

The Long and Short of It:

Defense of Late Latin Poetry for Historical Romance Linguistics

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Abstract

At the beginning of the fifth century AD, the Latin language, along with its empire, had already begun to fracture into new dialects, just as its empire broke among new districts.

Despite the fact that there were numerous texts written at this time, historical linguists have dismissed many of them as unhelpful in reconstructing the language spoken by various groups and understanding the divergence of dialects. However, these overlooked texts may provide fodder for historical linguists as the comparative method is refined.

The *Psychomachia*, published in 405, was widely read by Medieval Christians and has recently become rejuvenated as a topic for discussion. Despite this, translations are not widely available. I have translated this text in order to practice the translation process, but also to aid in my close attention to the text. By glossing and scanning the meter of the *Psychomachia* I examine it for evidence of the language change proposed to have occurred during its composition and to search for clues to the writer's primary language. I am particularly concerned with vowel length, which might have been lost by this time.

Framing the text in the linguistic understanding for the fifth century has proved the most difficult aspect of my thesis, and one which took over as the focal point. This is because historical Romance linguists do not agree on a framework for the state of the language.

Assuming Prudentius spoke Late Latin or Vulgar Latin, how might he have written in Classical Latin, which requires a subtle understanding of syllable length? The scansion shows no errors in the meter. This may show that vowel length had not been overtaken by stress yet. The other possibility is that he memorized and meticulously applied his knowledge of outdated forms.

1. Introduction

Jozsef Herman wrote in his book *Vulgar Latin* that, “The texts that essentially follow the traditionally prescribed forms of Latin [...]are of little interest to a linguist (120).” To some extent, his opinion is ineluctable; at some point in history, Latin as a written text was no longer an example of a spoken language. Indeed, some question if the written ever truly reflected a spoken language. To be sure, written language today rarely exemplifies the vernacular. For Herman and other historical and comparative linguists graffiti is preferred to Augustine and low-brow satire to Ovid because they are more likely to reflect how the language was actually spoken among the populace.

But it is precisely the prescriptive nature of Late Latin writing that interests me, specifically the meticulous formation that poetry entails. It may be more straightforward to examine texts that reveal another register, but when well-formed compositions are overlooked, so are other important arguments. It is my belief that the very existence of the texts demands consideration. The more erudite writers must have spoken some dialect of Latin, whether it was a proletarian tongue or an elite intellectual cant which approximated the classical idiom. The writers at the time must have been writing in a mode that was completely alien to them, or they spoke some form of what they wrote. The line may have been blurred between their spoken and written modes, meaning that the two influenced one another. However, such a language may be too complex to ever reconstruct. Even if the common stance stands (that the written language bears no close resemblance to the vernacular), what does it mean that they were able to write in an outdated mode? In my thesis project I attempted to answer that question, but often I was left with more questions. However, these new questions prove that the problem is not so simple as to

warrant the explanation given in some textbooks and classes.

I first give background in Classical Latin morphology as well as an example text from a contentious time in the history of Latin. After providing context from other scholars I display how and why the debate on Latin is still fraught with contention. Then I attempt to collate the two sides of this project by re-examining that text with this in mind, examining the scansion along with the prescriptive agility of the writing. What I found was intriguing to me, but not conclusive. The text I chose to examine is a favorite of mine, but it is also ideal for scrutiny due to its time period, relative obscurity, and intricate mastery of the language. It is the *Psychomachia* by Prudentius, published in 405 CE, a time at which the language spoken was on the cusp of diverging into new dialects across Europe. Most importantly, the *Psychomachia* is a poem, some one thousand lines, written in dactylic hexameter, an epic meter reserved for the most elect subject matter. I examine the scansion and accentuation while only mentioning the syntax when it is notable. Since poetry requires more attention to the language and its aural properties than prose, it is possibly the most prescriptive example possible. Thus it is also the least modern, most difficult, and thus least likely to be made.

For how might Prudentius have guaranteed an audience when just “a few decades after the composition of the *Psychomachia*, the intensive literary knowledge required for its full appreciation (especially vis-a-vis the use of Vergil) had become practically unattainable” (Smith, 1976: 10). Although Smith is concerned with the audience's ability to grasp the intertextual content, he should also worry that his audience will not understand the text itself due to the changing morphology and especially phonology; one of the major issues with the history of Latin is when vowels list the distinction according to length. Assuming Prudentius spoke Late Latin or

Vulgar Latin, how might he have written in Classical Latin, which requires a subtle understanding of syllable length? If the scansion shows that he understood the meter as a native speaker would have, it may show that vowel length had not been overtaken by stress yet. There are alternatives however: that he was a prodigy who memorized and meticulously applied his knowledge of the outdated forms; that the poem was retroactively corrected; or that he was indeed influenced by his own language and the text contains aberrations from Classical phonology.

Many linguists have already begun to study not only the metalinguistic passages of Augustine and Jerome, but the structure and aberrations of 'educated' fourth century prose texts as a whole. I believe that an extension to studying the poetry of the time is next. Just as Prudentius has been overlooked by medievalists and classicists in lieu of his prose philosophical contemporaries, his poetry has been overlooked by historical linguists. This may be precisely because searching for patterns or aberrations from a pattern in poetry is more difficult due to its strict guidelines in its composition.

Prudentius is the last great Latin poet until the twelfth century, and the last of those who successfully wrote in the same form and language as Vergil. If Smith can be relied upon, that decades after then one might also say that he is the last poet to fully understand the very form of Latin in which he wrote. Perhaps he never uttered aloud the dialect in which he wrote. At any rate, I believe Herman was biased: the prescriptive text, particularly poetry, contains just as much material for the historical linguist, if merely through the implications of its existence.

2. Prudentius Background and Literary History

Although linguists have demurred predicating linguistic change upon social or political upheaval, it is still important to keep the historical record in mind while examining the *Psychomachia*. When Prudentius wrote (generally accepted to be between the years 392-405 CE), Theodosius was emperor of Rome. The borders of the empire were shrinking, and the golden age of literature was long over. In 396 Theodosius decreed Christianity to be the official religion, and a new renaissance of literature revolving around the religious environment burgeoned. Among the work produced was the early Christian literature written by Jerome and Augustine of Hippo. To this list of prose writers Prudentius deserves to be added as the premier Late Latin poet.

Because of his unique status as a Latin poet in the fifth century, it is difficult to categorize Prudentius' writing as Classical or Medieval. Although Prudentius technically composed Late Latin poetry, he is commonly lumped with medieval Latin writers whose L1 was definitely not Latin. Medieval writers may have spoken some far-removed descendant such as Old French or Old Italian, and may have also been privy to an artificial Latin of the literate, but this is rather different than Prudentius' situation. Part of the reasoning behind the conflation is his subject matter and influence on the Medieval world. Prudentius was a popular writer, and his writings became even more widely read in Medieval Europe. According to Smith, classicists "know him as the only poet of Late Antiquity ... who could successfully imitate Vergil and Horace" (1976, xi). In fact, he is both: Prudentius unknowingly straddled these two periods as the last poet to write in Classical Latin and the innovator of the poetry/subject for the Medieval Latinists and translators. Smith remarks that he is simply "the best Latin poet between the Augustan Age

and the twelfth century (xi),” eschewing all classifications.

Most of the information we have on his life he penned himself in the preface to his collected works, published in 405. He was born in a Roman province in northern Spain in 348 CE to Roman family. While involved in the law and politics in his youth, in 392 he gave it up to become ascetic and began his writing in earnest. From the year 392 until 405 he composed all of his verse. One of the works published is the *Psychomachia*, which bears a pseudogreek title comprised of the words ψυχή and μάχη (meaning breath or spirit and battle respectively), implying the book is either on the battle of the soul, the battle for the soul, the battle within the soul, or some combination of all three. It is also a play on the word gigantomachia, which translates to 'battle among giants,' previously a common subject for Greek and Roman poets to bring up in their works. The result for Prudentius is an extraordinarily gory account of the battle among virtues and vices in an unclear and fairly unimportant setting. As I mentioned earlier this collection of verse is of Christian subject matter, an apt focus due to the new state religion. It is written in dactylic hexameter and thus is decidedly Virgilian before the subject matter is even mentioned. Like the more Iliadic last few books of the *Aeneid*, the *Psychomachia* is primarily a description of the warfare waged, interspersed with extended monologues from the warriors and didactic descriptions of either side. Unlike Vergil, however, Prudentius was not revising the epic tradition on behalf of Rome, rewriting Roman history in the process; he is intent of exposing and rejecting the Rome of Vergil and trying to reframe classical poetic beauty as Christian. The virtues are not substitutions for the Roman pantheon: they wipe it out entirely, using classical form for a Christian subject matter.

The *Psychomachia* could be either a revision of the epic mode and heroic ideals

according to a Christian value system, or it could simply be using these forms in order to introduce itself within the epic genre. Smith believes that the poem is intended by Prudentius to be a rejection of the 'cult of Vergil' which was apparent in literary circles of the 4th century, as a "rejection of the antique pantheon, emulation of the biblical bard, conspicuous refraining from mention of Vergil. (Smith 1976: 4)." The war of the Church against Satan, within literary circles, has been conflated with the battle against writers from the pagan era, working to "embrace the Word of God and to reject the false pleasures and teachings discovered from the masterwork of Roman literature (ibid)." If this is indeed the case, it is remarkable that Prudentius reclaimed dactylic hexameter and the epic style from Vergil while he used it to declaim the dependence on classical texts and poets. Prudentius has been seen alternatively as a Christian humanist, focused on reimagining Roman culture in a Christian ideal system, or as a staunch anti-pagan who sought to use the fruits of that culture to denounce it in favor of the Church (Smith, 1976: 27)

Prudentius was not only an artist of revision, mining and utilizing material from the past, but was also the innovator of an entirely new literary form. The *Psychomachia* has been endorsed as the first allegory ever written, and is definitely the first Christian allegory. One could say that the gods or giants of epics were personifications of natural or psychological forces, but these were not the protagonists of the epic: Achilles was meant to be a real man, whether historical or simply archetypal, not a personification of rage or the ethos of a rustic Greek city-state. Although writers had commonly personified abstractions in their works, the personifications were secondary characters that did not retain their agency throughout the work. As Smith explains:

"Literary historians know Prudentius' *Psychomachia* (c. 405) as the first sustained

personification allegory, one notable for its powerful influence upon medieval and Renaissance culture; they have viewed it as a poetic representation of animated virtues and vices who fight for dominion over the mind of a Christian everyman. "

(Smith, 1976: 3)

This marks it as the first work of an extended allegory, and the basis for allegories in Old French (the *Roman de la Rose*) and Old English (*Pilgrim's Progress* and *Piers Plowman*). The influence that the poem had on the medieval world was thanks to the vivid portrayal of the battle itself as well as the characters. It ensued that the *Psychomachia* was particularly well-copied since its gruesome subject matter lent itself quite well to illumination/illustration. Prudentius described the virtues and vices in meticulous detail, and developed their characters by using recurring qualities, such as the type of clothing worn, the manner of stature or gait, and the metal affiliated with them by either their weaponry, armor, or other battlefield objects.

Due to its timing among Late Latin prose giants and almost in spite of its literary historical significance, the *Psychomachia* is most often studied in reference to other works, defined by and studied only in accord with its progenitors (Vergil and Horace) and its offspring (which could be deemed as all Christian allegory, including *Piers Plowman*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Román de la Rose*). Which line the criticism will follow depends on whether the reader is a medievalist or a classicist. Most of the best criticism of the poem is oblique, couched in analyses of these other texts, or in studies of contemporary Latin sources. Moreover, some critics believe the text is important only because of these connections, since it is on its own an 'unsuccessful' work.

Some critics have begun to take note of Prudentius as a focus of study according to broader terms. His work is valuable to historians, classicists, and medievalists, and I believe his work deserves to be read so that current literary critics can analyze his work according to

modern methods of critical theory. For example, the characterization of the vice reverses the classical, but also has important repercussions for a possible inversion of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) for Occidentalism during the fourth century. Feminist critical theory in particular could be applied to the text to gain a remarkable new understanding of a 4th century perspective on women, especially in regards to the Church and figures of Christianity. Jessamyn Lewis, in her dissertation writes

“The warrior personifications of the *Psychomachia*, in keeping with classical tradition, are all characterized as female since the abstract nouns they represent are grammatically feminine. It is Prudentius' great innovation to have an entire poem populated by personifications. That they are *all* female, and placed in the masculine context of combat, is a particularly striking feature.”

(Lewis 2000: 2-3)

Just as the literary critics, historians, and classicists overlook the text for its intrinsic value, linguists dismiss study of the educated or prescriptive texts during the Late Latin period up until the Carolingian reforms of the 9th century, preferring those which might allow some “mistakes,” which could reveal the “actual” state of the language.

The comparative method is in part based on Romance linguistics; assignments in Historical and Comparative linguistics courses are often comprised of fate from varieties of Latin and its descendants precisely for its apparent cogency. As a Latin student, Classical Latin is given first without any allusion to Vulgar Latin or Proto-Romance, which are later explained as an interesting side note. With time, Vulgar Latin is introduced as the language spoken by the common people with an alternate vocabulary, but largely similar to Latin. The real world of Romance linguistics is decidedly more lively and vibrant. Linguists never presented the problem of Latin's evolution as solved, but merely exhausted: until new sources were discovered, no

further understanding could be gleaned. Many of the extant materials were deemed unhelpful by those who share Jozsef Herman's opinion. The more polished the source, the less likely it was to contain examples of “real speech.” Recently however, reanalysis of the same texts has brought new theories and understandings to the forefront. I will return to this discussion in part five of my thesis, but must first provide an overview of Classical Latin morphology and syntax, and the conventions of my transcription and glosses before offering the text itself.

3. Classical Latin Morphology and Syntax

It is difficult to find, and even more difficult for me to create a general linguistic analysis of the Latin language. Having studied Latin for so long according to the classical tradition, I find it hard to remove this influence and examine the language from a formal linguistic perspective. Moreover, Latin has such a corpus behind it that it proves problematic even to sift through the works for a more objective examination. For example in many different text I found that the glosses for phrases were often simpler than warranted from a linguistics standpoint. However, with my own knowledge of Latin I here attempt to outline the major features of the language, although I warn that some of the conventions and explanations I use are not based in linguistics but rather in the field of classics.

3.1 Morphology

Morphologically, Latin is an inflectional or fusional language, meaning words generally contain a high number of morphemes, or relevant pieces of information, within each lexeme, or word unit.. It also constructs some forms synthetically by attaching either prefixes or suffixes. Nouns and adjectives are generally understood to be inflected for number, case, and gender, while verbs are inflected for tense, mood, aspect, person, and number.

Although it is conventional to explain that each inflection provides all of these, is unique, and can be parsed out to provide all the information, this is not the case. First of all, each suffix is not necessarily unique, nor does it necessarily provide all information at once--there is considerable syncretism, as the same endings are used in the same lexeme family and even in the same inflectional categories for supposedly different semantic uses. Secondly, Latin utilizes not only concatenative processes, but also non-concatenative. The non-concatenative processes gave

me the most trouble in glossing verbs.

In the meantime, however, I will first explain the concatenative affixes I have glossed in the next section. The variations of the suffixes correspond to five inflectional classes of nouns, and five classes of verbs. There are also subgroups among the categories whose suffixes vary slightly from the overarching category. There are also so-called irregular morphemes whose set of suffixes do not fit into any of these sets. The majority of these aspects which do not fit into this taxonomy are found in the pronouns and adjectives.

3.1.1 Nominals

To explain it differently, nouns, adjectives, verbal nouns, and pronouns share some of the morphological suffixes and there are five groups of the most common endings which are referred to as the five declensions. All declensions share the following cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Ablative, and sometimes Vocative. Sometimes the Locative is posited as another case, but in general only the former are used. The Vocative has the same suffix as the Nominative in most declensions and is therefore not always given in lists of cases and declension endings.

As stated above, Latin nominals are marked for case and number. There was once a dual in verbs, but that was exceedingly rare, a holdover from Greek, and by Vergil's time only the singular and plural existed as possible numbers. In the case of negatives singular is always assumed; for example one would say *nihil est* ('there is nothing'), rather than using a general plural. *Nihil* is interesting because it is (usually) indeclinable; it can only be used as nominative or accusative singular; there are other nouns that work similarly. Some nouns are used only in the singular, like names (*Gallia*), or have different semantic meanings in the plural, like mass

nouns: *ni:s* “snow” versus *ni:ves* “snowflakes.” Some nouns are only found in the plural, like *arma* “weapons.” Sometimes there is semantic broadening following or spurring the singular falling into relative disuse. For example, the noun *castra* “camp,” is found more often than In the case of *locus* “place,” a masculine second declension noun, the regular plural *loci:* became broadened to mean “topics;” could it be that subsequently the neuter plural was appropriated producing *loca* “places?” (Allen and Greenough, 1903: § 99-106)

There is quite a bit of nominal syncretism, and some syncretism in the verbal morphology. For example (with syncretic cases in bold):

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	<i>puell-a</i>	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>ars</i>	<i>art-e:s</i>
Genitive	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>puell-a:rum</i>	<i>art-is</i>	<i>art-ium</i>
Dative	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>puell-i:s</i>	<i>art-i:</i>	<i>art-ibus</i>
Accusative	<i>puell-am</i>	<i>puell-a:s</i>	<i>art-em</i>	<i>art-e:s</i>
Ablative	<i>puell-a:</i>	<i>puell-i:s</i>	<i>art-e</i>	<i>art-ibus</i>

Puella 'girl' is feminine and belongs to the first declension, which typically includes feminine nouns, whereas *ars* 'art' or 'craft' is an example of a feminine third declension noun. The third declension is comprised of masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns, and also has a variant set of endings for some nouns known as 'i-stems.' *Ars* is an example of this: notice the genitive plural ending; the non i-stem third declension ending is just *-um*.

It is also required of Latin students and scholars everywhere to provide the gender of the nominal, adjectival phrase when parsing it out. The gender of the adjectival phrase always corresponds to the gender of the noun which it modifies. The noun's gender can sometimes be surmised by the declension to which it belongs or the root (or the nominative ending, which is the ending most likely to deviate from the regular endings), but in general, gender is simply part

of the lexicon, and determined by the inflectional class.

Case is largely a syntactically determined process, depending on the grammatical function that a noun has within a sentence, with the declension and gender defined by the lexicon. Prepositions are usually associated with one case of the modified noun. For example, the preposition *ad* meaning 'to or towards' takes the accusative case, so with the word *domus*, 'house' you would get the following:

<i>ad</i>	<i>domu-m</i>
to	house-ACC.S

Every word in a noun phrase is inflected for the case the noun must take according to its grammatical function. For this reason, a noun is never encountered in its root form. Likewise, bare nouns do not exist in Latin. The nominative is the least morphologically or semantically heavy form, but it is not a bare noun. One would think the nominative would be the form taken as the bare noun when morphology reduced, but it is assumed that it was slightly truncated accusative forms that were used as the base for Proto-Romance nominals. Sometimes it is a purely semantic distinction that informs which case will be used, however.

<i>in</i>	<i>dom-um</i>	<i>ven-it</i>
into	house-ACC.S	come.PERF-3.S
'She came inside the house'		

<i>in</i>	<i>dom-o:</i>	<i>est</i>
in/on	house-ABL.S	be.
'She was in the house'		

I have added the verbs to elucidate the different meanings, but they have no bearing on the meaning of *in*. Either there are two homophonous prepositions realized as [-in], or the preposition *in* can be taken as either 'into' implying motion or 'on, in' implying position. Thus when the motion 'into' is implied, the accusative case is chosen, and when 'in' or 'on' are meant,

the ablative.

As morphology reduced, prepositions rose to fill the syntactic void in order to mark the nouns' grammatical functions. For example, *ad* became not only a preposition implying motion advancing towards something, but also signified the indirect object as the dative case was lost:

<i>femin-ae</i> woman-DAT.S 'He gives the woman money'	<i>pecuni-am</i> money-ACC.S	<i>do:n-at</i> give-3.S.PRES.ACT
<i>ad</i> to	<i>femin-am</i> woman-ACC.S	<i>pecuni-am</i> money-ACC.S
		<i>do:nat</i> give-3.S.PRES.ACT 'He gives money to the woman'

3.1.2 Verbs

Verbs can be either transitive and/or intransitive and generally nouns used as objects with them are found in the accusative case, although some verbs necessitate genitive or dative case.

The traditional demarcations of verbs in Latin educational texts do not correspond to the . It is through the phonological modification of the stem that the subjunctive and other syntactic processes are expressed, such as the perfective system. In Latin the verb contains information about both the tense and timeframe, though it is not explained as such to elementary Latin students.

Some of verbs' inflectional morphology is also be used as derivational morphology; the perfect passive conjugation is actually formed of the past participles, used in conjunction with *esse* conjugations. Likewise there are participles for the present active and future perfect active, as well as verbal nouns and adjectives known as gerunds and gerundives respectively. As mentioned above, case is not only a syntactic construction, but can also inform the semantic meaning of a phrase. This allows for some adjectival phrases using participles or

gerunds/gerundives that have specific meaning in a certain case, One such use is the ablative absolute; the entire verbal adjective phrase is placed in the ablative case. This has the purpose of informing a situation, meaning that something has been done which predicates the main clause.

There is some reduplication but it is no longer a productive process, and is mainly a holdover from Proto-Latin or Hellenic influence. As with many languages, the most 'common' verbs are the most 'irregular,' although they share many endings with other verbs.

3.2 Syntax

Due to Classical Latin's synthetic and fusional nature word order is generally quite free, a property that makes poetry a rather different endeavor than it is in English for example. The morphology and syntax are intimately connected, since it is the morphology that allows morphemes within phrases to be separated and still understood to be taken together. That being said, it does have some general structure, but this is easily reorganized depending on the author's level of meddling. Verbs are usually in clause-final position, although they can come earlier; sometimes this actually changes the meaning of a sentence; if *est* is clause-initial it can be translated as 'there is.' Intriguingly, although Classical Latin is typically an SOV language, it generally has prepositions rather than postpositions. Therefore it is verb-final but not necessarily head-final. Prepositions can occur postpositionally only rarely, and this is generally only found in poetry. Likewise they sometimes occur in the middle of a noun phrase, due to the NP's ability to be separated. In fact, the only preposition that routinely occurs postpositionally, *cum* 'with,' is cliticized, and only with pronominal phrases:

? <i>cum nobis</i>	* <i>nobis cum</i>	<i>nobiscum</i>
? <i>cum me</i>	* <i>me cum</i>	<i>mecum</i>

The influence that this might have on pronunciation will be explored somewhat in section 6 regarding the clitic *-que*.

The morphological richness also allows for Latin's uniquely hypotactic syntax. Hypotaxis is the extensive use of subclauses in writing or speech, as opposed to paratactic construction, which prefers more separate units without nesting in one another. Parsing them out by their Greek etymologies, both have to do with how clauses are arranged, or touch one another (*taxis*): *hupo*, 'beneath' or *para* 'next to.' Thus in parataxis clauses abut one another side by side, while hypotaxis utilizes the recursive capacity of language by forming subclauses.

3.3 My Glosses

As I mentioned, although this is how Latin texts explain inflections, I have begun to question this system of glossing. In truth, it is only in contrast to one another that each suffix reveals what information it contains. In a way, there are optional slots to be filled, and at times it is only through their vacancy that certain elements, like mood or aspect, or gender, are exposed. At other times it is because there exists an entirely different set of endings according to the mood or the like. This occurs more often in a language like Attic Greek, but it seems to occur in Latin as well.

With the multiple declensions and conjugations, I have some issues deciding where to demarcate the suffix versus the stem, and how much information is carried by the stem, whether by stem changes or simply by the information attributed to the morpheme by the lexicon. It is the absence of another stem change or letter that sometimes provides the clue that a verb is active, or indicative, or even of a different conjugation. Whether the declension or conjugation predicates this change or the change determines the conjugation or declension type is unclear to me. Latin

is so morphologically rich that it is difficult to distinguish where the inflected form becomes a derived lexeme; many lexemes could be broken down into various morphemes from entirely different classes.

It is traditional to gloss verbs by their unique conjugational endings. By this I mean that a verb such as *serviunt*, which is the third person plural present active of the verb *servio*, *servire* would be glossed as *serv-iunt*. However, the *-i* in the ending does not inform the grammatical function or morphological information. It is only there because the stem in the fourth conjugation has an *i* in it. Nevertheless, there are differences among the conjugations' endings. Therefore is this *-iunt* ending different from the *-unt* ending of the first conjugation?

In particular I am unsure how to handle phonological processes that are examples of extended exponence (Spencer 1991: 51). For example, earlier I used the verb *venit*. This uses supposedly the perfect stem along with the inflections of the perfective category. But as in Spencer's example with the verb *regere*, the formation of the perfect stem uses a vowel change along with the inflectional suffixes (Spencer 1991: 52).

<i>reg-o:</i>	<i>re:k-s-i:</i>
'I rule'	'I have ruled'

Vowel changes in the perfective stem could be signifiers of the category as well as the inflections, meaning that the gloss could be applied to both.

Furthermore, I want to assume that gender is part of a morpheme's lexical information, but I'm not sure how this might be received. For example, the fourth declension contains primarily masculine words. A word such as *manus*, meaning hand or band, is of the fourth declension, but it is a feminine noun. Where is the gender encoded? There are also numerous

occasions in which a noun's gender is ambiguous both because of the suffix and because it is meant to be ambiguous. Moreover, an adjective's gender is more obviously evinced by the declension/endings, but is determined by the noun it modifies. Would it make sense to argue that adjectives' endings show gender in the suffix whereas gender is lexically encoded in nouns even though they share many declension affixes?

I would prefer to use a more comprehensive glossing system that neglects the Classics influence, but I have opted instead to straddle the Leipzig glossing rules while keeping in mind the traditional glosses on Latin. The only way I have significantly strayed from the Classics tradition is the actual point of demarcation, which may be earlier or later than expected from the Classics point of view.

Section 4: Psychomachia Excerpt with Glosses

310. *uen-erat* *occidu-is* *mund-i* *de* *fin-ibus* *host-is*
come-PPF.3.S.A.I west-ABL.PL world-M.GEN.S from boundaries-ABL.PL. enemy-NOM.S
311. *Luxuri-a* *extin.ct-ae* *iam-dudum* *prodiga*
Indulgence-F.S.NOM extinguish.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.GEN already-earlier generous+GEN
fam-ae
rumor-F.PL.GEN
312. *delibut-a* *com-as* *ocul-is* *uag-a* *languid-a*
array.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.NOM hair-F.ACC.S eye-M.PL.ABL roving-F.S.NOM sluggish-F.S.NOM
uoc-e
voice-F.S.ABL
313. *perd-ita* *delici-is* *uit-ae* *cu-i* *causa*
lose.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.NOM pleasure-F.PL.ABL life-F.S.GEN who-S.DAT cause of+GEN
volupt-as
desire-F.S.NOM
314. *elumb-em* *molli-re* *anim-um* *petulant-er* *amoen-as*
Unmanned-S.ACC soften-PRES.A.INF soul-N.S.ACC lascivious-ADV pleasant-F.PL.ACC
315. *haur-ire* *inlecebr-as* *et* *fract-os* *solue-re*
drink-PRES.A.INF charms-F.PL.ACC and weak-M.PL.ACC 1 oose-PRES.A.INF
sens-us
feeling-M.PL.ACC
316. *ac* *tunc* *pervigil-em* *ructa-bat* *marcid-a* *cen-am*
and then wakeful-S.ACC burp-IMPF.3.S.A.I exhausted-F.S.NOM dinner-F.S.ACC
317. *sub* *lucem* *quia* *forte* *iace-ns* *ad* *fercul-a*
up to light-S.ACC because by chance lie-PRES.A.PPL.S.NOM on dishes-N.PL.ACC
rauc-os
hoarse-M.PL.ACC
318. *audi-erat* *litu-os* *atque* *inde* *tepenti-a* *linqu-ens*
hear-PPF.3.S.I trumpet- M.PL.ACC and thence warm-N.PL.ACC quit-PRES.A.
319. *pocul-a* *lapsa-nt-i* *per* *uin-a* *et* *balsam-a* *gress-u*
cup-N.PL.ACC slip-PRES.A.PPL-S.ABL through wine-N.PL.ACC and balsam-N.PL.ACC step-M.S.ABL
320. *ebri-a* *calca-tis* *ad bell-um* *flor-ibus* *i-bat*
drunk-F.S.NOM trample-PRF.PASS.PPL.PL.ABL to war-N.S.ACC flower-M.PL.ABL go-IMPF.3.S.A
321. *non tamen* *ill-a* *ped-es,* *sed* *curr-u*
not nevertheless That/Demonst.F.S.NOM on foot-S.NOM but course/chariot-(M).S.ABL
inue.ct-a *uenust-o*
carry.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.NOM. graceful-M.S.ABL
322. *sauci-a* *mira.nt-um* *capi.e-bat* *cord-a*
ill-N.PL.ACC admire.PRES.A.PPL-PL.GEN seize.INDIC-IMPF.A.3.S heart-N.PL.ACC
uir-orum
man-M.PL.GEN
323. *o nou-a* *pugna.nd-i* *speci-es!* *non al-es* *harundo*
O new-F.S.VOC fight.GERUNDIVE-M.S.GEN sight-F.S.VOC not winged-S.NOM arrow-F.S.NOM

324. *neruum* bowstring-M.S.ACC *puls-a* beat.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.NOM *fug-it,* flee.PRF-.A.3.S *nec* and not *stridul-a* hissing-F.S.ABL
lance-a *torto*
lance-F.S.n/abl hurl.PRF.PASS.PPL-dat/abl
325. *emica-t* dart.IND-PRES.A.3.S *ament-o,* strap-N.S.dat/abl *frame.am* spear-F.S.ACC *nec dextr-a* not right-F.S.NOM *minatur* threaten-PRS.PASS.I.3.S
326. *sed uiol-as* but violet-F.PL.ACC *lasciu-a* wanton-F.S.NOM *iacit* throw-PRES.A.IND.3.S *foli-is-que* leaf-N.PL.ABL-and
ros-arum
rose-F.PL.GEN
327. *dimica-t* battle.IND-PRES.A.3.S *et* and *calath-os* flowerbasket/winecup M.PL.ACC *inimic-a* hostile-N.PL.ACC *per* through *agmin-a.* line-N.PL.ACC
fundit
pour-PRES.A.IND.3.S
328. *inde* thence *eblanditis* flattering-PRF.PPL (Dep)PL.ABL *uirtut-ibus* virtue-F.PL.Ab/dt *halit-u(-?)s* breath-M.S.NOM *inlex* enticer/lawless-S.NOM
329. *inspir-at* inspire-PRES.A.IND.3.S *tenerum* soft.S.ACC *labefa.ct-a* unsteady.PRF.PASS.PPL-N.PL.ACC
per *oss-a* *uenen-um,*
through bone-N.PL.ACC venom-N.S.ACC
330. *et* and *male* badly *dulc-is* sweet-S.NOM *odor-X* odor-M.S.NOM *dom.a-t* subdue.IND-PRES.A.3.S *or-a* mouth-N.PL.NOM *et* and
pector-a *et* *arm-a*
breast-N.PL.ACC and weaponry-N.PL.ACC
331. *ferrat-os-que* Ironclad-M.PL.ACC-and *tor-os* bed-M.PL.ACC *obli.s-o* crush.PRF.PASS.PPL *robor-e* oak-N.ABL *mulc-et.* charm-PRES.A.I.3.S
332. *deici-unt* throw-PRES.A.3.PL *anim-os* mind-M.PL.ACC *ceu ui.ct-i* as conquer.PRF.PASS.PPL-PL.NOM *et,* and
spicul-a *pon-unt*
javelin-N.PL.NOM place-PRES.A.I.3.PL
333. *turpiter;* repulsively *heu, dextr-is* alas right-M.PL.ABL *languent-ibus* wilt-PRES.A.PPL.PL.DAT/AB *obstupefacti* stun-PRF.PASS.PPL.
334. *dum currum* then course-M.S.ACC *uari-a* various-F.S.ABL *gemm-arum* jewel-F.PL.GEN *luc-e* light-F.S.ABL *mica.nt-em* flash.PRES.A.PPL-S.ACC
335. *mir.a-ntur;* marvel.I-PRES.PASS.I.3.P *dum* then *bratteol-is* gold leaf-F.PL. *crepita-ntia* crackle-PRES.A.PPL.N.PL.ACC *lor-a* thong.N.PL.ACC
336. *et* and *solid-o* solid-M.S.ABL *ex* from *aur-o* gold-N.S.ABL *pretios-i* precious-M.S.GEN *ponder-is* weight-N.S.GEN *ax-em* axle-M.S.ACC
337. *defix-is* sink.PRF.PASS.PPL-PL.ABL *inhi.a-nt* gape.I-PRES.A.3.PL *obtut-ibus* gaze-M.PL.ABL *et* and *radi-orum* ray-M.PL.GEN
338. *argent-o* silver-N.S.ABL *albent-em* pale-S.ACC *seri-em,* series-F.S.ACC *quam* than *summ-a* highest-F.S.ABL *rotarum* wheel-F.PL.GEN
339. *flex-ur-a* curve-FUT.A.PPL-F.S. *electr-i* Electrum-N.S.GEN *palle.nt-is* fade-PRES.A.PPL-S.GEN *contin-et.* holds in-PRES.A.I.3.S

orb-e
world-M.S.ABL

340. *et iam cunct-a* *aci-es* *in deditionis* *amor-em*
and now all-F.S.NOM line-3.F.S.NOM in surrender-F.S.GEN love-M.S.ACC
341. *sponte* *sua* *uersis* *trans-ibat* *perfid-a* *signis*
suddenly her turned-N.PL.ACC cross-IMPF.A.I.3.S false-F.S.NOM sign-N.PL.ABL
342. *Luxuri-ae* *serui-re* *uole-ns*
Extravagance-F.S.GEN serve-PRES.A.INF wish-PRES.A.PPL.S.M.NOM
domin-ae-que *flue-ntis*
mistress-F.S.GEN-and flow-PRES.A.PPL.S.GEN
343. *iura* *pat-i* *et lax-a* *gane-arum*
code.N.PL.ACC suffer-PRES.INF.PASS(deponent) and lax-F.S.ABL eating house-F.PL.GEN
lege *ten.e-ri.*
law-F.S.ABL hold-PRES.PASS.INF
344. *ingem-uit* *tam trist-e* *nefas fort.issim-a* *uirtus*
groan-PRF.A.IND.3.S so much sad-N.S.(ACC) sin.N strong.SUPER-F.S.NOM virtue.(F).3.NOM
345. *Sobrieta-s,* *dextr-o* *soci-os* *decede-re* *corn-u*
Soberness.F.S.NOM right-M.ABL(ofplace)ally-M.PL.ACC withdraw-PRES.A.INF horn-F.ABL
346. *inuict-am-que* *man-u(-?)m* *quondam sine* *caed-e* *peri-re.*
unconquered-F.S.ACC-and hand-F.S.ACC once without slaughter-F.S.ABL die-PRES.A.INF
347. *uexill-um* *sublim-e* *cruc-is,* *qu-od* *in agmin-e* *prim-o*
flag-N.S.ACC high-N.S.ACC cross-F.S.GEN which-N.S.ACC in line-N.S.ABL first.N.S.ABL
348. *dux* *bon-a* *praetul-erat,* *defi.x-a,*
leader(M).S.NOM good-F.S.NOM offer-PLUP.A.IND.3.S fix.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.NOM
cuspid-e *sist-it*
point/spear-F.S.ABL stop/cause to stand-PRES.A.IND.3.S
349. *instaur-at-que* *lev-em* *dict-is* *mordac-ibus*
renew-PRES.A.IND.3.S-and light-S.ACC word-PRF.PASS.PPL.P.ABL sharp-PL.ABL
alam
wing-F.S.ACC
350. *exstimula-ns* *animos* *nunc probis,* *nunc prece*
goad-PRES.A.PPL.S.NOM soul-M.P.ACC now proof-F.PL.ABL now prayer-F.PL.ABL
mi.xt-a:
mix.PRF.PASS.PPL-F.S.ABL.

Below is my loose translation of the excerpt. Some things I noticed in translating are that there is significantly less ellipsis, a simpler word order, and a shallower clause structure (more parataxis).

She came, the enemy from the western bounds,
Indulgence, with no care for her reputation long foregone
her hair arranged, with her eyes wandering and mouth unable to keep up,
Lost to pleasures, to whom desire was the ends of life:
to crudely mold the mollified souls,
to swallow down the heady draughts and loosen broken sense.
But at that moment she was herself broken,
exhausted by and belching the dinner that had lasted through the night

until at dawn sprawling on her strewn courses,
she heard the screeching battle trumpets and she ran off
sloshing through lukewarm cups of wine and oily balsam in her slipping course.
Drunk, she went to war on flowers trampled
not by her footfalls, but of those who carried her in a graceful chariot
as she seized the sickened hearts of her admirers,.
O new spectacle of fighting! Her right hand does not pluck bowstrings to set winged arrows to flight,
nor sling the lances through the hissing air, nor threaten with a spear
but instead scatters violets and battles with rose petals
pouring wine and odorous, odious, wanton flowers fed on wine through the lines of resistance.
With the virtues defused, her heady breath
spread a warm venom through aching bones
and the syrupy sweet odor smothers mouths, lungs, and arms
and subdues muscle and melts sinews underneath untried iron armor.
They throw down their spirits along with their javelins/weapons
shamefully, stunned, their right hands wilting without warfare waged
then marveled at the chariot that flashed with the light held captive/lost within gemstones
and the reins that crackled with goldleaf
and the heavy axle of dense and solid gold
they gaped at the spokes in either wheel, one after another pale silver,
out to the curved rim with electrum plied along the edge which held them in place
and now with the world the whole line in love of surrender, willingly her falseness crossed to opposing flags
wishing to serve Luxury and to suffer the codes of a loose mistress and
to be held by the lax law of the eating-houses
Then groaned the strongest virtue at such an offensive sin--
Sobriety--for her allies to withdraw from the right flank
and the once unconquered band to die without slaughter.
The high flag of the cross, which (was) in the first line,
the good leader bore up, and stood with fixed spear
and renewed the light wing with biting words
goaded the souls now with tests, now mixed with prayer...

5. *Late Latin is Proto-Romance*

The prior section was an example of the Latin written by Prudentius. There are no egregious mistakes with the morphology or syntax, and he uses a wide array of syntactical devices. It appears then that from the orthography and syntax side of things, Prudentius understood rather well how to imitate the Classical authors or alternatively had L1 or L2 acquisition of a mode similar to theirs. So now we know in what kind of Latin Prudentius wrote, but what might he have spoken in his everyday life? Examining his written work in the *Psychomachia* might give us some clue as to his spoken language, but probably only to phonology. The phonology is the only one that might reveal itself subtly enough to show how his language actually changed. The morphology is clearly identical to Classical Latin morphology, and as the scansion shows, Prudentius was able to write in more than adequate dactylic hexameter, implying that he understood the strictures of Classical Latin phonology. The text could be unreliable, since it was copied many times over many centuries by those who were by no means native Latin speakers. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the threat of alterations over time are somewhat diminished by the nature of the work itself. Altering the poetry would mean risking a gross distortion to the meter. So Prudentius knew Classical Latin forms intimately, to be able to use it productively.

It would be naïve to assume that he spoke in an identical mode as that in which he wrote, just as modern written language rarely reflects the spoken language entirely. But why is it so improbable that he spoke a similar variety of the Latin in which he wrote? If I were to read this thesis aloud, I could assume that the audience would be able to recognize it as English and decipher it, even if they did not understand it due to the nature of the text. Another question is

what other languages could possibly have been available to Prudentius? To answer that I must first admit to my own concealment of various complications regarding the evolution of Latin to the Romance languages. Until this point I have used a variety of terms for the different forms of Latin spoken throughout history. I have delayed explaining them because they warrant far more explanation than a footnote could offer; to explain them is to reveal that they are imaginary delineations whose meaning is reliant on what the author intends. When I began studying Latin I remember a professor gliding over the evolution from Latin to Romance by implying that there were two separate vocabularies, and that Latin had not existed as a spoken language for many years by the time the writing system began to reflect that change. I remember him stating that clearly no Roman in the first century would have actually used the term *equus*; they would have used *caballus*. For years I accepted that the exact reasons for and history of the evolution from Latin to Romance may be murky, but that it could generally be assumed that the written Classical Latin was eventually overtaken by the growing vernacular, which exploded into new languages factions, but only after the Roman Empire ended. This is as simplistic as saying that the Fall of Rome occurred when the Visigoths invaded in 422.

So what sort of Latin would Prudentius have spoken? Or, as some research implies, would he have spoken Latin at all, or a dialect so far removed as to have been unintelligible as Latin? It is the question of when the Latin diverged and could be considered to become 'dead' that causes such embroilment among Romanist scholars. To put it simply, timing is everything. Although the scholarship may be divided, it is still clear that Romance languages did evolve from some form of Latin, and therefore there are reconstructions of an intermediary language that are generally accepted. Section 6 will offer some of these.

Even if linguists can agree on a reconstructed form of “Proto-Romance,” there are many arguments for when this was spoken, by whom, in what context, and if this single language was ever spoken in its pure, reconstructed form. Moreover, even if Proto-Romance and Latin opposed one another, it would be impossible that there would be no bilingual speakers with no code mixing between the two. Similar to the story I was told by my Latin professors, many theorists present Proto-Romance as a descended form of “Vulgar Latin,” spoken at the same time as a form of Late Latin, but that the two ‘languages’ were spoken exclusively of one another, meaning the two formed a fully diglossic relationship. There are disputes on the nature and existence of Vulgar Latin, as well. I will attempt, in this section, to provide a brief overview of the various factions of the debate on Late Latin and Proto-Romance, their relatedness, and their use. First however, I must parse out the terminology which I have already used and will use throughout this section.

5.1 Overview and Background of Theories

5.1.1 Terminological Confusion

" We are lost in the labyrinth of ill-defined designations and overlapping pseudo-categories like Late Latin, Early Medieval Latin, Literary Latin, Written Latin, Vulgar Latin, Popular Latin, Colloquial Latin, Spoken Latin, Romance, Early Romance, Proto-Romance, Pre-Romance - and the rest."

(Herman 1991: 29)

As Herman details, Latin has been studied for so long that it is understandable that a variety of terms have arisen to try to describe the different states of the language. Scholars are sometimes sytmied from focusing on the language, being stalemated over terminology instead. The main problem is that of periodization, but there are not only overlapping time periods, but also regional differences, as well as clashing traditions and fields of approach. In general , Late

Latin is used by Classicists, often to refer to the more elite written language of the fourth and fifth centuries. Proto-Romance, a term from the linguistics field, is the reconstructed or hypothetical language spoken anywhere from the first to eighth centuries, depending on the scholar, implying a dialect further along the evolutionary path towards Romance. I will be using it to refer specifically to the reconstructed dialect, and occasionally as the hypothetical spoken language in the fourth and fifth centuries. I have endeavored to quote from sources only when they apply to the fourth and fifth centuries, but will certainly explain when other scholars use terms with a broader temporal scope than mine. The reason that Late Latin and Proto-Romance do not refer is a question of both tradition and linguistic exactitude; as Posner writes:

“some shared features of the Romance languages are not attested in Latin; hence the disputes about how reconstructed Proto-Romance, or Vulgar Latin relates to the language of our Classical texts.”

(Posner 1996: 98)

The much-used term Vulgar Latin fills some Romanists with consternation, because it is used in many vague, and sometimes contradictory, ways: one commentator counts thirteen distinct meanings for the term. It is usually used to refer to the posited language used either by the common people of the Roman Empire or sometimes given as the 'true' language spoken by everyone, but rarely written as anything but graffiti. Therefore it can sometimes be used to refer to a distinct dialect which hypothetically gave rise to Proto-Romance independently from written Latin.

The final term I will be using is Classical Latin, which unsurprisingly is as complicated a term as all of the above. It refers primarily to a written mode, but it can also denote a state of the language that sometime existed in a spoken form, and once written down, became the written

standard. When a dialect like this was actually spoken is a major point of contention. I cannot guarantee that any of the scholarship I quote from is using terms in the same way that I do or as I've presented above. Any time an alternative term is used I have attempts to place it within the scope of these four classifications.

5.1.2 Theories' Bases

Since there is significant evidence that there was far “more” Latin spoken than was actually written down, it can be assumed that the written language was clearly not indicative of the full breadth of the language, through vocabulary certainly, but also in syntactic and morphological variations.

To help organize the numerous theories regarding the inception of Proto-Romance and its status in the fifth century I have divided them into three groupings. It is important to keep in mind however that the theories fall more along a spectrum of these qualities:

1. Clear distinction between two languages (Classical and Vulgar Latin or Late Latin and Proto-Romance) as conceptually separate language systems, and/or in absolute diglossic relation to one another, with Vulgar Latin eventually evolving into what could be considered Proto-Romance
2. Two distinct but related modes, ranging anywhere from a separate phonology alone to a complex code switching relationship (related to 1, but could be below public consciousness); Proto-Romance evolved from Vulgar Latin, but with input from Classical Latin (Posner)
3. Complex but monolingual; favors the evolution of Latin and its divergence from the writing system over divergent language systems (Herman and Wright)

The first is one of the oldest and most studied. Some sixteenth-century thinkers claimed that even in Republican times the Roman populace may have spoken Italian. They did not envisage that languages change over time, merely that one social variant replaces another, when there is a

decay of social constraints. However, this is not indicative of the modern scholarship on the subject, which began in earnest in the 19th century. Since then it has been studied from a systematic linguistic perspective, and has become a successful example for historical and comparative linguistics. Essentially it based on the opinion that Vulgar Latin became the basis for all Romance languages. The second premise is similar, but also provides for the possibility that instead of Classical Latin frozen either in the text or among intellectuals, it was also able to evolve and perhaps influence the language that would be Proto-Romance. A relationship between the two might allow for some incongruities between the supposed status and the writings at the time. The final option is the most recent, and is still evolving today. The second and third often work in tandem, each one forcing the other to revise and expand in turn.

Robin Lakoff 1975 writes that the general issues for historical linguistics and language change are centered around syntax, phonology, semantics, and morphology. However, in terms of morphology the changes affect the syntax and phonology simultaneously when morphological attrition occurs. Lakoff states that problems such as loss of a case system, innovation or assimilation of an article system, and loss of tenses or moods from verbal morphology can be “most satisfactorily dealt with as syntactic changes combined with phonological changes” (Lakoff 1975: 119). This relation reveals the slightly dismissive opinion that many scholars have of morphology. Nevertheless if this is the case, morphology informs the close connection to syntax and phonology.

Within each of these categories are the primary concerns for Latin in the fifth century: the loss of a case system related to word final truncation of lexemes; the loss of contrastive vowel length; and the concordant rise in information given by word order. Phonology and morphology

are closely linked, since they must have evolved simultaneously; with the loss of word final /m/ or vowel length distinctions, some of the morphology reliant on to relay information would have been lost. The syntax and morphology are likewise contingent upon one another to evolve. In a way I see the movement from a complex case system to more syntax, that is, the move from a morphologically rich to a more syntactically rich language, is as a migration of the amount of importance the word order has for deep structure. If the morphology, where previously deep structure information was contained, is radically simplified, then more strain is placed on the syntax to convey information. Generative grammar holds that the theory that inflectional morphology is in the realm of syntax anyway, (Spencer 1991: 28) so couldn't it be plausible that it wasn't difficult for the syntax to become more important and inflection less so thereby diminishing the capacity for productive derivational morphology?

We must differentiate between vocabularies and lexicons. Take for example of the two Latin terms for horse, **caballus* and *equus*. Only the former has survived in Romance languages. The idea that because only *caballus* was found in graffiti and *equus* was only encountered in literature that there must be two separate languages with their own associated lexicons is simplistic, as is an alternative premise that *equus* was solely literary, and thus never uttered aloud. This is the result when some earlier arguments are extended ad absurdum. This is not to say that the theories previously mentioned subscribe to this idea, but it is important to also note what they are not saying. For if we accept that there is a literary vocabulary, whether it is exclusive of or overlaps with a koine vocabulary, then there is the more tender subject of morphology and language change. This distinction is important, for one of the most influential recent theories in Romance linguistics hinges upon it, that of Wright 1982, an alternative to the

theory of diglossia in Latin. The lexicon in the *Psychomachia* is clearly not Vulgar, and contains no apparent dearth of lexical richness, meaning that Prudentius had some access to a vocabulary comparable to Vergil's. Whether or not he used this vocabulary elsewhere is unclear.

5.1.3 Mistakes and Corrective Measures

If these written works progressed alongside the spoken word, even if phonology couldn't be exactified we would still have a clue into how things would have actually sounded. Misspellings can help with phonological variations and morphological changes, while the syntax is visible through the writing itself. Prescriptive writings can help with all three. Linguists use the mistakes and prescriptive teachings sometimes as evidence for a variety of causes, whether it be that the scribes were learning an extinct language, and that they spoke the common language, or that their language was changing for all, including those writing. I will intersperse material on the historical texts or historical information with the theories that they illustrate before dealing more closely with the metalinguistic source material from Prudentius' contemporaries and beyond.

5.2 Theories

5.2.1 Literate Pronunciations

Some Romance philologists who work in the Reconstruction tradition try to reconstruct Proto-Romance "from the evidence of the several subsequently attested Romance languages" believe that "there existed a separate educated 'Latin' pronunciation at that time, consciously differentiated from the normal Early Romance pronunciations" and that "archaic alternatives were not also in use at the same time (Wright 2002:7-8)." According to this theory, the language was changing across the board for the literate and illiterate, but a different sort of pronunciation

allowed spelling and morphology to be somewhat retained for the literate, which in turn allowed them to write using Classical forms. For the *Psychomachia* this implies that all Romans including Prudentius spoke the same language, but that he would have had an alternative phonology when he pronounced that language, perhaps a divergent accent. The public readings of his work would therefore only be intelligible to those who had the same phonological register that the work was pronounced in. According to Herman 1991 Ambrose and Augustine were aware of the differences between the texts they wrote and the way they pronounced their own language (Herman 1991: 32-33).

According to other authors, it appears that as the language changed, speakers of both groups were affected. The morphology and syntax would have likewise changed. Cravens nixes the separate literate phonology theory on the evidence provided by misspellings:

" the ostensibly small number of misspellings we find attested are in fact impressively large, and certainly enough to discount the need to postulate the existence of a separate literate phonology that had not undergone phonetic evolutions. "

(Wright, paraphrasing Cravens 1991: 8)

The idea that only the lower class spoke a different form from the written language is therefore contested, but more importantly, those writing did realize the connections between the written language and the spoken, and tried to subvert the writing system accordingly, even if subconsciously. Those who wrote therefore might have spoken according to a common phonology, although perhaps retaining some earlier phonology for a bit longer according to a sociolinguistic resistance to change. Moreover, the intricate relationships between morphology, phonology, and syntax make it unlikely that the phonology could remain relatively untouched while drastic morphological reduction occurred.

5.2.2 Diglossia

Rather than a separate phonology, some theorists advocate a diglossic relationship between two coexisting variants of Latin, one spoken and one purely literary. This could in fact border on the understanding of a separate phonology. The same problem that unravels the literate phonology argument can be modified to support diglossia: those who were semiliterate, or were taught writing later would have been prone to more mistakes due to their reduced exposure to the formal register. There is also the theory that there were two spoken dialects, but with only one formally literate linguistic group.

As I mentioned earlier, the mistakes that we find in written work are relevant to our understanding of the phonology of the time. Some believe that there are different levels of authenticity of the material: a common scribe would let more 'mistakes' into his writing, whereas someone higher up in the class structure was less likely to slip up in this way. This is important in the discussion of the proposed diglossia. It implies that Latin would have been used or spoken among people of a different class as well as a different education level. This would mean that it would have been spoken in a context outside the common sphere.

The equation of socioeconomic status and education is problematic, however. Herman discloses that "members of the Church, even at low levels, quite naturally were able to read ,and the first signs of decline in this respect would appear only in the middle of the sixth century," meaning that during Prudentius time there would still be a large collection of speakers who were also able to write (Herman 1991: 31). With such a high literacy rate, there would be likewise more room for error. Indeed, the amount of mistakes is extensive, but it is possible that it is merely through rote training that 'more elevated' writers were able to avoid making the same

mistakes. The ancient graffiti found in Rome has been the catalyst and cornerstone for the argument for Vulgar Latin.

Instead of assuming that there was a marked separation between Classical Latin and Vulgar Latin which led to a separation from Latin & Proto-Romance, it is possible that there was extensive code-switching or mixing that occurred. As Wright proffers, "this dissimilarity has led many modern scholars to envisage the literate strata of very early Medieval Romance-speaking Europe as being essentially bilingual" (Wright 1991: 7). The information we have from the Church at the time offers quite a bit of insight into the possible bilingual or diglossic relationship. For example, the Council of Orange in 441 CE decreed the following:

Euangelia deinceps placuit catechumenis legi apud omnem provinciarum nostrarum ecclesiam.

‘Hereafter the Gospel/Message of the catechumen is accustomed to be read among the whole congregation of our provinces’

Herman 1991: 31, translation my own

which according to Herman evidently means that everyone preparing for baptism in Gaul was also able to “follow a recitation of the Latin text of the Gospels (ibid.).” The intelligibility of the recitation is contingent on a factor which we can only theorize about—the pronunciation. But it appears that no matter the pronunciation, the common people were aware of and exposed to written texts by virtue of readings made aloud. Wright uses this to promote his idea of a complex monolingual society with an archaisized writing system, which I will delve into further in the next section.

An exploration into another language's diglossia might be helpful in understanding how Classical Latin and Vulgar Latin or Late Latin and Proto-Romance diglossia might have worked. Although Arabic "is often cited as a perfect case of 'diglossia' " many find that "the true

complexity of the manifold varieties of speech found throughout the Arabic-speaking world," which includes code-switching and an hybridization of the written and vernacular Arabic among the educated, challenges the textbook definition of diglossia as too strict to include any Arabic when closely examined. (14, Essays)

If there is a true diglossia between Latin and Vulgar/Romance, then there is a possibility of language contact between the two, and a hybridization similar to that of Arabic. This oscillation in conversation of 'high' and 'low' forms could combine the written and spoken varieties in "a dynamic and constantly shifting fashion [...] with a complex variety of realizations (Lloyd 1991: 14)." Could this not be deemed a classic example of internal code switching?

In the case of Arabic, scholars agree that it is still only one language, rather than as the divergent dialects proposed for Latin. This is important because those who command both modes see them as a single language, which supports Wright's monolingual theory (next section). Likewise he offers the case of Portuguese and Spanish as a contrastive example: even though they are understood to be two languages, they could be considered one language with two distinct different varieties. Moreover, it is not limited by literacy which portion of the population is bilingual in the two, or which language would be the language learned 'in addition' so that code switching may occur, meaning you could control the literary mode without reading it whatsoever. The conclusion of these two examples is that label of languages versus dialects, varieties, or glosses is not "naturally delimited," although not perhaps wholly arbitrary. Our perspective on Latin and Romance is confused, or perhaps conflated, with the perspective of the speakers of the two purported languages.

5.2.3 Wright and the Carolingian Theory

Wright 1982 challenged the assumption that Late Latin texts, particularly their spelling, were reliable as direct transcription of speech, with each letter corresponding to a sound in the spoken language. This was not a radical or even new idea, since all of comparative reconstruction originated in the recognition that “traditional Latin orthography was not a phonetic transcription of its writers' vernacular (Wright 2002: 303).” But the challenge lay in his argument that they might have been unaware of the different phonetics because they applied their phonological developments to the pronunciation of the text, meaning that the written mode could have been read as Romance all along. The result was to force the linguistic community to reevaluate all work that had been done prior, and to examine in a more subtle way thereafter (Cravens 53). Varvaro outlines the new standards that he believes must be upheld when examining Latin, including that geographical regionalization occurred far later than anticipated, being exhibited from the fifth century onwards, that the consensus remained one of linguistic unity into the sixth century, but that the rift is realized sometime after the year 100. He concludes:

" We consider as unjustified the old hypothesis that there coexisted within Latin from an early date two linguistic strata, one truly 'Latin' and one 'Vulgar Latin.' We also consider as undemonstrable, and indeed improbable, the existence even at a later period of a state of diglossia. Further and with even more justification we reject as no more than an intellectual construct the idea of 'Proto-Romance,' which is, to use a term drawn from the theory of perspective, the vanishing point of the geographical spread of Romance.”

(Varvaro 1991: 47)

Wright has been a proponent of an interesting and, to be honest, sensible hypothesis for how Latin was able to evolve supposedly under the radar for so long. Rather than attempt to cut the Vulgar and Classical Latins apart, we might open up to the possibility that there was in fact

only one language, certainly with different registers. This entails that everything written is merely the result of a highly demanding writing system. As the orthography and phonetics diverged, he concludes that the writing became more logographic in basis. Just as the Romans themselves considered their written language to have “the same linguistic essence as colloquial” (Herman 1991:31), so Wright believes they were essentially monolingual, and this dovetails with their own belief that there was one complex language. It may seem that he replaces the argument for diglossia with a subconscious diglossia that occurs only due to "conservativism of the written language” (Wright 2002: 8). In actuality he would prefer that no argument for diglossia prevail. Wright offered his theory in 1982, but the repercussions of his ideas are felt even now. In the world of classical philology, the 1980's are relatively recent.

Essentially he took a vein of scholarship begun by Jozsef Herman and others and pushed it even to its limits. Because of this extreme stance it is easy to deflate some of his arguments. The most contentious part of his theory regards the Carolingian reforms and the status of Latin in the eighth century, and his belief that Latin was 'invented' during that time period. This essentially stalls the progression forward in the written language and 'backdates' it so that it fits more with the Classical or Late Latin texts, creating an artificial Medieval Latin. Thus the written language eventually did not indicate the way that anyone including the literate spoke. Posner 1996 is dismissive of this very argument. Wright has been accused that he "abuses the label of 'Latin' to include both the written form of the Latin/Romance of western Europe and the vernacular language, as two forms of the 'same' language," (Wright 2002:11).

Walsh in particular has some misgivings about Wright, most of which deal with tenth and eleventh century developments, but it is worth noting here. After acceding that some passages

may have followed his hypothesis and been intelligible when read with vernacular pronunciation, Walsh contends that some "would have been indecipherable to the native speaker" when read (Walsh 1991: 206). He does bring up the point that we drastically butcher the Latin language to fit into our own phonological systems, "even we, who can easily consult the work of fellow twentieth century linguists who have reconstructed Classical Latin phonology, persist in pronouncing Latin through our native systems (Walsh 1991: 207)." Walsh further complicates the matter by reminding us that there were two different levels of writing: the ecclesiastical and notarial (ibid.), which do show some interesting differences, suggesting that different levels or types of education available to each group.

Wright does not imply that there was no evolution within illiterate communities, but indeed that characteristics of Romance rather than Latin were already developing at the end of the Roman Empire. These developments are supposedly found across Europe precisely because of the linguistic unity of the Roman Empire. As Varvaro 1991 explains, the best documented innovations or deviations are similar throughout the Empire, implying that "the Roman world was linguistically homogeneous (Varvaro 1991:48)."

Essentially Wright is offering that Late Latin might share some aspects with Modern English or French: although our orthography would imply that *thought* and *drought* are to be pronounced the same, and with apparently some velar action in both, they are pronounced rather differently. French is an even better example, since the endings of words are drastically reduced, and yet intelligibility has not been lost. It is our education that allows us to use an outdated writing system, and thus there would have to have been some means of teaching these paradigms to writers. If Prudentius had mastered the orthography, then he might be able to write his works

with no problems posed for morphology or syntax. However, if this discrepancy existed below the public consciousness, then he might have lacked an integral component to poetry—the sound of each word and length of each syllable. In 5.3.3, I will examine what evidence there is for teaching Latin orthography.

5.3 Metalinguistic Change

Just as we sometimes subconsciously assume that our Western practice of “pronouncing the texts with a sound for each written letter of standard spellings” (Wright 2002: 9) is how Romans must have viewed their writing, we assume they saw their language as we do. Up to this point the debates have only concerned modern interpretations of what languages existed in the fifth century Roman Empire. Surely diachronic analysis requires temporal distance since language doesn't appear to change to those who speak it. Yet scholars have more recently searched for what Romans thought of their own language: what they might have found troublesome. Sociolinguistics gives us the idea that language change can come from above or below; the historical importance has been placed on change from below, by examining graffiti and misspellings, but what changes were the writers of the time cognizant of? What information can we garner from society?

All of the historical/comparative theories must contend with the evidence already found, and be able to disproven or proven by what may yet be found. These are not always taken into consideration. There is another more delicate question, asking but they must also fit what the Romans thought or understood about their language. Some of this has to do with our own modern quibbles, as well, unfortunately. Summarizing Lloyd, his stance is that languages “can only seriously be regarded as being different entities from one another if their actual speakers

think they are different languages” (Wright 1991: 7). Janson, concerned primarily with society's naming their own languages, goes one step further in his belief that "identification of the existence of separate languages, where once was thought to be one complex single language, follows rather than precedes the establishment of separate written norms” (Wright 1991: 7).

According to Posner (1996: 105), the distinction between *lingua latina* and *lingua romana*, referring to the written and spoken languages respectively, was not made until the ninth century. It is implied that at the same time of Charlemagne's language reforms for Church Latin in 813 CE, or perhaps due to them, speakers finally 'recognized' or 'realized' that Latin and Romance were different languages.

But there are writers who notice a difference in the modes they employ dating back to the Golden Age; Cicero and Quintilian aware that their vernacular or informal literate language contrasted with the "forms of speech utilized in arguing law cases” (Lloyd 1991: 14), much as we might have grossly different types of English for different settings.

It was the Church, however, that offered the greatest amount of contemporary analysis of the language. The Church's objective to spread the word, so to speak, required that their message be intelligible and as uncryptic as possible. The problems encountered can typify the issues faced by Proto-Romance speakers, since the Church and its reach were so vast. The documentation we have from the ecclesiastical corpus offers information about "Christian views on communication and communicability, the metalinguistic stand of Christian authors on the relation between the texts and the uttered and perceived spoken language,” all of which “can be considered as representative of the Latin linguistic situation at large” (Herman 1991: 31).

Therefore, despite the favorable outlook that the decree from the Council of Orange

places on the intelligibility of written Latin, it must be noted that not all Church officials were assured of the public understanding. Some Christian writers in the fourth century felt hindered in communicating to the public not only because of the style of writing but of a systemic disconnect between their writing and pronunciation. Augustine of Hippo references the apparent difference in the formation of active versus passive verbs with the added variable of deponent verbs thrown in (Herman 1991: 33). This is huge, since it implies semantic change simultaneous with syntactic or morphological changes. He "accepts as rightful a usage in which verbs with an active construction always have an active form" (ibid)- that is, deponents do not exist in the language of the day. He also uses that platform to advocate for the merits of barbarisms (more vernacular forms), if helpful in spreading the Church's message.

5.3.1 Phonology

As I mentioned earlier regarding the Council of Orange, the phonology is the most important aspect to the debate of what was Latin, and the general awareness of who spoke it. Regarding a text such as the *Psychomachia*, the phonological issues that must be confronted in particular is the question of vowel length and the loss of vowel distinctions according to length.

The problems that lie within the option are whether or not the vowel length was lost entirely or if there was a gradual weakening, whether the vowel length was replaced by accent, and how aware the populace was of this change. According to Herman (regarding Prudentius contemporaries), "all grammarians are completely adamant about the necessary distinction of long and short vowels, and very much aware of current 'mistakes.'" (Herman 1991: 6). This contends with Wright's idea that grammarians used *brevis* and *longa* only as a technicality or terminology, asserting that Pompeius did fully understand the distinction of lengths (ibid.).

Simultaneously he maintained that authors did make mistakes and recommend obsolete forms, implying they had some form of institutional memory, but that they are:

"more or less permissive with regard to some minor changes, they always condemn the tendencies which could endanger the syllabic structure of the word; confusion of simple and double consonants, metatheses, and syncopes.

(ibid.)

According to Smith, finished hexameter works were to be read among "small groups, if not individually (Smith 1991, 30)" implying that the poetry would have been at least partially understood. Written texts when read aloud posed no problem for the general public, provided that the authors took care with slow and clear pronunciation and simplicity of word choice and structure: no undue hypotaxis (Herman 1991: 37). Hypotaxis is the extensive use of subclauses in writing or speech, as opposed to paratactic construction, which prefers more separate units without nesting in one another; more discussion can be found in Section 3.2. Could this support the theory of separate educated pronunciation? Or Wright's hypothesis that the pronunciation reflected the actual Proto-Romance phonology? Either way, the *Psychomachia*, like most poetry, contains far more paratactic constructions as opposed to hypotaxis.

Herman elaborates on an issue which Augustine had with *os* 'bone', preferring to use the analogical *ossum* in order to keep it distinct from *o:s* so that they might not be confused, implying a situation in which the quantitative vowel distinctions were lost. Phonological distinction between the two had been altogether forgotten. Simultaneously Herman states that Augustine's comment is:

"linguistically significant, as it establishes the necessity--which certainly was already clearly felt in 'popular' speech--to accept the structural rearrangements in inflectional and derivational morphology which inevitably followed from the loss of quantitative vowel-distinctions."

(Herman 1991: 32)

The loss of quantitative vowel distinctions was thus felt among some writers and that reparations were made to the writing to account for it. However, it is interesting that the example provided, that of *os* and *ossum*, involves a geminate, which would imply a 'heavy' penultimate syllable. Could this stipulation involve the remnants of the weight of the long vowel?

5.3.2 Syntax

According to Pinkster, the two postulated languages (Latin vs. Proto-Romance) do not have that different of a structure. It is also important to remember however that the two languages might not have a definite linguistic structure when writing due to orthographical convention; in other words, the writing style might also poorly reflect the syntax means taken when saying things aloud. According to Posner the text called *Peregrinatio Aetherae*, written by a nun about her pilgrimage to the Holy Land “dated, on external evidence to between AD 363 and 431” contained various syntactic changes including a “comparative infrequency of the verb-last ordering that characterized Classical Latin,” and a prevalence of SVO order, which is a given with all Romance languages (Posner, 1996: 103).

5.3.3 Education/Legacy

Wright informs us that there is “no record of any pedagogical method that was then used to teach, learn and study Latin as a foreign language (Wright 2002:3)” The evidence suggests instead that any pedagogy was created to “increase the literary skills of those who already spoke Latin (ibid).” It was not until the fourth century CE that Aelius Donatus wrote compiled the *Ars Grammatica*, which was comprised of two volumes, a long one dedicated to style and a short one, known as the *Ars Maior* and the *Ars Minor* respectively. The *Ars Minor* was strictly

concerned with grammar, and therefore “came to be the basis for all subsequent linguistic education in Latin (Wright 2002: 7), and the basics of the language were organized for elementary study. Donatus felt the need to provide morphological paradigms of nouns and pronouns and the synopses of verbs which Latin students have learned to loathe. To write correctly at the time was to reproduce forms of words as the writers of the Augustan Age might have used. The paradigms helped systematize the way that writers learned what the correct forms were. That there was such a market for a transcription of this type implied that they could “not be trusted to come naturally to the mind of the contemporary native speakers (ibid),” which fits the reconstructionist reasoning that nominal morphology was in the process of reduction in the speech of all. Learning Latin becomes study of orthography, rather than syntax or pronunciation.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, scholars generally concede that the “birth of separate Romance languages” occurred much later than the political fall of the Roman Empire. Simultaneously, there is significant evidence that many monolingual linguistic variations were already present in the fifth century, when Prudentius wrote. Ironically, given epic poetry's roots as a performative modus, I doubt the *Psychomachia* would have been meant to be performed aloud for a large audience. However, it might have been given private readings. As I prove in the next section, the scansion appears to be correct, but perhaps based a little more on the appearance of the words than the intrinsic vowel qualities.

Research has been largely focused on nonlyrical sources, reaching from secular graffiti to ecclesiastical prose. The dismissal of poetry from the body of input to the efforts on

reconstruction is based on the assumption that it is so artificially created that it offers no insight. But it is precisely that artifice which intrigues me. I am not well-versed enough in reconstructed Late Latin to offer an alternative phonological reading of Prudentius, but I think that it's safe to say that if Wright's hypothesis applies to the fifth century, Prudentius would only be Virgilian in appearance. The poetry's success would offer two interpretations: that Prudentius had the means to learn the orthographical conventions while speaking a rather different form, the idea Wright advocates, or that he spoke the elevated register in diglossic comparison to Proto-Romance. The study of poetry offers another alternative to the assumption that there is nothing more to do because our supply of data, in the form of texts and of modern day language counterparts, is finite.

6. Reconstructions

The text that I glossed, the *Psychomachia*, was published in 405 and likely written sometime in the 12 years prior. Although it utilizes classical morphology, and classical poetic syntax, it was written right when many of the scholars previously mentioned assume Latin had already begun to bifurcate into a specialized written form and some type of Proto-Romance. Despite the obvious contention among the previously mentioned scholars over this dialectization, all of their varied theories do not contest the idea that Proto-Romance did in fact descend from some form of Latin. It is the question of when the two diverged that causes such embroilment among Romanist scholars. In this section I shall give a relatively undisputed reconstruction of Proto-Romance. By this I mean what is generally believed to have occurred to the language phonologically, without regards to timing or location. First I will outline some of the classical forms most likely to have changed then.

6.1 Classical Conventions

6.1.1 Vowels: Long vs. Short

Classical Latin phonology contained five monophthongs which could be either long or short, and three diphthongs which were considered to have the same 'length' as a long vowel. Although Latin speakers realized the connection between a vowel's long and short realizations, the vowels were still separate phonemes, as evidenced by the following sentences and examples. (For the sake of clarity and convention, I have omitted the breves except where they are a distinguishing marker.)

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Mens-ă
table-NOM | mens-ă
measure-PERF.PASS.PPL.F.S.NOM | est.
be.PRES.3.S |
| | | The table has been measured. | |
| 2. | Mens-ā | mens-ă | est. |

table-ABL	measure-PERF.PASS.PPL.F.S.NOM	be.PRES.3.S
She's been judged by the table (connoting guests at a table).		

māl-um	māl-um
evil-NOM/ACC	apple-N.NOM

It is a convention among modern classical scholars to use macrons and breves to signify long and short vowels, respectively. However, it was not an orthographical convention for the actual speakers of Latin. In order to speak Latin, vowel length would have to be learnt in order to distinguish minimal pairs; by extension a speaker would know the vowel length of every vowel in every word. This feat that would be unimpressive to a Latin speaker in the first century, as it would be learned as the speaker acquired the language in childhood.

Long vowels and short vowels at some point converged and the phonological inventory was reduced. As I mentioned in section 5, there is little evidence of a system in place to teach anything beyond paradigmatic information to the educated or scribes. Either long vowels must have been maintained by some speakers and therefore taught to the younger or there was an artificial way to learn this that has never been recovered. However, long and short vowel did not merely merge according to their place of articulation: the phoneme's accent decided what vowel it would become, changing not only manner of articulation, but also place.

6.1.2 Accent and Stress

Accent or stress in Latin falls on the penult or antepenult, depending on the weight of both of these syllables. When modern Latin students attempt to read Classical Latin poetry aloud, they often try to place stress on long syllables. Although stress is in part determined by the length of the vowel, it is not necessarily the case that stress will fall on the long vowels within a word. It is the 'weight' of the syllables which determines where the stress will fall.

According to Posner:

“The position of the accent in Latin was determined by morpheme and syllable structure, and was not distinctive. Within the word (not including any clitics, but embracing also affixes) the accent fell on the penultimate syllable, except when that syllable was light - that is, contained a short vowel not followed by a tautosyllabic consonant.”

(Posner 1996: 108)

Intriguingly, Spencer would seem to disagree with that claim, stating that the placement of *-que* is “arguably determined in the phonology component (Spencer 1991: 459)” although he formerly stated that the only constraint placed upon its attachment was syntactic rather than morphological (43).

Essentially, accent as a rule falls on the penultimate syllable, but if that syllable were light it would transfer to the antepenultimate syllable, if it existed. In monosyllabic morphemes accent is obviously on the ultimate syllable, and in disyllabic morphemes accent is always penultimate, even if that syllable is light. There were two ways a syllable might be 'heavy:'

1. It contained a long vowel or diphthong.
2. The syllable had a CVC* construction; that is, there was a consonant at the end of the syllable (tautosyllabic consonant).

The postulated change from tonal to stress accentuation in later Latin is related to the syncope of unaccented vowel between stressed syllables (Posner 1996: 99), meaning that vowels were sometimes deleted when located between two stressed syllables.

According to Posner long vowels and geminates were sometimes orthographically confused, implying that there was some interchange between long vowel and long consonants. Therefore *mu:cus* was sometimes written as *muccus*, and *to:tus* as *tottus*. (Posner 1996: 106)

6.2 Phonology in Proto-Romance

As anyone who speaks a Romance language could have guessed, as Latin grew into

Proto-Romance, the separate phonemes of long and short vowels were lost, either absorbed by other phonemes or simply shortening. It is remarkable that the phonological change depended upon not only whether the vowel in question was long or short, but also if stress fell upon it.

Although the source is somewhat dated, Tore Janson 1979 provides a simple yet comprehensive explanation of what the shift might have been. He characterizes the vowels as either 'tonic' or 'pretonic,' but from what I can glean from the text, this corresponds directly to accentuated and non-accentuated vowels. Janson adapted his table from Bec:1971, and I have further adapted it here:

Accented Vowels

Latin V	ī	ĩ	ē	ě	ā	ǎ	ō	ō	ũ	ū
PrRom V	i		e	ε	a		ɔ		u	

Non-accented Vowels

Latin V	ī	ĩ	ē	ě	ā	ǎ	ō	ō	ũ	ū
PrRom	i		e		a		o		u	

As mentioned previously, most languages that descended from Latin keep some of the distinctions that were once marked by length by changing the quality of one of the phonemes.

As Posner explains “inherited short vowels tend to have lower pronunciation than long vowels”

(Posner 1996: 107); [e:] for instance, would be shortened to [e], whereas [e] lowered to [ε]. In

Romance the diphthongs *oe* and *ae* merged into the long and short [e] respectively. The

diphthong *au*, which in popular Latin usage seems to have merged with [o:] is retained in some

Romance languages, but merges eventually with [o] in most.

Since the morphological affixes occur word finally, this means (or is due to) the morphological complexity was lost as the phonology changed. Alternatively, one could imagine that as the complexity was abandoned, the phonology changed accordingly. In Latin every phoneme had something to do with its morpheme's role in the sentence, whereas in Romance the noun can convey the lexical content and the number. Words that had once been definitely ablative or accusative could be mistaken for other cases. More strain was placed on the syntax, and word order became less free. This loss of word-final morphological markers was introduced long before Prudentius' era, however, with some markers supposed to have been lost earlier than others. For example:

“the -M accusative mark is known not to have been 'fully' pronounced even in prestigious Golden Age usage : final -M did not count as separating syllables in metric and it was frequently omitted in graphy in early and late texts.”

(Posner 1996: 119)

It is assumed that it was, at most, a graphical representation for nasalization of the preceding vowel, and that the nasal quality was lost in the Romance languages.

7. *Scansion*

Attached is the pdf print out of the scansion, followed by a brief discussion with conclusions.

Scansion: Dactylic Hexameter

310. vēnerāt occiduis mundi de finibus hostis
311. Luxuria extinctae iamdudum prodiga famae
312. delibuta comas oculis vaga languida voce
313. perditā deliciis vitae cui causa voluptas
314. elumbem mollire animū petulanter amoenas
315. haurire inlecebras et fractos solvere sensus
316. ac tunc pervigilem ructabat marcidā cenam
317. sub lucem quia forte iacens ad fercula raucos
318. audierat lituos atque inde tepentia linquens
319. pocula lapsanti per vina et balsamā gressu
320. ebria calcatis ad bellum floribus ibat
321. non tamen illa pedes, sed currū invecta venusto
322. saucia mirantum capiebat corda virorum
323. o nova pugnandi species! non ales harundo
324. nervum pulsa fugit, nec stridula lancea torto
325. emicat amento, frameam nec dextra minatur
326. sed violas lasciva iacit foliisque rosarum
327. dimicat et calathos inimica per agmina fundit.
328. inde eblanditis virtutibus halitus inlex

329. īnspirat tenerum labefacta per ossa venenum,
330. et male dulcis odor domat ora et pectora et arma
331. ferratosque toros obliso robore mulcet.
332. deiciunt animos ceu victi et spicula ponunt,
333. turpiter, heu, dextris languentibus obstupefacti
334. dum currum varia gemmarum luce micantem
335. mirantur, dum bratteolis crepitantia lora
336. et solido ex auro pretiosi ponderis axem
337. defixis inhiant obtutibus et radiorum
338. argento albentem seriem, quam summa rotarum
339. flexura electri pallentis continet orbe.
340. et iam cuncta acies indeditionis amorem
341. sponte sua versis transibat perfida signis
342. Luxuriae servire volens dominaeque fluentis
343. iura patitur et laxa ganeorum lege teneri.
344. ingemuit tam triste nefas fortissima virtus
345. Sobrietas, dextro socios decedere cornu
346. invictamque manum quondam sine caede perire.
347. vexillum sublime crucis, quod in agmine primo
348. dux bona praetulerat, defixa cuspide sistit,

349. īnstauratque levem dictis mordacius alam
350. exstimulans animos nunc probis, nunc prece mixta:
-
407. sic effata crucem domini ferventibus offert
408. obvia quadrigius, ligum venerabile in ipsos
409. intentans frenos. quod ut expavere feroces
410. cornibus obpansis et summa fronte coruscum,
411. vertunt praecipitem caeca formidine fusi
412. per praeruta fugam. fertur resupina reductis
413. nequiquam loris auriga comamque madentem
414. pulvere foedatur. tunc et uertigo rotarum
415. implicat excussam domina, nam prona sub axem
416. labitus et lacero tradat sufflamine currum.
417. addit Sobrietas vulnus letale iacenti,
418. coniciens silicem rupis de parte molarem.
419. hunc vexilliferae quoniam fors obtulit ictum
420. spicula nulla manu sed belli insigne gerenti,
421. casus agit saxum, medii spiramen ut oris
422. frangeret, et recavo misceret labra palato
423. dentibus introsum resolutis lingua resectam

424. dilaniata gulam frustris cum sanguinis inplet.
425. insolitis dapibus creudescit guttur, et ossa
426. conliquefacta vorans revomit quas hauserat offas.
427. "ebibe iam proprium post pocula multa cruorem,"
428. virgo ait increpitans, "sint haec tibi fercula tandem
429. tristia praeteriti nimiis pro dulcibus aevi.
430. lascivas vitae inlecebras gustatus amarae
431. mortis et horrifico sapor ultimus asperat haustu."
432. caede ducis dispersa fugit trepidante pavore
433. nugatrix acies.

7.2 Conclusions

To reiterate, the *Psychomachia* is written in dactylic hexameter. Although our tendency is to assume length to be the same as accent, this is not how Classical Latin is assumed to have been read. It is important to remember that accent, while related to vowel length, does not simply fall on a long vowel. It might have been that words retained their prose accent while the meter was fulfilled by the weight of vowels alone. One must wonder, however, that as long and short vowel distinctions were lost they would have affected the reading of the Latin. However, in the *Psychomachia* the meter is still determined by vowel length. Since the meter did not change from its classical norms and become accentual meter, at least in the *Psychomachia*. This means there must have been some understanding or prescriptive mandate for meter according to syllable weight. In poetry it is important to note that some vowels were long by position whereas others were lexically determined. Those containing lexically determined long vowels were the first contended with by the poet when they began composing a line, since each would cut down the possible ways to structure a line. The poet might then place the remaining words various places to force vowels to fit the meter. Length by position could be fiddled with through simply a necessity of the meter or by placing a word initial consonant cluster after a vowel, forcing it to be understood as long, although classically there are some exceptions to which clusters must lengthen a vowel. It is the sensitivity to lexically determined long vowels as evidenced by correct usage with which I am most concerned. Moreover the prevalence of one type over another could signify Prudentius' comfort with the language.

The scansion here is unremarkable in the sense that it has no outstanding errors that I can see. There are relatively few ambiguous lines, and it flows well. Although the meter is not as artfully employed as by Virgil for instance, it still works. Meter is merely satisfied rather than

being an additional rhetorical device at the poet's disposal. The general faithfulness to the meter does not mean that Prudentius had either learned vowel lengths or still had them in his phonological register however. I contend that the scansion does not entail that Prudentius knew the vowel lengths, but that it is likely he did have some knowledge of them. He can determine which syllables would be heavy by position but does not seem to rely on as many vowels that might be long by nature, focusing on tautosyllabic consonants and diphthongs to determine weight instead. However he does use length to untangle certain lines. For instance, in line 312 the scansion allows for the sentence to be read correctly. Rather than reading it as

delibuta coma:s oculi:s vaga: languid: voce
set as to her hair with eye and with wandering, languid voice

using ablatives to describe her voice, the scansion requires that it be read as such:

delibuta coma:s oculi:s vaga languida voce
set as to her hair, wandering as to her eyes, languid in her voice.

Which differs in that the adjectives, now nominative, modify Luxuria paired with the eyes and voice in ablatives of description.

Another intriguing matter is that he consistently places the caesuras in the middle of feet of the line, as though it were on purpose. This is an unexpected aberration; it could mean that the rhythm of the meter itself had changed. I believe that Prudentius was using an antiquated weight system, relying on a combination of vowel quantity and stress to determine the meter. The length of vowels was still known, although it is unclear whence this knowledge came.

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