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**QUIDAM CICERO:
THE INDEBTEDNESS OF AUGUSTINE'S DOCTOR
CHRISTIANUS TO CICERO'S ORATOR**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2010

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Uroš Rajčević

(Serbia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Uroš Rajčević**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 02 June 2010

Signature

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INTRODUCTION

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.¹

A passage like this – the even-tempered narration written with a sort of simple candour – could easily have been written by Augustine if he had been born in another time. The power of Augustine's works has fascinated people – scholars and laymen – from the time they were first published. The unusual nature of his *Confessions* – an autobiography of Augustine's soul – added to his fame during his lifetime (whether the work was praised or snubbed). The authority of Augustine as one of the foremost Fathers of the Latin Church, coupled with a special place in the heart of his readers which his words engender, have made of him a person who was (and still is being) investigated more than any other figure from late antiquity.

A Select Overview of Augustinian Literature

Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, first published in 1967 was a unique and revolutionary new approach to the figure of Augustine and the world of late antiquity. It created a new interest for Augustine the person (and not only Church Father); to mention just one important publication after it, Serge Lancel's *Saint Augustin*, a study that not only looks at Augustine's life but the world around him. Brown's biography of Augustine – along with his other works – also caused a re-evaluation of the period of late antiquity, typically seen as an age of decadence. Even in his early work, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique*, Henri-

¹ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000). 5.

Irénée Marrou was not free of the idea of decadence in the late Roman letters (although he slightly modified this view later on). Nevertheless, Marrou's book, first published in 1937, transformed the way scholars approached the subject of late Roman culture.

Marrou studied Augustine's influence on the state of letters and culture, which were to shape the world of medieval education. By studying the erudite, philosophizing, eloquence-oriented culture of the late Roman West, Marrou placed Augustine in a specific place in time with its specific cultural circumstances; he showed how much of Augustine's mind-set owed to the cultural norms of his time and in what way Augustine's ideas developed through his life, with special attention to the *artes liberales*; to the young convert Augustine, those arts were still precious, but to Augustine, an aged bishop who wrote the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*, they did not seem as important. Marrou's very judgment of this treatise created an interest in the idea of a Christian or Christianized late antique culture, as well as the connexions between Augustine and the Latin Classics, including Rome's most eminent prosaist, Cicero.

In 1958 Maurice Testard published a two-volume edition entitled bravely, as he states it, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*;² the second volume was a selection of texts, while the first was an interpretation. Continuing on some of Marrou's ideas, Testard explored the influence of Cicero on Augustine's formation and his works and ideas. Going farther than Cicero, Harald Hagendahl published a two-volume edition entitled – one could say even more bravely – *Augustine and the Classics*; in this monumental work, Hagendahl traced all the classical influences in Augustine's works. Even though his interpretations are mostly conservative, Hagendahl's decisive work, along with the previous works of Testard and Marrou, has made it possible for generations of scholars to analyze the works of Augustine in their specific cultural context; works as Sabine

² “C n'est pas sans quelque appréhension que j'ai entrepris ce travail. Saint Augustin et Cicéron! Ce seul titre me disait assez tout l'intérêt de la recherche, mais aussi sa difficulté, voire sa témérité.” Maurice Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron* Vol. 1 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1958), i.

MacCormack's *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Saint Augustine* (1998), or Ilsetraut Hadot's innovative assessment of the seven liberal arts in antiquity: *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique* (1984); her advancements influenced the 2005 collection of essays *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Confessions to Cassiciacum*, edited by Karla Pollman and Mark Vessey.

Education itself has been of great interest to scholars since late medieval and especially early modern times, when humanist thought laid a greater emphasis on the development of the human spirit. Marrou's 1958 book *L'Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* is one of the first great twentieth-century books on education in Classical Greece, the Hellenistic kingdoms, and Rome. This book initiated further studies of the process of education in antiquity which produced books such as Stanley Bonner's *Education in Ancient Rome* (1977), and Robert Kaster's *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (1988). Recently, Raffaella Cribiore published two significant books on Greek education: *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (2001) and *The Schools of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (2007); a significant collection of essays: *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* edited by Yun Lee Too (2001).

Was Augustine Creating a Christian Saeculum and How?

When I set out to examine the relationship of Augustine and Cicero, I could not even imagine the magnitude of such an undertaking. The connexion between these two authors and authorities of antiquity is not easy to gauge, possibly two of the greatest authors and authorities of Latin antiquity (they certainly count among the most prolific, with the majority works preserved).

Speaking generally, I intend to show in my research to what extent and in what way Augustine was influenced by Cicero. But to further limit this question, I intend to examine the influence of Cicero on the Fourth book of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. With a starting point that, for Augustine, the choice of Cicero was in fact not a real choice, I will first examine the process of education in antiquity. Assisted by the fruitful research of great scholars I will compose an approximation (NB a quite modest approximation) of the education Augustine took part in during his life, both as a student and as a teacher. It is important, when considering the notion that Augustine was abandoning classical educational norms, to see what he was abandoning. Augustine's feelings towards education – both past and current – have been preserved in his *Confessiones*, albeit certainly rather selectively; nonetheless, they do point to a certain change in his priorities.

My second task is to examine the contents of the fourth book of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. This treatise, and especially the Fourth book, have long been considered either the starting point for a Christian culture devised by Augustine, or simply a manual for the clergy. Even though this entire treatise has been written in the style lauded and recommended by its Fourth book – a style that is immediately clear and understandable – it is of great importance to look beneath the surface. By placing the Fourth book in its proper cultural and historical context, I will endeavour to analyze its underlying message. The judgments that prefer either a Christian culture or a preacher-man's handbook cannot be properly examined if they and the work they are based on are not in their proper context; in this thesis I maintain that this context is the system of education and its programmes, as well as the general high culture of late Roman Latinophone society.

[1]

AUGUSTINE'S LITERARY EDUCATION:
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In antiquity the dominant form of education was literary education. As will be discussed in the following pages, the content of this education were great poetry (both epic and lyric), history, and oratory. However, all of this can be reduced to rhetoric. The schools of antiquity, and therefore late antiquity, subscribed to the ideal of the orator, the “good man, versed in speaking.”³ From a distance of by several centuries, one can easily observe how all roads lead to rhetoric⁴ and that education – both Roman education and its Hellenistic model – can be summarized (NB. in a rather simplified manner!) in three major steps. Step one: you learn to read and write. Step two: you learn the language and the content of your culture. Step three: you learn how to express what you have learned.

These three steps correspond roughly to three schools,⁵ that is they match the type of programme of schooling proposed by Henri-Irénée Marrou.⁶ According to him, since most children involved in this kind of three-stage system of schooling were from rich families (with few exceptions) they received the basic training (ABCs) at home, from a private tutor or – exceptionally – already in the “secondary” school. However, the sources do not fully support this reconstruction. Alan Booth placed more stress on the idea that both primary and secondary

³ *Vir bonus, dicendi peritus*: Marcus Porcius Cato, *Epistulae ad filium fragmenta*, 14 (quoted in Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 12.1.1). Or, in Augustine's words, *uir eloquentissimus*: Aurelius Augustinus, *De Quantitate Animae*, 33.79; *De Civitate Dei*, 9.4.2, 22.6.1.

⁴ “La culture générale est pour eux, moins une formation de l'esprit en tant que fonction, que le fait d'accumuler des connaissances, des matériaux utilisables pour le futur orateur.” Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1958), 118.

⁵ Cf. Robert A. Kaster, “Notes on ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ Schools in Late Antiquity” in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983), 323.

⁶ Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958).

education were received primarily in the so-called secondary school.⁷ In reasearching these two theses, Robert Kaster⁸ analyzed relevant sources and concluded that, while Booth's view was perhaps overly exclusive, it did advance on Marrou's idealized programme. According to the sources, the state had almost no interest in furthering elementary schools,⁹ and both Greek and Latin sources often show an ambiguity rather than a precise differentiation between primary and secondary instruction (and instructors),¹⁰ and apparently the most unifying element of all antique schools was their disunity: they were often adapted to local (or temporal) needs.¹¹ Although Kaster's remark that: "primary education need not imply a primary school"¹² is quite apt,¹³ his assessment that Marrou's thesis was "especially rigid" seems slightly out of context. Marrou did state that: "à Rome, comme en Grèce, l'enseignement collectif au sein d'une école est la règle générale."¹⁴ However, given his caveat that passing from the elementary school to the secondary school was a rare exception and that the wealthy preferred to obtain primary instruction for their children either at home or in the secondary school,¹⁵ Marrou's statement appears to address the statistics (or, to be precise, numbers). It is undisputed that the number of elementary schools throughout the empire was far greater than that of any other schools, and that only a minute portion of society attended any of the other schools. Therefore, the sheer number of children who

⁷ Alan D. Booth, "Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire," *Florilegium* No 1 (1979): 1–14.

⁸ R. A. Kaster, "Notes on 'Primary' and 'Secondary' Schools in Late Antiquity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* vol. 113 (1983): 323–346.

⁹ Gemeinhardt sees the schools as "selbst-regulativ." Peter Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 54–57

¹⁰ Cf. Alan D. Booth, "Litterator" in *Hermes* vol. 109, No. 3, 1981. 371–378. R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 50–51. Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 447–452.

¹¹ Also in Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 44.

¹² R. A. Kaster, "Notes," 323.

¹³ Even Apuleius' delineation of the stages of education does not imply any actual schools: Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis, *Florida*, 20.2.

¹⁴ H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 360.

¹⁵ Kaster calls it a modification to the (regular) three-tiered school system: R. A. Kaster, "Notes," 324 (note 5).

attended (only) elementary schools must have been higher than the number of students in all the successive stages of education.

I: Elementary Education

Le “maître” n’est chargé que d’apprendre à lire, ce qui est beaucoup moins important.¹⁶

It can be assumed that Augustine started his education in the modest *ludus* of his native Thagaste around the year 360/1. In his *Confessions* there is not only his initial response to such an environment – a hostile response – but the reflected opinion of a mature man – now a bishop – as well. He describes the beginning of his education as follows: “Then I was sent to school to learn letters, and I, poor wretch, did not realize what was the use of that.”¹⁷

The mature man was horrified by the behaviour of the teachers and the adults; somewhat comically, Augustine wonders how can it be that children are submitted to such torment by their parents and all their pleadings ran hollow; people pray to god to be delivered from the evils of torture¹⁸ and, he says, they as children prayed equally, yet no one pitied them or showed them mercy.¹⁹ Augustine admits that he was bad for rather playing ball than studying – for he did not realize what was the point in studying, and playing was much more fun – but the teachers who punished him and the others were no better; their games were just as childish – their pompous competitions in trivial knowledge – and they dared dispense punishment to

¹⁶ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 206.

¹⁷ *Inde in scholam datus sum ut discerem litteras, in quibus quid utilitatis esset ignorabam miser.* Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.9.14. Quoted from Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. J.J. O’Donnell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). The English translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁸ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.9.14.

¹⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.9.15.

children at play who were wrong only because they did not know better – as adults should – and who were less bitter in defeat than those same adults.²⁰

Prima Elementa (Ludus Litterarius)

A functional elementary education (*prima elementa*) in the ancient world was, apparently, often received in the *ludus litterarius*, a public institution²¹ which any free child could attend.²² This school, however, was for the poorer among Roman citizens. The children of the wealthy usually had private tutors (*praeceptores*) at home, or learned literacy in the more advanced school of the *grammaticus*.²³ It was quite unusual, however, for children who attended the *ludus* to continue their education; the fees at a grammarian's school were four to five times higher, and if one was not available locally, the child had to be sent to another town, his accommodations arranged, a special slave purchased, and so on.²⁴ Augustine was a notable exception.

Lower-level education in Rome mirrored the Hellenistic system, but because the Roman education system was bilingual pupils learned both Greek and Latin letters.²⁵ In the kingdoms of the Hellenistic Orient, private instruction was a privilege of the royal families; in Rome it was

²⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.9.15–10.16.

²¹ Plutarch related that for a long time teaching was not a paid profession, and that the first elementary school in Rome was opened by a freedman called Spurius Carvilius Ruga (manumitted by Spurius Carvilius Maximus Ruga, who was a consul in 234 BC). Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 59. Harris finds it plausible because the opening of the school is placed in the period of the birth of Latin literature: W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 158.

²² Some slaves received an education as well: Petronius, *Satiricon*, 46; Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, *Epistulae*, 7.27, 13, 9.36.4; Lucius Annaeus Seneca (Philosophus), *De Beneficiis*, 3.21.2; *De Vita Beata*, 17.2. See “Paedagogiani” and “Paedagogium Palatini” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. August Pauly, Georg Wissowa, et al. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche, 1942). For more on slave education see S. L. Mohler, “Slave Education in the Roman Empire” in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 71 (1940): 262–280.

²³ Sohrpronius Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Vita Hilarionis*, 2.

²⁴ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 997–998.

²⁵ For example *doctrina duplex*: Paulinus Pellaeus, *Eucharisticon*, 81; see also *Ibid.*, 74–80. *De Graeco an de Latino*, Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.1.

initially a privilege of the senatorial elite.²⁶ Several sources suggest that private (one-on-one) elementary education was more common for the children of the wealthy;²⁷ however, others suggest that a number of pupils received instruction in the Greek and Latin alphabet in the school of the *grammaticus*.²⁸ The children of the poorer citizens, if they were to be educated at all, attended the *ludus*; Sources suggest that both boys and girls attended the same classes.²⁹ The joint education of boys and girls seems to have been common practice in Hellenistic education as well.³⁰ *Ludi litterarii* existed in most cities and towns throughout the Empire, even in Augustine's Thagaste in the African hinterland.³¹ They were not prestigious or of good quality;³² they were simply available and (to some extent) affordable.

Even though an institution like the *ludus litterarius* existed, one should not assume that literacy was wide-spread in Roman cities, let alone outside of them. A number of people were functionally illiterate, being able to read poorly or only block letters on inscriptions.³³ When one considers the sources for the late antique period, the diminution of literary production is evident

²⁶ Henri-Irénée Marou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), 360.

²⁷ Quintilian discussed the issues of private and group instruction, himself preferring schools to private tutoring (Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.2); however, as Kaster aptly inferred, Quintilian did not refer to the instruction in the *prima elementa*, that is merely the ABCs: see R. A. Kaster, "Notes," 339. See also Plinius, *Epistulae*, 3.3.3. Paulinus Pellaeus, *Eucharisticon*, 65.

²⁸ See: R. A. Kaster, "Notes." Esp. "The fact that different levels of instruction were conceived of as sequential does not necessarily imply that that instruction was received in schools attended in a regular sequence." Ibid., 328.

²⁹ Marcus Valerius Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 9.68.1–2. One must, however, keep in mind that it must have been quite irregular for a girl from a poor family to attend any kind of school, because only boys would be able to get employment with the skills they learned there; among the wealthier, it seems, private tutoring was conducted more often for girls. An example is provided by Pliny the Younger, while mourning the death of a friend's daughter: Plinius, *Epistulae*, 5.16.3.

³⁰ Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 203. See *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. Wilhelm Dittenberger, 3rd edition, ed. Friedrich Hiller von Gærtringen, Johannes Kirchner, Hans Rudolf Pomtow, Erich Ziebarth (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1915–1924), 577–578.

³¹ Jones inferred that *ludi litterarii* must have existed in some villages as well, although there is little remaining evidence; Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 997. "Whether the teachers teach letters in cities or in villages." (*Siue in ciuitatibus siue in uicis primas litteras magistri doceant*.) *Digesta Iustiniani*, 50.5.2.8.

³² "The population at large, massively illiterate, was served (however ill) by the 'schools of letters' (γραμματοδιδασκαλεῖα, *ludi litterarii*), institutions of low prestige that provided general, utilitarian literacy." R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 24. One must, however, keep in mind that the number of children who attended these schools was still quite low.

³³ *Lapidarias litteras scio*. Petronius Arbiter, *Satiricon*, 58.

in most fields, although it is far from a phenomenon unified in time and space. Written contracts, the output of civic and military administrations, inscriptions (funerary or otherwise), even the copies of (secular) books³⁴ suffered a noticeable drop from at least the late third century in most of the provinces of the empire.³⁵ According to Harris, an increase in religious polemic and apologetic that was mostly a result of the rise Christianity, as well as a increased production of textbooks and manuals,³⁶ was one of the reasons why the codex came to replace the papyrus-roll; beside the economic benefits of the codex, it is easier to look for specific information in it.³⁷ However, his assessment that “consultation and quotation instead of independent and disinterested reading were becoming commoner,”³⁸ is too extreme. While one can admit that consultation and quotation played a greater role in the discussions of late antiquity, independent and disinterested reading could have suffered only in the numbers of people able to do it. It would be overreaching (to say the least) to claim that – at any period of Greco-Roman literary history – a vast number of literate people would spend their time sitting in their gardens and reading *belles lettres*. An example provided by Augustine – that of him and his group reading and discussing Vergil during their retreat at Cassiciacum – can hardly be characterized as reading for “consultation and quotation.”

The age of seven was usually when a child started to attend school, or to take lessons.³⁹

If these lessons were taken in a school – outside of the household – the child would be

³⁴ For instance, Augustine mentions how some books (Cicero’s works on rhetoric and philosophy) need to be obtained in Carthage because they cannot be found in Hippo. Aurelius Augustinus, *Epistulae*, 118.2.9.

³⁵ W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*: Chapter Eighth, 285–322.

³⁶ The commonly accepted conclusion (therefore to be found in Marrou and Kaster as well), based on sources and testimony.

³⁷ W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 295–297.

³⁸ W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 297.

³⁹ For example: Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 14.10–14.

accompanied by a slave called *paedagogus*.⁴⁰ Quintilian believed that the age of seven was the best suited for the beginning of education.⁴¹

The Litterator

The teacher was most often called (*ludi*)*magister* or *magister ludi (litterarii)* or *primus magister*; sometimes he was even called *litterator*,⁴² a calque of the Greek γραμματιστής.⁴³ Nevertheless, this was not such a rigid distinction as some scholars have inferred, in Greek or in Latin; various sources – spanning several centuries – suggest that *litterator* was used to denote what is in modern scholarship typically called a *grammaticus*, or a “teaching grammarian,” and that this professional may have taught either the simple ABCs or what is generally accepted as the *ars* of the “teaching grammarian.”⁴⁴ To become a *magister* did not require advanced studies: the only requirement was that the teacher himself be (functionally) literate. Sometimes the *magister* had an assistant, called only by a Greek name: υποδιδάσκαλος.⁴⁵ The school itself had no prestige, and neither did the teachers.⁴⁶ As a paid position, the job of *magister* was better

⁴⁰ The equivalent of the Hellenistic παιδαγωγός, a slave who would – quite literally – lead the child to school and back. See “paidagogos” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.

⁴¹ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.15.

⁴² To avoid confusion, only the term *magister* (with or without *ludi*) will be used for this teacher. See Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Grammaticis*, 4.3, 5. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 16.6.1, 18.9.2. Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *Epistularium Frontonis: Frontonis Epistulae ad Marcum Antoninum Imperatorem*, 1.5.3. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 4.2.2.

⁴³ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Grammaticis*, 4.4. Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, referring to Gaius Valerius Catulus, *Carmina*, 14.8. For more on the various names of instructors below the rank of *rhetor*, see R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 443–446.

⁴⁴ For an in-depth analysis see R. A. Kaster, “Notes.” Lactantius designates the *prima elementa* as *communes litterae* (in contrast to *litterae liberales*): Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, 3.25. Quintilian called it *trivialis scientia*: Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.27. Sometimes they are described as *primae litterae* (*Digesta Iustiniani*, 50.5.2.8.), which corresponds to the division: *litterae communes / liberales*. Cf. R. A. Kaster, “Notes,” 339.

⁴⁵ Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 9.18.4.

⁴⁶ Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales*, 3.66. Cribiore asserts that their role – providing literacy in a vastly illiterate world – was quite significant. R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 50. However, no testimony is offered, which can only lead back to Marrou’s assessment that, in the eyes of the adults, the antique teachers were mere “technicians,” labourers hired to teach children a skill. Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 206 quoted above.

fitted for a freedman.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the *magistri* were poorly paid;⁴⁸ under Diocletian, a rate of fifty *denarii* per pupil was established;⁴⁹ Harris inferred that the reason for this might have been a desire to make elementary schooling affordable to “a surprisingly large number of people.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the *magistri* – “those who teach the first letters” – were not exempt from certain taxes, like the *grammatici* and the *rhetoires*.⁵¹ Finally, because of low income, the *magistri* had to gather larger classes, which must have hindered the learning process.⁵²

The morality of the teacher was often questioned as well; Quintilian pointed out the dangers of depravity with a private tutor against those who fear for the moral welfare of a child in school.⁵³ Since there were no formal requirements for the job of magister, other than literacy, anyone could do it, and many were under-qualified.⁵⁴ Petronius mentions a couple of teachers, albeit private ones, each one bad in his own way: one was quite lazy, while the other – although more dedicated – was not very good.⁵⁵

The Ludus Litterarius and Its Programme

The educational programme of the *ludus* was as simple as that of its Hellenistic model. The children were to learn how to read, write, and do basic calculations.⁵⁶ There were,

⁴⁷ *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 18.3.2. “Métier payé et, qui pis est, mal payé.” H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 205.

⁴⁸ Juvenal says *rara tamen merces* when speaking of a grammarian’s salary, which was much higher; Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.228.

⁴⁹ *Magistro institutori litterarum in singulis pueris menstruos (denarios) quinquaginta. Edictum Diocletiani*, 7.66.

⁵⁰ William Vernon Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 308. However, he also asserted that “The illiteracy of the poor follows inevitably from the lack of subsidies for elementary education.” Ibid, 315.

⁵¹ *Qui pueros primas litteras docent immunitatem a ciuibus muneribus non habent. Digesta Iustiniani*, 50.5.2.8.

⁵² *Grege multo*: Prudentius, *Liber Peristephanon*, 9.

⁵³ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.2. See also Ibid., 1.3.17. Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 10.224.

⁵⁴ Jerome addressed the issues of choosing an adequate teacher: Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.5.

⁵⁵ Petronius, *Satiricon*, 46.

⁵⁶ Origenes secundum translationem Rufini, *In Numeros Homiliae*, 27.13. See also Quintus Horacius Flaccus, *Ars Poetica*, 325-330. However, the frequent use of the abacus and of *calculi* (pebbles) seems to indicate that this part of the education was even less accomplished. For Augustine, it was as boring as reading and writing: “Then already

nevertheless, some variations in the programmes of these schools:⁵⁷ there were a great number of them, and one can infer that they would offer lessons depending on the needs of a specific area at a specific time.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, major changes within the programme were an exception.

Education began with learning the letters. As the schools were bilingual, the children learned the Greek alphabet as well as the Latin.⁵⁹ However, since the Greek part of Augustine's education was not significant,⁶⁰ this thesis will focus solely on the "Latin school."⁶¹ In the Latin school, boys and girls first learned the Latin alphabet,⁶² starting by learning the letters by their names:⁶³ "the names and order of the letters before their shapes."⁶⁴ They were represented on tablets made of wood or ivory, which were sometimes gifted to good pupils.⁶⁵ The children learned all the letters by heart, from A to X,⁶⁶ then backwards from X to A, then in first and last pairs – AX, BV, CT,⁶⁷ and so on – and other combinations.⁶⁸ After these combinations they would go onto syllables⁶⁹ and then words beginning with the simpler ones (of one syllable),

'one and one is two, two and two is four' how I hated that song!" (*Iam uero unum et unum duo, duo et duo quattuor, odiosa cantio mihi erat.*) Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.13.22. See Konrad Vössing, *Schule und Bildung im Nordafrika der Römischen Kaiserzeit*. (Brussels: Latomus, 1997), 367.

⁵⁷ Prudentius mentions a magister teaching shorthand. Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, *Liber Peristephanon*, 9.

⁵⁸ See R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 45.

⁵⁹ *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 7.1.6.

⁶⁰ E.g. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.13.20. Cf. *Ibid.*, *Epistulae*, 222.2.

⁶¹ The name was coined by H.-I. Marrou in the *Histoire*. Considering that, in the West, the "Roman school" consisted of both Hellenophone and Latinophone schools, the term "Latin school" appears to be the most appropriate when referring to education attained in the Latin language.

⁶² Titus Maccius Plautus, *Mercator*, 2.2.303. See also: Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.1. Palinus Pellaëus, *Eucharisticon*, 65.

⁶³ Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.2. The letters of the Latin alphabet did not have actual names, like those of the Greek alphabet. The consonants had a vocal added (for example: BE, CE, HY, and so on). See Alfonso Traina, *L'alfabeto e la pronunzia del latino* (Bologna: R. Pàtron, 1967), 11.

⁶⁴ *Litterarum nomina et contextum prius quam formas*. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.24–25. Quoted from *Quintilian: Institutio Oratoria* vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library. Ed. G.P. Goold. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920.)

⁶⁵ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.26. Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.2.

⁶⁶ The Latin alphabet had only twenty-one letters, from A to X, because Y and Z were considered Greek letters. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.93; see also Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.9. Cf. Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*, 2.88.

⁶⁷ See H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 364.

⁶⁸ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.25. Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.2.

⁶⁹ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Ordine*, 2.7.24. Quoted from "De Ordine," in *Patrologia Latina* vol. 32, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1841).

progressing quickly to the longer and more complicated ones.⁷⁰ Repetition was essential, not only for building and exercising memory, but in order to remember the correct spelling and proper words;⁷¹ the syllables and the words had to be spoken rapidly in order to develop excellent reading and speaking skills.⁷² Certain words, called χαλινοί,⁷³ were chosen because they were particularly difficult.⁷⁴ According to their advancement, the pupils were divided into groups of *abecedarii* (those learning the alphabet), *syllabarii* (those who have progressed to syllables), and *nominarii* (those who have progressed to whole words).⁷⁵

At the same time, in essentially the same manner as reading, the children began to learn how to write. The *magister* first drew the letter and then guided the child's hand over the model so that he (or she) would learn the *ductus* of the letter.⁷⁶ The pupils then practiced on their own, progressing from letters to syllables and then to words.⁷⁷ However, before the children were competent enough to write whole words, they were obliged to learn how to write their own names.⁷⁸ This method had not changed since it was first introduced in the Oriental schools for scribes and notaries.⁷⁹ However, another method was employed in Roman schools; the pupil used the *stilus* to follow the form of the letters on wax tablets,⁸⁰ Marrou believed this to be an

⁷⁰ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.30–33.

⁷¹ Especially the alphabet which they used not only to read and write, but as a kind of mnemonic and organizational device: R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 166–167.

⁷² Ibid., 1.1.32, 34.

⁷³ Χαλινοί: (horseback-riding accoutrements) bit, reins; (metaphorically) anything that restrains. See “χαλινός” in *A Greek–English Lexicon*, comp. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, rev. Sir H.S. Jones, R. McKenzie et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁷⁴ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.37.

⁷⁵ Origenes secundum translationem Rufini, *In Numeros Homiliae*, 27.13.

⁷⁶ Seneca Philosophus, *Epistulae*, 15.94.

⁷⁷ Augustine mentions how ridiculous it would be if a *ludimagister* started teaching his pupils syllables before letters, when there is a (natural) *dicendi ordo*; Aurelius Augustinus, *De Ordine*, 2.7.24.

⁷⁸ See R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 167–169. Some evidence suggests that children would even start copying short texts before they had a proper grasp of the alphabet: Ibid., 169–170. Cf. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.24–25 quoted above.

⁷⁹ For more about this, see H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 19–24.

⁸⁰ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.1.27. Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.2–3.

innovation of the Romans.⁸¹ Everything that was read and written had to be learned by heart and recited as well, to exercise the memory and to learn to read and speak correctly.⁸² It makes sense to assume that the *magistri* also explained some of the readings to a certain extent, but this had to have been exceptionally limited, among other things because explanations were the province of a *grammaticus*.⁸³

It is clear that the most desirable qualities in a pupil (aside from discipline) were a good memory and a talent for emulation. As with children everywhere and at every time, the greatest problem was that it was all too dull; the maintenance of discipline was another important issue. The two together made school quite unpopular among the children. The *magistri* struck pupils with a stick when they made mistakes, not only for infractions. “To study” could be worded as *manum ferulae subducere*.⁸⁴ This approach was never questioned before the first century AD, and even then it was criticized because leniency went against tradition.⁸⁵ Jerome felt that it was important to balance out criticism and praise,⁸⁶ it was important that students do not grow to hate school from a young age, because that could impede their further studies.⁸⁷

⁸¹ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 365.

⁸² Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Instituio Oratoria*, 1.1.32, 36; 1.3.1.

⁸³ Cf. Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, *Saturnalia*, 1.24.12.

⁸⁴ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, 1.15; cf. Publius Ovidius Naso, *Amores*, 1.13.17–18.

⁸⁵ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Instituio Oratoria*, 1.2.6; *nunc pueri in scholis ludunt*; Petronius, *Satiricon*, 4. For criticism about the general state of things regarding child-rearing and education, see: Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, 28–29.

⁸⁶ Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.3.

⁸⁷ Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 107.4.4.

II: *Grammaticus Latinus*

*Venditores grammaticae.*⁸⁸

The exact year when Augustine started to attend the grammarian's school in Madaura⁸⁹ is unknown, however it was probably between the years 365 and 367.⁹⁰ Even though Augustine's father Patricius was a *curialis*,⁹¹ the family was not wealthy; Augustine mentions his father as a *tenuis municeps*,⁹² with no substantial property,⁹³ and in a sermon he even describes himself as a poor man, descended from poor parents.⁹⁴ They had to save and live frugally in order to give Augustine an education, which both his parents felt was worth the cost.⁹⁵ Lancel surmised that Augustine may have stayed with a relative in Madaura, or even a teacher.⁹⁶

The Grammaticus Latinus and His School

There was no strict rule or recommendation at what age a child should begin attending the lessons of the *grammaticus*. This stage of education began after the pupil had mastered the

⁸⁸ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.13.22.

⁸⁹ *Mihi reducto a Madauris, in qua uicina urbe iam coeperam litteraturae atque oratoriae percipiendae gratia peregrinari.* Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.3.5.

⁹⁰ Lancel inferred that he was around eleven. See: Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 36.

⁹¹ Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, 1.1.

⁹² Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.3.5.

⁹³ Aurelius Augustinus, *Epistulae*, 126.7.

⁹⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *Sermones*, 356.13.

⁹⁵ The *praecepta parentum* of *Confessiones*, 1.10.16; *spes litterarum, quas ut nossem nimis uolebat parens uterque.* Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.3.8. Augustine extolled the efforts of his father to educate him (his motives notwithstanding), saying that he did more for him than wealthier fathers had done for their sons; Ibid., 2.3.5. For Augustine's judgment of Patricius' motives: Ibid., 2.3.8.

⁹⁶ It was apparently not unusual for teachers to supplement their income by receiving students in their home, however, there is nothing to substantiate this in Augustine's case, therefore it is left only as a possibility. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 38–39.

skills offered in primary education (up to four years),⁹⁷ that is, the ABCs and basic mathematical skills. According to the sources, girls and boys still attended lessons together.⁹⁸

The grammarian's school was typically located near a forum,⁹⁹ in a "boutique" called a *pergula*.¹⁰⁰ The *ludi litterarii* often occupied a similar space and location.¹⁰¹ A drapery, called *uelum*,¹⁰² separated the school from the street. The teacher sat on an elevated chair, the *cathedra*, surrounded by his pupils.¹⁰³ Unlike the *ludus*, the grammarian's school was decorated; paintings¹⁰⁴ and maps¹⁰⁵ covered the walls, and several busts of great poets¹⁰⁶ were placed around the room.

A *grammaticus* was identical to his Hellenistic namesake, the γραμματικός; the difference being that in the Latin West every pupil needed two of them: a *grammaticus Graecus* and a *grammaticus Latinus*.¹⁰⁷ It would seem that the grammarians could easily be recognized by a cloak they wore,¹⁰⁸ at least in late antiquity.¹⁰⁹ The *grammaticus*' official salary was significantly greater than that of a *magister*.¹¹⁰ *Grammatici* were exempt from their civic (fiscal)

⁹⁷ Suetonius mentions that Nero was entrusted to Seneca at the age of eleven: Suetonius, *Vita Neronis*, 7. In all likelihood, the age at which a child started with the proper training in grammar depended on the child's abilities and (usually monetary) circumstances. Cf. A. D. Booth, "Elementary and Secondary Education," 1, 3–5.

⁹⁸ Ovidius, *Tristia*, 2.369–370. Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 8.3.15–16. Cf. above, girls in the *ludus*.

⁹⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.16.26.

¹⁰⁰ "Pergula, ~ae, f.: A more or less open attachment to the front of a building, used for trading and other purposes." *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). See Suetonius, *De Grammaticis*, 18.1.

¹⁰¹ Titus Liuius, *Ab Vrbe Condita Libri*, 3.44.6.

¹⁰² Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.13.22.

¹⁰³ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.203.

¹⁰⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.16.26.

¹⁰⁵ *XII Panegyrici Latini*, 4.20–21.

¹⁰⁶ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.226–227.

¹⁰⁷ For example: *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 18.3.2. See also *Codex Theodosianus*, 13.3.11 (quoted below).

¹⁰⁸ "Paenula, ~ae, f.: a close-fitting, hooded cloak, made of weatherproof material." *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

¹⁰⁹ *Paenulatorum magistrorum*: Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.16.25.

¹¹⁰ "To the grammarian, Greek or Latin, and geometer for a single pupil two hundred (denarii) a month." (*Grammatico Graeco sibe Latino et geometrae in singulis discipulis menstruos (denarios) ducentos.*) *Edictum Diocletiani*, 7.70.

duties.¹¹¹ Establishing chairs of grammar in cities was important for the empire because these schools would produce new members of the imperial administration.¹¹² Yet even with these exemptions and a salary four times greater than the compensation for a *magister's* work, it was still *rara merces* and quite far from comfortable living wages;¹¹³ according to Juvenal the yearly income was roughly what a jockey would earn in one circus victory.¹¹⁴ Grammarians who filled established chairs of grammar in the cities received both stipends from the city and individual fees from their pupils. The most popular teachers could ask for the most money; the *grammatici*, however, never reached fame or attained as much respect as the *rhetores* did. The tuition fees were not a safe source of income because parents often tried to avoid paying them.¹¹⁵

The *grammaticus* occupied a somewhat more elevated position in society than the *magister*, because his education was more advanced. However, the knowledge and the skills of the grammarian were no greater than that of any other well educated man;¹¹⁶ they were only greater when the same men were mere boys in the grammarian's school. The grammarians themselves usually came from the lower strata of society,¹¹⁷ and they held a paid position; their position within the educational system and the Roman society depended on the patronage of more illustrious men.¹¹⁸ They started to attain more respect at the turn of the first century AD,

¹¹¹ Medical doctors, grammarians and "other literary professors" were immune from duties on their property. *Codex Theodosianus*, 13.3.1pr. For more, see *Ibid.*, 13.3 (passim).

¹¹² The number of *grammatici* and *rhetores* (both Greek and Latin) to be hired for various cities and the payment they receive were determined in a law passed by the emperor Gratian. *Codex Theodosianus*, 13.3.11. Harris inferred, from some examples of poor men rising through the ranks of society (mentioned, for instance, by Libanius and John Chrysostom), that schools for poor people must have existed, furthermore that they must have existed throughout the empire, not only in the eastern half. Combined with the decrease in the number of epitaphs of freedmen, he deduced that there were fewer positions and opportunities for (slaves and) freedmen. W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 288.

¹¹³ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.228–229.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 242–243.

¹¹⁵ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.157.

¹¹⁶ "Since the grammarian and the educated layman occupied largely common ground, the grammarian's knowledge was not different in kind – or even necessarily in quantity – from that of any well-bred *litteratus*." R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 205.

¹¹⁷ Even the famous grammarian Quintus Remmius Palaemon was born a slave. Suetonius, *De Grammaticis*, 23.

¹¹⁸ R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 207–209.

when they came to be regarded the “guardians of language.”¹¹⁹ Freedmen like Palaemon¹²⁰ could not give grammar a good name like Seneca or Quintilian; neither could grammar do much for his station in society, while grammar could rise with more ease the grammarians could not.¹²¹ Quintilian in fact defended the art of grammar against “those who criticize this science as trifling and insignificant,”¹²² because good grammar is the source of good language and thus eloquence.¹²³ Nevertheless, the teaching of grammar could never be of great interest to a man with a keen intellect: the work was tedious, repetitive, and quite far from stimulating.¹²⁴

Considering the great number of pupils in one class and their disparate levels of learning and different stages of education, the *grammaticus* had to have at least one assistant, called either *proscholus* or *subdoctor*;¹²⁵ there were usually several of them, depending on the size of the school. *Proscholi* often had the same education as *grammatici*, that is a completed rhetorical education, however many upstarts opted to become assistants because it was easier than starting a school with no name to oneself;¹²⁶ it was a safe but not a well paid position.¹²⁷

Teaching the Ars Grammatica

In late antiquity *ars grammatica* was already becoming what is today considered “grammar,” however it was still perceived and defined primarily as an exegesis of poetic works;

¹¹⁹ For example, *Grammatici, custodes Latini sermonis*. Seneca Philosophus, *Epistolae*, 95.65.

¹²⁰ Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.215 sqq.

¹²¹ Cf. R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 57, 68–69.

¹²² *Qui hanc artem ut tenuem atque ieunam cauillantur*. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.5. Quoted from *Quintilian: Institutio Oratoria* vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library. Ed. G.P. Goold. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920.)

¹²³ See: Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.5–6.

¹²⁴ Juvenal’s seventh satire refers to it several times, even calling it *crambe repetita* – reheated cabbage – which will kill the wretched teachers. Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.154.

¹²⁵ Decimus Magnus Ausonius, *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, 23. Aurelius Augustinus, *Sermones*, 178.7.8.

¹²⁶ See A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1001.

¹²⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *Sermones*, 178.7.8.

great poetry was the chief subject of study in the grammarian's school.¹²⁸ As Servius succinctly put it: "the art of grammar primarily consists in the understanding of the poets and the faculty of writing and speaking correctly."¹²⁹ The *ratio scribendi loquendiue*, for the most part, did not follow the strict rules, categories, and definitions that modern grammar instruction entails. The schools, the teachers, the programmes, and the methods were essentially a carbon-copy of the Hellenistic system.¹³⁰

Before anything could be done in school, the teacher had to prepare his texts. Works were written without punctuation and with no spaces between words; furthermore, because poetry was studied, regular rules of accentuation and rhythm did not apply; the teacher had to mark possibly confusing parts of the text.¹³¹ One should not assume that the majority of grammarians did this work; they often inherited textbooks from their teachers, or teachers they had assisted.¹³²

The first task of a grammarian in any lesson was an initial reading – the *praelectio*¹³³ – before the students could read it aloud, he read the text and gave short explanations. The second task was the the exegesis – *ennaratio* – which consisted of explaining a text methodically¹³⁴ (*μεθοδική*, *ratio loquendi*, *recte loquendi scientia*, *uerborum interpretatio*), and historically

¹²⁸ "Parce que la connaissance des poètes est un des attributs principaux de l'homme cultivé, une des valeurs suprêmes de la culture." H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 235.

¹²⁹ *Ars grammatica praecipue consistit in intellectu poetarum et in recte scribendi loquendiue ratione*. Maurus Seruius Honoratus, *Explanations in Artem Donati*, 4.486. Quoted from: "Explanations in Artem Donati," in *Grammatici Latini* vol. 4, ed. H. Keil (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864). See also: Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, 2.1.1. Cf. "The art of grammar is the guardian of articulated speaking and discipline of moderation. (*Est autem grammatica uocis articulatae custos et moderatrix disciplina*.) Aurelius Augustinus, *Soliloquii*, 2.11.19.

¹³⁰ For more see H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 236-238.

¹³¹ Cf. "But when words themselves make the Scriptures ambiguous, we should first make sure that we did not distinguish or pronounce it badly." (*Sed cum uerba propria faciunt ambiguum Scripturam, primo uidendum est ne male distinxerimus, aut pronuntiauerimus*.) Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.2.2. More on confusion in a text (of the Bible in this case), *Ibid.*, 3.2.2–4.8 passim. Cf. P. Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum*, 42–43.

¹³² Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.2.2.

¹³³ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.8.13; (*Ibid.*, 2.5.4 for the same work of the *rhetor*).

¹³⁴ Following the Hellenistic tradition, where this form of grammar was added to the exegetical grammar in the first century BC: H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 236–238.

(ιστορική, *enarratio auctorum, poetarum enarratio, historiarum cognitio*).¹³⁵ Explaining the text methodically entailed the formal or technical grammar: the words themselves; the exegesis or the historical explanations addressed the persons, stories, and places in the text. Quintilian said that the greatest benefits of the art of grammar are that it introduces the appropriate use of language, clearly indicating what is useful and where it is useful; certainly something a future orator will need.¹³⁶

The Latin Classics¹³⁷

When Latin literature began to develop more rapidly in the first century BC, it affected the programmes of grammatical studies; the Greek schools had their own classics: Homer, Euripides, Menander, and Demosthenes. The first recorded grammarian who updated the scholarly programme was Quintus Caecilius Epirota, a freedman of Cicero's close friend Titus Pomponius Atticus; "he was the first to start reading Vergil and other new poets."¹³⁸ This was probably around 26 BC, while Vergil was still alive: before the *Aeneid* was ever published.¹³⁹ As new poets reached fame, they entered the programme of the grammarian's school.¹⁴⁰

However, by the end of the next century there was a traditionalist reaction,¹⁴¹ the merits of old writers – the *ueteres Latini* – were extolled. Why abandon them when, in fact, they were

¹³⁵ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.4.2, 1.9.1. Cicero succinctly listed the duties of the *grammaticus*: Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.187.

¹³⁶ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.8.17.

¹³⁷ Cf. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.8.1–12.

¹³⁸ *Primusque Vergilium et alios poetas novos praelegere coepisse*. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Grammaticis*, 16.2.

¹³⁹ H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 373.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Sermones*, 1.10.72–75. Marcus Valerius Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 1.35.1–2. Publius Connelius Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, 20. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 373.

¹⁴¹ H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 373.

studied in school by all the new authors?¹⁴² For others, the quick adoption of new material signalled a need for establishing a “grammatical canon,” to ensure a stable and worthwhile education one has to learn the work of a trusted author – a classic – and not the favourite of the month.¹⁴³ From the early Empire to late antiquity little had changed in the programmes of the schools of grammar, which only strengthened the conservatism and traditionalism of Latin literature and the Latin language; it maintained the literary culture of the Latin Roman élite,¹⁴⁴ and created the illusion that times had not changed.¹⁴⁵ The cultural hegemony among the well-educated is evident from the sources; a Roman from Africa (such as Augustine), a Roman from the Balkans (such as Jerome), and a Roman from Gaul (such as Paulinus of Nola) all studied the same literary language, from the same literary works, with equal pedantism.¹⁴⁶ The “grammatical canon” of Latin classics, once established, remained the same throughout antiquity; Vergil, Terence, Sallust, and Cicero continue being the *quadrige* on which the Latin grammarian’s teaching is based upon.¹⁴⁷ Although the number of authors and texts may seem scarce, the grammarian went into every single tiny detail of the text.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Poets such as Quintus Ennius, Lucius Accius, Marcus Pacuvius, Publius Terentius Afer, and prose writers such as Marcus Porcius Cato Censor, and Tiberius and Gaius Gracchi. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 1.8.11. Cf. Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, 20.

¹⁴³ Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 373–374.

¹⁴⁴ Averil Cameron, “Education and Literary Culture” in *The Cambridge Ancient History* vol. 13: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425*, ed. Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 674; Kaster concludes that in the first five centuries after Christ, the grammarian’s school was the second most important institution which maintained and expanded the ruling classes (second only to family): R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 40. “The schools of literary study at best did nothing to prepare their students to understand change; at worst, they blinded them to the fact of change.” R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 13; cf. *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. A. Cameron, “Education,” 675. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 223–224. P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 40. Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (De Boccard: Paris, 1938), 4, 20. “Offering those classes the one thing that approached a common experience.” R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 14.

¹⁴⁷ Cassiodorus referred to the work of Arusius Messius (*Exempla Elocutionum ex Virgilio, Sallustio, Terentio, Cicerone, Digesta per Litteras*) as the *Quadrige Messii*. Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, 1.15.17. See H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 375, 553 (n. 29). For more about the Hellenistic canon, see *Ibid.*, 223–242.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis, *Saturae*, 7.233–236.

Unquestionably, Vergil was the foremost poet in the Latin schools; with the *Aeneid* he corresponded completely to Homer's *Iliad* in the schools of the *grammaticus Graecus*; even though other great Roman poets, such as Horace, remain a part of the Latin grammarian's curriculum, their role is less significant. He is followed by Terence (who corresponds perfectly to the Greek Menander); Terence only reached popularity during the Empire, and the fragments that are preserved today are the ones with moralistic messages, the most popular verses in ancient schools.¹⁴⁹

Strictly speaking, history and oratory were in the province of the *rhetor*, but part of the programme of the *grammaticus* was dedicated to them as well; however, the grammarian mostly limited himself to questions of language and (technical) grammar. To a modern observer it may be somewhat unexpected, but the main historian studied in schools was Sallust;¹⁵⁰ then again, Quintilian recommended Livy – “the great author of history” – because he was the most similar to Cicero.¹⁵¹ Quite naturally, Cicero was the prince of oratory in Latin schools: “il règne en maître sur l'école.”¹⁵² Livy and, following him, Quintilian felt that Cicero is clear enough for beginners, but pleasant enough as well: both useful and enjoyable; and after him all the authors that are most akin to him.¹⁵³

Augustine and the Grammaticus Latinus

It was the love of the Latin language, and the admiration for its beauty – especially when it was displayed in shimmering poetry – that drew Augustine to the world of learning.¹⁵⁴ In

¹⁴⁹ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 374.

¹⁵⁰ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 374.

¹⁵¹ *Historiae maior auctor*. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 2.5.19.

¹⁵² H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 374.

¹⁵³ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, 2.5.20.

¹⁵⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.13.21–22.

the *Confessiones*, Augustine heavily criticized the myopia of the ancient schools. He marvels at how much people, “the sons of men,” observe the letters and the syllables; if a man should pronounce *omo* instead of *homo*, he is derided as if the pronunciation of that word is more important than the fact that he too is a *homo*.¹⁵⁵ Augustine recalls how he had feared making a barbarism in speaking more than minding not to envy those who had not.¹⁵⁶

When Augustine finished his formal education in Carthage, he returned to Thagaste (c. 375). There he taught as a *grammaticus* in a new school;¹⁵⁷ it was surely impossible to teach rhetoric in a town which, some ten years earlier, did not even have a grammarian’s school. It is possible that Romanianus opened the school;¹⁵⁸ he was undoubtedly Thagaste’s wealthiest denizen.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, Augustine did not stay in Thagaste for long; the occupation of grammarian must have been exceedingly tedious for a man of his capabilities. He returned to Carthage to teach rhetoric (again with the help of Romanianus).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.19.29.

¹⁵⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 1.19.30.

¹⁵⁷ “I started teaching in the town in which I was born.” (*In municipio quo natus sum docere coeperam.*) Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*. 4.4.7.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Contra Academicos*, 2.2.3.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 68.

¹⁶⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *Contra Academicos*, 2.2.3; cf. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 72.

A CULTURE OF ELOQUENCE:

AUGUSTINE AND THE ANCIENT CULTURAL IDEAL

And those studies, deemed noble, lead me intently
to litigious forums, that I should excel in them:
the more fraudulent, the more laudable.¹⁶¹

Augustine's talents demanded further education; however, it could not continue immediately after he finished the grammarian's school in Madaura. Around the year 370 Augustine returned to Thagaste,¹⁶² disillusioned: he had to stay there.¹⁶³ His parents could not afford to send him to Carthage to attend classes in the school of rhetoric (*schola rhetoris*). "At age sixteen I began living with my parents in a forced rest from any school, in idleness because of my family's want of money."¹⁶⁴ His father did everything he could to send him to Carthage; at the time it was something Augustine wanted more than anything, but later on he regreted the secular ambitions his father had for him.¹⁶⁵

A year later the family succeeded in obtaining enough money, thanks to a family friend (and in all likelihood, relative) and benefactor Romanianus.¹⁶⁶ That same year, or a little later,

¹⁶¹ *Habebant et illa studia quae honesta uocabantur ductum suum intuentem fora litigiosa, ut excellerem in eis, hoc laudabilior, quo fraudulentior.* Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.3.6. Quoted from James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). All English translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁶² Based on the age Augustine says he was at that time. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.2.4, 2.3.6.

¹⁶³ Cf. Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 40.

¹⁶⁴ *Sexto illo et decimo anno, interposito otio ex necessitate domestica, feriatu ab omni schola cum parentibus esse coepi.* Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.3.6.

¹⁶⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 2.3.5.

¹⁶⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *Contra Academicos*, 2.2.3. For the possibility of Romanianus being related to Augustine: Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 9; Aimé Gabillon, "Romanianus alias Cornelius – Du Nouveau sur le Bienfaiteur et l'Ami de Saint Augustin," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* vol. 24, No 1–2 (1978): 58–70. Two verses from a poem written by Romanianus' son Licentius to Augustine seem to imply that there was a family connexion: *Carmen Licentii*, 137–138.

Augustine's father Patricius died;¹⁶⁷ the economic burden, according to Augustine, passed over to Monica, and – one can assume from the previous – to Romanianus.¹⁶⁸ Their ambitions and efforts were justified; Augustine was the best student in his class, which made him “rejoice haughtily and puff up with pride.”¹⁶⁹ However, some expectations – one may presume – were not met equally: Augustine did not become a lawyer¹⁷⁰ like his friend Alypius;¹⁷¹ instead, he chose the less lucrative profession of teaching.¹⁷² As he relates, at a “feeble age” he was studying books on the vain art of rhetoric in which he “desired to excel for a contemptible and inflated cause, for the joy of human vanity.”¹⁷³ Statements such as these (and the one quoted at the very beginning) show how much the mature bishop Augustine disagrees with and laments the ambitions of the young student Augustine; their underlying message would appear to be: form without substance is a barren end which offers no rewards.

A change in Augustine's life undoubtedly occurred at age nineteen¹⁷⁴ (c. 373)¹⁷⁵ when he read Cicero's (now lost) treatise *Hortensius*, a protreptic for philosophy;¹⁷⁶ it caused what Marrou called his “conversion à la philosophie,”¹⁷⁷ referred to by Augustine as *studium sapientiae*;¹⁷⁸ a change that undoubtedly influenced his decision not to become a lawyer.¹⁷⁹ The

¹⁶⁷ Augustine mentions that he was nineteen years old and that his father had died two years earlier. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 27.

¹⁶⁹ *Gaudebam superbe et tumebam typho*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.3.6.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. “The nourisher of solicitors, Africa.” (*Nutricula causidicorum Africa*.) Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.148–149; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 11, 37.

¹⁷¹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.10.16; cf. 6.18.13.

¹⁷² Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 12. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 68.

¹⁷³ *Inter hos ego imbecilla tunc aetate discebam libros eloquentiae, in qua eminere cupiebam fine damnabili et uentoso per gaudia uanitatis humanae*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7. J. J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*.

¹⁷⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Vita Beata*, 1.4; *Confessiones*, 8.7.17.

¹⁷⁵ Augustine's son, Adeodatus, was also born around that time. Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.6.14. Brown infers that he was born c. 373 (P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 3), while Lancel believes it was earlier: c. 371/2 (S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 50).

¹⁷⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7; 8.7.17; *Soliloqui*, 1.10.17; *De Vita Beata*, 1.4.

¹⁷⁷ *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique*. Cf. “Dès ce moment Augustin n'est plus l'élève du rhéteur.” Maurice Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron* vol. 1 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1958), 18.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.11.18, 8.7.17.

fact that, in this passage,¹⁸⁰ he had formulated it as the book of a **certain** Cicero¹⁸¹ “a provoqué des discussions.”¹⁸² Most of the earlier scholarship¹⁸³ has judged this as a slight to Cicero, which was easy enough, especially when one takes into consideration Jerome’s famous dream.¹⁸⁴ In his analysis of the passage, Testard comes to the conclusion that, although such a judgment is possible, the evidence is far from decisive.¹⁸⁵ Whatever useful ideas Augustine found in Cicero, he repeated and praised (whether he mentioned Cicero by name or not).¹⁸⁶ The same passage in fact judges rhetoric and rhetoricians more than Cicero, because they admired him only for his eloquence and not for his heart.¹⁸⁷

The Triumph of Rhetoric: Latin Schools

As Cicero relates, there were no schools of rhetoric in early Rome, and eloquence was simply achieved by a natural gift: that is, until they heard the Greeks.¹⁸⁸ In fact, Roman rhetorical education was exclusively Greek until the first century BC. Suetonius preserved a few lines from a now-lost letter of Cicero in which he mentions a certain Lucius Plotius Gallus who was the first to open a Latin school of rhetoric in Rome; Cicero wished he had attended his

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Soliloquii*, 1.10.17.

¹⁸⁰ In *Confessiones*, 8.7.17 it is only “Cicero’s Hortensius” (*Ciceronis Hortensio*), and in *De Vita Beata*, 1.4 it is “that book of Cicero’s they call *Hortensius*” (*librum illum Ciceronis qui Hortensius uocatur*).

¹⁸¹ *Cuiusdam Ciceronis*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7.

¹⁸² M. Testard, *Saint Augustin*, 11.

¹⁸³ For a good summary of this scholarship, see M. Testard, *Saint Augustin*, 11–12.

¹⁸⁴ Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Epistolae*, 22.30. This seems to have influenced Marrou when he attributed the same feelings of shame to Augustine: H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 26.

¹⁸⁵ M. Testard, *Saint Augustin*, 13; cf. *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁸⁶ M. Testard, *Saint Augustin*, 13–15. Testard further inferred that *quidam* may not necessarily be insulting: *Ibid.*, 13–14. Cf. “Grammaticalement parlant, il y a loin de *cuiusdam* à *nescio cuius*.” *Ibid.*, 14. Aside from the passages I referenced above – where nothing (negative or positive) is added to “Cicero” or “Hortensius” – there are the (predominantly) positive judgments and quotations from Cicero in the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*: where Cicero is never named; see next chapter.

¹⁸⁷ *Linguam : pectus*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7. Testard sees it as a link to Cicero (*De Oratore*, 3.121) and the contradictions between rhetoric and philosophy: M. Testard, *Saint Augustin*, 18–19.

¹⁸⁸ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.14.

lessons as well, only he had been advised that Greek oratory would be more beneficial.¹⁸⁹ That was not the only problem facing Plotius' school; it was closed a year later by a censorial edict of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Lucius Licinius Crassus: it ran "against tradition and the custom of our elders."¹⁹⁰ Some have inferred that this was a clearly conservative move because the new school made it possible for more people – less wealthy people – to obtain a higher education.¹⁹¹ The programme of this school is not known today, but one can assume that it was similar to that rendered in the *Rhetoric for Herennius* (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*), composed in the same period.¹⁹²

Nonetheless, Latin rhetoric was only truly possible after Cicero. His speeches – preserved and published – were shining examples of Latin eloquence; his theoretical works on rhetoric were used as textbooks. Augustine relied mostly on Cicero's *On the Orator* (*De Oratore*) when he wrote the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*.¹⁹³ However, it appears that Cicero's most popular rhetorical treatise was *On Invention* (*De Inventione*).¹⁹⁴ It was the rhetorical treatise most commented upon; for instance, by Marius Victorinus, a certain Grillus and a (dubious) Eusebius before him (the work has not been preserved, but he is mentioned in the fragments from Grillus' commentary),¹⁹⁵ during the middle ages *De Inventione* was copied extensively, more than any other of Cicero's rhetorical treatises.¹⁹⁶ His theoretical treatises on

¹⁸⁹ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Rhetoribus*, 2. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (Rhetor), *Controuersiae*, 2.5. On the benefits of instruction in Greek: cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.93–94.

¹⁹⁰ *Praeter consuetudinem ac morem maiorum*. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Rhetoribus*, 1.

¹⁹¹ Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Du Seuil, 1958), 342–343.

¹⁹² H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 342.

¹⁹³ For more on this, see below: Chapter Three.

¹⁹⁴ "De inventione, ce travail de jeunesse, si sec et si scolaire." H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 382.

¹⁹⁵ See Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 410.

¹⁹⁶ Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (De Boccard: Paris, 1938), 50 (note 2).

rhetoric, however, remained the most popular and most used throughout antiquity, despite other works such as Quintilian's monumental *Institutes of Oratory* (*Institutio Oratoria*).¹⁹⁷

The educational ideals of the ancient world can be traced back to the fifth century BC. The educational revolution created by the sophists sparked an interest in education among Greek intellectuals; Marrou simplified the matter by defining the two most significant programmes: Plato's based on philosophy, and Isocrates' based on rhetoric.¹⁹⁸ And, as he states, it was Isocrates who finally won the battle (at least when one considers numbers).¹⁹⁹ In fact, rhetoric was so complex and its rules so numerous and intricate that all education seemed to prepare the student for rhetoric,²⁰⁰ especially when that education was bilingual. This, however, created a kind of unity in the whole Roman world; all the members of the aristocracy shared a united culture, whether their native language was Greek or Latin.²⁰¹

The Rhetor Latinus, His Students, and His School

Rhetor Latinus – called also (more rarely) *orator* or even in Greek ῥήτωρ or σοφιστής²⁰² (generally a name used for the *rhetor Graecus*) – commanded more respect than the *grammaticus*. In late antiquity a *rhetor* (as Augustine had once hoped to be)²⁰³ had an opportunity to work towards entering the imperial administration and advancing his station in

¹⁹⁷ Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 48.

¹⁹⁸ For more on this, see: H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, esp. 96–136.

¹⁹⁹ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 269; cf. *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁰⁰ H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 110–111. Cf. “Seul le rhéteur pouvait achever l'édifice de la culture.” *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰¹ Cf. Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 30. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 224. H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 271. NB: Even though an educated Latinophone Roman would know his Homer as well as a Hellenophone Roman, the Hellenophone would, at best, have only heard of Virgil.

²⁰² Even though ῥήτωρ and σοφιστής originally had different meanings, with time they started being used synonymously for *rhetor*; H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 531 (n24).

²⁰³ See *infra*.

life and society.²⁰⁴ However, even if he chose to remain in his profession – teaching – he had far better prospects than a *grammaticus*, and certainly better than a *ludi magister*. Rhetoricians demanded higher tuition fees from their students, received larger stipends from imperial coffers,²⁰⁵ and they were exempt from certain levies.²⁰⁶ Besides, a rhetorician – merely by the province of his calling – had an opportunity to create better bonds with his students, who might in turn become quite influential people (and who were, for the most part, the sons of quite influential people).²⁰⁷

However, it was not always easy for a rhetorician to establish himself in a city: there was sharp competition.²⁰⁸ The students themselves caused trouble. Libanius relates that in Athens some students would organize and wait for new arrivals at the port, and then abduct them and force them to attend their teacher's school.²⁰⁹ When Augustine transferred to Rome to teach in a private school, he says that he did not do so solely for the promise of greater pay and more honours, but mainly because he had heard that Roman students were better behaved than those in Carthage.²¹⁰ As a student in Carthage Augustine had already experienced the (all but institutionalized) disorder that groups of students caused in classrooms throughout the city: “Nothing is more similar to their behaviour than the behaviour of demons.”²¹¹ Those students were called *euersores* – the subverters – and they used to burst into classrooms, wreak havoc,

²⁰⁴ Cf. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 224; Averil Cameron, “Education and Literary Culture” in *The Cambridge Ancient History* vol. 13: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425*, ed. Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 673, 675.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.7.11.

²⁰⁶ Two hundred denarii per student: *Edictum Diocletiani*, 7.70. Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* 13.3.11

²⁰⁷ P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 43. Cf. R. A. Kaster, *Guardian of Language*, 205.

²⁰⁸ Libanius had experience with competition; cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 1000.

²⁰⁹ Libanius, *Orationes*, 1.16–22.

²¹⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.8.14.

²¹¹ *Nihil est illo actu similius actibus daemoniorum*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.3.6.

and mock students;²¹² the only reason why this kind of behaviour was never punished by law is that it was a time-honoured tradition.²¹³ One can surmise that even some of the other students (who were not *euersores*) were no better; boys from all over Africa found themselves in a metropolitan city, no longer under the watchful eye of their elders;²¹⁴ the memorable opening sentence of Book Three of Augustine's *Confessions* says: "I came to Carthage and the cauldron of depraved loves clamoured all around me."²¹⁵ For the new-comers, certainly, the desire to conform and to be accepted was even greater; Augustine admitted that, as a student, he had longed to belong to the *euersores*, that he "lived among them," and had been ashamed that he did not have the courage to do as they did.²¹⁶

Another significant problem was the loss of tuition; the students often attended classes in one teacher's school and at the end of the school year they either vanished or transferred to another school, without paying their fees. Augustine moved to Rome to escape the wantonness of Carthaginian students, but there he met with this new problem²¹⁷ and, apparently, it was not possible to sue the students or their parents.²¹⁸ Libanius warned that the students in Antioch did the same and advised his colleagues to make binding legal contracts with the students (or their parents) before accepting them in the school.²¹⁹ One should note that this was not an invention of late antiquity.²²⁰ Still, the main reason to transfer to a different school was competition; for instance, the arrival of a better or, at least, more famous teacher.

²¹² Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.3.6, 5.8.14.

²¹³ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.8.14.

²¹⁴ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.1.1, 3.2.2. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 26–27.

²¹⁵ *Veni Carthaginem et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.1.1.

²¹⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.3.6.

²¹⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.12.22.

²¹⁸ Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 97.

²¹⁹ Libanius, *Orationes*, 43; cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1002.

²²⁰ Cf. Decimus Iunius Iuuenalis, *Saturae*, 7.157.

The rhetorical schools shared the same location within cities as the grammarians' schools; but, they were usually much grander, even in earlier times; in late antiquity, they were sometimes even small theatres.²²¹ Libanius' school in Antioch was attached to the city *curia*.²²² There were no grading systems in the schools and no official degrees, diplomas, or confirmations; the "graduates" proved themselves solely by their skills.²²³

The length of this stage of education varied, but it would seem that three years was the minimum; however, it was possible to extend the length of the education and expand it into other disciplines as well.²²⁴ mathematics, philosophy,²²⁵ astronomy, and so on. Augustine spent about four years (371–375) as a student in Carthage. The rhetorician's school provided, most of all, instruction in rhetoric. Whatever the rhetorician explained (like the grammarian before him) – history, mythology, geography, (super)natural science, and so on – was used mostly to help students understand the treatises or speeches they had to read, and to supply them with examples they should use in their own works to either strengthen an argument or simply for aesthetic purposes.²²⁶ This way the students absorbed merely specks and glimpses of their culture,²²⁷ while everything else had to be achieved (if it was to be achieved at all) individually. As the system of higher education became focused almost completely on rhetoric and the students were overburdened (beginning in the grammarian's school) with trivial and exceedingly detailed knowledge (pedantic, even) of everything in the works they studied, another considerable aspect

²²¹ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 361.

²²² P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 43–44.

²²³ The closest thing to a degree was a written recommendation of the teacher: A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 999.

²²⁴ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 998–999.

²²⁵ Predominantly in Greek-speaking cities: Athens, Alexandria, and later in Constantinople, while in Rome philosophy was still more often learned from visiting (mostly Greek) professors; A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 999.

²²⁶ H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 116–117.

²²⁷ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1004; R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 12.

of culture in late antiquity came about: erudition.²²⁸ The *uir* should not only be *eloquentissimus*, but *doctissimus* as well.²²⁹ A cultured man was not only an excellent speaker, but an erudite; he had knowledge in everything, and not displaying that knowledge – when speaking, and when writing – was unimaginable.²³⁰

Cicero recommended that an ideal orator enrich his culture (especially) by studying law, history, and philosophy;²³¹ it was vital for an orator to have knowledge of everything, because “namely, the bounty of knowledge gives birth to a bounty of words.”²³² Nevertheless, in the Roman empire law became the province of experts and it was seldom useful to a non-professional (the same as, for instance, medicine and architecture, or the more advanced mathematical disciplines). The very fact that Cicero recommended this to a student as a personal goal (during or after his schooling) is telling of how much the ancient schools ignored these disciplines.²³³ From this, one can infer that the demands for an ideal man in ancient cultural models do not correspond fully to the programmes of the ancient school; the ancient school, in a nut-shell, gave its student the tools he needed to become an ideal man, but only through his own effort.²³⁴ One need not expand on why not many people had the time (or, better to say, opportunity), the propensity, or the ability to achieve this ideal.²³⁵

²²⁸ I cannot stress enough: part of the **culture**, and not formal education. Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 120–123.

²²⁹ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Quantitate Animae*, 33.70; *De Ciuitate Dei*, 22.6.1, 9.4.2.

²³⁰ The works of polyhistor, such as Varro, or Pliny the Elder, the many manuals and lexica confirm this, as well as works such as Martianus Cappella's *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, Nonno's *Dionysiaca*, and so on. Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 120–123.

²³¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2 (passim); cf. *Ibid.*, 2.131–132.

²³² *Rerum enim copia uerborum copiam gignit*. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.125.

²³³ For Quintilian and Cicero alike, history was a part of the high culture, and not the educational programmer. Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 116 (n. 1).

²³⁴ Cf. “La culture générale est pour eux, moins une formation de l'esprit en tant que fonction, que le fait d'accumuler des connaissances, des matériaux utilisables pour le futur orateur.” H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 118.

²³⁵ Cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.74–75; Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.31.64.

Beneath the surface the rhetorical school was not that different from the grammarian's; as Marrou put it: "théorie, étude des modèles, exercices d'application."²³⁶ The teacher explained the theory of oratory, which was – just like grammar – organized into numerous (sub)divisions and (sub)categories, and the student's first task was to learn and memorize the complicated terminology. Although the rhetorician's first assignment was to teach rhetoric – in theory and in practice – he continued the grammarian's task of textual exegesis. The main difference is that the rhetorician focused on prose compositions;²³⁷ there was a more or less established canon of texts in this school as well.²³⁸ The content of the rhetorical education was just as dry, rigid, and formal as the content of previous stages; one only needed to impart to the students the essence of the art of rhetoric, devoid of all personality and regardless of any contemporaneous developments or changes.²³⁹ An orator in late antiquity, like Augustine, had no need for judicial oratory which remained a part of the programme.

The student had to learn the technical aspects of rhetoric properly in order to be successful in the practical segment of this education as well:²⁴⁰ the προγυμνάσματα (preparatory exercises); both these segments were inherited from Greek rhetorical tradition. The students had the same task as in any stage of education: to work strictly adhering to well-established rules. Thus the preparatory exercises remained the same even though the circumstances of every period were different. The exercises were not only the same from century to century, but the order in which they were studied remained the same, and the rules according to which they were composed could not be altered. It was the same with the last of these exercises – declamations (*declamationes* or μελέται, in their two forms: *suasoriae* and *controuersiae*) – which were

²³⁶ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 272.

²³⁷ H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 47.

²³⁸ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 276. Cf. Aurelius Augustinus *Conf.* 3.4.7.

²³⁹ H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 50. Perhaps because anyone could learn it as such, but only few could truly know it.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Partitione Oratoria*, 139.

seldom altered or replaced for centuries; they were mostly fictitious legal cases (often supernatural and drawn from mythology).²⁴¹ All the exercises were memorized and performed publicly, in front of the class; the performances of more advanced exercises were sometimes attended by family members or even other interested parties.²⁴²

Augustine's Career in Rhetoric (Carthage – Rome – Milan)

Augustine had finished his formal education by the year 375, but in 376 he returned to Carthage, this time as a teacher of rhetoric. The city council gave him one of the (Latin) *cathedrae* (chairs) of rhetoric, hence he taught in the “public school” (*schola publica*).²⁴³ “In those years I taught the art of rhetoric and, conquered by desires, sold victorious loquaciousness.”²⁴⁴ Two things can be inferred from this; one is that the mature Augustine judges that he had been rather ambitious in those years and eager to prove himself; the other is that he was quite skilled in providing his students with the art of persuasiveness, which is what rhetoric **is** in its essence. In fact, in the *Confessions*, Augustine often deemed the profession of teaching equal to commerce, and likened the professors to merchants.²⁴⁵

Dissatisfied with the discipline (or, better to say, lack thereof) of Carthaginian students, Augustine wanted to move to Rome. To achieve this, he had to make himself known to important people – dignitaries – such as the African proconsul, who occasionally came from Rome to visit

²⁴¹ H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 51–53. Several collections of declamations were preserved, for instance the declamations of Seneca the Elder and the collection attributed to Quintilian. The popularity of declamations is attested in Roman literature, to the extent that Petronius even describes it as a habit of the lower (semi-educated) classes: Petronius, *Satiricon*, 48.

²⁴² H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 52.

²⁴³ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.7.11. *Schola publica* or *municipalis* was financed by the city's budget, and teachers were appointed by the *curia*. For more, see H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 406–407.

²⁴⁴ *Docebam in illis annis artem rhetoricam et uictoriosam loquacitatem, uictus cupiditate, uendebam*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 4.2.2.

²⁴⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 4.2.2. *Venditores grammaticae uel emptores*. Ibid., 1.13.22; *Quod uidebar emere maternis mercedibus*. Ibid., 3.4.7; *Subtrahere ministerium linguae meae nundinis loquacitatis... mercarentur ex ore meo... redemptus a te iam non redirem uenalis*. Ibid., 9.2.2; *Ut scholasticis suis Mediolanenses uenditorem uerborum alium prouiderent*. Ibid., 9.5.13.

his residence in Carthage. Currying favour was probably why Augustine dedicated his first book (c. 380 AD) – *On the Beautiful and the Proper* (*De Pulchro et Apto*) – to a Roman rhetorician (erudite and *philosophaster*), Hierius.²⁴⁶ That same year (the exact date is unknown), Augustine won a competition in poetry and was crowned by the proconsul Vindicianus;²⁴⁷ they were promptly brought together by their common interests: love for the Latin classics (i.e. the Latin culture of antiquity).²⁴⁸

Around 382, Augustine decided to move to Rome;²⁴⁹ he was promised more money and greater honours, and – what was even more important to him – he was assured that the Roman students handled themselves with better discipline than their colleagues in Carthage.²⁵⁰ With his teaching experience and some fame already attached to his name, he taught privately;²⁵¹ it is far from inconceivable that obtaining an official chair of Latin rhetoric in Rome was more difficult than in Carthage. He left for Rome the next year (383).²⁵² However, this move did not go as well as he had planned; he had fallen ill short after arriving;²⁵³ emotionally, he felt guilty for tricking his mother into staying in Africa.²⁵⁴ The students, albeit more disciplined in class, tended to disappear before they settled their tuition;²⁵⁵ and, economically, this must have been quite damaging for a private professor, for whom tuition was his main source of income. Augustine

²⁴⁶ In the *Confessions*, Augustine wonders what possessed him to do that, when he only knew of the man. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 4.14.21.

²⁴⁷ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 3.

²⁴⁸ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 56.

²⁴⁹ Alypius was already there: Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.8.13.

²⁵⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.8.14. Most notably the *euersores*, cf. supra.

²⁵¹ Cf. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 72.

²⁵² Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.8.15.

²⁵³ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.9.16.

²⁵⁴ He left her “praying and crying.” (*Orando et flendo*.) Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.18.15.

²⁵⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.12.22. See supra.

almost certainly stayed with some Manicheans when he was in Rome and he was already deeply disillusioned with this sect.²⁵⁶

The move proved to be beneficial the next year. The prefect of the city of Rome was a man named Symmachus: extremely wealthy, a senator, a pagan, and a *uir eloquentissimus ac doctissimus*. In 384 the imperial capital of Milan (*Mediolanum*) asked Symmachus to find a suitable man to fill the chair of Latin rhetoric in the city.²⁵⁷ The position of the official chair of rhetoric in Milan was quite attractive; as the official *rheto*r *Latinus* of the capital of the Western Roman empire, his duties were also more or less directly connected to the imperial court; one of those duties was to perform panegyrics for the emperor, consuls, and other Roman dignitaries.²⁵⁸ This appointment would also put him in a position to advance his career. His connexion to Symmachus were in fact the Manicheans;²⁵⁹ even though the Manichaeen sect was disliked by both Christians and pagans,²⁶⁰ Augustine as a Manichean was better suited to (the pagan) Symmachus because he would be a non-Christian element in the Christian capital.²⁶¹ Augustine asked Symmachus to test his abilities, which were – unsurprisingly – exceptional. With no opposition from Symmachus (not even Augustine’s sometimes evident African accent²⁶²) Augustine set off for Milan.²⁶³ Years later, his reflected opinion was that he was leaving as a Manichaeen agent, however, he left Manichaeism behind and “came to Milan to Ambrose the bishop.”²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ He was still moving in their circles at the time: Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23.

²⁵⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23.

²⁵⁸ Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 60. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.6.10.

²⁵⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.9.19.

²⁶¹ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 59–60.

²⁶² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Ordine*, 2.17.45.

²⁶³ His trip was paid by the city: Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23.

²⁶⁴ *Et ueni Mediolanum ad Ambrosium episcopum*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23.

Augustine probably spent his first year in Milan trying to establish himself as the new *rhetor*.²⁶⁵ From what he relates, his schedule was quite demanding; he spent the first half of the day in class, while for the rest of the day he visited with friends – old and new – and prepared for the next day's classes.²⁶⁶ He had completely abandoned Manichaeism by the spring of 385.²⁶⁷ Roughly at the same time, he became a catechumen in the Church.²⁶⁸ Completely disillusioned with the Manichaean religion, he first turned to the New Academy: through Cicero.²⁶⁹ After that, partly under Ambrose's influence, and partly under the influence of intellectual circles he became acquainted with in Milan, Augustine turned to Neo-Platonism;²⁷⁰ this, in turn, led him closer to Christianity.

In the summer of 386 Augustine fell ill again, and the pains in his chest affected his voice and breathing, thus preventing him from teaching.²⁷¹ In September, during the *feriae uindemiales* (a summer break from school), Augustine retreated to a friend's country estate in Cassiciacum.²⁷² There he gave up on all the secular ambitions he had ever had in this world: marriage, career, success.²⁷³ By the end of the *feriae* he notified the officials in Milan that he would not return to his post because of his ill health.²⁷⁴ Thus ended Augustine's secular career in Cassiciacum, in the (as it turned out: short-lived) "idle Christian life,"²⁷⁵ a Christian *uita*

²⁶⁵ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 79.

²⁶⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.11.18.

²⁶⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 6.1.1.

²⁶⁸ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.13.23–5.14.25.

²⁶⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 5.10.19.

²⁷⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 7.9.13, 8.2.3. Cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 85.

²⁷¹ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.2.4. Cf. *Ibid.*, 9.5.13.

²⁷² Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.3.5. Cf. *Ibid.*, *De Vita Beata*, 1.6.

²⁷³ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.2.4. *Ibid.*, *Retractatio*, 1.1.1. See: P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 102, 109, 113.

²⁷⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.5.13. Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, 2.4. Lancel surmised that Augustine could not quit so casually, because he had obligations to his students and their parents, as well as the city officials and the imperial court, therefore the period of his ill health was an ideal point of egress. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustin*, 146.

²⁷⁵ *Christianae uitae otium*. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 9.2.4.

contemplatiua, the life of contemplating the Eternal Truth, unburdened by business and obligations.

A CHRISTIAN RHETORIC:
THE FOURTH BOOK OF *DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA*

What is the use in a golden key if it cannot open what we want?
Or what is lacking in a wooden one if it can?
When we want nothing more than to open what is closed.²⁷⁶

Augustine's treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* was begun 397, when the first three books were published. Due to time constraints and his countless duties (not the least the fight against heretics, like the Pelagians, and the Donatist schism), Augustine left the treatise unfinished for almost thirty years. Around 426 he added the fourth book, thus finally offering his readers the complete treatise. The translation of the title of this work has never been an easy task. While some (especially older sources) translate it simply as *On Christian Doctrine*, many feel (I among them) that the modern – and somewhat altered or, at the least, differently coloured – meaning of “doctrine” would only lead to confusion. Some have decided to translate it as *On Christian Teaching*²⁷⁷ (cf. Karla Pollmann's translation: *Die christliche Bildung*), or something to that effect; however, the word “teaching” does not do enough to encapsulate the meaning of the Latin *doctrina*, especially in Augustine's use, which is why I deem it equally inadequate and choose to keep the title of the treatise in Latin.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ *Quid enim prodest clavis aurea, si aperire quod uolumus non potest? Aut quid obest lignea, si hoc potest? Quando nihil quaerimus nisi patere quod clausum est.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.11.26, *Patrologia Latina* vol. 34, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1841). The English translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

²⁷⁷ Edmund Hill insisted that it should be *On How to Teach Christianity*, or simply *Teaching Christianity*.

²⁷⁸ For a more detailed study into Augustine's use of the word *doctrina*, see Gerald A. Press, “*Doctrina* in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*” in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 17, No 2 (1984): 98–120; specifically on the views of scholars see 99–100. For Press the word's manifold meanings, in its specific cultural setting, equate it to the Greek παιδεία. “From the point of view of the ancients or of Augustine, to use the word *doctrina* was not to communicate some distinct meaning in a modern language; it was to invoke what is, from *our* point of view, a

A Christian Rhetoric?

It is manifest to anyone studying the world of Classical and late antiquity that rhetoric was a prerequisite to a certain style of living. It was unimaginable – with still few exceptions in late antiquity – for one to endeavour to be a part of higher society without a mastery of the (literary) language, and a thorough knowledge of the culture to which it was related. Just as speech separated man from animal, the Greek and the Latin tongues a Hellene or a Roman from a barbarian, so polished speech separated the *literati*, the best and the brightest, from the multitude of the common people (*vulgus*).²⁷⁹

How did the triumphant Christianity affect this? As an egalitarian religion it certainly took issue with the exclusivity of the existing culture; Christ and his apostles had no education to speak of, but were in fact craftsman, shepherds, and fishermen,²⁸⁰ just like the overwhelming proportion of all Christians (compared to the number of educated Christians, or non-Christians for that matter). Another significant problem was pagan literature. For a Christian, epic poetry was replete with demons, idols, false heroes, and their appalling behaviour,²⁸¹ both lyric poetry and novelistic prose usually had a salacious nature, at least at times (but often in graphic detail),²⁸² and philosophy was often regarded as dangerous and rather blasphemous.

spectrum of logically related meanings.” Ibid., 103, cf. 105. The same holds true for the titles of other works of Augustine as well (e.g. *Confessiones*, *De Civitate Dei*). Cf. “He [Augustine, in *De Doctrina Christiana*] took advantage of the variety of its [*doctrina*] meanings and the variations in how it would be understood from different cultural standpoints to argue simultaneously for his side and speak to both sides of the dispute between Christianity and ‘pagan’ culture.” Ibid., 108. Even though Press’ argument is somewhat to the point, it is highly unlikely that *De Doctrina Christiana* would be of interest to a non-Christian or that it was meant to be used as a collection of arguments for a “Christian cultural cause;” at best, it confronted the (old) notions of upper-class Christians who were traditionalists when it came to culture and education.

²⁷⁹ “Rhetoric transposed the creaking of an unwieldy political organism into elevating, classical music.” Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 30. Cf. Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l’Éducation dans l’Antiquité* (Paris: Du Seuil, 1958), 271.

²⁸⁰ Peter, to mention only one.

²⁸¹ Cf. Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *De Idolatria*, 10.

²⁸² To find an example one need only flick through the poems of Catullus, the satires of Horace or Juvenal, Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*, and so on.

Rhetoric, however, could not be ignored or left behind.²⁸³ The Christian message needed rhetoric and eloquence as a means of achieving its goals: the furtherance of that message.²⁸⁴ Therefore, (especially) the Fourth book of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* (NB the whole treatise was held in high regard) was quite relevant in the medieval Latin West. It was copied more than any pre-Christian work on rhetoric;²⁸⁵ it was also the first of Augustine's works to be printed.²⁸⁶ There was a renewed interest in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* in the twentieth century; even before Peter Brown, so to speak, rehabilitated the world of late antiquity and created a new and even more widespread interest in the works of Augustine. The interest in late Roman culture was undoubtedly sparked by Henri-Irénée Marrou's seminal book *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Ancient Culture*, which paid special attention to the transformation of the culture in the increasingly Christian world and the significance of Augustine and his works in this process, *De Doctrina Christiana*, among others. As a result, the content and value of this treatise came under new scrutiny. Furthermore, the history of the treatise made it interesting to a wide variety of scholars: Latin language scholars, late antique scholars, medievalists, patristic and Christian scholars, historians of rhetoric (esp. ancient, medieval, and early modern), and so on.

In my opinion, Marrou was correct when he judged that *De Doctrina Christiana* (NB in its entirety!) is a unique and original work.²⁸⁷ Augustine created a complete book of exegetical guidelines which covered reading and interpretation as well as expression. The Fourth book was

²⁸³ Cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.14.

²⁸⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.2.3. Cf. Erich Auerbach, "Sermo Humilis" in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 31–32.

²⁸⁵ John D. Schaeffer, "The Dialectic of Orality and Literacy: The Case of Book 4 of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*" in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 111 no 5 (1996), 1134b.

²⁸⁶ Harald Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Classics* vol. 2 (Gothenburg: Humanities Press, 1967), 568.

²⁸⁷ Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (Paris: De Boccard, 1938), 519.

the easiest to dismiss as unoriginal.²⁸⁸ How can it be original when the structure and content owe so much to Cicero? That judgment, however, not only applies a modern assessment of originality but ignores the fact that even though Augustine had followed Cicero in word (sometimes even quoting him) he nevertheless had his own use for Cicero's words. As Ernest Fortin suitably puts it: "The paradox of Book IV of the *De Doctrina Christiana* is that it is precisely when Augustine sounds most like Cicero, to the point of reproducing his own words, that he stands at the furthest remove from him."²⁸⁹ Cicero's styles of speaking were meant for a speaker in the forum, in the courts of law; Augustine did draw this division from Cicero, but he adapted the styles to the needs of a Christian speaker, a Christian teacher.²⁹⁰

The very rules of rhetoric cannot be subjected to any period's demands for originality;²⁹¹ Augustine quoted Cicero to demonstrate that eloquence is innate, that human ingenuity created it long before it was ever written down and systematized it into the art of rhetoric;²⁹² therefore, Augustine could have used another source and still would have gotten the same results, because eloquence and rhetoric do not belong to Augustine, or Cicero, or Isocrates, or any one person in particular. It would be pointless to even wonder why Cicero should form the basis for any considerations Augustine had on rhetoric and eloquence. Even if one disregards Cicero's reputation (especially in the Latin schools of rhetoric), Augustine's poor knowledge of

²⁸⁸ H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Classics*, 566–568. Their dismissal of Marrou's judgment does not take into consideration that he was, in fact, speaking of the whole of *De Doctrina Christiana*, and not only the fourth book. Even Augustine himself did not envisage the fourth book as a separate entity: Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.1.1, 31.64.

²⁸⁹ Ernest L. Fortin, "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric" in *Augustinian Studies* 5 (1974), 99.

²⁹⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.17.34–26.58. For more on this, see: Ernest L. Fortin, "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric" in *Augustinian Studies* 5 (1974): 85–100; Gerald A. Press, "*Doctrina* in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*" in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 17, No 2 (1984): 98–120.

²⁹¹ Cf. "A rhetoric that is old in its principles and organization but new in its methods and aims." G. A. Press, "*Doctrina*," 98. "For what has been said by one speaker is not equally useful for the speaker who comes after him; on the contrary, he is accounted most skilled in this art who speaks in a manner worthy of his subject and yet is able to discover in it topics which are nowise the same as those used by others." Isocrates, *In Sophistas*, 12. Quoted from *Isocrates*, trans. George Norlin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

²⁹² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.21. The "most eloquent and intelligent man," who already saw this, was Cicero. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.146.

Greek effectively cut him off from any Greek source, and there is little evidence that he was familiar with Quintilian's work.²⁹³

The Fourth Book of De Doctrina Christiana and Its Intended Reader

An important question in the study of the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana* is: For whom was this book intended? In Marrou's opinion there is nothing in this book which makes it uniquely suitable **only** for the clergy; what is more, Augustine saw the need for a Christian culture even before he had – quite unexpectedly – put on the frock.²⁹⁴ However, Harald Hagendahl and several other scholars have taken issue with Marrou's view, insisting that (the Fourth book of) *De Doctrina Christiana* could not have been written for anyone outside the clergy, because its advice, for the most part, does not concern laymen.²⁹⁵ What is interesting in Hagendahl – aside from the fact that he is considering the Fourth book as a separate entity – is that he never qualifies "clergy": a priest? a bishop? One cannot even find the word "preacher." Perhaps because a preacher need not necessarily be a member of the clergy (especially not in late antiquity), but can just as well be a layman or, more likely, a "monk," in all the fluidity that early monasticism entailed; Augustine's monastic community in Thagaste had little to do with a medieval cloister. This fact certainly shines a light on Marrou's suggestion that there may have been a certain "apostolic zeal,"²⁹⁶ that a Christian, especially an adult convert, could feel the need to spread his conversion.

²⁹³ See Paul Keseling, "Augustin und Quintilian" in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès International Augustinien, Paris 21–24 Septembre 1954 : Communications* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954): 201–204.

²⁹⁴ H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 381–382. "La *de Doctrina christiana* n'est donc pas un simple manuel de *Institutione clericorum* ; il n'y a rien de spécifiquement ecclésiastique dans ce programme de culture." Ibid., 381.

²⁹⁵ H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Classics*, 566. Esp.: "The prevailing opinion that the fourth book was to all intents and purposes written for the instruction of the clergy remains unquestionable." Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.4.6, 4.10.25, 4.13.29.

²⁹⁶ H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 381–382.

While some of the advice undeniably concerns only a proper priest – the most obvious being about the man who stands up, elevated, and speaks while all others keep silent²⁹⁷ – there is advice for those who by no means need be priests. In the beginning of the same passage which Hagendahl referred to for his argument, Augustine speaks of conversations. These conversations (or correspondence), with one or with many, need not imply priesthood. Jerome was not a priest, nor could one really call him a preacher, but could anyone deny him the title of an “interpreter and teacher of the Divine Scriptures?”²⁹⁸ The Apostle Paul? Nor was Augustine a priest or a preacher when he discussed religion in his retreat at Cassiciacum.²⁹⁹ In fact, Augustine never (independently) used the word “priest” (*sacerdos*) in the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*;³⁰⁰ he preferred the word “teacher” (*doctor*), which was used either ambiguously³⁰¹ or in clearer contexts, sometimes coupled with *ecclesia*³⁰² (or words derived from it).

Certainly, the appeal of the Fourth book to modern scholars (especially in the twentieth century) may have driven Hagendahl and others to ignore the fact that when Marrou speaks of Augustine’s proposed Christian culture, he has in mind not only the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana* – as Hagendahl clearly does – but all four books of the treatise. One must always keep in mind that, although almost three decades had passed before the Fourth book was written, it was nonetheless an integral part of the work, and all four books form Augustine’s vision of the treatise, a treatise which he considered unfinished without the book on how to express what the

²⁹⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.25.

²⁹⁸ *Diuiinarum Scripturarum tractator et doctor*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.4.6, PL 34. Again used by Hagendahl as an argument against Marrou.

²⁹⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Vita Beata*, 1.6.

³⁰⁰ The only occurrences of the word are in quotations from the Bible.

³⁰¹ For instance: Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.4.6 (used by Hagendahl), 4.7.21, 4.10.24. In a later passage there are several occurrences of the word, and while some clearly indicated priests, one quite unmistakably had *doctor* in the simpler meaning of teacher: “Therefore to that very Timothy the Apostle said, speaking certainly as a teacher to a disciple.” (*Vnde et ipsi Timotheo idem dicit Apostolus, loquens utique ad discipulum doctor.*) Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.16.33, PL 34. Neither are the *expositores* of the Scriptures necessarily priests or preachers: *Ibid.*, 4.8.22.

³⁰² For instance: Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.16.33, 4.18.35, 4.18.37, and so on.

Christian had learned with the aid of the first three books.³⁰³ After a careful analysis of the meaning of the word *doctrina* – in pre-Christian Latin and in *De Doctrina Christiana* – Gerald Press came to the same conclusion as Marrou.³⁰⁴ Even though he nowhere states this, his conclusion supports not only Marrou’s idea of a general Christian culture, in no way connected exclusively to the clergy, but the idea of the “apostolic zeal” as well. By spreading the Good News, the Christian is teaching the content of the Book; and, although Christians are not commanded (to be precise, there is no commandment) to spread the Good News, they are unquestionably – for lack of a better word – encouraged to do so.

I cannot stress enough that, regardless of all these arguments, one cannot – and should not – doubt that the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana* was intended **primarily** for the clergy, if for no other reason than for the simple fact that a preacher – who in fact is a member of the clergy – will derive the greatest use from its guidelines on preaching. A problem arises only when one decides to disregard the entire treatise by focusing solely on the Fourth book, which by itself does less to support the notion that the (entire) treatise is, one could say, the germ of a Christian culture which should sprout and develop from the ideas set forth therein. When scholars (such as Marrou and Press) speak of a nascent Christian culture they do not base their views exclusively on the Fourth book.³⁰⁵

Towards the end of the Fourth book,³⁰⁶ Augustine made a concession that not all speakers are equally gifted, including those who are vested with the obligation to speak. There

³⁰³ For instance: Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.31.64.

³⁰⁴ “To be a Christian, therefore, is to spread the good news, and this is to teach what is in the book. So the two sides of *tractatio scripturarum* meet *essential* needs, not only of Christian teachers in a special sense – bishops, priests, or monks – but of all Christians.” G. A. Press, “*Doctrina*,” 113.

³⁰⁵ Esp. “What a Christian needs to learn and the learning of knowledge that would be a cultural ideal for a Christian – that is to say, a Christian *doctrina* – is, therefore, learning how to discover what is to be understood and how to set forth what has been understood, which is exactly what *tractatio scripturarum* teaches. *Doctrina christiana*, in sum, is *tractatio scripturarum*.” G. A. Press, “*Doctrina*,” 114.

³⁰⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.29.62.

are those who can perform better than they can speak, and those who can speak – or rather write – better than they can perform. By the time Augustine wrote the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana* his experience with preaching, especially in church, had grown considerably. Not only was he a preacher, a priest, and then bishop, but he was surrounded by many who were to become priests themselves. When Augustine was consecrated as a priest his bishop, Valerius, allowed him to form a small monastery within the cathedral of Hippo Regius. Through the years this monastery became a veritable seminary from which many of Augustine's protégés were sent off as priests and bishops to various towns and villages in Roman Africa.

In the very conclusion of this book, Augustine states that he does not describe himself, whose faults are many: “but a man as he should be if he strives to work in the sound – that is Christian – doctrine, not only for himself but for others as well.”³⁰⁷ From what has been discussed above, and the very wording of this statement, it is clear that this man is a *doctor Christianus*. In his analysis of the Fourth book, Luigi Pizzolato came to the conclusion that this man whom Augustine has described is, in fact, to a greater extent a preacher than a teacher; moreover, he can be just a “performer.”³⁰⁸ I, however, contend that – in (Augustine's) Christian context – the preacher **is** the teacher. The first three books of *De Doctrina Christiana* are useful to any (educated) Christian, whether he chooses to profess his knowledge publicly or not; regardless of what a person does with this knowledge, someone who has worked in the Christian *doctrina* is a Christian *doctor* (but if he does not share it, he is not a *magister*). However, if this *doctor* **is** a *praedicator*, he is necessarily a *magister* as well: Christians – especially the illiterate

³⁰⁷ *Qualis esse debeat qui in doctrina sana, id est Christiana, non solum sibi sed aliis etiam laborare studet.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.31.64. PL 34.

³⁰⁸ “Per il motivo dell'utilità del popolo ... è essenziale all'ecclesiastico, in ultima analisi, non tanto l'essere *magister* (o *doctor*), ma *praedicator*. ... può bastare l'essere solo *pronuntiator*.” Luigi F. Pizzolato, *Capitoli di Retorica Agostiniana* (Rome: Istituto Patristico “Augustinianum,” 1994), 98

masses – were taught through preaching.³⁰⁹ The image of the priest or bishop seated upon the cathedra and speaking to his congregation is extraordinarily similar to the image of the ancient teacher doing the same in his classroom. The correlation is so evident that it was never missed by scholars nor, one can safely presume, by Augustine.

Talent and Wisdom: Cicero or Augustine?

The connexion between the Fourth book of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* and Cicero's rhetorical treatises has been one of the most discussed segments of this book and its impact on Christian oratory. While some, such as Hagendahl, support the view that Augustine's rhetoric is entirely unoriginal and copied from Cicero, others, most notably Press, assert that Augustine's rhetoric is in fact original, due to his approach to the subject matter. Not only is this view closer to the ancient idea of originality, but it is (in my opinion) the correct view, supported by Augustine's work.

While writing this treatise, Augustine was not “re-inventing the wheel.” When he claims that eloquence should not be studied by anyone who cannot learn it quickly and with ease, and bolsters this claim by calling on an authority of Latin rhetoric – “the very prince of Roman eloquence” – he is not offering testimony from the inventor of this truth. The wording itself did not imply authorship: “It did not grieve the very princes of Roman eloquence to say;”³¹⁰ what is more, Cicero offered this advice through Crassus.³¹¹ It would be folly to imagine that it was noticed for the first time only in the late Roman Republic and not in the centuries preceding it, in

³⁰⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.4.6, 4.10.24–25, 4.11.26, 4.12.27 (where he quotes Cicero), and so on. It would be tedious to list all the instances which attest to it, especially in the segment of the book in which Augustine speaks of styles of speaking and their use in Christian oratory. Cf. G. A. Press, “*Doctrina*,” 112, 114 (quoted above). Cf. E. Auerbach, “*Sermo Humilis*,” 32.

³¹⁰ *Ipsos Romanae principes eloquentiae non piguit dicere*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4, PL 34.

³¹¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.89, 146.

all probability going back to the time of Corax and Tisias (fifth century BC), and even before that to the unknown author of the first rhetorical treatise.³¹²

As for originality, the same can be said about the statement that nearly all people who want others to support their cause use powerful speech, arguments, and evidence.³¹³ Or the opinion that eloquence devoid of wisdom is either of use to no one or harmful;³¹⁴ about “a certain diligent negligence;”³¹⁵ or his use of Cicero’s duties of a speaker: to teach, to delight, and to move.³¹⁶ The same can be said about his musings on the innate nature of eloquence, eloquent men, and the art of rhetoric.³¹⁷ Even Augustine’s examples which further his opinion on native eloquence are not new or original; it was not news that children who grow up listening to good language will speak it correctly and purely, and that city-dwellers always recognize the mistakes made by people from the countryside.³¹⁸

These, like the ones on eloquence, are merely simple observations – common sense – something every reader will know and recognize; without a doubt such observations can be found in Classical authors as well (if one of them has bothered to write them down). It strikes me that one of the components of Augustine’s persuasiveness is that he is able to use common sense:

³¹² Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.91.

³¹³ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.4.6–7. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.80.

³¹⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.5.7. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.1; cf. *De Oratore*, 3.55.

³¹⁵ *Quaedam diligentem negligentiam*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.24. *Quaedam etiam negligentia est diligens*. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Orator*, 78.

³¹⁶ *Docere, delectare, mouere*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.12.27; cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Orator*, 69. For an in-depth analysis, see: Barbara Kursawe, *Docere Delectare Movere: Die Officia Oratoris bei Augustinus in Rhetorik und Gnadelehre* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000).

³¹⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.21. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.146; cf. 1.131–133, 1.14, 3.74–75; the importance of listening, reading, and practising: *De Oratore* 1.95, 1.158. Isocrates, *In Sophistas*, 10, 14–18; *Antidosis* 189; cf. *Antidosis*, 188, 190. However, only Augustine claims that talent and practice is enough for eloquence, Cicero and Isocrates insist upon both **and** proper schooling in the art of rhetoric. Cf. “Séparer l’éloquence de la rhétorique, concevoir toute une formation de l’orateur qui délibérément ignorera ces recettes, cet art sur lequel depuis des siècles tant d’attention a été concentrée, c’était là vraiment innover.” H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 517.

³¹⁸ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.5.

to state his point clearly and contextualize it. Some of the advice he gives to the prospective Christian teacher can be classified as such as well, and it would be useful to consider them.

An Education in Rhetoric: Why, When, Who, and How?

Rhetoric is fundamentally neutral because it can defend either a lie or a truth; anyone who knew this must also realize that it would be sheer folly to leave the defenders of the Truth “unarmed” against a well-armed host (pagans, schismatics, heretics).³¹⁹ From this one can infer that Augustine saw more negative traits in rhetorical training than in rhetoric itself: rhetoric was a tool. In fact, rhetorical exercises which are designed to train a future orator to plead for the same cause from both sides of the argument cannot be found in most textbooks of rhetoric (Quintilian’s included), but they were heartily recommended by Cicero.³²⁰ That sort of lax relationship with the truth is not suited to a Christian.

Furthermore, the teaching of rhetoric is overrated. Augustine referred to Cicero, who repeated the rhetorician’s truth that only those who can learn the art of rhetoric quickly can learn it at all.³²¹ But this does not mean that everyone who is talented enough should pursue a rhetorical education; if it is to be pursued by any, it should be by those who have the leisure to do it; even when one is talented enough to learn rhetoric quickly, it still takes time and if there is any more important work to be done, rhetorical education can be dispensed with³²² because it is

³¹⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.2.3; cf. *Contra Cresconium*, 1.1.2.

³²⁰ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.130. Cf. Elaine Fantham, *The Roman World of Cicero’s De Oratore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89.

³²¹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4. Cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.146; Isocrates, *In Sophistas*, 10, 17.

³²² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4.

only a means and not an end in itself.³²³ Lastly, studying the art of rhetoric should be limited to boys only; there is no need for adults to waste their time in classes.³²⁴

The ancient rhetorical tradition – Augustine included – realized that all the methods of rhetorical schooling are scarcely able to overcome a lack of talent and natural wit.³²⁵ This tradition maintained that schooling is secondary to nature and that a talented speaker will derive the most benefits from a rhetorical education. However, for Augustine schooling was not even secondary; those without talent will get nothing from their “great labour.”³²⁶ If an inborn talent and exercise is what makes a great orator, the school is irrelevant; what is more, those schools only foster exclusivity, foolish vainglory, and cause excessive pride.³²⁷ Memorizing the rules of rhetoric does little to help in speaking: “Since not even all among those who have learned them can speak by the rules and at the same time think of them, unless they are discussing the rules themselves.”³²⁸ If a speaker is too anxious about the rules, he might lose track of what he is trying to say; and for a Christian speaker saying is teaching.

The fact that a rhetorical education is unnecessary is attested by numerous authors who are eloquent without training in eloquence; the eloquence one finds in their works is there not because they used to be eloquent, but because they **are** eloquent,³²⁹ in these works, eloquence is the “maid-servant” of wisdom.³³⁰ Eloquence, therefore, is as innate as language, and language is better learned by adopting it naturally than by inculcating it from without.³³¹ Instead of seating a

³²³ Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 517–518.

³²⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4.

³²⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4. Cf. Isocrates, *In Sophistas*, 10, 14–18; Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.113, 1.150, 2.90, 2.131, 3.146.

³²⁶ *Magno labore*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4. PL 34.

³²⁷ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessiones*, 3.4.7.

³²⁸ Quandoquidem etiam ipsi qui ea didicerunt et copiose ornateque dicunt, non omnes ut secundum ipsa dicant, possunt ea cogitare cum dicunt, si non de his disputant. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4. PL 34.

³²⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.4.

³³⁰ *Famulam ... eloquentiam*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.6.10.

³³¹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.3.5.

talented boy in a classroom, Augustine recommends that he rather devote himself to reading and listening to works of eloquent men, and exercising.³³² It is best if the material is not only written eloquently, but that this eloquent text also carries wisdom; wisdom, Augustine says, is much important to a Christian teacher.³³³ The Bible itself will instil both eloquence and wisdom. To a less talented speaker, Augustine recommends a thorough knowledge of the Bible; its eloquent and wise words will further the Truth through the vessel of the speaker.³³⁴ The eloquence displayed in the Scriptures and in the writings of Christian authors – a natural eloquence, which is in accordance with the rules of rhetoric³³⁵ – is abundant and beautiful, it is wise, and it is better; this eloquence is perfectly suited for what it has to say.³³⁶ temperate, not ostentatious.³³⁷

Speaking Clearly

The Scriptures were composed with an appropriate eloquence which, nonetheless, is not always immediately evident. Augustine explains that the difficult, metaphorical, and mysterious style employed by the Old Testament writers was intended to sharpen the minds of the faithful. A text written in a clear and simple style might become monotonous and vexing, while a text written in a more concealing style can intrigue the reader and incite him to further work.³³⁸ That style also conceals the mysteries of the faith from unbelievers. The third, and weakest, justification for the style is that it provided intelligent men with an opportunity to excel and gain

³³² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.5.8. Cf. supra, Cicero.

³³³ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.5.8. Cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.1, *De Oratore*, 3.55.

³³⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.5.8.

³³⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.6.10; cf. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.146.

³³⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.6.9; cf. Ibid., 4.7.21.

³³⁷ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.14.

³³⁸ About the words of the Prophets: “The more they seem covered by figurative words, the sweeter they become when they are uncovered.” (*Quanto magis translatis uerbis uidentur operiri, tanto magis cum fuerint aperta dulcescunt.*) Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.15, PL 34.

some second-hand respect in the Church by interpreting the unclear passages.³³⁹ This style, however, is not to be imitated; these works were written in such a way for the reasons already mentioned; men who interpret these words for others have to be clear and immediately intelligible. A Christian teacher must speak so that it is not his fault if he is not understood, but that either the recipient is too dim or the passage is exceptionally difficult,³⁴⁰ these passages are better suited for a select few, and they should never be brought up in front of a large group of people unless they are truly essential.³⁴¹

Clarity in speech is vital for any teacher, but especially the Christian teacher: he is teaching salvation. A preacher especially has need for clarity and immediate understanding, because one cannot answer everybody's question or stay on the same subject too long when speaking in front of a group of diverse "pupils."³⁴² However, a fervent desire for clarity might make a speech less elegant; even though the message itself is more important than the way it sounds, one should avoid speaking too blandly. In these cases, Augustine recommends a technique referred to by Cicero as a certain "diligent (or careful) negligence,"³⁴³ "which takes away ornament in such a way that it does not bring meanness."³⁴⁴ The goal of a Christian teacher is not to convince, but to reveal what was hidden; however, if the revelation sounds charmless the teacher's efforts might become futile. Only a few people are ready to appreciate the message in whatever form it comes, because it is an inborn quality in intelligent people to love the truth in words, not the words themselves;³⁴⁵ Christian teachings are more powerful even in this case

³³⁹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.8.22.

³⁴⁰ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.8.22.

³⁴¹ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.9.23.

³⁴² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.25.

³⁴³ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Orator*, 78.

³⁴⁴ *Haec tamen sic detrahit ornatum ut sordes non contrahat.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.24.

³⁴⁵ "What is the use in a golden key if it cannot open what we want? Or what is lacking in a wooden one if it can? When we want nothing more than to open what is closed." (*Quid enim prodest clavis aurea, si aperire quod*

because they carry truth³⁴⁶ (moreover, the Truth³⁴⁷). “But since those who eat and those who learn have not few similarities between them, for the tastes of the many one needs to spice up even the regular food without which one cannot live.”³⁴⁸ No word in this sentence is there by chance, the metaphors are clear; the teachings of a Christian teacher are the food which the faithful need to live in blessed eternity, just as regular food keeps people alive in the *saeculum*.

The Teacher’s Grammar

Any teacher must avoid words which do not teach and bring about confusion; this justifies the use of grammatically improper words by Christian teachers because the goal is understanding. Therefore, a Christian teacher may use incorrect words if, by using them, they avoid any lack of clarity (which is the same reason the *uulgus* uses them). Solecisms, which are ridiculed by any grammarian, are fully justifiable; a Christian teacher can use the plural of the word *sanguis*³⁴⁹ or use the word *ossum* for “bone” instead of *os*³⁵⁰ “when African ears cannot distinguish the shortness or the length of a vowel.”³⁵¹ Maintaining the purity of speech is useless if it causes the speaker to be misunderstood; it would be best if the teacher (Christian or otherwise) finds appropriate synonyms where possible, and use immediately understandable solecisms or barbarism when no synonym can be found.³⁵²

uolumus non potest? Aut quid obest lignea, si hoc potest? Quando nihil quaerimus nisi patere quod clausum est.) Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.11.26.

³⁴⁶ Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.25.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.28.61–29.61.

³⁴⁸ *Sed quoniam inter se habent nonnullam similitudinem uescentes atque discentes, propter fastidia plurimorum, etiam ipsa sine quibus uiui non potest alimenta condienda sunt.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.11.26.

³⁴⁹ In Classical Latin, the word *sanguis* was a *singularia tantum*. Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.24; *Non congregabo conuenticula eorum de sanguinibus.* *Psalmus* 15.4

³⁵⁰ In Classical Latin, two words had this same nominative singular: *os*, *ossis*, *nt.* (bone); *os*, *oris*, *nt.* (mouth).

³⁵¹ *Vbi Aerae aures de correptione uocalium uel productione non iudicant.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.24.

³⁵² Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.10.24.

A Christian teacher is destined to use numerous words which would make a grammarian cringe; even if he does not uphold the recommendation of (“vulgar”) clarity, because of the nature of the Bible and the early development of the Christian faith he cannot avoid using barbarisms and neologisms (especially calques).³⁵³ Counsels such as these would probably fall on deaf ears in the classroom of a grammarian; they would certainly bring its adherent punishment and to the one who proposed it either derision or frustrated anger. In another work, Augustine compared the need for a clarity in teaching to the behaviour of mothers and nurses. When they speak to small children they lower their language to the children’s understanding. They do not do so because they cannot speak properly, but because speaking without being understood would be speaking in vain.³⁵⁴

Augustine concluded his treatise with a rather nice variation on a usual formula, which I have chosen to repeat at the end of this chapter.

“This book has run longer than I had wanted or expected. But to the reader or hearer to whom it is pleasing, it is not long. However, to whom it is long but wants to know it, he may read it in parts. One, on the other hand, who is loathe to know it should not complain of the length.”³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Cf. H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, 536–539.

³⁵⁴ Aurelius Augustinus, *In Euangelium Ioannis Tractatus*, 7.23; cf. Michel Banniard, *Viva Voce: Communication Écrite et Communication Orale du IV^e au IX^e siècle en Occident Latin* (Études Augustiniennes: Paris, 1992), 74.

³⁵⁵ *Longior euasit liber hic quam uolebam quamque putaueram. Sed legenti uel audienti cui gratus est, longus non est. Cui autem longus est, per partes eum legat qui habere uult cognitum. Quem uero cognitionis eius piget, de longitudine non queratur.* Aurelius Augustinus, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.31.64. PL 34.

CONCLUSION

A CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Augustine's proposed culture cannot be regarded as dilettantish or unoriginal. From what has been discussed in previous chapters, one can see that Roman culture was based on the literary texts it had produced and which had maintained it for centuries. Almost identical formal education and a passionate love for the letter gave the educated class of Romans a shared culture; they all had an in-depth knowledge of the most influential literary works (more or less, of course, depending on the person, his or her proclivities and abilities). Every cultured (sc. Latinophone) Roman shared the same lore, the same mythology, history, oratory, science, philosophy, as well as a general religious knowledge (regardless of personal beliefs).

Augustine saw this. The culture he had proposed **was** new in the sense that it sought to replace this common, pagan, Roman culture. According to the wording of the Fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine's vision may tolerate pagan literature, but it unequivocally displays a preference for Christian writings: the Bible and the Church Fathers. In this culture, the Bible replaces the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. By saying that one can become eloquent by reading Christian writings (the Bible included), Augustine says that education can begin and be based on those works, instead of (sinful, lascivious, blasphemous, idolatrous) poems. These works would, most likely, cease to form the backbone of a Roman Latin culture. Unlike the late Roman culture which was, indeed, shared across the Roman lands – but only by the aristocracy – the Scripture-based culture would be shared by all Christian Romans.

This culture would, certainly, not be shared by every Christian to the same extent. Its basic tenets would, nevertheless, be shared by everyone. Educated pagan Romans did share the

same culture with approximately the same knowledge (at least when compared to the disparate knowledge of Christianity by, for instance, Augustine and an illiterate peasant in his congregation), but this shared culture was limited in the number of participants, and hindered by language. Not every Roman citizen knew of the adventures of Aeneas and Dido (the story Augustine loved so much as a boy) – especially the ones in the East (Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, and so on) – and not every Roman knew the adventures of Odysseus (Gauls, Berbers, Libyans). Yet, every Christian knew of Adam and Eve or Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, regardless of what part of the Roman empire they came from (or even outside of it), regardless of the language they spoke, education, and level of literacy (if any). The more exclusive part of the new culture – eloquent speaking – so important to a teacher, a *doctor Christianus*, in Augustine’s vision does not begin with Cicero – as it had in the secular culture – but with the Bible. The sacred and wise eloquence of the Scriptures would become the model upon which all eloquence is founded.

Augustine’s debt to Cicero is manifest. It would far exceed the limits of this work to list all the ways Cicero influenced Augustine’s education; only to mention them would become tedious, but there are a few that need to be mentioned. In the rhetorical school Cicero was the unparalleled model; Augustine’s life changed when this superbly eloquent man convinced him to dedicate his life to wisdom, by means of a small treatise; Augustine, as a would-be philosopher, lover of wisdom, was greatly impeded by his limited knowledge of Greek, and the most established source of philosophy in Latin was Cicero, the man who introduced Augustine to the love for wisdom. The fact that Cicero was all around him to begin with and that he was often the only one he could turn to, had effectively prevented Augustine from “choosing” Cicero.

Augustine, a boy from the bounds of the hinterland of Roman Africa through that driving force of late Roman affairs – social mobility – became the great mind of Latin late

antiquity, the exquisitely eloquent Christian, yet, one must always keep in mind, still a man of late Roman society and culture or, as Marrou called him (following a long tradition), *lettré de la décadence*. Augustine's indebtedness to Cicero can be observed from his own works; either when he credits Cicero or "the prince of Roman eloquence" for his influence or sound judgment or when Cicero simply speak from Augustine's works. Cicero was the corner-stone of ancient high culture – the *sine qua non* – and, because of the *Hortensius*, additionally significant for Augustine's intellectual development. Cicero's doctrine was inculcated into Augustine by the ancient system of education, and it did what it was designed to do: make him into Cicero's *orator optimi generis*. Christianity and the Lord, the recipient of his *Confessions*, inspired Augustine to convert Cicero's *orator* to a *doctor Christianus*. Certainly, with new priorities which undoubtedly started to develop in Cassiciacum when Augustine left all hope for a life in the *saeculum*, Augustine's teacher is a more natural, a more organic sort of teacher and speaker. His *doctor optimi generis* is dedicated to the *doctrina sana, id est Christiana*, whose priorities are love, truth, and salvation, following in the footsteps of the one who said *Ego sum uia et ueritas et uita*.

APPENDIX

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CLASSICS:

CHRISTIANS AND SCHOOLS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Somewhat unexpectedly, at first there were no major conflicts between Classical (i.e. pagan) culture and Christianity; it was inconceivable to simply discard such an ancient and so highly revered a tradition.³⁵⁶ The decline of the ancient school system was a fact in the West only when it was impossible to maintain it because of the Germanic conquests and the end of the Western Roman empire.³⁵⁷ In the Eastern empire, Classical culture – and with it, the classical school – slowly began to lose respect in the late fifth century and then drastically in the sixth.³⁵⁸

The last pagan emperor, Julian the Apostate, forbade the Christians from teaching in secular schools.³⁵⁹ The reason was that the Christians were inferior and that they could not be expected to teach children poetry – sacred pagan poetry – when they do not believe in the gods; they have their religion and their books, so let them open their own schools and teach Matthew and Luke.³⁶⁰ Two men did just that; a certain Apollinarius and his son created a school programme that replaced the traditional pagan texts with Biblical texts, which they have adapted to classical norms; this was, nevertheless, an exception that did not prove to be enduring.³⁶¹

³⁵⁶ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 225; A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 1005; Nenad Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasicizam: Pozitivni Stavovi Starohrišćanskih Pisaca Prema Antičkoj Knjizi* [Early Christian Classicism: Positive Attitudes of Early Christian Authors Towards the Ancient Book] (Belgrade: Čigoja, 2005), 113.

³⁵⁷ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 318.

³⁵⁸ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 225–239.

³⁵⁹ In force from June the 17th 362 to January the 11th 364. *Codex Theodosianus*, 13.3.5

³⁶⁰ Flavius Claudius Iulianus, *Epistolae*, 61.

³⁶¹ Homeric hexameter, various other metres, Platonic dialogues, and so on. Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Du Seuil, 1958), 429. Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1006; N. Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasicizam*, 115.

Julian's ban was exceptionally unpopular, even among the emperor's pagan supporters.³⁶² However, little is known about how successful the ban was; even though it forbade Christians from teaching, there was no mention of Christian students; seeing how unpopular the measure was it is quite probable that it was not enforced, especially in the farther regions of the Empire. What is more, it is hard to believe that wealthy and educated Christians agreed with the ban and allowed that their children remain uneducated.³⁶³ Marrou inferred that Julian's prohibition, although quite short-lived, had longer lasting consequences; by shutting Christians out of the education process, Julian forced them to turn inwards and devise a school of their own; even though no Christian school for the grater public was created in late antiquity, this process gave birth to the early episcopal school, and the sixth-century monastic school.³⁶⁴

There were no attempts to organize a higher-level Christian education. Although theology was flourishing in the fourth and fifth centuries, there were no schools, academies, or programmes for aspiring theologians; would-be Christian thinkers had to attain theological knowledge by their own devices.³⁶⁵ The closest thing to an organized education system was to find famous Christian thinkers and join in their discussions; Jerome did the same in his youth, and he was the same years later in his monastery in the Holy Land; another example of the latter was Augustine, in his small monastery in Hippo Regius.

Since the Christian faith was based on the written word, a minimum of literacy was required for the faith and the Christian message to be upheld and spread to others. Therefore, a

³⁶² *Codex Theodorianus*, 13.3.6). "His [Julian] action aroused a greater storm of protest than any of his other anti-Christian measures." A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1006; cf. Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 72; N. Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasizizam*, 135.

³⁶³ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1006.

³⁶⁴ For more on this, see: H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 435–447; cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1007.

³⁶⁵ "Surprisingly, perhaps, and despite the Christian intellectual traditions of a few centuries such as Alexandria, Caesarea and, in the East, Edessa and Nisibis, for the vast majority, Christian training remained largely informal." Averil Cameron, "Education and Literary Culture" in *The Cambridge Ancient History* vol. 13: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425*, ed. Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 667; A. H. M. Jones, 1010–1011.

part of a Christian education had to be the study of the Scriptures. Jewish religious education was a model to be imitated; in rabbinic schools the Jews studied sacred texts and the sacred language throughout the two Roman empires.³⁶⁶ Christian scholarship even aided (secular) education and erudition; numerous books were copied (not only Christian ones), new literary forms emerged (e.g. lives, homilies), sermons were written down, and so on; wealthy Christians, like wealthy pagans before them, continued to support education and culture financially (both Classical and Christian).³⁶⁷

With only a few (quite limited) exceptions, Christians in late antiquity did not create a Christianized school programme; instead they were content to let their children share an education with the pagans, in secular schools; there they learned what were now becoming sacred languages from the works of sacrilegious writers.³⁶⁸ The culture, the παιδεία, remained almost unaffected; cultured men became cultured in the same schools, regardless of their faith; in his famous rhetorical school in Antioch, Libanius had both pagan and Christian students, John Chrysostom, for instance.³⁶⁹ Both pagans and Christians shared the already formed culture now pervaded by Christianity.³⁷⁰

Nonetheless, there was also a certain resistance towards the classical culture, and therefore its basis – classical literature – as well. Using polished language became a problem, because Jesus and the Apostles were uneducated: ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι;³⁷¹ Paul said for himself

³⁶⁶ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 420.

³⁶⁷ A. Cameron, "Education," 670, 677–678.

³⁶⁸ N. Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasicizam*, 118–119.

³⁶⁹ A. Cameron, "Education," 669; cf. R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 72–73 (note 168).

³⁷⁰ Cf. "Christianity integrated itself completely into the old ancient literary culture or, better said, the ancient literary culture was integrated into the new Christian historical reality. (Хришћанство [се] сасвим утопило у стару антички књижевну културу, боље речено античка књижевна култура се утопила у нову хришћанску историјску реалност.) N. Ristović, 207.

³⁷¹ *Actus Apostolorum*, 4.13.

that he was “uncouth in speech, but not in knowledge.”³⁷² One must always keep in mind that Christianity was preached not only to educated people, but that most of the audience of the preacher was uneducated simple folk who did not care much for the heights of the literary language and the art of rhetoric; if for no other reason than that they were often difficult to understand.³⁷³ In order to make the Bible accessible and understandable to all the classes of Latin-speaking Christians, Jerome did not attempt to create a translation in the literary language, which he was more than capable of doing;³⁷⁴ he admitted even that he did not find such an unrefined language agreeable after the Latin classics.³⁷⁵

“What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What the Academy with the Church?”³⁷⁶ With these words Tertullian denied any connexion – or the need for one – between the old pagan culture and the nascent Christian culture. He rejected the education he himself had and the culture he had belonged to, while at the same time writing in the language of that culture, even using arguments of pagan philosophy: a science he rejected as false and dangerous. He nevertheless thought that it was important for children to be educated in secular schools (with precautionary measures) because there was no alternative. Adults, on the other hand, should avoid the Classics and the schools because of the idolatrous nature of pagan literature (he was, in essence, in accordance with Julian’s later decision).³⁷⁷ “It is easier not to teach letters than not to

³⁷² Ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ’ οὐ τῇ γνώσει. *Ad Corinthios* 2, 11.6.

³⁷³ A. Cameron, “Education,” 670–671.

³⁷⁴ A. Cameron, “Education,” 672.

³⁷⁵ Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Epistolae*, 22.30.

³⁷⁶ *Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid Academiae et Ecclesiae?* Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7.9. Quoted from *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, ed. François Refoulé (Paris: Du Cerf, 1957).

³⁷⁷ Cf. Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Epistolae*, 21.13; N. Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasicizam*, 114, 166; Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *De Idolatria*, 10.

learn them;”³⁷⁸ this opinion was shared by other Christian authors.³⁷⁹ However, Origen opened a grammar school c. 203,³⁸⁰ and there were other Christians with similar occupations.³⁸¹

The tradition of classical education remained the norm in late antiquity, despite the increasing number of Christian teachers and students.³⁸² Christianity almost in no way permeated the programmes of the schools; the greatest change in the schools is that there were now teachers and students who not only did not believe the tales of the gods and heroes, but disagreed with everything they felt was wrong in them; yet the moral aspect of the texts read in the schools (for instance, the moralistic lines from Menander or Terence) was not that different than Christian ethics.³⁸³ There was no change in the status of the teachers in secular schools; the only teachers who gained any respect were Christian teachers; like the rabbis among the Jewish faithful, Christian teachers were revered as people who can uncover the secrets of the Scriptures.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁸ *Facilius est litteras non docere quam non discere*. Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *De Idolatria*, 10.7. Quoted from *De Idolatria, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, ed. A. Reifferscheid and G. Wissowa. (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1890).

³⁷⁹ Cf. *supra*. See: A. H. M Jones, 1005.

³⁸⁰ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.2.15.

³⁸¹ See, for instance: Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.3.3, 7.32.6.

³⁸² A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1006.

³⁸³ Cf. N. Ristović, *Starohrišćanski Klasicismizam*, 202.

³⁸⁴ H-I. Marrou, *Histoire*, 448.

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