i>Cursus Mixtus</i> Forms: irrespective of coincidence of ictus & accent
<i>Pan. lat. X</i>	.756	.771	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.832	.942
<i>Pan. lat. XI</i>	.757	.765	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.802	.901
<i>Pan. lat. VIII</i>	.795	.847	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.890	.978
<i>Pan. lat. IX</i>	.678	.724	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.844	.956
<i>Pan. lat. VII</i>	.796	.791	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.848	.947
<i>Pan. lat. VI</i>	.775	.802	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.837	.959
<i>Pan. lat. V</i>	.781	.769	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.808	.936
<i>Pan. lat. XII</i>	.759	.741	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.813	.915
<i>Pan. lat. IV</i>	.798	.804	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.809	.957
<i>Pan. lat. III</i>	.822	.764	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.765	.942
<i>Pan. lat. II</i>	.816	.824	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.836	.980
Ammianus	.948	.579	<i>cursus</i>	---	---
Ausonius: <i>Gratiarum actio</i>	.841	.828	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.846	.933
Symmachus: <i>Orationes</i>	.920	.926	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.949	.989
<i>Epistolae</i>	.904	.904	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.925	.993
<i>Relationes</i>	.923	.912	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.905	.972
Theodosian Code	.901	.730	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.743	.794
Augustine,					
<i>Epistolae</i> : Group II	.740	.643	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.634	.706
Group III	.825	.683	<i>cursus mixtus</i>	.668	.722

While the rates of 74.0 percent and 82.5 percent for the accentual forms in Groups II and III are on a par with rates found in the Latin panegyrics and Ausonius, they are far below those in Ammianus, Symmachus and the *Code*, where the rates of occurrences range from 90.1 to 94.8 percent. If we consider the proportions for the metrical forms (64.3 percent in Group II and 68.3 percent in Group III), we find them lower than in all the other writings in the Table (except for Ammianus', which is to be expected, since Ammianus eschewed all meter in his clausulae): e.g., by about ten percentage points for one-half of the *Panegyrics* and by over twenty points for the works of Symmachus (90.4-92.6 percent).

An even more striking disparity between Augustine and his contemporaries appears in the four metrical forms that fall under the standard accentual patterns. Where strict coincidence of accent and ictus was noted, we recorded proportions of 63.4 percent and 66.8 percent in Groups II and III. When specified forms not displaying coincidence of accent and ictus were included, the proportions rose to 70.6 percent and 72.2 percent respectively. We will use the latter figures for comparison. The corresponding rates in the comparative texts are as follows: 79.4 percent in the *Theodosian Code* and 90.1 to 99.3 percent in the *Panegyrics*, Ausonius and Symmachus. These latter rates exceed those of Augustine by over ten to twenty-nine points.

Two conclusions present themselves. In the case of accentual and metrical forms *per se*, Augustine, in contrast to the tendency of his age, was not concerned with achieving high rates of occurrences. In the case of combined metrical and accentual clausulae or forms of the *cursus mixtus*, he was even less desirous of reproducing the style of his non-Christian or non-sectarian contemporaries.

Fortunately, we possess a work by Augustine which may provide an insight into his motives for his peculiar usage of clausular rhythms. The work in question is Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. Of particular interest is a passage in Book 4 wherein Augustine, relying on Jerome's translation of a Pauline text, declares that the writers of the Bible and their translators "lack the adornment of style which is produced by rhythmical clausulae"³⁵). He concludes with a statement of his own clausular practices, which he finds compatible with other Christian authors:

³⁵) *De doct. christ.* 4.20.41.

... in meo eloquio, quantum modeste fieri arbitror, non praetermitto istos numeros clausularum; ita in auctoribus nostris hoc mihi plus placet, quod ibi eos rarissime invenio³⁶).

This statement comports well with what we have observed in the clausulae of Groups II and III of the letters. The key word in this passage is “*modeste*”, a term which accurately describes the rhythms of the letters: the clausular forms of the age do indeed appear, but “in moderation”.

It is important to consider the context in which this discussion of rhythm occurs. Elsewhere in the *De doctrina*, Augustine expresses his belief that it is incumbent upon the Christian writer and teacher to use the art of rhetoric to expound truth and refute falsehoods³⁷). Although the Christian should not hesitate to delight and persuade his listeners with eloquence³⁸), he should also strive for clarity of speech and use such common idioms as to be fully understood³⁹. At the same time, Augustine shows his contempt for the contemporary schools of rhetoric which value highly the excessive formalism of rhythmical clausulae⁴⁰. On the other hand, he praises the translators of sacred texts for avoiding the “*plausibilia*” of the rhetoricians⁴¹. Augustine supports the notion that rhythm should be natural and inherent in the words themselves; he has particular praise for the plain style, in which there are present “a certain ornament not sought out but somehow natural and also a clausular rhythm, unostentatious but almost necessary and arising, so to speak, from the subject matter itself”⁴²). In short, sense should come before style⁴³).

The *De doctrina* fits into the larger context of the cultural history of the late empire. R. A. Markus has argued that certain circumstances underway in the mid-fourth century led to a newly strengthened resolve among Christian intellectuals in the latter part of the century (in the main, Augustine and Jerome) to create a Christian culture as a real

³⁶) Ibid.

³⁷) Ibid., 4.2.3.

³⁸) Ibid., 4.9.23 and 13.29.

³⁹) Ibid., 4.9.23 and 10.24.

⁴⁰) Ibid., 4.6.10.

⁴¹) Ibid., 4.20.41.

⁴²) Ibid., 4.26.56.

⁴³) Ibid., 4.28.61: “in ipso autem sermone malit rebus placere quam verbis; nec aestimat dici melius, nisi quod dicitur verius; nec doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori”.

alternative to the pagan heritage⁴⁴). As for what prompted this resolve, Markus cites the attempt by the emperor Julian to exclude Christians from teaching pagan literature and the movement by pagan aristocrats of the West to venerate pagan culture; this latter is evidenced, for example, in Symmachus' circle re-editing Livy and in the spirited debate between Ambrose and Symmachus over the presence of the Altar of Victory in the Curia⁴⁵).

Markus further suggests that such polemical writings as the *De civitate dei*, which attacks anachronistically the pagan gods of Varro's day, should not be considered as Augustine's true *Adversos paganos*, but that such credit should go to the *De doctrina christiana*, which takes aim at the secular learning of his own age. Markus regards the *De doctrina* as

... nothing more nor less than a sketch for a Christian culture and education alternative to the pagan *paideia* of the Roman world. It provides the syllabus for a Christian *paideia* based on the scriptures... Of course the syllabus contains some secular components; but the terms on which secular learning enters this round of studies and the extremely restricted limits within which its pursuit is sanctioned makes this educational programme inhumanly narrow⁴⁶).

While Markus may think that the program as a whole is "inhumanly narrow", such cannot be said of Augustine's intention concerning clausular rhythms. In accomplishing that aspect of the program set forth in the *De doctrina*, Augustine in Groups II and III of the letters permitted irregular forms of the *cursus*, frequently allowed resolution of accentual and metrical patterns, and often seemed to neglect rhythm⁴⁷). In so doing, Augustine, as a Christian writer, ran counter to the practice of such exponents of paganism as Symmachus and Ammianus.

R. G. HALL

(Saint Bonaventure University)

S. M. OBERHELMAN

(Texas Tech University)

⁴⁴) "Paganism, Christianity, and the Latin Classics in the Fourth Century", in J.W. BINNS, ed., *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century* (London, 1974), pp. 1-21.

⁴⁵) Alan CAMERON, "Pagans and Literature in Late 4th. Century Rome", Alan Cameron et al., eds., *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident* (Vandoeuvres-Genève, 1977), pp. 1-40, has correctly argued that such actions by the pagan elite do not necessarily imply a cohesiveness among their number. Markus' point simply is that such actions hardened the resolve among certain Christians to develop an alternative culture.

⁴⁶) MARKUS, "Paganism", p. 12.

⁴⁷) See REYNOLDS, *De civitate dei*, p. 63.