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Early Latin

Phonology – Part 2: Syllables, Prosody, Accent

Roadmap

- Syllables
- Prosody
- Accentuation

Two premises

- Most phonological features of Early Latin are typical of Latin phonology in general
- Degree of ‘linguistic anarchy’ (of Early Latin and beyond): great number of optional variants, different forms, reflecting different stages of language change, attested at times in the same text

Syllabification

- At the foundation of (Early) Latin prosody, accentuation, and metre

- Main distinctions
 - open vs. closed syllables
 - light vs. heavy syllables

Open vs. closed syllables

- Open syllable: syllable ending in vowel
 - > any syllable whose nuclear vowel is followed by a break (*ro.sa*)
 - by another vowel (*me.us*)
 - by a consonant + vowel (*fa.cis*)
 - by a sequence *muta cum liquida* (c/t/p/g/d/b + l/r) + vowel (*du.plex*)
- Closed syllable: syllable ending in consonant
 - > any syllable whose nuclear vowel is followed by a consonant and a break (*dic.tus*)
 - by two consonants other than *muta cum liquida* (*dic.tus*)
 - in separate domains, such as after preverbs (e.g. *ob.reptare* BUT *pro.bro*)

Basic Constants and phonotactics

- Syllable consists minimally of one vowel or diphthong
- Intervocalic consonants always occupy the onset of the second syllable
- A word-initial onset can have up to 3 C, but sequences CCC(V) only if first two CC are *s* + voiceless plosive (e.g. *Strabo* but **sr-C*, **sf-* etc.)
- Intersyllabic consonantal clusters are divided into two syllables (except in *muta cum liquida* sequence, and artificial contexts), and respect sonority sequencing (e.g. *spo.pon.di* < **spo.spon.di*)
- Coda can have up to 3 C, but sequences VCCC only if final 2 CC are voiceless plosive + *s* (e.g. *urbs* [urps]); violation of sonority sequencing tolerated (e.g. *lux*)

Light vs. heavy syllables

- Light syllable: open syllable ending in a short vowel

fă.cis

- Heavy syllable:

open syllable ending in a long vowel (*fē.ci*)

closed syllable with short vowel (*făc.tus*)

closed syllable with long vowel (*dūc.tus*)

[Latin admits superheavy syllables (e.g. CVVC, CVVCC): e.g. *caus.sa*, *lau.dāns*; but cf. CIL 1.2924 *causa ioudicetur*; standard perfect form *hausī* (> **haur-sī* vs. *gěro* – *gěssi*)]

Sandhi

- Word-final syllable normally treated as it were part of a single prosodic unity with the following word, for syllabification purposes

e.g. *ē.t a.liud* ([˘])

et . dicas ([˘])

stabili.tā s.camna ([˘]) [BUT cf. *Rud.* 198 *eri.lē .scelus*]

- Vowel of an open syllable followed by another vowel is shortened (*vocalis ante vocalem corripitur*)

e.g. *dē.amo* for *dē.amo*

- or can be merged with the following vowel (*synizesis*)

e.g. *dēorum* for *dēorum*

Sandhi

- Word-final syllable ending in vowel or vowel + *m* preceding a word beginning in vowel is prosodically (but not phonetically) silent (elision)

e.g. Ter. *Eun.* 991 is ***pr(o) ill(o) eunuch(o) ad Thaid(em) hanc deductus est***

- Blocking of vowel merging:
 - diaeresis (with diphthongs)
 - hiatus (e.g. Ter. *An.* 817 *o – optume hospes*)
 - > with shortening of first vowel: prosodic hiatus (Pl. *Cas.* 725 *tū – āmas*)

Early Latin Accentuation

- Pre-literary Latin: an intensive, protosyllabic accent?
 - > weakening of word-internal (atonic?) short vowels
e.g. *căn-o* (accented *cáno*) becomes *cĭn-o* in *cecĭni*, *concĭno* (tonic -> atonic?)
BUT *făci-o* (accented *fáció*) becomes *confício* in Early Latin [originally *cónficio*?])
- (Early) Latin:
 - if the penultimate syllable is heavy, the accent falls on it (*conféctus*, *confécci*), if the penultimate syllable is light the accent falls on the previous one, if any (*confícĭo*)

Early Latin Accentuation

- Disyllables always accented on the penultimate syllable (*pŭto*, *cĕdo*), except in case of syncopated words (e.g. *istŭc* < *istu*ce, not *ístuc*).
- Monosyllables: accented (e.g. *dŭc*, *vís*) or clitic (e.g. (*ŭsus*) *sit*), at times unverbated and/or reduced (*fáctumst* = *factum est*)
- Peculiar accent shift with some clitics -> *'ro.să* > *ro'săque*
- Prosodic units with (atonic) disyllables (e.g. Pl. *Curc. 477 supra lácum*)
- A melodic accent ('musical', 'chromatic'), as argued by ancient grammarians, or intensive stress as (presumably) in archaic period?

Accent, phonology, quantity

- Influence of accent on the phonology and quantity of atonic syllables
 - syncope of word-internal vowels:
e.g. *dextera, sinistra* vs. *dextra, sinistra*; both forms attested in Early Latin
 - shortening of final vowels
e.g. *possīt, matēr, erāt* vs. *possit, matĕr, erāt*; both forms attested in Early Latin
 - syncope of final vowels
e.g. *face, duce* vs. *fac, duc*; both forms attested in Early Latin

Iambic shortening

- Treatment as two light syllables (pyrrhic) of a iambic sequence (light + heavy)
- Iambic by morphology (e.g. *căuě* for *căvē*) or sandhi (e.g. *ăpűd me* for *ăpud me*)
- Internal polysyllable (e.g. *uőlűptati* for *uőlűptati*), coincide with a disyllabic word (e.g. *căue*), or spread over two words, of which first always monosyllable, lexically (e.g. *in illis*) or after elision (e.g. *tűb(i) ęsse*)
- Attested in all EL dramatic verse, also in Lucilius' iambo-trochaics; origin in speech, related to phrasal-stress patterns (only requirement is atonicity of shortened syllable).

(BUT spread and extension in poetry as a metrical license?)

Thank you!