Cursus in Dante Alighieri's prose books *De vulgari eloquentia*, *De Monarchia* and *Convivio*

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Abstract: This paper examines the prose rhythm in Dante's Latin and Italian prose. The samples of Dante's Latin books *De vulgari eloquentia* and *De Monarchia* and the Italian book *Convivio* are analysed with the purpose of finding the incidence and patterns of prose rhythm. The method used in this paper is comparative-statistical analysis. The rhythm of classic prose was based on the quantity of syllables, while the medieval Latin prose rhythm was based on word stress and called *cursus*. Although the use of *cursus* was more popular in Latin prose, it can also be found elsewhere, including Italian prose. The analysis reveals that rhythmical sentences endings have a role in Dante's prose and that the *cursus* appear in his Latin works, as well as in his works in vernacular.

Keywords: prose rhythm, cursus, clausula, Dante

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study the prose rhythm in Dante's Latin and Italian prose using the method of comparative-statistical analysis. The term 'prose rhythm' is used in ancient rhetoric to denote rhythmical units at the end of sentences and clauses which in classic prose were called *clausulae*. The rhythm of classic prose was based on the quantity of syllables. In time, the system of *clausulae* was simplified and amongst quantity, word stress became significant. Medieval Latin prose rhythm was based exclusively on word stress and called *cursus.*

Besides Latin prose, *cursus* can also be found elsewhere, including Italian prose. As regards Dante and the use of *cursus* in his books in vernacular, there are differences in opinions whether, and to what extent Dante intentionally rhythmicized his clause endings.

In my research I have analysed the occurrence of *cursus* in Dante's Latin books *De vulgari eloquentia* and *De Monarchia*, and the Italian book *Convivio*

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(books I and II) with the purpose of finding the incidence and patterns of prose rhythm[1]. The sample of Latin books was formed from the first ten chapters in both books, and altogether 822 sentence- and clause-ends (474 endings from *De vulgari eloquentia* and 348 endings from *De Monarchia*) were analysed. In the case of *Convivio*, the sample was formed from all the sentence- and clause-ends in the first two books, altogether totalling 2810 endings.

In determining the rhythm schemes some problems of prosody became apparent. The syllabication of Italian words is not problematic when the syllable line is between a vowel and a consonant or between two consonants. But when there are several vowels in a row, the situation is more complicated, because the language then often allows two ways of syllabication (Menichetti 1993: 176–177). The situation is even more complicated when one of the juxtaposed vowels is an unstressed i or u, as in Italian those phonemes could be half-consonants. In case of doubt, Aldo Menichetti suggests to consult the dictionary *Dizionario d'ortografia e di pronunzia.* This recommendation has been followed within this analysis.

As regards to the Latin, it has been said that in medieval Latin accentuation appears often to be the same as in antiquity (Norberg 1968: 88). Medieval writers had learned their prosody and accentuation from classical models, but still occasional mistakes appear (Strecker 1999: 58, Norberg 2014: 31–49). Thus, for this analysis the rules of accentuation of the classical Latin have been followed.

2. Prose rhythm

2.1. Prose rhythm in ancient prose

As has been said before, the rhythm of classic prose was based on the quantity of syllables. The use of *clausulae* is seen, for example, in the works of Cato (*De Agri Cultura*), Gaius Gracchus, Livy, Sallust and, of course, Cicero. Cicero's preference of certain *clausulae* is evident. The most common rhythmical units used by Cicero are[2]:

    a. — ∪ — — — // — ∪ — — ∪ (for example, *illa tempestas*)
    cretic, spondee // cretic, trochee

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[1]   I have formerly analysed the occurrence of *cursus* in Dante's Italian books *Vita Nuova* (Mikkel 2011).

[2]   See Grillo 2015: 43–44.

b. — ∪ — — ∪ — // — — — — ∪ — (for example, *adiutus non debui*)
cretic, cretic // molossus, cretic
c. — ∪ — — ∪ — X // — — — — ∪ — X (for example, *Caesari de eius actis*)
cretic, ditrochee // molossus, ditrochee

It has been mentioned that the authors posterior to Cicero heavily preferred his cretic-trochee, dicretic and ditrochee *clausulae* (Oberhelman, Hall, 1984: 114).

Prose rhythm in the sense of *clausulae* has been discussed by Cicero mainly in the third book of the *De Oratore* and in the *Orator* 168–238. It has been noted how Cicero himself did not favour his recommended *clausulae*: for example the *clausula heroa* — ∪ ∪ — — , which seems to have been recommended by him in *Or.* 217, is quite rare in his extant works; and on the other hand, the "cretic + spondee" sequence (— ∪ — — —) is used very frequently, but was not mentioned by Cicero in his theoretical discussion of *clausulae* (Aili 1979: 9).

2.2. Prose rhythm in medieval Latin prose

In time, the system of *clausulae* was simplified and, amongst quantity, word stress became significant. This type of prose rhythm where the clausula is structured both accentually and quantitatively, has been defined by modern scholars as *cursus mixtus*[3]. The clausula is simultaneously one of the forms of the *cursus* and one of the standard metrical forms (cretic-spondee, dicretic, cretic-tribrach, ditrochee) (Oberhelman, Hall 1985: 216)[4]. *Cursus mixtus*, in turn, developed into medieval Latin prose rhythm that was purely based on word stress and was called *cursus* (Norberg 1968: 87, Clark 1910: 10–11).

There were four different rhythmic patterns in the late Middle Ages: d. *cursus planus* (Xx xXx, for example *audíri compéllunt*[5]), e. *cursus velox* (Xxx xxXx, for example *gaúdia pervveníre*), f. *cursus tardus* (Xx xXxx, for example *tímet impéria*) and g. *cursus trispondaicus* (Xx xxXx, for example *dóna sentiámus*, which was also treated as the second form of *cursus planus*). Rhythmical

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[3]   See, for example, the articles of Steven M. Oberhelman and Ralph G. Hall (1984, 1985) who have analysed the accentual prose rhythms in imperial Latin authors.

[4]   Oberhelman and Hall bring an example of the clausula *missa pervenerit* which is a *cursus tardus*, while metrically it is a dicretic (Oberhelman, Hall 1985: 216).

[5]   See Norberg 1968: 87.

units comprise at least two words and the last word must have at least three syllables. The number of syllables in the preceding word is not important, only the stress is relevant (Tunberg 1996: 115, Janson 1975: 10).

Comparing the medieval forms of *cursus* and *clausulae* used in classic prose, we can see that *cursus planus* is based on the *clausulae* "cretic + spondee" (Xx xXx and —∪———; for an example, see d. in 2.2 and a. in 2.1), *cursus velox* is based on the *clausulae* "cretic + ditrochee" (Xxx xxXx and —∪——∪—X; for an example, see e. in 2.2 and c. in 2.1), and *cursus tardus* is based on the *clausulae* "cretic + cretic" (Xx xXxx and —∪——∪—; for an example, see f. in 2.2 and b. in 2.1).

In medieval prose, a rhythm notion of *consillabicatio* was introduced – replacing the last word with two or three short words that include the same number of syllables. Moreover, a different way of describing *cursus* was used where the length of the last word was not considered important, but only the number of syllables between the last two stresses and after the stress of the last word is observed. Therefore, for example, next to the usual *cursus planus* are the forms X xxXx and Xxx Xx (Lindholm 1963: 40–51). In Latin prose, *cursus velox* was the most popular, and used often at the end of the sentences and also at the end of books (Toynbee 1966: 229). According to Toynbee, *cursus velox* is the most frequent *cursus* also in Dante's Latin book *Letters* (*Epistolae*) (ib. 242).

3. The occurrence of *cursus* in Dante

3.1. The occurrence of *cursus* in Dante's Latin books *De vulgari eloquentia* and *De Monarchia*

De vulgari eloquentia is an unfinished book of Dante and was probably composed between 1303 and 1305 (Malato 1999: 873). In the first book Dante discusses the relationship between Latin and vernacular and is searching for an illustrious vernacular in the Italian area.

The results of the analysis of *De vulgari eloquentia* are summarized in the following table:

Table 1. The occurrence of *cursus* in *De vulgari eloquentia*

	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	142	30.0%
Cursus trispondaicus	36	7.6%
Cursus velox	98	20.7%
Cursus tardus	65	13.7%
Miscellanea	133	28.1%
Total	474	100.0%

The results of the analysis show that the percentage of the *cursus* in this sample is 71.9%, there, *cursus planus* (30.0%) predominates, for example as in *natura permittit*, or *rationem portare.* Next most frequent, by occurrence, is *cursus velox* (20.7%), for example *avidissimi speculantur*, or *memorabili castigavit*, followed by *cursus tardus* (13.7%), for example *esse flexibile*, *pauci perveniunt*, and finally *cursus trispondaicus* (7.6%), *tantum sensuale*, and *ipsum naturantem.*

In my research I observed also the occurrence of *cursus* in the given sample by chapters, the summary of the analysis is in the following table:

Table 2. The occurrence of *cursus* (C.) in *De vulgari eloquentia* in different chapters

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea	Total
1.I	9	2	9	7	3	30
1.II	15	3	5	10	18	51
1.III	6	2	5	4	5	22
1.IV	14	3	7	9	17	50
1.V	9	1	3	4	6	23
1.VI	16	1	10	2	12	41
1.VII	21	5	18	12	10	66
1.VIII	13	5	15	2	11	46
1.IX	25	7	13	9	23	77
1.X	14	7	13	6	28	68
Total	142	36	98	65	133	474

Table 3. The occurrence of *cursus* in *De vulgari eloquentia* in different chapters (%%)

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea
1.I	30.0%	6.7%	30.0%	23.3%	10.0%
1.II	29.4%	5.9%	9.8%	19.6%	35.3%
1.III	27.3%	9.1%	22.7%	18.2%	22.7%
1.IV	28.0%	6.0%	14.0%	18.0%	34.0%
1.V	39.1%	4.3%	13.0%	17.4%	26.1%
1.VI	39.0%	2.4%	24.4%	4.9%	29.3%
1.VII	31.8%	7.6%	27.3%	18.2%	15.2%
1.VIII	28.3%	10.9%	32.6%	4.3%	23.9%
1.IX	32.5%	9.1%	16.9%	11.7%	29.9%
1.X	20.6%	10.3%	19.1%	8.8%	41.2%
Total	30.0%	7.6%	20.7%	13.7%	28.1%

If we take a closer look, we can see the accumulation of *cursus velox* in chapters I, VII, VIII – where the average percentage of *cursus velox* in this sample is 20.7%, the proportion of these in chapter I is 30.0%, in chapter VII 27.3% and in chapter VIII 32.6%. In the first chapter of *De vulgari eloquentia* Dante claims that he is going to discuss the theory of eloquence in vernacular and that vernacular language is natural, not artificial, and therefore more noble. In chapter VII he describes the building of the Tower of Babel and the separation of languages because of the impudence demonstrated by humankind. In chapter VIII Dante compiles a map of the geographical positions of the languages he knows dividing the European territory into three parts, with southern Europe again divided in three: *oc* language, *oïl* language and *sì* language. It can be said that those three chapters (introduction and intention to discuss the more noble kind of language, the separation of language into different idioms, composing a map of the geographical positions of the languages) are all very relevant in the first book of *De vulgari eloquentia*. Also, in chapter VIII the percentage of *cursus trispondaicus* is the highest (10.9%), while the average is 7.6%. In chapter V we can see the highest percentage of *cursus planus* (39.1%) and at the same time relatively low percentage of *cursus velox* (13.0%). We can see the accumulation of *cursus tardus* in chapter I (23.3%, while the average percentage is 13.7) and the lowest percentage of *cursus tardus* is in chapter VIII (only 4.3%).

    De Monarchia (or *Monarchia*) is a treatise on the relationship between secular authority (represented by the Holy Roman Emperor) and religious authority (represented by the Pope). There are many opinions about the date

of composition of this work which refer the years between 1307–1308 and 1321 (the death of Dante) (Malato 1999: 886). The work is composed of three books, in the first of which Dante affirms the need for a universal monarchy.

The data of the *cursus* in *De Monarchia* are summarized in the following table:

Table 4. The occurrence of *cursus* in *De Monarchia*

	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	82	23.6%
Cursus trispondaicus	28	8.0%
Cursus velox	54	15.5%
Cursus tardus	50	14.4%
Miscellanea	134	38.5%
Total	348	100.0%

The results of the analysis show that the percentage of the *cursus* in this sample is 61.5%, there, in turn, *cursus planus* (23.6%) is the most used, for example *interesse videtur*, and *esse producit*. The second most frequent form is *cursus velox* (15.5%), for example *naturaliter principari*, *hominum salutabat*, then *cursus tardus* (14,4%), for example *intellectus possibilis*, *ipse perficitur*, and the last in frequency is *cursus trispondaicus* (8.0%), for example *unam civitatem*, *esse animatum*.

The occurrence of *cursus* in *De Monarchia* was studied by chapters too; the summary of the data is given in the following table:

Table 5. The occurrence of *cursus* in *De Monarchia* in different chapters

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea	Total
1.I	8	0	7	9	5	29
1.II	8	3	7	5	19	42
1.III	14	4	9	8	37	72
1.IV	6	3	6	5	11	31
1.V	13	3	12	9	26	63
1.VI	5	4	0	4	9	22
1.VII	5	1	1	3	5	15
1.VIII	8	4	6	0	7	25
1.IX	9	4	3	0	7	23
1.X	6	2	3	7	8	26
Total	82	28	54	50	134	348

Table 6. The occurrence of *cursus* in *De Monarchia* in different chapters (%%)

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea
1.I	27.6%	0.0%	24.1%	31.0%	17.2%
1.II	19.0%	7.1%	16.7%	11.9%	45.2%
1.III	19.4%	5.6%	12.5%	11.1%	51.4%
1.IV	19.4%	9.7%	19.4%	16.1%	35.5%
1.V	20.6%	4.8%	19.0%	14.3%	41.3%
1.VI	22.7%	18.2%	0.0%	18.2%	40.9%
1.VII	33.3%	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%	33.3%
1.VIII	32.0%	16.0%	24.0%	0.0%	28.0%
1.IX	39.1%	17.4%	13.0%	0.0%	30.4%
1.X	23.1%	7.7%	11.5%	26.9%	30.8%
Total	23.6%	8.0%	15.5%	14.4%	38.5%

Closer study reveals the accumulation of *cursus velox* in chapters I (24.1%) and VIII (24.0%), while average percentage of *cursus velox* in this sample is 15.5%. Chapter I is a kind of introduction to the whole book and in chapter VIII Dante speaks about God: men are made in the image of God, but God is one. The first chapter also has the highest percentage of *cursus tardus* (31.0%). On the contrary, in chapter VIII the *cursus tardus* does not occur at all, the same stands for chapter IX (also 0.0%). The percentage of *cursus planus* is highest in chapter IX (39.1%) and *cursus trispondaicus* accumulates in chapters VI (18.2%), VIII (16.0%) and IX (17.4%) – the average percentage of *trispondaicus* is 8.0%. The analysis of this sample of *De Monarchia* does not allow us to conclude that *cursus velox* accumulates in more relevant chapters, or that it has some other semantic connections. In this case, further analysis would be needed.

The data of *De vulgari eloquentia* and *De Monarchia* are juxtaposed in the following table:

Table 7. The occurrence of cursus in *De vulgari eloquentia* and in *De Monarchia*

	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	224	27.3%
Cursus trispondaicus	64	7.8%
Cursus velox	152	18.5%
Cursus tardus	115	14.0%
Miscellanea	267	32.5%
Total	822	100.0%

3.2. The occurrence of *cursus* in Dante's *Convivio*.

Although the use of *cursus* was more popular in Latin prose, they can also be found elsewhere, including Italian prose. There are many opinions about whether and how much Dante used *cursus* in his Italian books, since for that purpose Dante's Latin books have been studied more systematically[6]. According to some authors, Dante was certainly familiar with the rules of *cursus*, and seemed to follow them where he found appropriate (Rajna 1932: 86).

Convivio is a work written between 1304 and 1307. This unfinished work of Dante consists of four *trattati* (books): a prefatory one, plus three books, each of which includes a *canzone* (long lyrical poem) and a prose allegorical interpretation of, or commentary on the poem that takes us in numerous thematic directions. The *Convivio* is a kind of vernacular encyclopaedia of the knowledge of Dante's time. It touches on many areas of learning, not only philosophy but also politics, linguistics, science and history (Malato 1995: 864–865). Book 1 explains why a book like the *Convivio* is needed and why Dante is writing it in the vernacular instead of Latin. Book 2 discusses allegory and Lady Philosophy (in connection with the poem *Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete*), and also treats an astronomical theme (number and nature of the heavens) and angeology.

The results of the analysis of *Convivio* (parts I and II) are summarized in the following tables, where the distinction is made between part one and part two:

Table 8. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part I

Convivio part I	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	352	30.8%
Cursus trispondaicus	220	19.2%
Cursus velox	121	10.6%
Cursus tardus	49	4.3%
Miscellanea	401	35.1%
Total	1143	100.0%

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[6]   See Malato 1999 who studies the regular use of cursuses in Dante Alihieri's books *De vulgari eloquentia, Monarchia, Questio de Aqua et Terra* and especially in *Epistolae.*

Table 9. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part II

Convivio part II	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	487	29.2%
Cursus trispondaicus	284	17.0%
Cursus velox	161	9.7%
Cursus tardus	75	4.5%
Miscellanea	660	39.6%
Total	1667	100.0%

Table 10. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part I and II

Convivio part I and II	Frequency	%%
Cursus planus	839	29.9%
Cursus trispondaicus	504	17.9%
Cursus velox	282	10.0%
Cursus tardus	124	4.4%
Miscellanea	1061	37.8%
Total	2810	100.0%

The analysis revealed that the percentage of the *cursus* in *Convivio* part one is approximately 65% and in part two approximately 60%, the most frequent form is *cursus planus* with the incidence of approximately 30%, for example *solamente privato*, and *alcuno difetto*. In both parts of *Convivio* the next in frequency is *cursus trispondaicus* (17.9%), for example *prima partorita*, *servo conoscente*, then *cursus velox* (10.0%), for example *essere al migliore*, *numero regolato*, and finally, *cursus tardus* has the smallest frequency (4.4%), for example *essa medesima*, *quinta e ultima*.

Summary of the analysis of the occurrence of *cursus* in part one and two by chapters in part one is showed in the following table:

Table 11. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part I in different chapters

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea	Total
1.I	32	18	12	6	37	105
1.II	33	24	11	5	26	99
1.III	22	16	7	1	27	73
1.IV	25	15	13	3	28	84
1.V	30	23	8	2	26	89
1.VI	16	11	12	5	18	62
1.VII	28	28	8	2	27	93
1.VIII	37	13	12	2	46	110
1.IX	23	11	4	5	17	60
1.X	28	19	6	4	26	83
1.XI	34	23	8	7	57	129
1.XII	23	11	9	5	38	86
1.XIII	21	8	11	2	28	70
Total	352	220	121	49	401	1143

Table 12. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part I in different chapters (%%)

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea
1.I	30.5%	17.1%	11.4%	5.7%	35.2%
1.II	33.3%	24.2%	11.1%	5.1%	26.3%
1.III	30.1%	21.9%	9.6%	1.4%	37.0%
1.IV	29.8%	17.9%	15.5%	3.6%	33.3%
1.V	33.7%	25.8%	9.0%	2.2%	29.2%
1.VI	25.8%	17.7%	19.4%	8.1%	29.0%
1.VII	30.1%	30.1%	8.6%	2.2%	29.0%
1.VIII	33.6%	11.8%	10.9%	1.8%	41.8%
1.IX	38.3%	18.3%	6.7%	8.3%	28.3%
1.X	33.7%	22.9%	7.2%	4.8%	31.3%
1.XI	26.4%	17.8%	6.2%	5.4%	44.3%
1.XII	26.7%	12.8%	10.5%	5.8%	44.2%
1.XIII	30.0%	11.4%	15.7%	2.9%	40.0%
Total	30.8%	19.2%	10.6%	4.3%	35.1%

If we take a closer look at the occurrence of *cursus velox* and *cursus tardus* in part one, we can see their abundance in one chapter – VI (19.4% and 8.1%). It is much higher than the average frequency on these two types of *cursus* (10.6% for *cursus velox* and 4.3% for *cursus tardus*). In chapters V–VII Dante explains the first reason for using vernacular and not Latin in *Convivio*. Throughout these three chapters the percentage of all types of *cursus* is also high – ca 71%. In chapter XIII (last chapter of book I) the percentage of *cursus velox* in also high – 15.7%, but the percentage of *tardus* in quite average – 2.9%. In the last chapter of book I Dante exalts the new language and predicts a future success to *lingua volgare*. Explaining the reasons of using vernacular instead of Latin and predicting a future success to vernacular are quite important parts in the first book of *Convivio* and the abundance of *cursus velox* in those chapters may not be incidental[7].

Book II is a kind of comment on the first poem in *Convivio* (*Voi che 'nten-dendo il terzo ciel movete)*. Summary of the analysis in part two could be seen in the following table:

Table 13. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part II in different chapters

	C. planus	C. trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea	Total
2.I	27	19	9	2	41	98
2.II	21	9	4	3	22	59
2.III	12	14	3	3	21	53
2.IV	33	12	3	4	45	97
2.V	32	19	15	5	39	110
2.VI	41	31	18	5	48	143
2.VII	27	21	10	2	48	108
2.VIII	26	18	10	5	36	95
2.IX	29	15	9	6	43	102
2.X	26	12	6	1	29	74
2.XI	30	16	9	3	33	91
2.XII	24	13	7	1	20	65
2.XIII	27	10	11	0	25	73
2.XIV	62	42	21	19	85	229
2.XV	38	20	15	14	76	163
2.XVI	32	13	11	2	49	107
Total	487	284	161	75	660	1667

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[7]   The analysis of Dante's other Italian prose book, *Vita Nuova*, also showed an accrual of *cursus velox* in certain relevant chapters (Mikkel 2011: 708).

Table 14. The occurrence of *cursus* in *Convivio* part II in different chapters (%%)

	C. planus	C.s trispondaicus	C. velox	C. tardus	Miscellanea
2.I	27.6%	19.4%	9.2%	2.0%	41.8%
2.II	35.6%	15.3%	6.8%	5.1%	37.3%
2.III	22.6%	26.4%	5.7%	5.7%	39.6%
2.IV	34.0%	12.4%	3.1%	4.1%	46.4%
2.V	29.1%	17.3%	13.6%	4.5%	35.5%
2.VI	28.7%	21.7%	12.6%	3.5%	33.6%
2.VII	25.0%	19.4%	9.3%	1.9%	44.4%
2.VIII	27.4%	18.9%	10.5%	5.3%	37.9%
2.IX	28.4%	14.7%	8.8%	5.9%	42.2%
2.X	35.1%	16.2%	8.1%	1.4%	39.2%
2.XI	33.0%	17.6%	9.9%	3.3%	36.3%
2.XII	36.9%	20.0%	10.8%	1.5%	30.8%
2.XIII	37.0%	13.7%	15.1%	0.0%	34.2%
2.XIV	27.1%	18.3%	9.2%	8.3%	37.1%
2.XV	23.3%	12.3%	9.2%	8.6%	46.6%
2.XVI	29.9%	12.1%	10.3%	1.9%	45.8%
Total	29.2%	17.0%	9.7%	4.5%	39.6%

In the book two of *Convivio* the incidence of all types of *cursus* is the highest in chapter XII – 69.2%, while the occurrence of *cursus velox* is highest in chapter XIII (15.1%). An average use of *cursus velox* in book two is 9.7%. In chapter XIII the percentage of *cursus tardus* is 0% (which is also significant) and the percentage of all types of *cursus* is 65.8%. *Cursus tardus* is used more frequently in chapters XIV (8.3%) and XV (8.6%), while the average use of *cursus* in this book is 4.5%. We should particularly mention the higher occurrence of *cursus velox* and *tardus* in the last chapters of this book.

3.3. Comparison of Latin and Italian texts

The following table juxtaposes the data of *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Monarchia*:

Table 15. The comparison of *cursus* in *Convivio, De vulgari eloquentia and Monarchia*

	Convivio	DVE	Monarchia
Cursus planus	29.9%	30.0%	23.6%
cursus trispondaicus	17.9%	7.6%	8.0%
cursus velox	10.0%	20.7%	15.5%
cursus tardus	4.4%	13.7%	14.4%
Miscellanea	37.7%	28.1%	38.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In table 16 we see compare the results of Latin and Italian samples:

Table 16. A comparison of *cursus* in Latin and Italian samples

	Convivio	DVE+Monarchia
Cursus planus	29.9%	27.3%
Cursus trispondaicus	17.9%	7.8%
Cursus velox	10.0%	18.5%
Cursus tardus	4.4%	14.0%
Miscellanea	37.7%	32.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The comparison shows us that in Latin samples the percentage of *cursus* is 67.5% and in *Convivio* 62.3%. As we can see, there is no significant difference between these two samples. The biggest difference concerns the use of *cursus velox* and *tardus*: in Latin samples the percentage of *cursus velox* is 18.5%, while in *Convivio* 10.0%. The percentage of *cursus tardus* in *Convivio* is 4.4% and in Latin works 14.0%. It can be said that the prosody of both language influences the use of *cursus*. In Latin, word stress may be on the penult or the third syllable from the end, and *cursus velox* comprises words with such stresses. Many vernacular words, instead, have the stress on the penultimate syllable, and in *Convivio* Dante used mostly *cursus planus* and *trispondaicus* which comprise words with stress on the penultimate syllable. In Latin samples, the percentage of *cursus planus* is quite similar to the result of *Convivio* – 27.3% in Latin and 29.9% in vernacular. But the use of *cursus trispondaicus* in Latin works is low, only 7.8%, as opposed to 17.9% in *Convivio*.

4. Conclusion

Based on this analysis, it can be said that Dante is not indifferent towards prose rhythm, and that the *cursus* appear in his Latin works, as well as in his works in vernacular. The importance of the rhythmical endings of sentences in Dante's prose can also be seen from the use of *cursus velox*. In Latin prose in general, *cursus velox* was the most popular and most often used. It was also considered as one of the most elegant *cursus* and used above all at the end of the sentences as well as, quite often, at the end of the book. *Cursus tardus* was also used more frequently in Latin prose than in Italian, probably for the prosodic reasons. Furthermore, the higher use of *tardus* in some parts of Dante's vernacular prose may indicate the importance of rhythm for Dante. The distribution of *cursus* is not homogeneous in different parts of his works. We can see, for example, the preference of *cursus velox* in some parts, and the absence of some type of *cursus* in several chapter (thus, in the sample of *De Monarchia* there are no *cursus tardus* at all in the chapters VIII and IX and no *cursus velox* in chapter VI). *Cursus planus* is used more or less equally in every part of his books, both in Latin and in vernacular.

The analysis of these samples indicates the accrual of *cursus velox* in the first chapters (in *De vulgari eloquentia* and in *De Monarchia*) or in the final chapters of the book (in both books of *Convivio*). In the final chapters of the second book of *Convivio* we can also see the higher use of *cursus tardus*. Analysing the sample of *De vulgari eloquentia*, we can point out an accumulation of *cursus velox* in some more relevant chapters in this book, the same can be said about the first book of *Convivio*.

In order to say more about the use of *cursus* in Dante, it would be necessary to study the works of some other contemporaries of Dante, and to compare the results. We hope it will be done in further research.

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