

## THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE *CURSUS MIXTUS* IN LATIN LITERATURE

In 1984 and 1985 Ralph Hall and I presented statistical methodologies, based on inductive statistics and the comparative method, to determine the rhythmical qualities of Latin prose from the third to early sixth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> We continued our work with the publication of articles on the final clausulae in the legal codes and Augustine's letters and on rhythms in internal positions,<sup>2</sup> while I produced studies of the clausulae in the *Pseudo-Sallustiana* and Ammianus.<sup>3</sup>

These papers demonstrated that two modes of rhythm prevailed in late Latin: the *cursus*, or clausulae constructed only from an accentual bias, and the *cursus mixtus*, wherein coincidence of accent and metre is sought. The *cursus* comprises three basic cadences: the *planus*, *tardus* and *velox*. Each cadence is determined by the number of unaccented syllables between two word-accents. The *planus* has two unaccented syllables between the two accents and one unaccented syllable after the last accent (*pórtam serváre*; *redíre non póssum*); the *tardus*, two unaccented syllables both between the word-accents and after the last accent (*vēstra cognóvimus*; *praeēsse dignátus est*); and the *velox*, four unaccented syllables between the word-accents and one after the last accent (*experíentiae conlaudámus*; *rescribere non cessábo*; *nóvit et impugnáre*).<sup>4</sup> We defined the *cursus mixtus* as the occurrence of four standard metrical forms derived from Cicero's clausular system – cretic-spondee, dicretic, cretic-tribrach and ditrochee – within the parameters of the accentual schemes of the *cursus*. The *planus* contains either the cretic-spondee (*epístulae nóstrae*) or the ditrochee (*mánu feríre*); the *tardus* either the dicretic (*cárcer inclúderet*) or the cretic-tribrach (*éstis indigenae*); the *velox* either the ditrochee (*experíentiam singulórum*) or the cretic-spondee (*nímium videbátur*). Authors employing the *cursus mixtus*, however, desired as a rule of practice an exact coincidence between accent and ictus and therefore favoured the *planus*/cretic-spondee, *tardus*/dicretic or cretic-tribrach and *velox*/ditrochee.<sup>5</sup>

In an individual study published in *Classical Philology*, I offered a refinement of the methodology for determining whether clausulae contained deliberate accentual patterns; specifically, I was most interested whether late Latin authors used certain rhythms which I had previously labelled 'irregular', namely the *trispondaicus* and the *miscellanei*.<sup>6</sup> That paper offered a dramatic reconsideration of previous theories

<sup>1</sup> Steven M. Oberhelman and Ralph G. Hall, 'A new statistical analysis of accentual prose rhythms in imperial Latin authors', *CP* 79 (1984), 114ff., and 'Meter in accentual clausulae of late imperial Latin prose', *CP* 80 (1985), 214ff.

<sup>2</sup> Hall and Oberhelman, 'Rhythmical clausulae in the *Codex Theodosianum* and the *Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*', *CQ* 35 (1985), 201ff.; 'Internal clausulae in late Latin prose as evidence for the displacement of metre by word-stress', *CQ* 36 (1986), 508ff.; 'Rhythmical clausulae in the letters of Augustine as a reflection of rhetorical and cultural goals', *Augustiniana*, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Oberhelman, 'Clausular rhythms and the authenticity of the *Pseudo-Sallustiana*', *Latomus* 45 (1986), 383ff., and 'The provenance of the prose style of Ammianus Marcellinus', *QUCC*, forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> For a bibliography of the *cursus* see Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 79 (1984), 115 n. 5.

<sup>5</sup> For the *cursus mixtus* see Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985), 216 n. 11.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term *miscellanei* to denote any accentual scheme other than the three standard forms and the *trispondaicus*. These would include the *medius* (one unaccented syllable between two accents with two unaccented syllables after the last accent: *repúgnant spirítus*); *dispondaicus* (two

concerning accentual rhythms in late Latin prose.<sup>7</sup> I found decidedly different tendencies in the use and application of accentual rhythms in late Latin. One tradition, exemplified best by Symmachus, Vegetius and Palladius, was the virtual restriction of cadences to the three standard accentual rhythms outlined above. The other tradition, evident in the works of writers such as Minucius, Cyprian, the panegyricists and the late fourth-century Christian writers, was richer and more varied; here we find not only the three standard forms, but also the *trispodaicus* and variant typologies like the *medius*. By the end of the fifth century, the latter tradition was discarded by most writers in favour of the former. It appears that as the *cursus* became entrenched as the mode of all rhythmical prose, whether in the papal and imperial curiae or in formal literature, fewer typologies and variants were admitted, until almost all clausulae conformed to the three standard typologies.<sup>8</sup> This tendency to cause a complex rhythmical system to conform to a strict canon was not a new phenomenon; writers of the first and second centuries had taken Cicero's metrical rhythms and reduced them to a handful of standard patterns.<sup>9</sup>

The first methodology for identifying the *cursus*, therefore, was found in those situations wherein an author restricted his rhythmical cadences to the three standard forms. It was misleading, however, if not flawed, when it was applied to texts containing the other tradition of *cursus* that my newer methodology had detected. Moreover, Hall and I had been misled by the data revealed by that first methodology and were compelled to offer conjectures about 'tempering' of rhythm, 'conflict between pagan and Christian', and the like. Instead, the simple fact was that some authors did not use the narrowly defined canon of accentual forms so evident in authors like Arnobius and Symmachus, but a fuller and more complex system that reflected the complete metrical rhythms of Cicero, the acknowledged paradigm of style among later writers.

Now, a scrutiny of the methodology for the *cursus mixtus* is also warranted. Just as I had discovered that accentual rhythms in late Latin are not necessarily limited to the three standard accentual forms, could it be as likely that in the *cursus mixtus* system of some authors metres beyond the previously identified four standard metrical forms were both allowed and favoured? In other words, is the *cursus mixtus* always as restricted as our former studies assumed? Indeed, there was the great danger that Hall and I had engaged in a circular argument; since there exist no discussions of the *cursus mixtus* in primary sources, we had been compelled to form our theories of the component parts of the *cursus mixtus* from the evidence afforded by the rhythms of

word-accent with one unaccented syllable after each accent: *actiōnes sōlvat*); and the *dispondeus dactylicus* (three unaccented syllables between two word-accent and two unaccented syllables after the last accent: *firme constituere* and *necessitatibus subicere*). These categories correspond to the Ciceronian metrical clausulae of trochee-cretic, ditrochee and paeon-cretic/tribrach.

<sup>7</sup> See the table in my forthcoming paper 'The *cursus* in imperial Latin prose: a reconsideration of methodology' in *CP* 83 (1988).

<sup>8</sup> See the tables in Tore Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the 9th to the 13th Century* (Stockholm, 1975), and G. Lindholm, *Studien zum mittellateinischen Prosarhythmus: Seine Entwicklung und sein Abklingen in der Briefliteratur Italiens* (Stockholm, 1963). Janson, 104f., summarizes his data by demonstrating the existence of two different traditions of the *cursus* in the early Middle Ages, each tradition corresponding to one of the two traditions I have demonstrated for late Latin: the one with only a few forms (mainly the standard forms); the other rich in variants and by-forms. This double tradition may have survived in some manner from antiquity throughout the Dark Ages until the twelfth century, when the more restricted system prevailed.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge, 1970), 158f.; see also Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985), 216 with note 12.

writers like Symmachus and Arnobius. But these authors may not, after all, be representative of the prose rhythms of other writers in late antiquity, and therefore the rhythms of certain texts may not have been rightly appreciated by Hall and myself. These are serious problems which we must address.

The question of which metrical patterns we should investigate in addition to the four standard metrical forms is easily answered. Just as the four standard metrical forms of the *cursus mixtus* were sought because of their exact coincidence with the three standard accentual cadences, we can assume as a hypothesis that the metrical equivalents of the accentual patterns *trispondaicus* and *miscellanei* were also desired under their corresponding *cursus* patterns. This would entail the coincidence of the paeon-trochee and the *trispondaicus*; the trochee-cretic and the *medius*; the ditrochee and the *dispondaicus*; and the paeon-cretic/tribrach and the *dispondeus dactylicus*. We do know that these metrical patterns were used by Cicero, and thus it would not be surprising if they occur in the *cursus mixtus* system of certain late Latin writers who imitated his style.

A new methodology then must be developed whereby we can state with confidence whether any of the above-mentioned metrical forms are in fact an intended component of the *cursus mixtus* – whether a certain metre falling under a *trispondaicus* or *miscellaneus* cadence is deliberate or fortuitous. Moreover, if this hypothesized expanded system of the *cursus mixtus* exists, we should expect to observe other standard metrical forms falling under the *trispondaicus* and *miscellanei* patterns regardless of coincidence of accent and ictus – just as one sees use of the ditrochee with the *planus* and the cretic-spondee with the *velox*.

The first step is to establish normative values for the ‘natural’, that is, non-intentional, frequencies of these metrical patterns in the context of the *trispondaicus* and *miscellanei* cadences. Regarding the *trispondaicus* we are fortunate to possess the work of Tore Janson, who has broken new ground in demonstrating with statistical verification the accentual rhythms of the medieval writers. According to Janson, there were two traditions of the *cursus* in the 10th and 11th centuries. One tradition, found in Germany and France, favoured the *trispondaicus*, in addition to the standard forms *planus*, *tardus* and *velox*. Since we can be reasonably sure that medieval writers neglected metre in the formation of their clausulae, we can consider their *trispondaicus* clausulae as reflecting intentional accentual rhythms void of conscious metrical tendencies. Thus, the frequencies in these texts of standard metrical patterns as they fall under the *trispondaicus* will be fortuitous and may serve as control values in comparative tests: for if the percentages of the same metrical forms in a sample text are significantly higher, then we may conclude that the metres in the latter are purposeful and comprise part of that author’s system of the *cursus mixtus*.

As for the *medius*, *dispondaicus* and *dispondeus dactylicus*, these same medieval texts will not do, as these cadences were rarely used in the Middle Ages. Thus, I returned to the control texts used in the 1984 *CP* article. These texts contained a very high number of the *miscellanei* rhythms: in all, there were 492 occurrences in 2000 sentence-closings (= 24.6%).

For my sampling of metres under the *trispondaicus*, I examined at random 4000 sentence-closings in the medieval authors listed in the Appendix in Janson’s book; for the *miscellanei*, it was simply a matter of consulting my worksheets for the works of Descartes and John Calvin, as I had already scanned the metre of each of the 2000

<sup>10</sup> For these texts see Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 79 (1984), 118ff. Cicero’s orations, which were the third of our control texts, are omitted from consideration here for obvious reasons.

clausulae derived from their texts.<sup>11</sup> The final eight syllables occurring in all of these 6000 clausulae were noted and then grouped according to typology. No clausula exhibiting possible hiatus/elision was included in the sampling.

Table 1 contains the data of this survey. The *trispondaicus* was found in 448 of 4000 sentence-closings (11.2%); however, the paeon-spondee (both first and fourth paeon)

Table 1

Metrical form	Accentual typology			
	óóóóóó (n = 4000)	óóóóó (n = 2000)	óóóó (n = 2000)	óóóóóóó (n = 2000)
óóóóó		21	5	
óóóóóó		2		2
óóóóóóó		6		
óóóóóóóó		57		8
óóóóóóóóó		2		
óóóóóóóóóó		14	6	
óóóóóóóóóóó		21	2	4
óóóóóóóóóóóó			2	3
óóóóóóóóóóóóó		11	4	3
óóóóóóóóóóóóóó		51	21	14
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóó		87	23	2
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	6			
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	38			
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	72			
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	109		21	
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	9			
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	21			
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	49		6	
óóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóóó	156		94	
Total number of accentual typology	448	272	184	36
Percentage of all clausulae	(11.2)	(13.6)	(9.2)	(1.8)
Total number of standard forms with exact coincidence of accent and ictus	51	21	21	5
Percentage of typology clausulae	(11.4)	(7.7)	(11.4)	(13.9)
Total number of standard forms irrespective of coincidence of accent and ictus	205	42	35	12
Percentage of typology clausulae	(45.8)	(15.4)	(19.0)	(33.3)

*n*, total number of clausulae in sample.

is infrequent under the *trispondaicus* (51 of 448 sentence-closings, or 11.4%). The most common metrical patterns in fact are the dispondeo, ditrochee and dactyl-spondee, respectively; together, they account for 337 (75.2%) of all forms falling under the *trispondaicus*.

<sup>11</sup> To verify the data collected from the medieval writers I also sampled 600 *trispondaicus* clausulae from Descartes and Calvin for metrical patterns. The percentages were nearly identical in every category. While consistency of control texts would have been achieved by sampling Descartes and Calvin in all accentual typologies, it was important to investigate occurrences of metre in at least one situation where accentual rhythms were deliberately employed.

If we can assume that these values are an accurate indicator of metrical patterns that fortuitously occur under *trispondaicus* clausulae written only from an accentual bias, then two rules may be formulated. First, if no concurrence of the paeon-spondee and the *trispondaicus* is sought, we should expect a significantly low number of coincidences of the two forms. The other metrical patterns will be distributed randomly and variously under typologies like the disponde, ditrochee, dactyl-spondee and, to a lesser degree, cretic-spondee and choriamb-spondee. Moreover, all the standard metrical forms<sup>12</sup> under the *trispondaicus* will occur at a rate of about 40–50%; this percentage may seem quite large, but this is due to the very great number of ditrochees, which in our control samples were present in 109 of 448 *trispondaicus* clausulae (24.3%). The converse of this rule is as follows: if an author intends the paeon-spondee in his system of *cursus mixtus*, we should note in his text a significantly high concurrence of that metre and the *trispondaicus*. In addition, the percentage of other standard metrical forms present in the text will be far greater than the normative value of 45.8%. In other words, the *trispondaicus* in the *cursus mixtus* will almost always be the vehicle for standard metrical forms; non-standard metres will be rare.

In the second group of control texts, 272 *medius* cadences were found (13.6%). Of those only twenty-one contained an exact coincidence with a trochee-cretic; twenty-one others, a paeon-cretic/tribrach, dicretic or cretic-tribrach. Thus a total of 42 clausulae (15.4%) displayed a standard metrical form, and this permits the following rule: if the *medius* is part of an author's system of *cursus mixtus*, the number of standard forms will be high; but if no attempt is made to accommodate metre, the number of these same forms will be few, and rhythms with spondaic properties will dominate. This same rule obtains in the cases of both the *dispondaicus* and *dispondeus dactylicus*: standard metrical forms will occur at high rates of frequency if metre is sought in conjunction with the accentual cadences; but in texts without the *cursus mixtus* (whether they be *cursus*-only or non-rhythmical), the percentages of standard metrical forms will be low, with spondaic rhythms prevalent.

To test these rules I re-examined my worksheets of clausulae taken from over 100 texts of the third to early sixth centuries A.D. Although my primary interest was the prose rhythms of those texts previously identified as *cursus mixtus*, I also consulted works which were non-rhythmical or contained *cursus*-only clausulae; for these texts, in theory, will display metrical qualities similar to those in our control texts, and thus verify the rules hypothesized above.

The data of the survey are presented in Table 2, with the authors listed in roughly chronological order. The column headings are as follows: 'Rhythm' indicates the type of prose rhythm determined for the text by my former studies;<sup>13</sup>  $T$  = total number of clausulae sampled;  $T_i$  = total number of *trispondaicus* clausulae in the sample;  $T_{ie}$  = number of paeon-spondees falling under the *trispondaicus*;  $T_{ist}$  = number of all standard metrical forms falling under the *trispondaicus* irrespective of coincidence of accent and metre;  $T_m$  = total number of *medius* forms;  $T_{me}$  = number of trochee-cretics with exact coincidence with the *medius*;  $T_{mst}$  = number of all standard metrical forms falling under the *medius*;  $T_d$  = total number of *dispondaicus* cadences; the next two columns,  $T_{de}$  and  $T_{dst}$ , report, respectively, how many ditrochees and how many total standard metrical forms fell under the *dispondaicus* clausulae;  $T_{dd}$  = total

<sup>12</sup> By 'standard' metrical form in this paragraph I mean the four standard forms (cretic-spondee, ditrochee, dicretic and cretic-tribrach) and the forms under investigation here: paeon-cretic/tribrach, trochee-cretic and paeon-spondee.

<sup>13</sup> Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 79 (1984), 122ff., and 80 (1985), 222f.; Oberhelman, *CP* 83 (1988).



Firmicus Maternus <i>De errore prof. rel.</i>	CM	250	22 (8-8)	20 (90-9)	22 (100-0)	6 (2-4)	—	3 (50-0)	2 (0-8)	—	2 (100-0)	1 (0-4)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
Aurelius Victor	NR	241	53 (22-0)	6 (11-3)	22 (41-5)	28 (11-6)	9 (32-1)	12 (42-9)	17 (7-1)	2 (11-8)	7 (41-2)	9 (3-7)	1 (11-1)	1 (11-1)
Hilary <i>Tract. myst.</i>	CM	213	23 (10-8)	7 (30-4)	17 (73-9)	17 (8-0)	5 (29-4)	12 (70-6)	2 (0-9)	1 (50-0)	2 (100-0)	1 (0-5)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
Vegetius	CM	243	17 (7-0)	9 (52-9)	14 (82-4)	—	—	—	1 (0-4)	—	1 (100-0)	—	—	—
PL III	CM	284	24 (8-5)	18 (75-0)	24 (100-0)	14 (4-9)	2 (14-3)	13 (92-9)	6 (2-1)	—	3 (50-0)	5 (1-7)	5 (100-0)	5 (100-0)
PL II	CM	415	51 (12-3)	39 (76-5)	50 (98-0)	16 (3-9)	5 (31-3)	13 (81-3)	5 (1-2)	—	3 (60-0)	1 (0-2)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
Palladius	CM	241	18 (7-5)	9 (50-0)	16 (88-9)	3 (1-2)	3 (100-0)	3 (100-0)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ausonius <i>Grat. actio</i>	CM	231	19 (8-2)	12 (63-2)	18 (94-7)	9 (3-9)	2 (22-2)	7 (77-8)	2 (0-9)	—	1 (50-0)	1 (0-4)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
Symmachus (a) <i>Epistulae</i> I-II	CM	654	37 (5-7)	35 (94-6)	37 (100-0)	21 (3-2)	4 (19-0)	21 (100-0)	2 (0-3)	—	2 (100-0)	1 (0-02)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
(b) <i>Orationes</i>	CM	489	26 (5-3)	24 (92-3)	26 (100-0)	11 (2-2)	3 (27-3)	10 (90-9)	3 (0-6)	—	3 (100-0)	1 (0-2)	1 (100-0)	1 (100-0)
Macrobius (a) <i>Somm. Scip.</i>	CM	295	32 (10-8)	25 (78-1)	31 (96-9)	6 (2-0)	3 (50-0)	6 (100-0)	2 (0-7)	2 (100-0)	2 (100-0)	5 (1-7)	2 (40-0)	2 (40-0)
(b) <i>Saturnalia</i>	CM	397	57 (14-4)	31 (54-4)	51 (89-5)	15 (3-8)	4 (26-7)	12 (80-0)	24 (6-0)	6 (25-0)	17 (70-8)	7 (1-8)	5 (71-4)	5 (71-4)
Jerome (a) <i>Epistulae</i>	CM	350	31 (8-9)	11 (35-5)	28 (90-3)	18 (5-1)	6 (33-3)	15 (83-3)	14 (4-0)	8 (57-1)	12 (85-7)	3 (0-9)	2 (66-7)	2 (66-7)
(b) <i>Contra Rufinum</i>	C	427	31 (7-3)	14 (45-2)	26 (83-9)	45 (10-5)	10 (22-2)	16 (35-6)	18 (4-2)	1 (5-6)	5 (27-8)	7 (1-6)	4 (57-1)	4 (57-1)
(c) <i>In Daniele</i> I	C	235	24 (10-2)	12 (50-0)	13 (54-2)	25 (10-6)	5 (20-0)	12 (48-0)	6 (2-6)	—	1 (16-7)	3 (1-3)	—	1 (33-3)
(d) <i>Adversus Pelag.</i>	C	434	30 (6-9)	12 (40-0)	21 (70-0)	54 (12-4)	14 (25-9)	27 (50-0)	23 (5-3)	5 (21-7)	2 (39-1)	2 (0-5)	—	—

Table 2 (cont.)

Author/Work	Rhythm	T*	T <sub>t</sub>	T <sub>te</sub>	T <sub>lst</sub>	T <sub>m</sub>	T <sub>me</sub>	T <sub>mst</sub>	T <sub>d</sub>	T <sub>de</sub>	T <sub>dst</sub>	T <sub>dd</sub>	T <sub>dde</sub>	T <sub>ddst</sub>
<b>Ambrose</b>														
(a) <i>Epistulae</i>	CM	310	21 (6.8)	9 (42.5)	19 (90.5)	37 (11.9)	11 (29.7)	28 (75.7)	9 (2.9)	3 (33.3)	8 (88.9)	5 (1.6)	4 (80.0)	4 (80.0)
(b) <i>De excessu frat.</i>	C	313	28 (8.9)	19 (67.9)	26 (92.9)	33 (10.5)	8 (24.2)	75 (84.8)	13 (4.2)	5 (38.5)	10 (76.9)	4 (1.3)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)
(c) <i>De paradiso</i>	C	366	38 (10.4)	23 (60.5)	29 (76.3)	40 (10.9)	13 (32.5)	17 (42.5)	22 (6.0)	—	6 (27.3)	7 (1.9)	—	3 (42.9)
(d) <i>Exp. in Ps. 118</i>	C	389	31 (8.0)	18 (58.1)	23 (74.2)	45 (11.6)	10 (22.2)	19 (42.2)	35 (9.0)	4 (11.4)	12 (34.3)	—	—	—
<b>Augustine</b>														
(a) <i>Doct. christ.</i>	CM	351	31 (8.8)	10 (32.3)	27 (87.1)	21 (6.0)	8 (38.1)	14 (66.7)	19 (5.4)	4 (21.7)	13 (68.4)	—	—	—
(b) <i>Exp. ad Galat.</i>	C	326	41 (12.6)	9 (22.0)	22 (53.7)	37 (11.3)	12 (32.4)	18 (48.6)	20 (6.1)	—	8 (40.0)	3 (0.9)	—	—
(c) <i>De baptismo</i>	C	259	38 (14.7)	8 (21.1)	22 (57.9)	22 (8.5)	7 (31.8)	12 (54.5)	7 (2.7)	2 (28.6)	3 (42.9)	6 (2.3)	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)
(d) <i>De vera relig.</i>	C	327	32 (9.8)	10 (31.3)	22 (68.8)	29 (8.9)	3 (10.3)	9 (31.0)	21 (6.4)	4 (19.0)	11 (52.4)	2 (0.6)	—	—
<b>Caelius Aurelianus</b>														
<i>Acutae passionnes</i>	NR	248	53 (21.4)	7 (13.3)	24 (45.3)	26 (10.5)	4 (15.4)	5 (19.2)	27 (10.9)	6 (22.2)	9 (33.3)	8 (3.2)	—	4 (50.0)
<b>Codex Theodosianus</b>														
<i>Leges novellae</i>	CM	982	77 (7.8)	44 (57.1)	62 (80.5)	36 (3.7)	13 (36.1)	22 (61.1)	3 (0.3)	—	2 (66.7)	8 (0.8)	6 (75.0)	8 (100.0)
	CM	503	32 (6.4)	22 (68.8)	30 (93.8)	7 (1.4)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	2 (0.4)	1 (50.0)	2 (100.0)	4 (0.8)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)
<b>Ennodius</b>														
<i>Epistulae</i>	CM	298	43 (14.4)	28 (65.1)	41 (95.3)	8 (2.7)	7 (87.5)	7 (87.5)	—	—	—	—	—	—

\* For key headings see text.

† Percentages are shown in parentheses.

CM, *cursum mixtum*; NR, non-rhythmical; C, *cursum*.



number of *dispondeus dactylicus* patterns;  $T_{dde}$  and  $T_{ddst}$  represent, respectively, how many paeon-cretics/tribrachs and how many standard metrical forms occurred with the *dispondeus dactylicus*. All totals are expressed in the next line as a percentage.<sup>14</sup>

Table 2 affords general and specific observations on the rhythmical systems of the 39 texts listed.<sup>15</sup> First, some general observations:

(1) The normative values are supported by the percentages of clausular typologies in the two non-rhythmical texts – Caelius Aurelianus and Aurelius Victor. The total number of standard metrical forms that occur under each of the four accentual patterns in Table 2 match in every respect the values derived from the control samples. For example, in Caelius and Aurelius the percentages of exact coincidence of paeon-spondee/*trispodaicus* is 13.3% and 11.3% respectively (norm: 11.4%), while the percentages of all standard forms under the *trispodaicus* are 45.3% and 41.5% (norm: 45.8%). Similar equivalences exist for the *medius*, *dispondaicus* and *dispondeus dactylicus*. We may conclude that the hypothetical rules formulated above have proven sound in the case of texts that display no rhythm.

(2) Those works which I have shown elsewhere to contain *cursus*-only clausulae exhibit no tendencies for standard metrical forms under the accentual typologies. The *cursus* works of Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine show high usage of the *trispodaicus*, *medius* and *dispondaicus*, but the frequencies of the standard metrical forms under these cadences are not remarkable. Granted, the percentages of paeon-spondees under the *trispodaicus* are higher than the normative values; but this may be explained as follows. The *esse videatur* clausula, although in fact not very common in Cicero,<sup>16</sup> became the rhythm *par excellence* among later authors. Tacitus and Quintilian both complained of the excessive use of this phrase,<sup>17</sup> and it may well be the paeon-spondee became so pervasive that writers in late antiquity, even when eschewing metre, were influenced by it. It is relevant to note that Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine all were capable of producing *cursus mixtus* works<sup>18</sup> and as fervent admirers of Cicero's style they could be expected to retain some of their metrical practices, especially in the area of the paeon-spondee, which came to be associated with Ciceronian style. This would also explain the slightly higher incidence in their works of standard metrical forms under the *medius* (which, again, is the accentual abstraction of the Ciceronian trochee-cretic); however, the percentages fall far short of those found in *cursus mixtus* texts, and the overall non-metrical nature of these works becomes apparent when the values of their standard metrical forms are compared to both the norms and *cursus mixtus* works, even those written by these same Christian writers.

(3) While there is a wide spectrum of the application of the *cursus mixtus* in late Latin texts, we may identify two distinct traditions. One type of usage of the *cursus mixtus*, manifest in Arnobius, Firmicus, Macrobius, Palladius, Symmachus and Vegetius, was restricted to the three standard accentual cadences (*planus*, *tardus* and

<sup>14</sup> The percentages of the totals with subscripts 'e' and 'st' denote the frequency of standard forms, either with or without coincidence of accent and ictus respectively, in relation to each accentual typology. Thus the percentage of  $T_t$  for Minucius signifies that 17.5% of all the clausulae were *trispodaicus*; on the other hand, the percentage for  $T_{te}$  in the next column means that 57.3% of all the *trispodaicus* clausulae contained a paeon-spondee, while the percentage for  $T_{lst}$  says that 100% of the *trispodaicus* contained one of the standard metrical forms.

<sup>15</sup> In cases of large corpora, such as those of Lactantius, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine, three or four works were randomly selected. Of the *Panegyrici latini* I arbitrarily chose II, III, X, XI and XII.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkinson, op. cit. 141.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>18</sup> See the table in Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985), 223.

*velox*) and the four standard metrical forms falling under them. In this tradition, which is the one Hall and I had previously assumed to be the sole type of *cursus mixtus*, the *trispodaicus* and *miscellanei* are infrequent: the percentage of their total number of occurrences averages between 5 and 9%. When these other accentual typologies do occur, exact coincidence is preferred; even when there is no concurrence, a standard metrical form is still used. The frequencies of these patterns in such texts, however, are very low, and therefore it is best to think of these authors as utilizing a *cursus mixtus* that comprises but the standard three accentual and four metrical forms; other patterns are used only occasionally and perhaps to relieve the tedium of this narrow canon of typologies.

The other tradition of the *cursus mixtus* is clearly evident in such authors as Minucius, Cyprian, Lactantius, the panegyricists, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine. Here the variety of accentual rhythms is rich – the *trispodaicus* and the *miscellanei* in some instances reach 25–30% of the total number of clausulae.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, metrical forms are intended to coincide with these accentual rhythms; for example, in the works of Minucius and Cyprian, nearly every accentual clausula contains a standard metrical form.<sup>20</sup> To give one set of comparative figures: while the normative values for the total standard metrical forms under the *trispodaicus*, *medius*, *dispondaicus* and *dispondeus dactylicus* are 45.8%, 15.4%, 38.0% and 27.7%, respectively, in Minucius we observe 100%, 90.3%, 100% and 100%. Because the total occurrence of these accentual patterns is so very high (28.0%), they are obviously intended. It is now proper, consequently, to describe Minucius' complete system of the *cursus mixtus* as comprising eight accentual cadences and eight metrical patterns. This is a radical reappraisal of the *cursus mixtus*, and proves that the former methodologies developed by Hall and myself lack sensitivity in detecting subtle differences in rhythm.

Specific observations are as follows:

(1) In previous studies Hall and I have shown that Minucius and Cyprian are the first known practitioners of the *cursus mixtus*.<sup>21</sup> Before A.D. 200 accentual rhythms, it appears, did not exist; it was only in the opening decades of the third century that the rhetorical schools in Africa began the teaching of the accommodation of accent in constructing metrical clausulae.<sup>22</sup> As Minucius and Cyprian are the earliest examples of this rhythmical practice, it is to be expected that their rhythms should display great diversity. The tendency of rhythmical systems is to narrow the number of accepted variants and by-forms. This is true, as pointed out above, of Cicero's metres, which were canonized into a handful of patterns in the first and second centuries,<sup>23</sup> and also of the Middle Ages, when the richer tradition of Germany and France succumbed to the restricted system prevalent in Italy.<sup>24</sup> The full system of the *cursus mixtus*, seen in Minucius and Cyprian, is refined throughout the third century, until the constricted *cursus mixtus* makes its appearance. Arnobius, the first example of this newer system, employs the three main accentual patterns in 91.2%, and the four standard metrical forms in 85.5%, of his clausulae.<sup>25</sup> This trend to narrow the

<sup>19</sup> In my third *CP* paper (83 [1988]) I have shown with certainty that all these works are accentual.

<sup>20</sup> Here I use 'standard' in the same sense as in n. 12 above.

<sup>21</sup> Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985), 224, and *CQ* 36 (1986), 519ff.

<sup>22</sup> Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 79 (1984), 130, and *CP* 80 (1985), 226f.; and Hall and Oberhelman, *CQ* 36 (1986), 525f.

<sup>23</sup> See Hall and Oberhelman, *CQ* 35 (1985), 201 n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Janson, *op. cit.* 104.

<sup>25</sup> See the tables in Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985), and Hall and Oberhelman, *CQ* 36 (1986).

wide spectrum of accepted accentual and metrical rhythms is carried further by Firmicus, Macrobius and Symmachus in the fourth century; even authors of treatises on agriculture and military strategy, to wit, Palladius and Vegetius, sought out this style. The same obtains for the writers of the legal schools and later for Ennodius in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. The fuller system of the *cursus mixtus*, however, was still extensively used even as it was being restricted. The *Panegyrici latini*, which span a 100-year period (A.D. 289–389), reflect this fact. Although only five of these panegyrics are given in Table 2 for reasons of lack of space, all eleven (II–XII) display the exact same system of clausulae. Hence, both traditions of the *cursus mixtus* coexisted in the third and fourth centuries, until the narrow system alone was used in the early fifth.

(2) An author's use of one or the other tradition of *cursus mixtus* must be attributed to personal choice. We cannot adduce any philosophical or religious motive: the *cursus mixtus* of the Christians Arnobius and Ausonius is identical to that of the pagans Symmachus and Macrobius. Chronologys also plays no role; we have seen that both systems were used throughout the third to fifth centuries. Finally, geography is not a factor. Some of the panegyricists surely were trained by the same Gallic school as Ausonius and Symmachus were, and we know that Lactantius (full *cursus mixtus*) was the pupil of Arnobius (narrow *cursus mixtus*). In the final run, therefore, we are left with an author's personal preference for choice of rhythm.

(3) We are now in a position to appreciate anew the prose rhythms of writers like Lactantius, Hilary and the late fourth-century Christian writers. Elsewhere, Hall and I were of the opinion that these writers employed in certain works a 'tempered' *cursus mixtus*, perhaps as an avoidance of a sophistic, i.e. pagan, style.<sup>26</sup> At the time, we were at a loss to explain in any satisfactory way the low frequencies of the accentual and metrical forms in these authors' works. But both my most recent work in *CP*<sup>27</sup> and this paper have shown that our conjectures were ill-conceived. The reason for the low percentages of the three standard accentual forms is that these authors actually sought four to six forms; likewise the metre: instead of four standard metrical patterns, they used as many as eight. The rhythmical qualities of these authors are more complex and varied than we were capable of supposing when we were under the impression that there was only one tradition of the *cursus mixtus* in antiquity.<sup>28</sup>

(4) Finally, a fuller understanding of the *cursus* itself is possible.<sup>29</sup> It now becomes clear that the first Latin texts of late antiquity that contain *cursus*-only clausulae are scriptural commentaries or doctrinal essays by Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine.<sup>30</sup> But the same authors were also capable of using a nice *cursus mixtus* in their letters,

<sup>26</sup> This is elaborated at great length in the Augustine paper cited above in note 2.

<sup>27</sup> This is the important conclusion of my paper in *CP* 83 (1988).

<sup>28</sup> It now becomes even more clear that simple statistical counts and single hypothesis-testing will not provide reliable answers to complex questions concerning prose rhythms. All typologies, accentual and metrical, must be tested individually, and not lumped into one statistical category in an 'either-or' test. Thus the methodologies of the first two *CP* papers, while significant for their efforts in placing the study of late Latin prose rhythms in a new scientific light, are too weak in their ability to gauge sensitive differences in prose style to be of wide application.

<sup>29</sup> The *cursus* system of Ammianus is not included in this survey; as I have demonstrated in my forthcoming paper in *QUCC*, Ammianus borrowed a Greek practice.

<sup>30</sup> This generalization is based of course only on what works I have studied thus far. I have also omitted from consideration here certain texts that I have previously labelled 'cursus': spurious works of uncertain date (parts of the Apuleian corpus) and the grammarians Donatus and Servius. Michael Reeve in private correspondence has shown to my satisfaction that the grammarians proper pose such special problems as to make statistics derived from their work negligible.

rhctorical treatises and orations. Thus, we must explain the presence of the *cursus* in some writings, but not in others. It is not a question of error in methodology, for the *cursus* is clearly evidenced by the data in Table 2: the non-significant percentages for metrical typologies under the accentual patterns in the *cursus* texts demonstrate that the clausulae are accentual-only in nature.<sup>31</sup> What we have, in essence, is these authors' *cursus mixtus*, but with the metre stripped away, leaving behind the husks of accentual patterns. A new rhythmical system, therefore, formed by the rejection of metre in *cursus mixtus* clausulae, has been introduced by three writers who were equally at home with the more complicated *cursus mixtus*.

The cause for the first appearance of the *cursus* among late fourth-century Latin authors must be one of the following: (1) audience, (2) propriety of the rhythm to subject-matter, (3) the abandonment of the *cursus mixtus* in favour of a more ornate style, or (4) the manifestation of a pagan vs. Christian conflict. The latter scenario, fashionable in the past in some quarters, cannot apply to prose rhythms. The *cursus mixtus* of the Christians Arnobius and Ausonius is identical to that of Symmachus and members of his circle of friends, and we may suppose the Christian background of at least a few of the panegyricists. Moreover, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine used the *cursus mixtus* in some of their works. To extend the conflict concerning the Altar of Victory to prose rhythm is fanciful speculation.

It is also inconceivable that the *cursus* was invented to be a more ornate rhythm. The *cursus*, in fact, is the least aesthetically pleasing of the various modes of ancient prose rhythm, as it consists only of patterns of stress-accent appearing monotonously in succession of three to six cadences; in fact, 'cadences' is a most proper term for describing the *cursus*, since it seems certain that the accentual forms were taught in schools by tapping on desks or tablets. The *cursus* is also the least literary, as it was based on vernacular speech and accent; the Asiatic metres of the Ciceronian tradition, on the other hand, were Greek in origin, while the *cursus mixtus* was a highly artificial amalgam of metre and accent, and thus both these rhythms could claim to literary sophistication. If ornateness and attractiveness of rhythm were the sole criteria, the *cursus* would be the last choice of an author.

We may also question the role of audience. Accentual rhythms, like their metrical counterparts, are decorative but artificial techniques.<sup>32</sup> There is nothing to lead us to assume that a mass audience (conjectured by Hall and myself elsewhere)<sup>33</sup> would have appreciated accentual clausulae any more than they would have appreciated metrical clausulae. One presumably did not 'naturally' speak, write or comprehend *velox* or *trispodaicus* clausulae any more than one 'naturally' spoke, wrote or comprehended dicretics and cretic-spondees. The stereotype of every village blacksmith discerning poetic quantities is a romance and we may dismiss as exaggerated Cicero's frequent remarks of crowds exclaiming delight at a well-turned ditrochee.<sup>34</sup> While we may be certain that almost anyone could detect mistakes in the pronunciation of words, we overstate the case when we imagine a copper worker able to distinguish an actor's

<sup>31</sup> See the table in Oberhelman and Hall, *CP* 80 (1985). The table with discussions in text in Oberhelman, *CP* 83 (1988), is important, as some decisions about rhythm in the 1985 table are revised.

<sup>32</sup> I owe much of this paragraph to Robert Kaster. My deepest thanks to Professor Kaster for his continued personal and professional help in clarifying my thoughts on ancient prose rhythm; his acute suggestions and criticisms have always proved invaluable and profitable.

<sup>33</sup> Hall and I made much of the 'mass audience' and 'African untrained laity' in the first two *CP* papers and our studies in *CQ* for 1985 and 1986.

<sup>34</sup> Cicero, *Or.* 213–14; cf. 195.

lapse in saying *amât* instead of *amât* or an orator's error of using a dispendee when obviously a cretic-spendee would have achieved much greater pleasure. To carry this further, there is no evidence that would lead us to suppose that the uneducated, the semieducated or even educated, unless trained in accentual rhythms, could distinguish between a speech or sermon containing *planus* and *trispindaicus* clausulae and one without them. Nothing, in the final analysis, supports a theory that the *cursus* was a deliberate concession to mass audiences, providing untrained ears with rhythms that could be understood and enjoyed. The inclusion of accent in the formation of clausulae from the third century onwards is probably nothing more than the belated realization by rhetorical teachers of the dominance of word-stress in the Latin language.

In the end, therefore, we are left with subject-matter. Simplistic as this explanation may be, it seems reasonable that Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine wished to apply a unique rhythmical system to what was essentially a new genre of literature: scriptural commentaries. This is only a theory, but the fact remains that three Christian authors, skilled in metre and the *cursus mixtus*, cast aside metrical forms in the clausulae in their biblical commentaries and those theological writings that were of an expository nature – sermons, doctrinal essays, polemics and apologies. I, of course, must express caution, for I have not yet studied the rhythms in all the church fathers' corpora in conjunction with thematic content and chronology. But it is not far-fetched to think of the *cursus* as a rhythmical system that the late fourth-century Christian writers extrapolated for commentaries on scriptures.

The provenance of the *cursus* may have been the Greek *cursus*, already in use since the beginning decades of the fourth century.<sup>35</sup> The Greek patristic writers Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa had been using accentual-only clausulae in their theological writings for some time before the *cursus* appears in the western church fathers.<sup>36</sup> An attractive theory is that Jerome, who studied rhetoric in the east and who knew the above Greek writers, brought back the idea of the *cursus* as a rhythmical system for biblical exegesis and doctrinal essays.<sup>37</sup> In fact, Jerome states his indebtedness to Gregory of Nazianzus for much of what he learned about scriptural exegesis, calling Gregory *praeceptor meus*.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, it is well-known that Ambrose was an avid admirer of these same Greek ecclesiastics and cared little for the writings of the earlier western fathers.

Another motive behind the adoption of the *cursus* was surely its ease of construction. The commentaries of Jerome, for example, were written in haste (*velocissime* as he tells us); he wrote the *Commentary* on Abdias in two nights, while he set forth his exegesis on Paul's letter to the Ephesians at the rate of 1000 lines per day. Sermons and other works read aloud to the laity equally bear the air of hasty composition. For instance, Augustine says that he never wrote out his sermons except on rare occasions.<sup>39</sup> The impression one gets of Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, a series of nine sermons delivered over a six-day period during Lent, is a free style of writing, to which

<sup>35</sup> See W. Hörandner, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner* (Wien, 1981). There is no tradition of the *cursus mixtus* in Greek.

<sup>36</sup> H. Dewing, 'The origin of accentual prose rhythm in Greek', *AJP* 31 (1910), 323f.

<sup>37</sup> If this scenario is correct, irony abounds. The Greek *cursus*, first evident in Themistius and Himerius, seems to have been taken from the Latin *cursus mixtus*. But if the late fourth-century Christian writers borrowed the concept of accentual-only clausulae from the Greek patristic authors, then the Greek *cursus* was the inspiration for an alternative to the *cursus mixtus*. Thus, we have this cycle of influence over the course of about six hundred years: Greek metrical system → Latin metrical system → Latin *cursus mixtus* → Greek *cursus* → Latin *cursus*.

<sup>38</sup> *Comm. in Is.* 6.1; *Ep.* 1.1 and 53.8.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *De trinitate* 15.27.48 and *Retract.* 2.32.2.

Ambrose through his preaching had become accustomed; indeed, Ambrose did not even take the trouble to remove traces of oral delivery in the published version of the sermons.<sup>40</sup> For one interested in rapidity of writing and yet at the same time in using prose rhythm, the *cursus* was ideal. He was required only to group together two, or in rare instances three, word-accent in order to effect a good rhythm. He could even dictate a rhythmical text without any great difficulty: the stringing of two accents is a simple task compared to metrical patterns that are based on Greek models and even more so when we consider the *cursus mixtus* with its requirements of coincidence of accentual and metrical patterns. Set speeches for formal occasions, like funeral speeches and panegyrics, and carefully-written theoretical treatises were a different matter; these would have called for the grander style of the *cursus mixtus*.<sup>41</sup> As for the letters of the church fathers, a most fruitful line of enquiry would be the study of the rhythms of individual letters according to addressee. I suspect that letters addressed to, for example, family members are non-rhythmical or *cursus*, while those written to fellow bishops or popes contain the *cursus mixtus*. We do know that many letters of the church fathers were meant to be published as quasi-official documents, and such letters may bear a rhythmical style far removed from a note dashed off to one's parents.

To conclude: the 1985 methodology developed to determine the *cursus mixtus* has proved inadequate and misleading in many instances. Contrary to opinions expressed in previous studies of prose rhythms in late imperial Latin, the present methodology has demonstrated the existence of two distinct modes of usage, or traditions, of the *cursus mixtus*. One tradition, the original system of the *cursus mixtus* and observable in the early third century, is a rich diversity of accentual and metrical forms that replicates the full spectrum of Cicero's prose rhythms. The second tradition, noticeable first in Arnobius, is a narrow canon of three standard accentual cadences and four standard metrical patterns. Both traditions were used throughout the fourth and fifth centuries and appear in such unexpected texts as legal codes and technical treatises. There is no pattern for the selection of a particular tradition by writers, and it is clear that an author chose this or that *cursus mixtus* from personal inclination. Ultimately, the *cursus*, used by Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine for their scriptural commentaries, became the sole mode of rhythm.

Finally, on the basis of my former papers in *CP* and *CQ* and the present study I can offer with confidence the following history of prose rhythms in imperial Latin prose. Until the beginning of the third century prose rhythms were metrical. While non-rhythmical works do occasionally occur, e.g. Tacitus' historical works,<sup>42</sup> most authors employed the Asiatic metres that had become popular through Cicero. Then, in the opening decades of the third century the rhetorical schools in northern Africa began teaching the accommodation of word-stress in the formulation of the metrical clausula. This coincidence of both metre and accent in the same clausula is called by modern scholars *cursus mixtus* (no contemporary – grammarian, rhetorician or otherwise – discusses this prose rhythm). The *cursus mixtus* may have been taught elsewhere as well, or even invented in another region; however, it is found only in African authors for the first eighty-odd years of the third century, and thus its

<sup>40</sup> See 1.6.24; 5.24.84; 5.24.92; 6.1.1. For the *cursus* of this work see my 1988 *CP* paper. Augustine's captivation with Ambrose's sermons in Milan is commonplace, as is his pleasure at Ambrose's exegeses.

<sup>41</sup> It is in the *De doct. christ.* that Augustine advises Christian professors to imitate the style of Paul and other scripture or of the best writers like Ambrose.

<sup>42</sup> H. Aili, *The Prose Rhythm of Sallust and Livy* (Stockholm, 1979).

beginnings may be traced to Africa sometime between Tertullian (metrical prose)<sup>43</sup> and Minucius and Cyprian, the first extant examples of this new rhythm. The *cursus mixtus*, to explain its origin, is the product of a refusal by teachers of rhetoric to abandon the traditional metrical system of Cicero and their recognition of the dominance of accent in Latin.<sup>44</sup>

The history of the *cursus mixtus* in the third and fourth centuries has been outlined above. To what is stated there I may add that the accentual quality of clausulae became so strong that metrical-only clausulae were no longer used; I can find no text after A.D. 200 that contains metre only.

In the last quarter of the fourth century the Christian writers begin to use accentual-only clausulae (the *cursus* as the medieval grammarians called it) in their exegetical and other ecclesiastical works. The provenance of the *cursus* is not known, but the most likely theory is that the Greek *cursus*, itself a new rhythm (first used c. 330–340) and found in fourth-century Greek exegetes, was taken over by the Latin writers for their own scriptural commentaries; if this is the case, then Jerome introduced the *cursus* into the west. Still, the *cursus mixtus* remained the preferred mode of rhythm for formal prose, speeches, and even the imperial curiae. When the papal curia, however, took over the *cursus* and as the vernacular and colloquial elements of Latin scripture and exegesis became the standard style for all other genres of literature,<sup>45</sup> then the *cursus* alone was used by Latin writers.<sup>46</sup>

Texas A & M University

STEVEN M. OBERHELMAN

<sup>43</sup> See Hall and Oberhelman, *CQ* 36 (1986), table with extensive discussion *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> L. Stephens, 'Some remarks on prose rhythm', *Helios* 15.1 (1988), forthcoming.

<sup>45</sup> D. Sheerin, 'Medieval Latin: *In media Latinitate*', *Helios* 14.2 (1987), forthcoming.

<sup>46</sup> This paper has benefited greatly from the comments of the anonymous reader of *CQ*.