

Latin morphophonology

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Preface

My intentions for this monograph are threefold.

Beyond the narrow scope of Latin, this study investigates the structure of geminate consonants, long monophthongs, and diphthongs, and specifically the interaction between geminate consonant and vowels, something which has received surprisingly little attention. Furthermore, this grammar provides some clues into the nature of non-derived environment blocking and lexical exceptionality, which, in the author's opinion, can only be studied in the context of a relatively exhaustive phonological grammar. Classical Latin, as a well-documented dead language, provides the ideal tool for investigating these questions: a large, carefully edited closed corpus.

This monograph is structured in a somewhat different fashion than is typical for phonological grammars. After introducing the material and theoretical assumptions, chapter §?? provides a “tutorial” in Latin phonology, introducing all but few phonological processes and summarizing the phonological analysis. The following 5 chapters are dedicated to clarifying and motivating the analysis in greater detail. The final 3 chapters apply the analysis to show that the analysis generates the inflectional and derivational paradigms of Classical Latin.

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Part I

Preliminaries

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book attempts to provide a relatively comprehensive account of the synchronic phonology of Classical Latin, by which we mean the literary language of the Roman Empire from the earliest reasonably well-attested author (the dramatist, Plautus, born 254 BCE) to the time of Constantine the Great and the Christianization of the Empire. The manuscripts handed down to us include scripts for comedies and dramas, public oratories, poems both frivolous and epic, histories, legal documents, agricultural manuals, and even descriptive grammars. The language of this period was written in a shallow orthography which allows the careful observer to deduce much about the pronunciation of a “high” form of Latin during this era, and evidence from contemporary grammatical descriptions, graffiti, and reflexes in Romance fill in many of the details. For interpreting the grapheme-to-phone mapping, I will primarily rely on the evidence put forth by ?. However, the handbook of ? has served as a useful source of generalizations both synchronic and diachronic.

This is due to my own conviction that producing a “correct” description of Latin is only of scientific interest insofar as it reveals the possibilities of the human language facility. Whatever Plautus must have known as native speaker of Classical Latin must to a first approximately, also have been known by any other typically-developing infant with no hearing impairments born under similar circumstances. This is not to say that all who call themselves linguists should focus solely on X, but that this is a necessary if the products of linguistic analysis can be said to be more or less “correct” rather than more or less aesthetically pleasing.

1.1 Data sources

1.1.1 Wordlist

1.1.2 Scanned poetry

Pseudolus, a comic play written by Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254–184 BCE).

The Aeneid, an epic poem written by Publius Vergilius Maro (“Virgil”) between 29 BCE and his death 10 years later; it was published immediately after the author’s death with only minimal editorial meddling.

1.2 Transcription

1.3 Theoretical assumptions

1.3.1 Prosodic representations

1.3.2 Rule application, ordering, opacity

is that the LEVEL ORDERING (?) is inconsistent with the relevant data. This fact which has been recognized for decades (?) but has unfortunately been tragically ignored.

1.4 Substance in phonology

To deny that one can study the phonology in this way would be equivalent to denying that one can study a computer program independent of

I do not assume, therefore, that the underlying segment indicated /k/ is linked to any auditory or articulatory substance; whatever the internals of /k/, it is simply an abbreviation for the mental entity which, barring further complications, which is realized as a complete voiceless velar closure/release superimposed on a pulmonic XXX; as it is conventionally known, [k]. While it is not implausible that such mental entity /k/ has additional “substance”, there is of yet no compelling evidence that any additional details of articulatory or acoustic realization are accessible during grammatical computation.

1.5 The role of diachrony

In many cases, there are established pre-historical “causes” for the details of a phonological pattern in Classical Latin. In general, I have chosen not to refer to these diachronic facts except to provide references to the appropriate handbooks, or to draw an illuminating analogy between the diachronic and synchronic patterns. It has been clear at least since Saussure that diachronic and synchronic relationships have distinct inputs and cannot really be compared; the former consists of a relation between the outputs of “earlier” and “later” grammars, whereas the latter consists of input-output relationship within a single grammar.

Chapter 2

A tutorial in Latin morphophonology

This chapter provides a tutorial overview of major phonological processes in

2.1 Consonantal alternations

2.2 Vocalic alternations

2.3 Stress assignment

2.4 Cliticization

Part II

The grammar

Chapter 3

Consonants

3.1 Inventory

3.2 Geminate consonants and degemination

3.3 Cluster simplification

3.4 Devoicing

3.5 Rhotacism

Chapter 4

Vowels

4.1 Inventory

4.2 Diphthongs and vowel-glide alternations

4.3 Shortening

4.4 Truncation

4.5 Epenthesis

4.6 Lowering

Chapter 5

Phonotactics

?

5.1 A generative theory of phonotactics

5.2 Onsets

5.3 Codas and rimes

5.4 Long-distance co-occurrence restrictions

Chapter 6

Clitics

6.1 Inventory

6.2 Clitization and opacity

Chapter 7

Quantity and word stress

7.1 Weight determination

7.2 The foot

7.3 Subminimal lengthening

Part III

Applications

Chapter 8

Declension

8.1 The first declension

The vast majority of first declension nouns are feminine, though there are a large number of exceptions. Many of these exceptions have been borrowed from the Greek first declension (e.g., *idiōta* ‘idiot’).

8.2 The second declension

8.3 The third declension

8.3.1 Coronal-final utter stems

8.3.2 *i*-stems

8.3.3 Irregulars

8.4 The fourth and fifth declensions

8.5 Syncretisms

Chapter 9

Conjugation

9.1 Theme vowels

9.2 Inflectional affix phonology

Chapter 10

Derivation

10.0.1 Prefixation

10.0.2 Diminutives

10.0.3 Opacity to medial degemination

10.0.4 The *Lēx Mamilla*

10.0.5 Frequentives

10.0.6 Denominal adjectives

10.0.7 Deverbal agents