Latin Iambic and Cretic Shortening Revisited

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1. Feet in Plautus comedies

Lindsay (1922: 287) Numeri innumeri

Iambic verse			Trochaic verse
Iamb		(L**H**)	Trochee (**H**L)
Spondee	(HH)	(HH)	(HH)
Tribrach	(LLL)	(LLL)	(LLL)
Anapest	(LLH)	(LLH)	(LLH)
Dactyl	(HLL)	(HLL)	(HLL)
Proceleusmatic	(LLLL)	(LLLL)	(LLLL)
		ictus final **H) or L**L)	ictus initial (**H** or (**L**

2. A short fragment: alternating trochaic septenarius and iambic octonarius

Captivi, opening of act 4, Ergasilus

T-7 Iúppiter Supréme, sérvas me meásque áug(e)s opes,
768 (**H** L)(**H** L)(**H** H) (**H** H) (**H** L)(**H** L) (**H**   L L)

T-7 máxumas- *òpimi-tátes-   òpipa-rásque óffers míhi
769 (**H**   L   L) (**L**HL)(**H**L) (LLL)(**H** L) (**H** H) (**L** H-)

I-8 láudem, lúcrum, lúdum, jócum, fèsti-vitá-tem férias
770 (H   **H**) (L   **H**) (H   **H**) (L **H**) (HH)(L**H**)(H **H**)(L**H**)

I-8 pómpam, pénum, pòta-ti ó-nes sàtu-ritátem gáudium   dactyl (HLL) I, (HLL) T
771 (H   **H**)   (L   **H**) (HH)(L**H**) (**H** LL)(L**H**)(H   **H**)(L**H**)

T-7 néc quoiquam hómini sùpplicáre núnciam certumst míhi
772 (**H**   L   L)   (L L L) (**H**L)(**H**L) (**H** L   L) (**H** H) (**L**H-)
                                   núnc certumst mihi   Goetz and Schoell 1904
                                   (**H**   H)(**H**   L H-)

I-8 nam vel prodésse amíco póssum vel in-imícum pérdere
773 (H   **H**) (H   **H**)(L L**H**)(H **H**) (**H** L   L)(L**H**)(H   **H**)(LL)

I-8 ita hic me amòe-nitáte amóena amóenus òne-rávit díes   tribrach (LLL) I, (LLL) T
774 (LL**H**) (L   L **H**)(L**H**)(LL **H**)(L L **H**) (L LL)(HH) (L**H**)   Goetz and Schoell T-7

T-7 síne sácris *hèredi-tátem súm aptus ècfer-tíssumam
775 (**H**L)(**H**H) (**H**HL) (**H**H) (**L**   L   L) (**H**H)(**H** L H-)   H- syllaba anceps

3. Quantitative verse, not accentual verse, but still a regard for stress/accent.

Some indications of the desire to avoid a clash between stress and ictus

-1. Lindsay (1922: 18-22) *Ego eo* 'I am going' is in an iambic line always (*ego eo*) and always (*eo ego*) in a trochaic line.
Stress is on the verb and the two different word orders allow to reconcile stress and ictus.
The proceleusmatic (LLLL) in an iambic line has ictus on the third syllable (LL**L**L) (*ego éo*), but on the first syllable (**L**LLL) (*éo ego*) in a trochaic line.

-2. Lindsay (1922: 92, 107) the proceleusmatic foot is a favourite foot of Plautus' senarii, but a proceleusmatic word is impossible as an iambic foot. A word like *facilius* 'more easy' cannot be an iambic foot, given that the ictus would fall on the pre-final syllable. (*facilius*) in an iambic line would be *facilíus* (LL**L**L) in a trochaic line *fácilius* (**L**LLL).

Proceleusmatic words do occur in iambic lines, but then always divided over feet. Two examples from the Captivi:
33; I-6   Recon|ciliar(e) |ut fáci|lius| posset| domum   (H LL)
              HH   LLH   H LL LH   HH   L H
409; T-7   Et mea| opera| si hinc| rebito|, |fáciam ut| fáciat| fácilius   (LLLL)
                           or (Lindsay Fourth Paeon without shortening (LLLH)

Search (www.brepolis.net) limited to Plautus gives 22 occurrences of the word *facilius*, a search limited to Ovid and Virgil not a single one: LLLX is an impossible sequence in a classical hexameter the only feet allowed being (HH) or (HLL)

-3. A tribrach word or word ending (LLL) or a dactylic word or word-ending (HLL) must not be (is not) a foot of an iambic line: clash between ictus and accent (**L**LL) and (**H**LL).

-4. Iambic words with stress on the first syllable, like *ămō*, *ămant*, *ămor*, quite common in Latin, fit difficultly in Plautus lines: the iambic and trochaic metres do not allow for an ictus on a light syllable followed by a heavy syllable **L**H.
In the feet above, ictus on a light syllable is always followed by a light syllable. Iambic tribrach (L**L**L), dactyl (H**L**L), proceleusmatic (LL**L**L) and trochaic tribrach (**L**LL), anapest (**L**LH) and proceleusmatic (**L**LLL).

These iambic words do not fit because there is a desire to reconcile ictus and accent.
In Classical poetry where ictus and accent are reconciled only in the last two feet of the hexameter, but not in the first four, iambic words do fit, like *cănō* in :

ārmă vĭ|**rūm**quĕ **că**|**nō** Trō|**iaē** quī| **prī**mŭ|s ă|**b** ō**rī**s

4. Iambic words, long vowels and Brevis Brevians

Iambic words that do not fit:

-1) are placed in a position where the final syllable becomes the stressed syllable:
bónae → *bonáeque*, (*itáque*, *musáque*).

-2) final vowel can be elided: *cav(e) n(e) eas* 'Beware don't go!' [ká.we.n(e).e.as] →
[káw.ne.as] sounded as *Cauneas* '(Caunean) figs' (Lindsay 1894: 169; Mester 1994: 13, fn.16;
Fortson 2008: 177)

-3) are placed at the beginning or end of a line (*mihi* 769, 772; *dies* 774 above)

-4) are placed before other stressed words *citō cúrrit* 'runs quickly' *calē fácere* 'to make warm',
modō véni 'I just arrived'.

-5) final vowel is shortened, also before -t, -r *modō* → *modŏ*, *cavē* → *cavĕ*, *amāt* → *amăt*, *amōr*
→ *amŏr*

This shortening is traditionally referred to as Brevis Brevians: a short vowel, L, shortening a
long vowel, H, in an iambic LH word. Iambic Shortening (IS) for (LH) words and Cretic
Shortening CS for (HLH) words (*dēsĭnō* → *dēsĭnŏ* 'to cease'). Cretic Shortening in Plautus is
rare, due to limitations of dactylic words in Plautus (**3**. -3 above, Mester 1994: 33, fn.41).

Plautus scanned *modo* as either *mŏdō* or *mŏdŏ*, with the Pyrrhic (LL) the rule and the Iamb
(LH) the exception (Lindsay 1922: 33-36).
Shortening of these final vowels is assumed to a have started in the above 4) context *cale facere*
etc. with first shortening and later syncope (*călēfácere > călĕfácere > calfácere* (Quintillien's
time (Lindsay 1894: 202). Adverbs like *male*, *bene* already had at Plaute's time invariably a
short final vowel *probe* a long one (frequency of *malefactum*, *benefactum*).

Tendency to shorten **every** final long vowel (Lindsay 1922: 42 and 1894: 207, Niedermann
1931: 71-71); final ā in *terra*, *mensa* had shortened before Plautus' time, final ō *mandō* 'to
order', *currō* after Virgil's time (*modo* as adverb always with short final ŏ, *modo* (ablative of
modus) always with a long final ō in Virgil). calcār → cal.căr, ănĭ.māl → ănĭmăl

5. Iambic shortening and closed syllables

Short scansion of the second closed syllable in words like *vòluptátem* has traditionally been taken as evidence for shortening of the second syllable *vŏlŭp-tátem* and as the effect of IS shortening word-internally. Similar to *cĭtŏ cúrrit*, *călĕ fácere*, *mŏdŏ véni* etc.

Foot-based (foot improving) analyses. Existing OT (and pre-OT) analyses (parallel OT Prince and Smolensky 2004, serial OT McCarthy, Pater and Pruitt 2016) essentially follow Mester 1994 in providing a word-based stress account in which IS and CS are analysed as ways of improving foot structure.

McCarthy, Pater and Pruitt (2016) analyse cretic *dēsĭnō* shortened to *dēsĭnŏ* 'to cease' by allowing a trochaic (ˌLH) foot, although it never appears in Latin surface forms, as an intermediate foot in the harmonically serial evaluation. The intermediate (ˌLH) foot is then turned into a (ˌLL) foot (with a shortened vowel), at the next round of evaluation. For the derivation of surface (ˈde:)(ˌsi.no), the following steps are assumed: /de:sino:/ → de:.si.no: → (ˈde:)si.no: → (ˈde:)(ˌsi.no:) → (ˈde:)(ˌsi.no). IS word-finally and word-internally basically works the same.

1- Both the parallel and the serial analysis (as well as Mester 1994) predict shortening to take place in a pre-main stress LHL or LHH sequences as well. In the serial analysis, for instance, the pre-main stress sequence is optimally analysed as (ˌLH)σ and then further improved by vowel shortening to surface as (ˌLL)σ.

Vowel shortening in Pre-classical Latin was, however, restricted to final vowels. Word-internally, heavy syllables with a long vowel (Lindsay 1922: 45 (6 words), Allen 1973: 182. Mester 1994) were rarely shortened, closed heavy syllables only if they were immediately followed by main stress (cf. Allen, 1973: 181 and Lindsay, 1894: 201-202).

No shortening in pre-main stress LHσ- **Long** vowels
Captivi
I-8   ita hic me ămōe-nĭtáte amóena amóenus one-rávit díes
774   (LL**H**) (L L **H**)(L**H**)(LL **H**)(L L **H**) (L **LL**)(H**H**) (L**H**)

T-7   quód genus ílli est únum póllens átque hŏnōrāt-tíssumam
278   (**H**   L L) (**H**LL) (**H**H) (**H** H) (**H** L L)(**H**H)(**H** L H)

Miles Gloriosus (Lindsay 1922: 67, 86)
I-7   Istuc curáv(i) ut ŏpīn-ĭ-ó-ne íl-liu' púl-chrior
770   (H **H**) (L**H**)   (L L **H**)(L**H**)(L**H**)(LL **H**)(L **H**)

No shortening in pre-main stress LHσ- **Closed** syllables
Poenulus
I-7   Siquidem Àntidámai quáeris ădoptā-tícium
1045   (L **H**) (L **H**)(L **LL**)(L **H**) (L L**H**)(H**H**)(L**H**)

I-6   Demárcho ítem ips(e) fúit ădoptā-tícius
1060   (H **H**) (H **L** L) (H   **LL**) (L**H**)(H**H**)(L**H**)

2- Fortson 2008: 177 "the heavier the heavy syllable, the less likely it is to be shortened." Words ending in –ns or –x almost never undergo shortening. However, in the foot-based analyses LH words, regardless of how heavy the heavy syllable is, will be treated alike, which "invalidates the main theoretical motivation […] of the supposed repair strategy." Also, words with lexicalized IS, *male*, *bene* etc., are "in the main *unstressed* words […] thus the invocation of the stress contour of the word or sequence [..] to explain the shortening is open to serious question" ibid. 185.

3-The result of shortening a closed syllable

Syllables closed by a geminate consonant could scan as short (*supĕllectilis* 'utensils', *sed ĕccam*, *et ĭlle*, (the first syllable of *iste* and *ille* being the most frequent one to be shortened (Fortson 2008: 194)), but the geminate remained a long consonant (Lindsay 1922: 45). Foot-improvement implies the loss of a mora (violation of MAX-μ) and predicts a short singleton consonant.

Mester 1994: 18, fn. 22 "requiring perhaps a formal distinction between geminates and ambisyllabicity".
Prince and Smolensky 2004: 78, fn. 42. in a way similar to (Hayes 1995: 301) a two-layer moraic representation (two moras for length, one for weight).

However, a two-layer representation becomes suspect given that degemination did exist: *ofella* and *mamilla* diminutives of *mamma* 'breast'and *offa* 'bite'

4- Shortening is not limited to words.
Consider *súm aptus* from line 775 above; shortening **after** a stressed syllable
    sŭm ăptŭs ècfer-tíssumam
775   (**L** L L) (**H**H)(**H** L H-)

Both words in isolation: (súm) and (áp)(tus) have stress on the first syllable and consist of only heavy syllables. Pronounced together as [su. map. tu. (sec.fer)] the first syllable becomes the brevis required for the shortening of the heavy second syllable: LHL → LLL ([sú.map.tu(s)] → [sú.măp.tu(s)]). The foot-improving, word-based stress analyses can never describe this. In McCarthy, Pater and Pruitt (2016), an intermediate foot (ˈLH), with main stress on the L syllable is only allowed in disyllabic words, like *ămō*, to avoid a violation of NONFIN (MAIN-σ), the main stressed syllable may not be final. (If it were allowed, words like *voˈluptas* would incorrectly become *ˈvoluptas*)

Shortening **before** a stressed syllable. Amphitruon: *ab exércitu* (Lindsay 1922: 86)

I-6   Nunc hodi(e)Amphitruo veni-et huc ăb ĕxércĭtu
140   (H   **L** L) (H   **L** L) (L**H**)(H**H**) (L L **H**)(L**H**)

Here again, an intermediate (ˌLH) foot on *ab ex* is excluded, given that the preposition *ab* is unstressed. In sum, shortening is not a word-based phenomenon.

Lindsay (1922: 86) "In Roman talk *exercitu* did indeed begin with a spondee, but not when it followed the Preposition *ab*, etc. In that phrase it rather began with an Iambus, just as the phrase *cito currit* with a Pyrrhic".

For vowels this makes sense, if *cito, modo* could be pronounced with a final long or short vowel and be scanned as an iamb or as a pyrrhic, it makes sense to say that in one case they were pronounced as an iamb and in the other as a pyrrhic. But this doesn't make any sense for closed syllables. How can [ek.ser] in exercitu be pronounced differently?

If instead of shortening, one simply assumes (in a way in line with Lindsay 1922: 40 "the syllable that suffers shortening must be an *unaccented* syllable (i.e according to sentence accentuation). *That is a necessary condition*..") that heavy closed syllables, if they were unstressed in a word or word-group (*vòlŭptátem*, *apud ménsam*, *voluptás mea*, but never *volŭptas* alone (Lindsay 1922: 41), were allowed to be scanned as short, but did not suffer any phonological shortening, all the above problems simply disappear.

In conclusion: the only shortening there was in Latin, was shortening of final vowels. There was no shortening of closed syllables or geminates, unstressed closed syllables were metrically licensed to be (optionally Lindsay 1894: 202) scanned as short. One expects them in other contexts as well. Two cases of heavy, unstressed, word-internal syllables (with long vowels) scanned as short:

T-7   síne sácris   hērēdĭ-tátem súm aptus ècfer-tíssumam
775   (**HL**)(**H**H) (**H**LL) (**H**H) (**L** L L) (**H**H)(**H** L H-)
                    (**HH**L)
Miles Gloriosus
I-6   me fuiss(e) excordam caecum incōgĭtābilis
543   (L **H**)   (HL**H**) (H **H**)(L **H**)(LL**H**) (L**H**)
                                (**H**L**H**)

References to be provided