

**THE INFLUENCE OF CICERO UPON
AUGUSTINE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
HIS ORATORICAL. THEORY FOR THE
TRAINING OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
ORATOR. A DISSERTATION**

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The Influence of Cicero Upon Augustine in the Development of His Oratorical. Theory for the Training of the Ecclesiastical Orator. A dissertation by James Burnette Eskridge

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JAMES BURNETTE ESKRIDGE

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The Influence of Cicero Upon Augustine
in the Development of his Oratorical
Theory for the Training of the
Ecclesiastical Orator

A DISSERTATION

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BY
JAMES BURNETTE ESKRIDGE

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PREFACE

This dissertation is the outcome of a year's work, 1902-03, in the University of Chicago, with Professor George Lincoln Hendrickson, now of Yale University. The work done under his direction was a technical study of the rhetorical writings of Cicero. In studying the influence of Cicero upon Augustine with regard to the three styles, while preparing a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts, it was impossible not to be impressed with his influence upon Augustine's oratorical system as a whole. I have, therefore, attempted to show the influence of Cicero in its entirety upon Augustine's theory of oratorical training for the preacher.

Augustine, in an earlier work, entitled *Contra Cresconium*, touched somewhat upon matters of a rhetorical character, though the best of his technical treatment of the subject is to be found in a small work entitled *De Doctrina Christiana*, in four books, three of which are devoted to the method of interpreting Scripture through the ascertaining of its proper meaning, and the fourth to the manner of making this meaning known in the most effective way. The fourth book, then, is rhetorical and literary and draws on the theory of Cicero as treated in the *De Oratore*, the *Brutus* and the *Orator*.

Finally, whatever excellence of method of treatment this dissertation may possess is due, in no small measure, to the instructors, in general, with whom I came in contact, and in particular, to Professor Hendrickson. Any errors of interpretation, treatment or detail, are chargeable to myself alone.

J. B. ESKRIDGE.

NOTE. In *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, von Eduard Norden, Zweiter Band, Zweiter Abdruck, 1909, page 617, the statement is made that the first three books of *De Doctrina Christiana* pertain to inventio, and the third to elocutio; and that as regards Augustine, his grosse Lehrmeister war Cicero, der auctor Romani eloquii. He further calls attention to the fact that the three styles are taken from Cicero. This is what Augustine himself tells us in so many words. On page 505 Norden cites a passage of Scripture quoted by Augustine as showing membra and caesa, and in other places free reference is made to Augustine.

I have not seen Colincamp's *La Methode Oratoire dans St. Augustine*, 1848, nor Lezat's *De Oratore Christiano apud St. Augustinum*, 1871.

In my Master's dissertation, 1903, as above mentioned, the question of the three styles of Augustine and his dependence upon Cicero was treated. In *A. J. P.* Vol. XXVI, p. 276 ff., Professor Hendrickson, in a historical treatment of the "Origin and Meaning of Characters of Style", in so far as his purposes are concerned, bears out my conclusions.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	iii
I. Introduction	I
II. Augustine's Ideal Ecclesiastical Orator	4
III. The Offices of the Ecclesiastical Orator	16
IV. Derivation of the Three Styles of Oratory	18
V. The Plain Style, or <i>Submissa Dictio</i>	19
VI. The Middle Style, or <i>Temperata Dictio</i>	21
VII. The Grand Style, or <i>Grandis Dictio</i>	22
VIII. Combination of the Three Styles	24
IX. The Interpretation of the Divisions of Style	27
X. The Norm of Augustine; Examples from Paul and Amos	30
XI. Illustration of the Plain Style	37
XII. Illustration of the Middle Style	46
XIII. Illustration of the Grand Style	48
XIV. Fundamental Differences Between Augustine and Cicero	50
XV. Summary	55



I. INTRODUCTION

The controversy between the philosophers and rhetoricians regarding the relative merits of philosophy and rhetoric, respectively, had gone on for centuries before St. Augustine's day.¹ Feeling, therefore, that neither philosophy nor rhetoric was sufficient within itself for the education of the ecclesiastical orator, but that both were alike essential, in *D. D. C. IV*, 7 and 8, he encourages the employment of both to the end that the orator may equip himself with the best training possible for his profession.² He would have

¹Notes from Prof. Hendrickson's Research Course in Cicero, University of Chicago, 1903.

In *A. Gellius XV*, 11.2, Crassus banishes the teachers of rhetoric.

Sextus Empiricus contains an account of the attack of the philosophers on rhetoric. Πρὸς μαθηματικούς Β (Bekker p. 678. 20 f.) Πρὸς Πύθορα, section 20.

²*D. D. C. IV*, 7, 8: Sed cum alii faciant obtuse, deformiter, frigide; alii acute, ornate, vehementer; illum ad hoc opus unde agimus, iam oportet accedere, qui potest disputare vel dicere sapienter, etiamsi non potest eloquenter, ut prosit audientibus, etiamsi minus quam prodesse, si et eloquenter posset dicere. Qui vero affluit insipienti eloquentia, tanto magis cavendus est, quanto magis ab eo in iis quae audire inutile est, delectatur auditor, et cum quoniam diserte dicere audit, etiam vere dicere existimat. Haec autem sententia nec illos fugit, qui artem rhetoricam docendam putarunt: fassi sunt enim sapientiam sine eloquentia parum prodesse civitatibus; eloquentiam vero sine sapientia nimium obesse plerumque, prodesse nunquam. Si ergo hoc illi qui praecepta eloquentiae tradiderunt, in eisdem libris in quibus id egerunt, veritate instigante coacti sunt confiteri, veram, hoc est, supernam quae a Patre luminum descendit, sapientiam nescientes; quanto magis nos non aliud sentire debemus, qui hujus sapientiae filii et ministri sumus? Sapienter autem dicit homo tanto magis vel minus, quanto in Scripturis sanctis magis vel minus, quanto in Scripturis sanctis magis minusve profecit. Non dico in eis multum legendis memoriae mandandis, sed bene intelligendis, et diligenter earum sensibus indagandis. Sunt enim qui eas legunt, et negligunt; legunt ut teneant, negligunt ne intelligant. Quibus longe sine dubio praefereendi sunt qui verba earum minus tenent, et cor earum sui cordis oculis vident. Sed utrisque ille melior, qui et cum volet eas dicit, et sicut oportet intelligit.

Huic ergo qui sapienter debet dicere, etiam quod non potest eloquenter, verba Scripturarum tenere maxime necessarium est. Quanto enim se pauperiorem cernit in suis, tanto eum oportet in istis esse ditioerem; ut quod dixerit suis verbis, probet ex illis; et qui propriis verbis minor erat, magnum testimonio quodammodo crescat. Probando enim delectat qui minus

him neither a wise teacher, lacking in the proper training along rhetorical lines, nor a loquacious pedant devoid of that soberness of thought and depth of wisdom which are to be obtained only through philosophy. If one of the two must be neglected, it is preferable for the ecclesiastical orator to possess wisdom rather than eloquence. But far better is it that he should possess wisdom and eloquence, both in harmonious combination, since it is in this way only that he can attain more nearly to perfection.

Upon this fundamental conception, that of the employing of philosophy and rhetoric,⁸ or in the case of the ecclesiastical orator, Scripture, which stands in the same relation to the ecclesiastical orator as philosophy does to the ideal orator of Cicero, Augustine constructs his entire theory of ecclesiastical education. In this he follows Cicero, who recognizing the futility and the absurdity of the respective claims of philosophy and rhetoric when divorced from each other, endeavored to unite the two in the training of his ideal orator. In *De Orat.* III, 35, 142-3, Cicero says: Nunc sive qui volet eum philosophum, qui copiam nobis rerum orationisque tradat, per me appellet oratorem licet; sive hunc oratorem, quem ego dico sapientiam iunctam habere eloquentiae, philosophum appellare malet, non impediam; dummodo hoc constet, neque infantiam eius, qui rem norit, sed eam explicare dicendo non queat, neque inscientiam illius, cui res non suppetat, verba non desint, esse laudandam; quorum

potest delectare dicendo. Porro qui non solum sapienter, verum etiam eloquenter vult dicere, quoniam profecto plus proderit, si utrumque potuerit; ad legendos vel audiendos et exercitatione imitandos eloquentes eum mitto libentius, quam magistris artis rhetoricae vacare praecipio; si tamen ille qui leguntur et audiuntur, non solum eloquenter, sed etiam sapienter dixisse vel dicere veraci praedicatione laudantur. Qui enim eloquenter dicunt, suaviter; qui sapienter, salubriter audiuntur. Propter quod non ait Scriptura, Multitudo eloquentium; sed, "Multitudo sapientium sanitas est orbis terrarum." Sicut autem saepe sumenda sunt et amara salubria, ita semper vitanda est pernicioiosa dulcedo. Sed salubri suavitate, vel suavi salubritate quid melius? Quanto enim magis illic appetitur suavitas, tanto facilius salubritas prodest. Sunt ergo ecclesiastici viri qui divina eloquia non solum sapienter, sed eloquenter etiam tractaverunt: quibus legendis magis non sufficit tempus quam desse ipsi studentibus et vacantibus possunt.

⁸*D. D. C. I, 1*: Duae sunt res quibus nititur omnis tractatio Scripturarum: modus inveniendi quae intelligenda sunt, et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt.