

SUAVIS AND DULCIS A STUDY OF CICERONIAN USAGE

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THE ADJECTIVE *suavis*, with its derivative noun *suavitas* (occasionally *suavitudo*), and the adjective *dulcis*, with its derivative noun *dulcedo* (occasionally *dulcitudo*, *dulcitas*, and, in late Latin, *dulcor*),¹ are etymologically distinct. Akin to Greek ἡδύς, ἡδομαι (= what gives pleasure, primarily to the senses, including taste, and secondarily to the mind), and to Sanskrit *svādúh*, *svādví* (= having good taste), *suavis* is believed to be rooted in the base **swād-/swād-*. *Dulcis*, on the other hand, probably akin to Greek γλυκύς (= primarily sweet to the taste, and consequently sweet or pleasurable to the other senses and to the mind), is derived, it is conjectured, from the root **dluku-*.² Originally words with distinct meanings and derived from distinct roots, *suavis* and *dulcis* are, however, from the earliest extant Latin literature down to late pagan and Christian Latin, broadly synonymous, being both used to express gustatory as well as other sensuous, emotional, and mental pleasures.

Ancient lexicography recognised the synonymy, as can be seen from the following list of synonyms in Charisius; "acceptum, comprobatum, gratum, *suave*, iucundum, *dulce*" (p. 414, l. 19 Barwick), and further: "comis, facilis, *suavis*, acceptus, *dulcis* . . . iucundus, gratus . . ." (p. 418, ll. 4-5 Barwick). So does modern lexicography, a characteristic example of which can be found in Lewis and Short, where both *suavis* and *dulcis* are defined as "sweet," "pleasant," "agreeable," and both *suavitas* and *dulcedo* as "sweetness," "pleasantness," "agreeableness," (a) literally, i.e., as affecting the senses, and (b) figuratively, i.e., as affecting the mind or feelings.³

¹Other derivatives are *suaviter*, *insuavis*, *insuavitas*, and, more rarely found, *suaviare*, *assuaviare*, *suavifico*, *suavidus*, and compound adjectives (usually poetical), such as *suavi-* or *suave-* *-olens*, *-dicens*, *-frangens*. From *dulcis*, the other commonly found derivatives are *dulciter* and *dulcesco*, but there are many more, which are less common: see TLL 4.2182, 2186 f., 2197 f. For brevity and convenience I generally use *suavis* and *dulcis* here to cover derivatives as well, except where it is necessary to specify the morphological detail.

²See A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* (Paris 1959) 186-187 and 659; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968) 228-229 and 406-407; and, for a larger collection of Indo-European cognates, C. D. Buck, *Dictionary of selected synonyms in the principal Indo-European languages* (Chicago 1949) 1032.

³See also Forcellini, *Lexicon totius Latinitatis*, s.v. "dulcis," "suavis," and derivatives. TLL (4.2182-2199) supplies the most abundant documentation for *dulcis*, but (like O.L.D.) has not yet reached *suavis*. Cf. also H. Menge, *Lateinische Synonymik* (1900)

However, although the use and synonymy of *suavis* and *dulcis* extend generally over the whole of Latin literature, it is the peculiarity of *suavis* that its frequency fluctuates considerably with author, genre, and period, in both poetry and prose.

Suavis is more frequent than *dulcis* in Plautus (28/21) and Terence (5/1),⁴ but much less so in Lucretius (14/35) and Catullus (3/27).⁵ In Vergil, all 10 instances of *suavis* occur in the earlier or pseudo-Vergilian works (Ps. Verg. *Minor poems*: 5, *Ecl.*: 4, *Georg.*: 1, *Aen.*: 0), whereas the 69 instances of *dulcis* are more evenly distributed.⁶ Similarly, in Horace, all 10 instances of *suavis* occur in the *Satires* and *Epistles* (*Serm.*: 9, *Epp.*: 1, *Odes*: 0), whereas the 57 instances of *dulcis* include 26 occurrences in the *Odes*.⁷ There is only one occurrence of *suavis* in Phaedrus,⁸ and none in Ovid, Propertius, Tibullus, Lucan, Silius, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, Persius, Juvenal, Martial, Seneca (as poet), Avienus, Avianus, and Namatianus. The absence of *suavis* is particularly remarkable when confronted with the frequency of *dulcis* in these poets: Phaedrus: 7, Ovid: 78, Propertius: 15, Tibullus: 15, Lucan: 8, Silius: 35, Statius: 104, Valerius: 24, Persius: 3, Juvenal: 7, Martial: 44, Seneca (as poet): 19, Avienus: 4, Avianus: 1, Namatianus: 4.⁹ Extremely rare in mature

181, no. 307, and F. Lieber, *Dictionary of Latin synonyms* (Philadelphia 1860) 180, both listing as synonyms "*dulcis, suavis, iucundus, gratus, amoenus*." C. Moussy, *REL* 42 (1964) 389–400, has discussed the synonymy of *gratus* and *iucundus*; J. Marouzeau, *Quelques aspects de la formation du latin littéraire* (Paris 1949) 57–71, has examined, with much insight, the problem of Latin synonyms in general.

⁴For Plautus, references to *suavi-s* (21), *-ter* (1), *-tas* (2), *-tudo* (2), *-saviatio* (2) / *dulci-s* (18), *-culus* (1), *-acerbus* (1), *-fer* (1), in G. Lodge, *Lexicon Plautinum* (Leipzig 1924–1933). Terence: (*suavis*) *Ht.* 482; 962; *Poe.* 305; 344; 411; (*dulcis*) *Ht.* 234.

⁵For Lucretius, references to *suavi-s* (11), *-loquens* (2), *-dicus* (1) / *dulci-s* (30), *-edo* (5), in J. Paulson, *Index Lucretianus* (Göteborg 1911). Catullus: (*suavis*) 13.10; 61.7; 64.87; excluding kisses (*suavium, suaviolum, suaviari*), for which, as for *dulcis*, references in M. N. Wetmore, *Index verborum Catullianus* (New Haven 1912). The rest of Republican poetry is too fragmentary to permit any safe conclusion. *Suavis* is in Ennius (*Ann.* 119; 245; 303 V^a), Naevius, Accius, and Turpilius (*ap. Non.* pp. 314; 137; 254 Lindsay), but not in Lucilius (cf. L. Berkowitz and T. F. Brunner, *Index Lucilianus* [Hildesheim 1968]). Laevius (27.6; 9.19 Traglia), Matius (10.1 Traglia) and Caecilius (*ap. Non.* p. 137 Lindsay) feature *dulcis*, not *suavis*.

⁶*Suavis*: *Ciris* 3; 96; *Copa* 19; *Priap.* 3.13; *Dir.* 22; *Ecl.* 2.49; 55; 3.63; 4.43; *Georg.* 4.200. References for *dulci-s* (65) and *-edo* (4) in H. Merguet, *Lexicon zu Vergilius* (Leipzig 1912).

⁷*Suavis*: *Serm.* 1.1.51; 3.85; 4.76; 6.130; 9.5; 10.24; 2.2.51; 8.89; 8.92; *Ep.* 1.8.4. References for *dulcis* in A. Lane Cooper, *Concordance to the works of Horace* (Washington 1916).

⁸3.1.5. Also 4.3, according to A. Cinquini (see n. 9).

⁹References (mostly as adj. *dulcis*, occasionally as noun *dulcedo*) in A. Cinquini, *Index Phaedrianus* (Milan 1905); R. J. Deferrari et al., *Concordance of Ovid* (Washington 1939); J. Phillimore, *Index verborum Propertianus* (Oxford 1905); B. P. Glass, *Index*

Augustan and post-Augustan poetry,¹⁰ *suavis* resurfaces in Christian poetry of the fourth century, with, for example, 7 occurrences (against 39 of *dulcis*) in Prudentius, and 2 occurrences (against 1 of *dulcis*) in Commodianus.¹¹

In prose, *suavis* is not to be found in Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Q. Curtius, Tacitus, Suetonius, Florus, and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. These authors, however, do use *dulcis*: Caesar: 4 times, Sallust: 2, Livy: 17, Curtius: 7, Tacitus: 11, Suetonius: 1, Florus: 2, *Scriptores Hist. Aug.*: 9.¹² *Suavis* is hardly to be found, against a very high frequency of *dulcis*, in Seneca's prose (2/60), and in Columella (2/73), but it occurs somewhat more frequently in Cato: 3 *suavis*/5 *dulcis*, Varro (*De Re Rustica*): 3/10, Quintilian: 9/26, Pliny the Elder: 43/44, Pliny the Younger: 13/21, Apuleius: 21/42, Arnobius: 6/24, Augustine: 21/73, Boethius: 4/13.¹³ It is also found (usually along with *dulcis*) in Fronto, Aulus

Tibullianus (Hildesheim 1978); R. J. Deferrari *et al.*, *Concordance of Lucan* (Washington 1940); N. D. Young, *Index verborum Silianus* (Iowa 1939); R. J. Deferrari and C. Eagan, *Concordance of Statius* (Brookland 1943) (at *Theb.* 8.236 *suavis* is improbable, depending on an emendation of Garrod generally rejected by editors); W. H. Schulte, *Index verborum Valerianus* (Pennsylvania 1935); L. Berkowitz and T. F. Brunner, *Index verborum quae in saturis A. Persii Fl. reperiuntur* (Hildesheim 1967); M. Dubrocard, *Juvenal-Satires: Index verborum* (Hildesheim 1976); L. Friedländer, *Martialis Epigrammaton libri* (Leipzig 1886) vol. 2, indices; R. Busa and A. Zampolli, *Concordantiae Senecae* (Hildesheim 1975); indices verborum in A. Holder, *Avieni carmina* (Innsbruck 1887); A. Guaglianone, *Aviani fabulae* (Paravia 1958); J. Vessereau, *Rutilius Namatianus* (Paris 1904).

¹⁰E.g., Nemesianus *Cyneg.* 319; Anon. *PLM* 3.305 Baehrens.

¹¹Commod. 86; 331; 1035. For Prudentius, references in R. J. Deferrari and J. M. Campbell, *Concordance of Prudentius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1932).

¹²References (mostly as adj. *dulcis* and noun *dulcedo*) in H. Merguet, *Lexicon z.d. Schriften Caesars* (Jena 1886); A. W. Bennett, *Index verborum Sallustianus* (Hildesheim 1969) (at *Hist.* 2. fr. 78 Maurenbrecher *suavis* is improbable, depending on an emendation by Dietsch generally rejected by editors); D. W. Packard, *Concordance to Livy* (Cambridge, Mass. 1969); J. Thérasse, *Q. Curtius Rufus: Index verborum* (Hildesheim 1976); A. Gerber and A. Greef, *Lexicon Taciteum* (Leipzig 1877–1890); A. A. Howard and C. N. Jackson, *Index verborum C. Suetoni Tranquilli* (Cambridge, Mass. 1922); M. L. Fele, *Lexicon Florianum* (Hildesheim 1975); C. Lessing, *Scriptorum Historiae Augustae Lexicon* (Leipzig 1906–1907).

¹³Mostly as adj. *suavis* and *dulcis*, and as nouns *suavitas* and *dulcedo*, occasionally as adv. *suaviter* and *dulciter*. Also included are, for *suavis*, the negatives *insuavis* and *insuaviter*, and, for *dulcis*, the verb *dulcesco* and a few other derivatives. References are assembled in R. Busa and A. Zampolli (above, n. 9); G. G. Betts and W. D. Ashworth, *Index to Columella* (Uppsala 1971); index verborum in R. Krumbiegel, *M. Porci Catonis de agri cultura; M. Terenti Varronis res rusticae* (Leipzig 1897); E. Bonnell, *Lexicon Quintilianum* (Leipzig 1834); index in A. P. de la Forest, *C. Plinii Hist.* (Paris 1831–1832) vol. 10.2, index locupl.; X. Jacques and J. Van Ooteghem, *Index de Pline le Jeune* (Brussels 1965); W. A. Oldfather, *Index Apuleianus* (Middletown, Conn. 1934); L. Berkowitz, *Index Arnobianus* (Hildesheim 1967); D. Lenfant, *Concordantiae Augustinae* (Paris 1656–1665). A. Lane Cooper, *Concordance of Boethius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1928).

Gellius, Caelius Aurelianus, Julius Valerius, Firmicus Maternus, Charisius, Macrobius, Isidore of Seville, Martianus Capella, Ambrose, Jerome, Orosius, and Gregorius Magnus.¹⁴ In few authors is it more frequent than *dulcis*, as in Nepos: 3/1, Vitruvius: 14/6, Petronius: 8/7, Ampelius: 1/0, and Tertullian: 20/18.¹⁵ In no other writer is *suavis* so abundant as in Cicero: 245/108.

In a study of "unpoetic words," B. Axelson briefly noted the frequency of *suavis* in the comic writers, its decline from Lucretius to Vergil and Horace, its absence in some of the poets and historians mentioned above, despite its presence in Vitruvius and Petronius (whose styles he characterised as vulgar), as well as Cicero and some Ciceronians like Quintilian, Pliny the Younger, and Lactantius. Led by his observation to conclude that *suavis* was avoided in poetry and elevated prose from Augustan times onwards, Axelson theorised that it had emerged from archaic Latin as a word of vulgar or colloquial tone, and was consequently expurgated from poetry and dignified prose through a purificatory process.¹⁶ On this theory, the essential difference between *suavis* and *dulcis* would be one of tone, of status and dignity, the one being foreign, the other integrated, to formal language. Some years later, in a discussion of the poetic vocabulary of Catullus, D. O. Ross, subscribing to this theory, went further in arguing, from the presence of *suavis* in Catullus, Pseudo-Vergil and early Vergil, that this word became part of characteristic neoteric vocabulary, a development which stressed its informal tone and contributed to its subsequent expurgation.¹⁷

In a detailed review of Axelson's book two years after its publication, A. Ernout took issue, among other things, with Axelson's view of the word *suavis*. Examining briefly the uses of *suavis* in Pseudo-Vergil, early Vergil, and Catullus, Ernout argued that the difference between *suavis* and *dulcis* was not at all one of status, but of meaning, in that *suavis* expressed sensuous impressions of taste, smell, sight, while *dulcis* was more general, concrete as well as abstract, physical as well as moral.

¹⁴E.g., Fronto, *Eloq.* 5; Aul. Gell. 1.21.4; 10.3.3; 12.3.2; 4.3; 18.11.2; 19.9.5; 9.10; Cael. Aur. *Acut. Pass.* 2.19.115; Jul. Val. *Gest. Alex.* 2.39; Firm. Mat. 3.5.12; 5.5.6; Charis., Macrobius, Isid.: see above, 220 and below, 226; Mart. Cap. 1.3; 3.297; 9.908 (= pp. 5; 123; 482 Dick); Ambros. in *Ps.* 118, *serm.* 5.3. 33; Jerome, *Ep.* 46.1.3; Oros. 6.12.4; Greg. in *Ezech.* 1.5.12.

¹⁵Again mostly as adj. *suavis* and *dulcis*, and as nouns *suavitas* and *dulcedo*, but including adv. *suaviter*, negatives *insuavis*, *insuavitas*, compound *suaviludius* and noun *dulcor*. Nepos *Att.* 1.3; 4.1; 18.5; 18.4; Ampel. *Lib. mem.* p. 4.11 Assman; other references assembled in H. Nohl, *Index Vitruvianus* (Leipzig 1876); J. Segebade and E. Lommatzsch, *Lexicon Petronianum* (Leipzig 1898); G. Claesson, *Index Tertullianus* (Paris 1974-1975).

¹⁶B. Axelson, *Unpoetische Wörter* (Lund 1945) 35-37.

¹⁷D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1969) 76-80.

Unimpressed by the absence of *suavis* in the historians from Caesar to Justin, and objecting to the characterisation of Vitruvius' and Petronius' styles as vulgar, Ernout rejected the theory that *suavis* differed from *dulcis* in degree of dignity, and implicitly favoured instead a theory based on a distinction of meaning.¹⁸

While Axelson and particularly Ross somewhat overstated the case for the absence of *suavis* from both poetry and prose,¹⁹ and Ernout's view of the essential difference between *suavis* and *dulcis* may be valid for Vergil and Catullus, the virtual eclipse of *suavis* from poetry and historical prose until the rise of Christian Latin cannot be denied or easily dismissed. A comprehensive study of these two synonyms throughout Latin literature would show that a theory which would adequately account for the differences between them would be neither exclusively in terms of dignity, nor exclusively in terms of meaning, but a complex one, based on examination of several aspects of the problem, including chronology, grammar, metrics, status, and meaning. Such a study, rendered difficult by the lack of exhaustive indexes for several authors and for inscriptions and of *TLL* material on *suavis*, is beyond the scope of this article. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the solution of the problem by examining it with specific reference to Ciceronian usage. Cicero is singled out because, in addition to his singular importance as a writer in the shaping of Latin prose, he provides for both *suavis* and *dulcis* an abundance of documentation in diverse genres, such as is unparalleled in any other author.

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The following statistics indicate the frequency of *suavis* and *dulcis* in Cicero, and distribution across his five genres.

Letters: *suavis*: 94 (56 *suavis*, 11 *suaviter*, 26 *suavitas*, 1 *insuavis*)
 dulcis: 20 (17 *dulcis*, 3 *dulcedo*)
 Orations: *suavis*: 11 (7 *suavis*, 4 *suavitas*)
 dulcis: 13 (12 *dulcis*, 1 *dulcedo*)

¹⁸A. Ernout, "Notes et Discussions," *RevPhil* 21 (1947) 63-64 = *Philologica* 2 (Paris 1957) 76-78.

¹⁹Thus Ross (*op. cit.* 77), in stating that "*suavis* disappeared entirely from (poetry)," does not take account of its occurrence (albeit rare) in Phaedrus, Nemesianus, Prudentius, Commodianus, Anon. *ap. PLM* (above, notes 8, 10 and 11). To add, as he does (78), that "*suavis* was avoided by prose writers . . . though occasionally used (by Cicero)," understates the 245 occurrences in Cicero and those in some of the authors just listed.

Rhetorical treatises:	<i>suavis</i> : 90 (29 <i>suavis</i> , 5 <i>suaviter</i> , 46 <i>suavitas</i> , 3 <i>suavitudō</i> , 5 <i>insuavis</i> , 1 <i>suaviloquens</i> , 1 <i>suaviloquentia</i>)
	<i>dulcis</i> : 28 (24 <i>dulcis</i> , 1 <i>dulcissime</i> adv., 2 <i>dulcedo</i> , 1 <i>dulcitudō</i>)
Philosophical works:	<i>suavis</i> : 49 (23 <i>suavis</i> , 2 <i>suaviter</i> , 22 <i>suavitas</i> , 1 <i>insuavis</i> , 1 <i>suaviloquens</i>)
	<i>dulcis</i> : 44 (35 <i>dulcis</i> , 1 <i>dulciter</i> , 6 <i>dulcedo</i> , 1 <i>dulciculus</i> , 1 <i>dulcesco</i>)
Poetic fragments:	<i>suavis</i> : 1
	<i>dulcis</i> : 3 (2 <i>dulcis</i> , 1 <i>dulcedo</i>)
Total:	<i>suavis</i> : 245 (116 <i>suavis</i> , 18 <i>suaviter</i> , 98 <i>suavitas</i> , 13 other)
	<i>dulcis</i> : 108 (90 <i>dulcis</i> , 2 <i>dulciter</i> or adv., 13 <i>dulcedo</i> , 3 other) ²⁰

These statistics warrant a few preliminary observations. (1) Cicero had a predilection for *suavis* over *dulcis* in a proportion (2.3/1) somewhat uncommon in Latin authors. (2) Suppositions that preference for one or the other term was a temporary feature, a stylistic mannerism or *tic*, can be ruled out on grounds of their chronological distribution throughout the Ciceronian corpus. (3) Suggestions that *suavis* was a feature of Cicero's colloquial language break down on consideration of the distribution of both terms across the five genres. The frequency of *suavis* in relation to *dulcis* admittedly declines to its lowest proportion in the genres usually featuring the most elevated style (0.8/1 in oratory and 0.3/1 in poetry), and rises to its highest proportion (4.7/1) in the epistolary genre, which usually displays the least formal style (although *Quint. fr.* 1.1, *Comm. petit.*, *Fam.* 5.7 and 5.12 may serve as examples of the contrary). It is impossible, however, to correlate the incidence of *suavis* with moments in these genres when a colloquial tone prevails. (4) On the other hand, classification into grammatical categories of adjective, adverb, and noun reveals disparities so striking that they deserve to be

²⁰References collected in W. A. Oldfather *et al.*, *Index verborum Ciceronis Epistularum* (Urbana 1938) (excluding kisses [*suavium*, *suaviari*], but including 5 instances of *suavis* in letters written not by Cicero himself, but by individuals closely connected with and much influenced by him, namely his brother Quintus, his son Marcus and his former pupil Caelius Rufus (*Comm. pet.* 42; *Fam.* 16.8.1; 21.3; 8.1.1; 3.1), one example of *dulcis* occurring in a probable quotation from comedy (*Fam.* 3.8.8), and 2 of the 3 uses of *dulcedo* in letters not by Cicero, but by Brutus (*ad Br.* 1.16.8) and Matius (*Fam.* 11.28.2)); H. Merguet, *Lexicon zu den Reden des Cicero* (Jena 1877–1884) (*suavis* occurs at *Sext. Rosc.* 48; 63; *Verr.* 3.23; *Pis.* 42; 93; *Balb.* 36; *Phil.* 3.18; and *suavitas* at *Sull.* 19; *Cael.* 25; 42; *Phil.* 2.24); K. M. Abbott *et al.*, *Index verborum in Ciceronis Rhetorica* (Urbana 1964); H. Merguet, *Lexicon zu den philosophischen Schriften Ciceros* (Jena 1887–1894); J. W. Spaeth, *Index verborum Ciceronis poeticonum fragmentorum* (Urbana 1955). The figures given for Cicero's rhetorical works include occurrences in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*; although not by Cicero, the treatise conforms to Ciceronian practice in its use of *dulcis* and *suavis*, as can be seen from the example cited in the following pages.

reflected in any hypothesis which purports to explain the differences between *suavis* and *dulcis*. As adjective, the predominance of *suavis* over *dulcis* is in the proportion of 1.3/1, but as adverb, it rises to the proportion of 9.0/1, and as noun to the proportion of 7.5/1. While the noun *suavitas*, with 98 occurrences, constitutes 40% of the incidences of *suavis*, the noun *dulcedo*, with only 13 occurrences, constitutes merely 12% of the incidences of *dulcis*.²¹

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Pliny the Elder distinguishes between *suavis* and *dulcis* in enumerating the several flavours identifiable in fruits and juices: *dulcis, suavis, pinguis, amarus, austerus, acer, acutus, acerbus, acidus, salsus* (NH 15.106). A little further on, he again distinguishes: *namque in iis et austerus et acutus et dulcis et suavis* (107), and again: *quod tamen iure dici dulce et pingue et suave* (*ibid.*). Macrobius states precisely the difference between the flavours denoted by *suavis* and *dulcis* (*Sat.* 7.7.15–17):

Ad haec Disarius: 'omne quod dulce est cito satiat nec diuturnam desiderii sui fidem tenet, sed in locum satietatis succedit horror. in musto autem sola dulcedo est, suavitas nulla. nam vinum cum in infantia est, dulce; cum pubescit, magis suave quam dulce est. esse autem harum duarum rerum distantiam certe Homerus testis est qui ait μέλιτι γλυκερῷ καὶ ἡδελ οἶνῳ. vocavit enim mel dulce et vinum suave. mustum igitur cum necdum suave est sed tantum modo dulce, horrore quodam tantum sumi de se non patitur quantum sufficiat ebrietati. addo aliud, naturali ratione ebrietati dulcedinem repugnare, adeo ut medici eos qui usque ad periculum distenduntur vino plurimo cogant vomere, et post vomitum contra fenum vini qui remansit in venis panem offerunt melle inlitum, et ita hominem ab ebrietatis malo dulcedo defendit: ideo ergo non inebriat mustum in quo est sola dulcedo.

Isidore of Seville observes that *suavis* and *dulcis* may be synonymous, but are not always interchangeable: *Dulce idem potest esse quod suave, non utique suave quod dulce: dulce enim mel dicimus et suave acetum, quod dulce non est* (*Diff. App.* n. 189).

It is apparent from these passages that, at least, lexicographers and gastronomes made a clear distinction between the meaning of *dulcis* and that of *suavis* in the primary, gustatory sense. *Dulcis* is a primary gustatory sensation and means "sweet." The noun which it characteristically qualifies is honey (*mel*). Its Greek equivalent is γλυκὺς or γλυκερός, which characteristically qualifies μέλι. It also qualifies the juice of ripe fruit, including that which has been freshly pressed from the grape, but not yet fermented into wine (*mustum*). Consequently, like honey or

²¹It is also noteworthy that: (1) *insuavis*, the negative of *suavis*, having no counterpart in *dulcis*, is serviceable as a negative for both (7 occurrences), to avoid periphrases such as *non dulcis, haud dulcis*. (2) As a stylistic device, the comparative form of the adj. is far more common with *dulcis* (32 occurrences) than with *suavis* (9).

sugar, that which is *dulcis*, while pleasant and likely to gratify the palate quickly, provokes disgust, if administered continuously or in large quantity. *Suavis*, on the other hand, is not a primary taste. It denotes pleasantness of taste, which results from the combination of sweetness and acidity. Characteristically, it qualifies wine (*vinum*). Its Greek equivalent is ἡδύς which characteristically qualifies οἶνος. It can even qualify sour wine or vinegar (*acetum*). Thus the primary Latin equivalent for the English "sweet" (from A.S. "swete" or "swet," cf. Icel. "saetr," "sötr," Goth. "sutis") is not its etymological cognate "suavis," but "*dulcis*."

Dulcis is found 19 times in 16 contexts of Cicero with the literal meaning of a gustatory sensation.²² In 6 of the occurrences, it qualifies *mel*. In one occurrence, it qualifies the ripe grape (*uva . . . maturata*), as opposed to the sour taste (*peracerba gustatu*) of the grape when still young (*augescens*). On three occasions, it qualifies *aqua*, the water being respectively that of a spring (*fons*), that of a pond, and that which is explicitly opposed to salt water (*aqua marina*). On four occasions, it qualifies food (*cibus*) or drink (*potio*), but the context leaves no doubt that the idea in mind is specifically the primary taste of sweetness. This is particularly evident in *De or.* 3.99, where it is stated, as in the Macrobius passage, that prolonged doses of what is *dulcis* provoke disgust:

Quin etiam gustatus, qui est sensus ex omnibus maxime voluptarius quique dulcitudine praeter ceteros sensus commovetur, quam cito id quod valde dulce est aspernatur ac respuit! quis potionem uti aut cibo dulci diutius potest?

In the remaining five occurrences, *dulcis* qualifies *res*, or it is used in the neuter as a substantive, being opposed, each time, to *amarus* or *sub-amarus*.²³

Suavis with the literal meaning of a gustatory sensation is found 12 times in 10 contexts of Cicero. Twice it is used of wine which has been mellowed by age. Five times it is used of specific solid foods: herbs (*herba, helvella, fungus, nasturtium, lapathus*), fish (*pisces, acipenser*), and fowl (*aves*), it being always understood that the taste is a pleasant one. In the remaining instances, it is used of food more generally (*cibus*), or, by itself, as a substantival adjective, or as the substantive *suavitas*. In these cases, *suavis* is used to denote sometimes the pleasurable sensation of tasty food in general, and sometimes the sensation of eating itself, as experienced by the palate (*palatus, sensus*), as opposed to the insensibility

²²Including diminutive *dulciculus* (1), noun *dulcitus* (1), verb *dulcesco* (1), and 3 instances of the expression *sermo* (or *oratio*) *melle dulcior*, where the adj. qualifies *mel* implicitly.

²³*Mel*: *Fin.* 1.30; 3.34 (*bis*); *Senect.* 31; *Rhet. Her.* 4.44; *Orat.* 32. *Uva*: *Senect.* 53. *Aqua*: *Verr.* 4.118; *Div.* 1.15; *Nat. D.* 3.37. *Cibus* and *potio*: to *De or.* 3.99, add *Tusc.* 3.46. *Res*: *Inv.* 1.25. Substantive: *Fat.* 8; *Rep.* 3.13; *Fin.* 2.36; *Nat. D.* 3.32.

(*stupor*) of a sick person's palate, or to feelings of the heart (*cor*) and perceptions of the mind (*ratio*).²⁴

In the literal sense of taste, then, the two words show a clear difference of meaning in Cicero. *Suavis* is used to express the sensation of taste itself and pleasantness of taste in general, including that of wine. *Dulcis*, on the other hand, denotes the very specific and primary taste of sweetness. It is the regular antonym of "bitter," "sour," "salty," and, as such, regularly qualifies fresh water, as opposed to salt water. Ciceronian usage is consistent with the distinction noted by Pliny, Macrobius, and Isidore, and further amplifies and illuminates it.

Thus, in the literal sense of the gratification of taste, *suavis* has a broader scope than *dulcis*. Both are extended to cover notions of sensuous, corporeal, and tactual gratifications in general. They are synonyms in this respect, as adjectives: *hanc in motu voluptatem (sic enim has suaves et quasi dulces voluptates appellat Epicurus . . .)* (*Fin.* 2.30); as nouns: *si (voluptas) . . . pluris esse contendat dulcedinem corporis . . .* (*Fin.* 3.1): *si ea sola voluptas esset quae quasi titillaret sensus . . . et . . . cum suavitate afflueret . . .* (1.39); as adverbs: *qua (voluptate) sensus dulciter ac iucunde movetur* (*Fin.* 2.18): *video quam suaviter voluptas sensibus nostris blandiatur* (*Acad.* 2.139).²⁵

But when the sense-experience is confined to smell or sight, there is a clear preference for *suavis*. Not a single instance of *dulcis* occurs in describing an object inasmuch as it occasions a pleasurable experience of a specifically olfactory or visual nature. *Suavis*, on the other hand, is found describing the smell of flowers: *suavitatem odorum qui afflarentur e floribus* (*Senect.* 59); the smell of perfumes: *unguentis . . . summa et acerrima suavitate conditis* (*De or.* 3.99); the smell of the human body and mouth—pleasurable, that is, to the perverse Verres!—: *odor . . . taeterrimus oris et corporis . . . uni isti suavis et iucundus* (*Verr.* 3.23); as well as the colour of a human complexion: *candiduli dentes, venusti oculi, color suavis*" (*Tusc.* 5.46; cf. *coloris suavitas*: *Tusc.* 4.31; *Opt. gen. or.* 8); movements of the body, graceful to see: *quae ex formis percipiuntur, oculis suaves motiones* (*Tusc.* 3.41);²⁶ a green landscape: *viridarium* διαφάσεις *latis luminibus . . . suaves* (*Att.* 2.3.2).

²⁴*Vinum*: *Am.* 67; *Br.* 287. Herbs, fish and fowl: *Fam.* 7.26.2; *Tusc.* 5.99 (*bis*); *Fin.* 2.25; *Nat. D.* 2.160. *Cibus*: *Fin.* 2.64; *Phil.* 2.115. Substantival, for taste itself: *Fin.* 2.25 (. . . *suavitatem ipsam neglegebat*); 2.24 (. . . *quod non intellexeret quid suavissimum esset . . . ut cui cor sapiat ei non sapiat palatus*); 2.91 (*non modo cor non habere sed ne palatum quidem . . . huic omnia sensu, non ratione, sunt iudicanda, ea dicenda optima quae sunt suavissima*).

²⁵Cf. (*dulcis*) *Leg.* 1.47; *Fin.* 2.10; 16; 39; 114; and (*suavis*) *Leg.* 1.31; *De or.* 3.25; *Fin.* 1.37; 2.13; 88; 5.80.

²⁶*Suavis* translates Gk. ἡδύς from Epicurus: τὰς διὰ μορφῆς κατ' ὄψιν ἡδέας κινήσεις (*Ath.* 7.280).

Of sounds which are pleasant to hear, however, *dulcis* is commonly used, as in *sonus erat dulcis* (*Off.* 1.33), or of the sound of music from the spheres, as in Scipio's dream: *complet aures meas . . . tam dulcis sonus* (*Rep.* 6.18), or of the song of birds: *avium dulcedo* (*Rhet. Her.* 4.29). So is *suavis*. The voice of the Sirens is invested, in the same passage, with both *vocum dulcedo* and *vocum suavis* (*Fin.* 2.49). The nuance of difference here consists in the potential of colouring in *suavis* for neutrality, and in *dulcis* for pejoration. Thus, as it was found with the sense of taste (above, 227), when the point being made is not so much the pleasantness of a sound, but the sensation of hearing itself, the tendency is to use *suavis*: *qui aspernetur oculis pulchritudinem rerum, non odore ullo, non tactu, non sapore capiat, excludat auribus omnem suavitatem* (*Cael.* 42); *voluptas suavitate auditus animum deleniens* (*Tusc.* 4.20). On the other hand, in a discussion turning to music that is soft and effeminate, pleasant to the ear but debilitating in its effect on the moral fibre, *dulcedo*, corroborated by a clearly pejorative term in hendiadys, clinches the nuance: *mores lapsi ad molliam mollitis pariter sunt inmutati cum cantibus, aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati* (*Leg.* 2.38; cf. 1.47, for a similar hendiadys, with *dulcedo* + *scabies*). To the ear as to the palate, *dulcis* can be rather like sweets, immediately gratifying, potentially unwholesome.

* * *

A special feature of the use of *dulcis* and *suavis* in describing the pleasantness of sounds consists in their application to the sounds of spoken language, and, by extension, to the configuration of written language. They both become part of the vocabulary of literary criticism, and are used with conspicuous profusion in the rhetorical treatises to describe the literary style or diction of orators,²⁷ philosophers, poets, and writers in general,²⁸ as well as specific ingredients of diction, such as the effect of metaphors,²⁹ the structure and cast of sentences,³⁰ the euphony resulting from collocation of certain consonants.³¹ As terms evaluating literary diction, *dulcis* and *suavis* are synonymous and interchangeable, although there is the tendency again (as previously remarked in n. 21) to prefer *suavis* when a negative adjective, an adverb, or a substantive are used,

²⁷(*Dulcis*) *De or.* 2.34; *Br.* 50; 83; 105; 247; 295; *Or.* 42; *Senect.* 31; *Off.* 1.3; *Rhet. Her.* 4.44; (*suavis*) *Inv.* 1.3; *De or.* 3.28; 3.82; *Rep.* 3.42; 5.11; *Br.* 38; 40; 44; 110; 177; 186; 276; *Senect.* 31.

²⁸(*Dulcis*) *De or.* 2.58; *Br.* 77; 121; 262; *Or.* 32; *Tusc.* 2.27; *Off.* 1.108; (*suavis*) *Inv.* 2.6; *De or.* 1.49; *Br.* 120; *Or.* 62; *Acad.* 1.33; 2.16; *Nat. D.* 1.42; 1.60; *Div.* 1.78; *Top.* 3.26; *De or.* 1.49; *Br.* 120; *Or.* 62; *Acad.* 1.33; 2.16; *Nat. D.* 1.42; 1.60; *Div.* 1.78; *Top.* 3.26; *De or.* 1.49; *Br.* 120; *Or.* 62; *Acad.* 1.33; 2.16; *Nat. D.* 1.42; 1.60; *Div.* 1.78; *Top.* 3.26.

²⁹(*Dulcis*) *Br.* 326; (*suavis*) *Or.* 150; 168.

³¹(*Dulcis*) *Or.* 157; 158; (*suavis*) 149; 157; 158; 163; 182.

and to prefer *dulcis* when the adjective in the comparative degree is used. That there is no difference between a diction described as *dulcis* and one described as *suavis* is made clear by the application of both terms indiscriminately to the same writers and speakers, as to Theophrastus (*Br.* 121; *Acad.* 1.33; *De or.* 1.49), Demetrius of Phaleron (*Off.* 1.3; *Br.* 38), Isocrates (*Or.* 42; *De or.* 3.28), Nestor (*Senect.* 31; *Rhet. Her.* 4.44; *Br.* 40), Menelaus (*Br.* 50; *Rep.* 5.11) and Laelius (*Br.* 83; 295; *Rep.* 3.42). While both serve to characterise similarly such writers and orators of the "middle style," yet they can be differentiated by two particularities.

In the first place, *dulcis* conforms with the particularity manifested in the description of sounds (cf. above, 229), in that it has the potential of a pejorative colouring, which can be realised by the addition of a clearly depreciatory term. In the following example, *suavis* appertains to a diction embellished with ornaments appropriately used with variety and moderation, and *dulcis* to a diction saturated with ornaments excessively and ubiquitously applied:

Ita sit nobis igitur ornatus et suavis orator . . . ut suavitatem habeat austeram et solidam, non dulcem atque decoctam . . . (*De or.* 3.103).

Drawing on the vocabulary of wine-making, Cicero likens literary *suavitas* to a wine well-fermented to a medium and pleasant taste, by adding the appreciatory terms *austerus* and *solidus*; to *dulcis*, he gives the pejorative touch of "oversweet," like an ill-fermented wine, by adding the depreciatory term *decoctus*.

Secondly, *suavitas* is distinguished by having a status peculiar to itself in Cicero's vocabulary of literary criticism. In the theory of oratory, the resource of the orator (*vis oratoris*) is said to consist of five aspects: (1) invention (*inventio*), (2) arrangement (*collocatio*), (3) diction (*elocutio*), (4) delivery (*actio*), and (5) memory (*memoria*).³² Whenever the question is raised, with regard to the aspects of diction and delivery, as to what constitutes "sweetness" in the technical sense of the Greek literary term τὸ ἡδύ, the Latin equivalent used is consistently *suavitas-suavis*, never *dulcedo-dulcis*. *Dulcedo* does not share with *suavitas* the status of a formal technical term, which identifies a type or genus of diction and delivery.³³

In diction, the styles available to the orator (*genera dicendi*) are said to be three. The plain style, cultivated by the so-called Atticists, is suited to the orator's function of informing his audience and proving his case

³²*Inu.* 1.9; *De or.* 1.42; *Part. or.* 3; *Rhet. Her.* 1.3.

³³On "sweetness" (τὸ ἡδύ) and "charm" (χάρης) in Greek literary criticism, see Aristotle *Rhet.* 1414a, Hermogenes *περὶ ἰδεῶν* 219 and Demetrius *On Style* 36; 128–183. The antithesis *suavis/gravis* (*De or.* 3.96; *Br.* 38; 186; *Or.* 62; 150; 168) regularly renders τὸ ἡδύ/τὸ μεγαλοπρεπές. Th. Ernesti, *Lexicon Technologicae Latinorum Rhetoricae* (Leipzig 1797) 139–140 and 375–376, in assigning the same status to both *suavis* and *dulcis* as technical equivalents of τὸ ἡδύ, is not supported by evidence from Cicero.

(*probare, docere*) by addressing the intellect, and is one of artful simplicity, designed to convey an impression of concern with matter rather than manner of speech. The terms commonly employed to characterise it, other than "plain" or "simple" (*tenuē*), are "ordinary" (*humile*), "restrained" (*summissum*), "fine" or "subtle" (*subtile*), "sharp" or "pointed" (*acutum*), "clear" or "distinct" (*argutum*). In contrast, the grand style, suitable for arousing and swaying emotions (*flectere, movere, animos tractare, incitare, permovere*), is powerful, impassioned, and splendid, resorting to all kinds of rhetorical devices effective in producing calculated effects with the utmost force. The terms usually employed to characterise it, in addition to "grand" (*grande*), are "impetuous" (*vehemens*), "rich" (*uber*), "ample" (*amplum*), "copious" (*copiosum*), "ornate" (*ornatum*), "forceful" (*forte*), "solid" (*robustum*), "weighty" (*grave*), "spirited" (*acre*), "fiery" (*ardens*), full of "vigour" (*vis*) and of "muscle" (*nervi*). The plain and the grand styles are thus identified by terms which are suggestive of their nature and meaningful in themselves.³⁴

The third style, appropriate to the orator's function of pleasing his audience, by satisfying their ears, their minds, and their emotions (*delectare*), frequently has its features expressed in terms of intermediacy between the plain and the grand, such as "richer than the plain," "more restrained than the grand," "with less muscle," and so on. The terms usually employed to identify it—*medium, modicum, mediocre, temperatum*—are all relative terms, with the exception of *suave*, which is the only one intrinsically meaningful, without reference to features in the other two styles. The following examples will serve to illustrate the use of *suavitas* as the identifying term, the characteristic trademark of the middle style:

Or. 99: *Ille enim summissus . . . medius suavis, hic autem copiosissimus . . .*

Ibid. 91: *Uberius est aliud aliquantoque robustius quam hoc humile de quo dictum est, summissius autem quam illud de quo iam dicetur amplissimum. Hoc in genere nervorum vel minimum, suavitatis autem est vel plurimum. Est enim plenius quam hoc enucleatum, quam autem illud ornatum copiosumque summissius.*

Ibid. 92: *Huic omnia dicendi ornamenta conveniunt plurimumque in hac orationis forma suavitatis.*

Ibid. 69: *Probare necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae . . . quot sunt officia oratoris tot sunt genera dicendi: subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo.*

Part. or. 21: *Suave autem genus erit dicendi . . .*

Ibid. 22: *Fit enim suavis oratio cum . . .*

Ibid. 22: *Multa sunt suavitatis praecepta . . .*

³⁴On the three functions of the orator, see *Br.* 185; 276; *Or.* 69; *Opt. gen. or.* 3; 5; 16. On the three styles see, above all, *Or.* 20–21; 75–99; *Opt. gen. or.* 7–13; *Rhet. Her.* 4.11–16. The three styles were a commonplace of Greek literary criticism, but E. Fantham, *Hermes* 107 (1979) 441–458, argues that Cicero did not himself adopt them as a basis for criticism until after *De or.*

Suavitas in diction, for which the recipe is set out in detail in *Part. or.* 21–22; 32; 72; *Or.* 92; 95–96; *Br.* 274–276, is recognised by the presence of a variety of stylistic devices: overall correctness, artistry, distinction, smooth and easy flow, clarity, colour, and polish; choice, elegant, and pure vocabulary, excluding ineptitudes, solecisms, barbarisms, but including original and novel expressions; a sequence of words and structure of phrases having a gentle and pleasant rhythm; unimpeded by hiatuses of vowels and collisions of consonants, well blended by judicious use of conjunctions and asyndeta; length of clauses and sentences moderated by proper pauses, in consideration of capacity of breath and lungs; rhetorical devices, including antithesis, anaphora, metaphors, metonymies, allegories, apostrophes, dialogues, figures of language and of thought, breadth of knowledge and culture, liberal and amiable character; gentle expression of, and appeal to, emotions, such as surprise, wonder, fear, pity, grief, joy, and excitement. *Suavitas* in diction leaves the audience neither coldly informed, nor hot in impassioned excitement to action, but warmly sympathetic to the orator's point of view.

As a term employed to characterise oratorical style, *suavis* is applied not only to the aspect of diction (*elocutio*), but also to that of delivery (*actio*): *orationem . . . suavem non verbis sed varietate vocum, motu corporis, vultu . . . (Part. or. 25)*; or to one component of *actio*, such as correct pronunciation of words, intonation, accent: *hanc dico suavitatem quae exit ex ore (De or. 3.42)*; *non verbis sed sono vocis nec tam bene quam suaviter loquendo facile superabit . . . (De or. 3.43)*; *de sono vocis et suavitate appellandarum litterarum . . . (Br. 133)*;³⁵ or, such as the voice, its modulation, pitch, gradation of tones: *ad . . . actionis suavitatem quid est vicissitudine et varietate et commutatione aptius? (De or. 3.225)*; *hinc gradatim ascendere vocem et suave est . . . Haec varietas et hic per omnes sonos vocis cursus . . . actioni afferet suavitatem (227)*. In describing the orator's voice, *suavis* is consequently much preferred to *dulcis* (10 to 1), as being more expressive in distinguishing the pleasant or modulated aspect of the voice from its other aspects, such as its being loud (*magna*), clear (*clara, splendida*), sonorous (*canora*), or full (*plena*).³⁶

* * *

So far we have considered those uses of *dulcis* and *suavis* which the dictionary classified as "affecting the senses," as well as the extension of one such use into the field of literary aesthetics. Let us now turn to those uses classified as "affecting the mind or feelings."

³⁵Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3.21; 22 (*pronuntiationis suavitudo*).

³⁶(*Dulcis*) *Or.* 57; (*suavis*) *De or.* 1.132; 3.213; *Br.* 203; 234; 235; 259; 303; *Or.* 57; 58; *Off.* 1.133.

Both *dulcis* and *suavis* are terms of endearment attached as adjectival attributes to people: relatives, friends, associates, and acquaintances. Both are part of the informally polite language used in addressing individuals, frequently in the superlative degree, and invariably so as part of the terminology of salutation in the prescript and valediction of letters. *Mi suavissime, mi suavissime et optime, mi dulcissime, suavissimae filiae, Tironi suo dulcissimo* are typical. Both, when not used alone, are reinforced by additional adjectives of similar meaning, denoting excellence, endearment, or pleasantness in general.³⁷ Not infrequently, however, the larger context indicates or the accompanying adjective attributes some intellectual accomplishment to the individual described as *suavis*: *doctus* (*Fin.* 5.14), *doctissimus* (*Fam.* 7.15.2), *docilis* (*Fam.* 7.20.3), *studiosus studiorum* (*Fam.* 2.13.2), *humanus* (*Fam.* 16.4.1). Individuals thus described as *suavis* in such contexts include Hieronymus, philosopher and pupil of Aristotle (*Fin.* 5.14), Phaedrus, head of the Epicurean school (*Fam.* 13.1.2), Nicias of Cos, *grammaticus* (*Fam.* 9.10.2), Nicon, medical writer (*Fam.* 7.20.3), App. Claudius Pulcher, cos. 54, antiquarian (*Fam.* 2.13.2). While *dulcis* is purely a term of endearment, *suavis*, while being so, has a potential nuance suggesting intellectualism and good breeding, which can be realised by reinforcement with explicit additional terms.

This observation is confirmed by consideration of the range of nouns, other than those of people, with which *dulcis* and *suavis* are found in association. Out of some 32 such occurrences of *dulcis*, over half are in association with nouns denoting beloved institutions and possessions, such as native land, city, home, office of state, and the pursuit of agriculture; cherished goals and lofty aspirations of state and individual, such as peace, freedom, glory, victory, wisdom, and truth.³⁸ Of some 44 such occurrences of *suavis*, none is to be found in association with the nouns just listed, and almost none with other such nouns similarly denoting precious national and personal institutions and aims.³⁹ On the

³⁷E.g., with *dulcis*, *optimus* (*Leg.* 3.25), *amandus*, *iucundus* (*Fam.* 9.15.1), *venustissimus* (*Q.F.* 1.3.8), *facetus* (*Off.* 1.108); with *suavis*, *bonus* (*Comm. pet.* 42; *Fam.* 13.1.2), *optimus* (*Q.F.* 2.15.2; 3.5.9; 7.9); *optatissimus* (*Fam.* 14.5.2), *carus* (*Q.F.* 2.6.4; 3.4.6; *Att.* 4.15.2; 5.1.5); *benignus*, *facilis* (*Balb.* 36), *modestissimus* (*Att.* 5.9.3), *officiosus* (*Fam.* 13.1.2).

³⁸*Pax*: *Phil.* 2.113; 12.9; 13.1; *libertas*: *Cat.* 4.16; *Verr.* 5.163; *Rep.* 1.47; 1.55; *Att.* 15.13.3; *patria* (*salus patriae, solum patriae*), *urbs*, *domus*: *Fam.* 4.9.3; *Balb.* 11; *Cat.* 4.16; *Leg.* 2.5; 3.19; *praetura*, *agri cultura*, *gloria*, *victoria*, *prudentia*, *lux veritatis*: *Fam.* 10.26.3; *Off.* 1.151; *Phil.* 5.20; *Verr.* 5.66; *Tusc.* 1.94; *Acad.* 2.31. The adjective is frequently associated with the noun in such combinations as *nihil est victoria dulcius* (*Verr.* 5.66) or *nomen pacis dulce est* (*Phil.* 2.113), where the significant noun is not the one strictly qualified by the adjective, i.e., *nihil*, *nomen*, but *victoria*, *pax*. A special favourite (13 out of 32) is the phrase *nihil . . .* (or *quid* or *nec quicquam . . .*) *dulcius*.

³⁹A rare exception at *Inv.* 2.22 (. . . *ullam pecuniam fratris aut amici vita aut denique officio suo . . . suaviorem*).

other hand, well over half of them have to do with matters of social intercourse with friends in private life, of which the following are typical: of letters, poems, books exchanged with friends, 16; of conversation (*sermo*, *sermonis communicatio*) and social fellowship (*coniunctio*), 5; of friends' visits, invitations, attentions, and good wishes, 8.⁴⁰ The comparative infrequency of *dulcis* in similar contexts is seen from the following figures: of letters, 1; of conversation (*sermo familiaris*), 1; of affection (*amor*), friendship (*amicitia*), and greetings from a friend (*salus*), 3; of leisure (*otium litteratum*), 1.⁴¹

While *dulcis* is characteristically associated with matters that are beloved, cherished, and dear, *suavis* is characteristically associated with matters which are a source of mental agreeableness. *Dulcis* is predominantly emotional, *suavis* predominantly intellectual. It is this difference that accounts for the choice of *dulcis* at one time, and *suavis* at other times, to qualify the noun "life." Life, as a precious possession, is *dulcis*: *Tulliolam, quae nobis nostra vita dulcior est* (*Fam.* 14.7.1). Life, made unpleasant by the absence of intellectual pursuits, is (*in*)*suavis*: *vitam insuavem sine his studiis* (*De or.* 2.25); so is life, agreeable in the country: *vitamque hanc rusticam . . . et honestissimam et suavissimam* (*Sext. Rosc.* 48); and life, made uncomfortable for a young rake by his elders' vigilance: *ut . . . ipsius videremur vitam insuavem reddidisse* (*Att.* 10.4.6). So closely is *suavis* associated with the idea of mental recreation, that it can act as a counterbalance to the contrasting idea of practical utility (*utile*), as in: *suavis autem est/et vehementer saepe utilis iocus et facetiae* (*De or.* 2.216); and *nulla . . . epistula inanis aliqua re utili et suavi venerat* (*Att.* 2.8.1).

The difference is seen even more sharply in the substantive forms *dulcedo* and *suavitas*. The substantive *dulcedo*, in the sense of "affecting the mind or feelings," is rare, occurring only four times, including two in letters written not by Cicero himself, but by correspondents. It is always accompanied by another substantive in the appositional genitive, necessary to define its meaning: *dulcedine quadam gloriae commoti* (*Arch.* 24); *neque honoris neque pecuniae dulcedine sum captus* (Marius in *Fam.* 11.28.2); *virtus aliena dulcedinem vivendi minuere potuerit* (Brutus in *Ad. Br.* 1.16.8); *sive natura paulo acrior sive quaedam dulcedo iracundiae* (*Q.F.* 1.2.7). Like its adjective, *dulcedo* has to do with the endearment of cherished goals and possessions (here, glory, honour, money, survival, and one's own temper), their attractiveness to the feelings. The emotional

⁴⁰Letters: *Att.* 1.20.1; 2.8.1; 12.1; 13.1; 13.19.4; 44.1; 16.15.6; *Q.F.* 3.1.17 (*bis*); *Fam.* 2.13.1; 13.18.1; 15.21.4; *Br.* 330. Poem: *Q.F.* 3.7.6. Book: *Fam.* 3.4.1; 5.12.3. *Sermo* and *coniunctio*: *Att.* 1.17.6 (*bis*); 4.19.2; *Fam.* 11.27.5; 13.26.1. Visits, etc.: *Att.* 4.4; 9.1; 7.18.1; 9.12.1; 10.8.9; *Q.F.* 2.9.1; 14.1; *Fam.* 3.12.1. (Mostly as adj., some adv.).

⁴¹*Att.* 15.13.4; 16.3.6; *Fam.* 2.1.1; 9.24.3; *Am.* 66; *Tusc.* 5.105.

tone is so dominant in *dulcedo* that pejorative connotation is easy, as obviously in the last example, and potentially in the other three. The objects of emotional appeal can assume the guise of seductions, temptations, indulgences to which passions lead and moral weakness yields.

In this sense of "affecting the mind or feelings," *suavitas* as substantive occurs no less than 37 times. The noun which accompanies it to define its meaning, in appositional genitive or in amplificatory juxtaposition, is characteristically drawn from the vocabulary depicting aspects of social life, its mental, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic amenities: *consuetudo*, *usus*, *sermo*, *familiaritas*, *ingenium*, *humanitas*, *officium*, *scientia*, *studia* are typical.⁴² Quite frequently, unlike *dulcedo*, *suavitas* can dispense with the appositional genitive of the defining noun, generally without prejudice to clarity of meaning, being then an autonomous concept of charm and social grace in men, or of agreeableness emanating from circumstances, activities, and possessions in private life. Thus Crassus (cos. 95), orator of vast culture, Scaevola Pontifex (cos. 95), jurist of consummate erudition, Tiro, well-bred and companionable slave, Atticus, delightful friend of inexhaustible resources, all distil not *dulcedo*, but *suavitas*; so does a country-house, a relaxed conversation, or good company.⁴³

The complexion of *suavitas* as a merit of social life (*otium*) is stressed by its being placed (through various syntactical devices (e.g., asyndeta, connectives *et . . . et* and *cum . . . tum*, adversative *sed*) in antithetical juxtaposition to activities or merits of public life: to courage on the battlefield and uprightness in the administration of justice: *et in re militari virtutem et in administranda provincia iustitiam . . . in consuetudine et familiaritate suavitatem* (Fam. 10.3.1); to honour in a magisterial career: *quae vita esset nostra, quae suavitas, quae dignitas* (Att. 3.20.1); *in vestro ingenio et industria mihi plurimum et suavitatis et dignitatis constitutum puto* (Fam. 15.14.6); to love of country and patriotism: *est omnino patriae caritas meo quidem iudicio maxima, sed amor voluntatisque coniunctio plus certe habet suavitatis* (Fam. 10.5.1). Its complexion as a social merit featuring charm, grace, and tenderness is stressed by its being placed in antithetical juxtaposition to aspects of character or social life which are of a graver or more serious moral tone. Thus it is antithetical to parental responsibility (*alter apud me parentis gravitatem, alter filii suavitatem obtinebat*, Sull. 19), to paternal admonition and filial duty (*suavitate fratrem prope aequalem, obsequio filium, consilio*

⁴²(*Consuetudo*) Fam. 3.10.9; 13.63.1; (*usus*) 16.8.1; (*sermo*) 4.6.2; (*familiaritas*) 10.3.1; 13.63.1; (*ingenium*) 3.1.1; 5.12.1; (*humanitas*) 3.1.1; 7.28.1; Att. 6.3.8; 15.1.1; Cael. 25; Tusc. 5.55; (*officium*) Fam. 3.1.1; Q.F. 2.14.1; (*scientia*) De or. 3.56; (*studia*) Rep. 1.7.

⁴³De or. 2.16 (Crassus); 1.234 (Scaevola); Fam. 16.5.1 (Tiro); Att. 4.1.2 (Atticus); Q.F. 3.1.3 (villa); Att. 12.1.2 (conversation); Q.F. 2.15.3 (company).

parentem, Q.F. 1.3.3), to loyalty and devotion in a friend (*cum propter familiaritatem et consuetudinis suavitatem tum quod consilio eius fideli ac bono . . . utebar*, Fam. 13.63.1), to the austerity of a stuffy puritan (*in hac suavitate humanitatis . . . in hac causa pertristis quidam patruus, censor, magister*, Cael. 25).

* * *

The conclusions which emerge from this study of Ciceronian usage are as follows. The semantic fields covered by *dulcis* and *suavis* overlap in Cicero, as they do in general, sufficiently for them to be regarded as synonyms and, to some extent, interchangeable. But in the majority of occurrences of these two adjectives and their derivatives, the use of the one rather than the other is a result not of chance but of choice. The choice is not determined by considerations of appropriateness to genre, in view of any dignity in *dulcis* and vulgarity in *suavis*. While grammatical and syntactical factors occasionally play a part in determining preference for one or the other in a given sentence, the predominant consideration, as a rule, is of the differences in nuances of meaning that exist between the two words in Cicero's mind. These differences are manifold and complex. In the primary and literal sense of taste, *suavis* is more general, *dulcis* more specific. In other sensuous applications, *suavis* is appropriate specifically to sensations of smell and sight. When applied to the sense of hearing, *dulcis* is more apt to develop a pejorative connotation, and *suavis* more apt to be neutral. The same is true in the vocabulary of literary criticism, where *dulcis* does not share with *suavis* the status of a technical term. In the sense of affecting the mind or feelings, *dulcis* has a strong emotional tone, and is again more prone to pejorative colouring, while *suavis* is more intellectual and descriptive of mental amenities.⁴⁴

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