

## *Ēssē vīdētūr*: Occurrences of Heroic Clausulae in Cicero's Orations

Though extensive research has been done on Cicero's prose rhythm, appearances of the heroic clausula (concluding a phrase with the rhythmical sequence of dactyl plus spondee) in his oratorical works are consistently contested by modern scholars. Cicero asserts that rhythms too poetical should be avoided (*de Orat.* 3.175), and the heroic clausula creates a rhythm strongly evocative of epic poetry. This understanding has led scholars to believe that he does avoid the rhythm; further, it has had an impact on modern readings and emendations of his texts, as many editors emend to avoid the presence of the clausula. Zieliński, in his 1904 study of Cicero's prose rhythm, classes this rhythm among what he terms the *pessimae* clausulae, having found in his research that Cicero utilizes it rarely. Ciceronian scholars tend to agree that the author typically avoided this clausula (Wilkinson 1963: 157; Ramsey 2003: 21; Powell 2005). My argument is that Cicero did, in fact, occasionally favor the use of the heroic clausula, and especially used it in enhancing sentiments of sarcasm or mockery.

My investigation is based upon Zieliński's list of instances of the heroic clausula, incorporating adjustments to his approach made by scholars in the intervening century. An examination of particular instances makes it evident that coincidence of accent and ictus affirms the poetic rhythm of the clausula and thereby draws the attention of the listener (e.g. *Phil.* 13.27, *Quinct.* 28). There are, further, many convincing instances in which the heroic clausula appears to emphasize the context of his arguments, and adds to the present tone of mockery (e.g. *Quinct.* 79, *Phil.* 2.63).

One example will clarify my approach. At *Phil.* 2.63, Cicero ends a discussion of Antonius' base behaviors. It seems reasonable to assume that Cicero would have wanted to adorn his oration at this point to emphasize the invective before changing. I argue that he chose

to do so with a heroic clausula. Cicero follows his discussion of the vomiting with the phrase *veniamus ad splēndīdīōra*, “let us move to his more illustrious deeds.” Though modern scholars contest the manuscript reading of *splēndīdīōra* specifically due to the presence of the heroic clausula, the reading of the manuscripts must be correct. Cicero’s sarcasm implies that what he has previously been discussing may already be described as illustrious (*splendida*); the heroic clausula thus becomes mock-heroic, and heightens the sense of shamefulness in Antonius’ deeds. The intentional use of the clausula is further supported by the fact that, as with most clausulae, a sense break immediately occurs here as Cicero goes on to discuss Antony’s more despicable behaviors.

I conclude that appearances of heroic clausulae were occasionally favored by Cicero, especially when used to enhance sentiments of sarcasm or mockery. His earlier writings appear to utilize the clausula to broader purposes, and more prominently, than his later works. A greater acceptance of Cicero’s intentional use of the clausula will broaden modern readers’ comprehension of his rhetoric and simultaneously shed some light on the acceptance and emendation of the manuscript readings of his texts.

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