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# The Blackwell History of the Latin Language



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James Clackson and Geoffrey Horrocks



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# Preface

The impetus to write this book came after teaching various joint courses on Latin historical linguistics to undergraduates reading Classics at Cambridge over the past ten years. Although we consistently recommended L. R. Palmer's *The Latin Language* to students as a readable account of the history of the language, we became increasingly aware of some of the shortcomings that have become apparent in the 50 years since Palmer's book was written. In particular, there have been considerable advances in linguistic theory and method, as well as important discoveries of texts in Latin (and in the other languages spoken in pre-Roman Italy), and a better understanding of the Indo-European background to the language. Furthermore, Palmer has comparatively little to say about the processes by which Latin became standardized, nor did he have the advantage of modern sociolinguistic theory to help explain the interactions between the spoken language and the Classical standard. Accordingly, we set out to write a new history of Latin that overcame some of the shortcomings we saw in Palmer. We decided to model the structure of the work on Geoff Horrocks's book *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers*, including detailed discussion of a number of texts from all periods with glossing for each word. In this way we hope that the book will be accessible to those who have little or no Latin, but are interested in linguistics or language history, as well as to classics undergraduates, graduates and professional Latinists. In order to appeal to this large and diverse constituency we have included expositions of some topics which may be familiar to some readers, such as the comparative method in historical

linguistics, but we hope that all readers will find something new. We have included a glossary of some linguistic terms for Latinists who are new to the subject; these readers may also find an introductory volume to historical linguistics helpful, such as Herbert Schendl *Historical Linguistics* (Oxford, 2001) or Mark Hale *Historical Linguistics: Theory and Method* (Oxford, 2007).

There are other changes of emphasis from Palmer's work. On the whole our focus has been on Latin as a language, and its relationship to the history of Rome and Roman imperialism. We have in consequence concentrated more on linguistic than stylistic issues, and we have been less concerned to describe the particular idioms and vocabulary choices of Roman literary figures, except in so far as they have proved important for the subsequent development of Latin. Accordingly, the reader should not expect to find here very much in the way of appreciations of the music of Vergilian verse or descriptions of the metrical patterns found at the end of periodic sentences (*clausulae*) in Classical prose, though the latter are very briefly considered in chapter VI. We have not presented a systematic overview of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language, concentrating instead on specifics where these are relevant to the history of linguistic innovations and replacements. The necessary basic information can be easily found in standard grammars and handbooks. Finally, we devote proportionately much less space to the development of the Latin vocabulary than Palmer, who was writing before the publication of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and when the ongoing *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* was still in its infancy. These works now allow the reader to trace word histories in a much more systematic way than was possible when *The Latin Language* came out, and we have preferred to restrict the space given to lexical discussions in order to allow a corresponding increase in the exposition of syntactic changes.

We hope that readers will benefit from being able to appreciate the history of Latin in its entirety, from the pre-historic origins to the end of its existence as a language with native speakers. But we are aware that people have many different needs from a book such as this, and some may prefer to read a chapter at a time. In view of this, we have decided to present specific bibliographies for each chapter. We have also appended a further bibliography of standard and useful reference works at the end of the volume.

Of the eight chapters of this book, we each took individual responsibility for four: James Clackson wrote the outer chapters, I, II, VII and VIII and Geoff Horrocks wrote the inner core: chapters III, IV, V and VI. All translations of Latin texts cited are our own. We each read, commented on and discussed the other's work in draft. We have also benefited from the input of successive groups of students taking the 'E3'

course at the Classics Faculty who were unwitting guinea pigs as readers of many of the Latin texts that appear in this book. We are particularly grateful to Jim Adams, for allowing us to use material from his forthcoming book *Regional Diversity in Latin*, and to Michael Crawford, for giving us access to his new reading of CIL I<sup>2</sup> 5. An anonymous and well-informed reader for Blackwell's saved us from innumerable errors and made many welcome and constructive suggestions for improvement. The usual disclaimers apply, of course. And finally we wish to thank Anna Oxbury for copyediting our manuscript so expertly and professionally, and for devising a range of excellent solutions to rather complex problems of layout and presentation.

We dedicate our book to Gill Horrocks and Véronique Mottier.



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# Chapter I

## Latin and Indo-European

### 1.1 Introduction

Latin is an Indo-European language. This means that Latin is genetically related to most of the modern (and the ancient) languages of Europe, as well as many languages of India, Iran and Central Asia. The genetic relationship accounts for the large numbers of similarities, both in vocabulary and in grammar, between Latin and Greek, Sanskrit, Gothic, Old Irish and many other ancient languages which no alternative hypothesis (such as chance similarity, linguistic borrowing or convergence) can explain. Over the last 200 years linguists have undertaken a systematic comparison of the similarities between the Indo-European (henceforth IE) languages to build up a picture of what the non-attested parent ('Proto-Indo-European', henceforth PIE) must have looked like. The reconstruction of PIE is, in places, highly abstract and highly complex, and for many individual features there is still considerable debate amongst experts in the field as to which reconstruction is the most plausible. Even so, it is possible to arrive at a picture of the parent language which is widely accepted, and use that to set the background to the development of Latin. The reader will have to take much of what is said about PIE on trust in this chapter, since this is not a book about PIE, but about Latin.

Why should the historian of Latin be interested in PIE? Apart from the intrinsic interest of knowing the relationships between Latin and other languages, we can suggest a number of reasons. Firstly, in order to understand the development of Latin, it is necessary to see what it started out

as. Thus the development of the Latin verbal system, or Latin word order, has its roots already in PIE structures. Secondly, a knowledge of the background to Latin can help assess the question of its relationship to neighbouring languages – as we shall see in the next chapter. Thirdly, a knowledge of PIE may actually help us to understand some features of Latin vocabulary or grammar. To take a single example, one of the earliest Latin inscriptions known is a sixth century graffito scratched around a pottery vessel, known as the ‘Duenos vase’ (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 4, see 1.4.5 below). The final 15 letters of the inscription read *nemedmalostatod*, and this was long recognized as *ne med malos (s)tatod* an earlier form of *ne me malus stato* not me-ACC bad-NOM set.3sg.IMPER ‘let no bad man set me’, although the use of the verb *sto* ‘I stand, set’ in this context was unexplained. Comparative Indo-European linguistics, however, offered a solution to this problem (first proposed by Rix 1985). Other IE languages, such as Irish and Hittite, share a verbal root which can be reconstructed as *\*tā-* (*\*teh<sub>2</sub>-*) and which means ‘steal’. If we assume that this verbal root also survived into an early stage of Latin, then we can interpret the sequence as *ne me malus \*tato* not me-ACC bad-NOM steal.3sg.IMPER ‘let no bad man steal [me]’, a commonplace formula on inscriptions on moveable objects in the ancient world. This attestation remains the only appearance of this verbal root in the whole Latin corpus, and its meaning is only recoverable through IE comparison.

## 1.2 The IE Language Family

The IE language family comprises over 80 different languages and varieties. All of the living languages, and most of the varieties which are no longer spoken can be assigned to one of the subgroups of the family. Some ancient languages have left such scanty remains that their position in the family, and in some cases, even their membership of the family, remains in doubt. As we shall see in the next chapter, some of these scantily attested languages are relevant to the early history of Latin, and we shall discuss them in more detail there. Here we shall confine ourselves to giving an overview of the different branches of the IE language family.

- 1 *Anatolian*. The Anatolian branch is the earliest attested branch of Indo-European. The best attested language in the Anatolian family is Hittite, which is written in the cuneiform script, adopted from Semitic languages of the ancient Near East and for which the earliest texts date from the sixteenth century BC. A number of other languages are now also recognized to belong to the Anatolian family. Two others are recorded from the period before 1000 BC, both

in cuneiform (Palaic and Luwian – Luwian is also attested in a hieroglyphic script which is not used for any other language), and from a later period other languages are recorded in alphabetic scripts, including Lydian, Lycian and Carian.

- 2 *Greek*. The Greek branch of Indo-European is the second earliest attested, with texts written in the Linear B syllabary surviving from the fourteenth century BC and later. Greek is extensively attested in alphabetic script from the eighth century BC onwards.
- 3 *Indo-Iranian*. The two large language families termed Indic and Iranian share a number of common innovations which guarantee that they both derive from the same branch of Indo-European. The first evidence for Indo-Iranian is also in the second millennium BC, and consists in the inclusion of some terms and phrases relating to riding and horsemanship in cuneiform sources. The major early textual remains of the Indic branch are the hymns of the Rg-Veda (written in an archaic form of Sanskrit, often termed Vedic), and of the Iranian branch the Gathas, the hymns attributed to Zarathrustra in the Avesta (their language is known as Avestan or Gathic Avestan). Both of these texts were orally transmitted for centuries before being written down, but internal evidence suggests that they are both of great antiquity, and scholars generally assign a date to around 1000 BC for the composition of the Gathas and a couple of centuries earlier for the oldest Vedic hymns. Indo-Iranian, Greek and Anatolian are the three most important branches for the reconstruction of PIE.
- 4 *Latin and the languages of Italy*. As we shall see in the next chapter, it is a moot point how closely the IE languages of Italy are related to each other. Several subgroups are recognizable: Latino-Faliscan, comprising Latin and the neighbouring language Faliscan which are attested from the seventh–sixth century BC, although the early inscriptions are short and difficult to interpret in both languages; the Sabellian group, known principally through Oscan and Umbrian and attested first in the South Picene inscriptions which date from the sixth century BC; Venetic, attested in short inscriptions from the sixth century BC is also IE. The Messapic language, attested from inscriptions from the same date in the area at the extreme south-west of Italy shows greater divergence from the other languages of Italy.
- 5 *Celtic*. The only surviving languages of the Celtic branch are Irish, Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Breton, but the family once extended over a much wider section of Western Europe. The earliest attestations of Celtic are inscriptions from France, Italy and Spain in the centuries immediately before and after the beginning of the Christian era. Extensive textual evidence for Celtic is much later, with the first Old Irish glosses recorded in the seventh century AD. The interrelationship

of the Celtic languages is still debatable, but the following subgroups are recognized:

- (a) Goidelic: the branch which comprises Irish, Scots Gaelic and Manx.
- (b) Brythonic: the branch which comprises Welsh, Cornish and Breton.
- (c) Celtiberian, known from inscriptions in Spain.
- (d) Gaulish, known from inscriptions mainly in France.
- (e) Lepontic, known from inscriptions in northern Italy.

Owing to an imperfect knowledge of branches (c), (d) and (e), it is difficult to be sure whether a ‘continental Celtic’ sub-group, comprising all the Celtic languages from outside the British Isles with the exception of Breton, actually reflects any linguistic reality.

- 6 *Germanic*. The Germanic language group is first known from sources in the first millennium BC; the first extensive text is the Gothic Bible translation made in the fourth century. Old English is attested from the eighth century, and Old High German, Old Saxon and Old Norse from the following century.
- 7 *Armenian*. The Armenian branch comprises just one language, known in its classical form from the Bible translation and theological and historical works written in the fifth century AD.
- 8 *Slavic*. The first texts to record a Slavic language are the Bible version and translations of Greek texts made by Cyril and Methodius in the late ninth century.
- 9 *Baltic*. The Baltic subgroup comprises Lithuanian, Latvian and the now extinct Old Prussian. The first texts were written in the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries.
- 10 *Albanian*. Albanian has only a relatively shallow time depth, being first attested in texts written by missionaries and others from the late Middle Ages to the early modern period.
- 11 *Other poorly attested languages*. There are also a number of languages which are only known from short inscriptional texts or glosses recorded by Classical authors which are reckoned to be IE, but whose relationship to other languages remains in doubt. These include Phrygian, Thracian, Illyrian, Sicel and Lusitanian.

### 1.3 Reconstructed PIE

The reconstruction of PIE entails the assumption that a single language was spoken at some point in time from which all the different IE varieties have evolved. However, the reconstructed picture can never reach the stage of giving an adequate description of PIE. This is due to the nature of reconstruction through the **comparative method** (CM). The CM operates

through identification of sets of correspondences in languages which are known to be related, and forming of hypotheses to explain the correspondence. We may, for example construct a correspondence set of word forms with identical meaning and similarity of form, as follows:

Latin	Greek	Sanskrit	English
<i>pater</i>	<i>patēr</i>	<i>pitar-</i>	<i>father</i>
<i>pes</i>	<i>poús</i>	<i>pad-</i>	<i>foot</i>
<i>plenus</i>	<i>plērēs</i>	<i>pūrná-</i>	<i>full</i>
<i>pro</i>	<i>pró</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>for</i>
<i>pellis</i>	<i>pélas</i>		Old English <i>fēll</i> 'hide'
<i>pecu</i>		<i>paśú</i>	Old English <i>fēoh</i> 'livestock'
<i>piscis</i>			<i>fish</i>

In all these words (and several others) we see a correspondence between initial *p*- in Latin, Greek and Sanskrit, and initial *f*- in English. The words are not limited to one particular lexical field and they represent core items in the lexicon. We can reconstruct a single PIE phoneme as the forebear of these sounds in the daughter language, traditionally denoted *\*p*. The same process is used to reconstruct the whole phonemic system for PIE. When we come to morphology, however, we find reconstruction is not so straightforward. To take a notorious example, we can compare the genitive singular of the *o*-stem declension (the Latin 2nd declension; in this table we have added further IE languages to those given above):

Latin	(Homeric) Greek	Sanskrit	Old English	Hittite	Lithuanian
<i>-i</i>	<i>-oío</i>	<i>-asya</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>-as</i>	<i>-o</i>

These forms are not reconcilable to a single prototype, and in order to make sense of the differences one must hypothesize motivations for replacement of an earlier form in one language branch or another. The Hittite ending *-as* is identical with the nominative singular ending *-as* (both can be derived from *\*-os*), and this is usually seen as an especially archaic form, and one which would be liable to be replaced in order to disambiguate the two categories. The Greek and Sanskrit forms can both be derived from an extended form *\*-asyo*, which is found in other branches of IE, suggesting that the replacement of *\*-os* already took place within the parent language. It is clear that in order to explain these different genitive singular endings, we must reconstruct a proto-language with diachronic, or dialectal, variation. It can thus be difficult to reconcile the reconstructed morphology to the reconstructed phonology – are we to assume that the different chronological or dialectal variants of the proto-language shared the same phonemic system? This seems unlikely from what we know of

attested languages, but there is no way to restrict the reconstruction of phonemes to one particular morphological reconstruction.

The CM gives the impression that reconstructed PIE is a single point from which the daughter languages all derive separately. In actual fact, it is unlikely that the reconstructed data that linguists operate with were concentrated together in an actual speech-community at one time and place. It is more likely that the reconstructed items are diffusely arrayed in time and space and across the speaker population. The comparative linguist must therefore draw up a framework in order to fit the reconstructed data into plausible temporal and spatial slots. For example, in order to explain the reconstruction of both a genitive singular marker *\*-os* and *\*-osyo*, one model would propose that the language ancestral to Hittite and the rest of the Anatolian branch split off from PIE at an earlier date than other languages. The only check on whether this model is correct is its own explanatory power and internal consistency, and it may be possible to construct two, or more, separate models which both give adequate explanations of the reconstructed data. In dealing with hypotheses about the Indo-European language family, it will be necessary to bear these methodological points in mind.

## 1.4 Latin and IE

A presentation of reconstructed PIE is beyond the scope of this work. In this section, we shall present some of the salient features of PIE for the history of Latin, in order to give an idea of what Latin has inherited from PIE and where it has diverged.

### 1.4.1 Phonology

The reconstruction of PIE is most secure in the domain of phonology. This is because the phoneme system contains a small, finite and ordered set of elements. Phonological change is, on the whole, regular, well studied and well documented. This means that it is usually possible to compare two cognate sounds, such as Latin *p* and English *f* in the example given above, and identify the sound which is most likely to be ancestral to them. In the case of *p* and *f*, for example, we know of many secure examples of the change  $p > f$  in the world's languages, but far fewer of  $f > p$ , so we can reconstruct the ancestral sound as *\*p* (written with an asterisk since it is a hypothetical, unattested form). However, we must be aware of the limits of our reconstruction; we may be able to reconstruct the phonemic system without complete certainty about the phonetic realization of those phonemes. We have no way of knowing, for example, whether a

reconstructed *\*d* was a true dental or an alveolar or some other linguo-dental consonant, although we can be sure that it was opposed to two other consonants with the same place of articulation, *\*t* and *\*d<sup>h</sup>*, and other consonants with the same manner of articulation, but a different place of articulation, such as *\*g*. Nor do we know for certain that the reconstructed phonemes *\*d* and *\*g* were distinctively voiced, and some models of PIE claim that they had a different manner of articulation. In reconstructed PIE, it is the oppositions between the phonemes that are important, rather than the distinctive features *per se* that articulate these oppositions. The standardly reconstructed phoneme system of PIE is as follows:

### Consonants

Stops:

Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar
*p	*t	*k'	*k	*k <sup>w</sup>
(*b)	*d	*g'	*g	*g <sup>w</sup>
*b <sup>h</sup>	*d <sup>h</sup>	*g <sup>h</sup>	*g <sup>h</sup>	*g <sup>wh</sup>

Fricatives: \*s

'Laryngeals': \*h<sub>1</sub>, \*h<sub>2</sub>, \*h<sub>3</sub>

Nasals: \*m, \*n

Continuants: \*r, \*l, \*y, \*w

### Vowels

\*e, \*o, \*a (\*ē, \*ō, \*ā)

\*ṃ, \*ṅ, \*ṛ, \*ḷ, \*i, \*u (\*ī, \*ū)

Some explanatory points should be made about the above tables:

1 'Labio-velars' is the term given to a series of consonants which have reflexes in Eastern IE languages (Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Slavic, Baltic, Armenian) as velars or palatalized velars, but which in the earliest stages of Western IE languages (Greek, Germanic, Celtic, Latin) appear as velars with concomitant lip-rounding, or sometimes as labials. Typical cognate sets are the following:

\*k<sup>w</sup>o-/k<sup>w</sup>i- 'who?': Sanskrit *ká-*, Greek *tís*, Germanic (English) *who*, Latin *quis*

\*g<sup>w</sup>em- 'come': Sanskrit *gam-*, Greek *baínō*, Germanic (English) *come*, Latin *uenio*

\*g<sup>w</sup>ow- 'cow': Sanskrit *gav-*, Greek *boús*, Germanic (English) *cow*, Latin *bos*

(Note that in some of the Greek and English cognates, the labio-velars have been further obscured by specific sound-changes: *tís* shows a characteristic Greek development to a dental before a front vowel, and

in English *cow* and *come* the labial element has been lost before a back vowel.)

It can be seen from the above examples that Latin *qu-* derives from PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>*, but *\*g<sup>w</sup>* develops differently. In most words it is continued by Latin *u* [w] but there are also cases, as *bos*, where it appears as a labial stop. The words which show this development (and also forms which have *p* in place of PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>*) are normally explained as borrowings from other IE varieties spoken in Italy which regularly develop labial stops from original labio-velars. These will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Alongside labio-velars, there are also ‘velar’ and ‘palatal’ series, which have different outcomes in some IE languages, but merge as velar consonants in prehistoric Latin. Schrijver (1991: 425–36) has suggested that the two series had different effects on a following *\*e*: *\*ke-* giving Latin *ca-* (as *carpo* ‘I pluck’ < *\*skerp-*), and *\*k’e-* giving Latin *ce-* (as *cedo* ‘give!’ < *\*k’e-*). Unfortunately, there are only six etymologies to support Schrijver’s claim, and a few counterexamples, so Schrijver’s theory remains unproven at present (see Meiser 1998: 82f.).

2 ‘Voiced aspirates’ is the traditional term for a series of consonants which are reconstructed from the comparison of voiceless aspirates *p<sup>h</sup>*, *t<sup>h</sup>*, *k<sup>h</sup>* in Greek, voiced aspirates *b<sup>h</sup>*, *d<sup>h</sup>*, *g<sup>h</sup>* in Sanskrit, and voiced consonants in Germanic (English *b*, *d*, *g*), Iranian, Armenian, Baltic and Slavonic. Note the following examples of cognate sets for PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>* and *\*d<sup>h</sup>*:

- \*b<sup>h</sup>er-* ‘carry’: Greek *p<sup>h</sup>érō*, Sanskrit *b<sup>h</sup>árāmi*, Germanic (English) *bear*, Armenian *berem*
- \*neb<sup>h</sup>-* ‘cloud’: Greek *nép<sup>h</sup>os*, Sanskrit *náb<sup>h</sup>as-*, Germanic (German) *Nebel* ‘fog’, Old Church Slavonic *nebo* ‘heaven’
- \*d<sup>h</sup>uh<sub>2</sub>mo-* ‘vapour, smoke’: Greek *t<sup>h</sup>ūmós*, Sanskrit *d<sup>h</sup>ūmá-*, Old Church Slavonic *dymŭ*
- \*rud<sup>h</sup>ro-* ‘red’: Greek *erut<sup>h</sup>rós*, Sanskrit *rud<sup>h</sup>irá-*, Germanic (English) *red*, Slavonic (Russian) *rudyj* ‘red-haired’.

It can be seen from the table that these consonants are not opposed to a voiceless aspirate series (as the voiced aspirates of Sanskrit are), and it may be better to envisage them as originally ‘breathy-voiced’ in PIE, although we shall retain the traditional terminology of ‘voiced aspirate’. The reconstruction of voiced aspirates without voiceless aspirates has been held to violate a linguistic universal, and has led to attempts to refashion the PIE consonant stem entirely. One such attempt, independently proposed by the American Paul Hopper and the Georgian Thomas Gamkrelidze (see Szemerényi 1996: 152), involves re-casting the reconstructed voiced stops as ejectives (or ‘glottalics’), and then interprets the opposition between the other two series as only reliant on the feature



[voice], with aspiration not a distinctive feature. The question of the reconstruction of the PIE stops is still under debate, but the ‘glottalic’ model does not seem to have any extra explanatory power when it comes to the derivation of the Latin consonant system from PIE, since PIE  $*p$ ,  $*t$ ,  $*k$ , etc. are continued as voiceless stops in Latin and  $*b$ ,  $*d$ ,  $*g$ , etc. as voiced stops, whereas the voiced aspirate series develop either to Latin fricatives in word-initial position or to voiced stops word-medially. Thus the Latin cognates to  $*b^b er-$ ,  $*neb^b-$ ,  $*d^b uh_2 mo-$  and  $*rud^b ro-$  are *fero*, *nebula*, *fumus* and *ruber*. We shall return to investigate these Latin developments more fully in the following chapter, but for our present purposes we need only state that the Latin reflexes are most economically derived from original ‘voiced aspirates’: the word-initial development to fricatives can be accounted for by the original feature [aspiration] (cross-linguistically the move from aspirates to fricatives is widely attested), whereas in word-internal position the feature [voice] is preserved.

3 ‘Laryngeals’ is the traditional term used to refer to three consonants which are hypothesized to have existed from their effect on neighbouring vowels, and whose presence can be detected by systematic vowel alternations in different morphological environments. Laryngeals have no direct reflexes as consonants in any IE language outside the Anatolian branch, where they are sometimes continued by velar or pharyngeal fricatives (and even there  $*h_1$  may leave no trace). Despite their widespread loss, laryngeals appear to have had different outcomes in different language branches, and they must be reconstructed for early, prehistoric stages of Latin in order to explain certain developments. The treatment of laryngeals in Latin is generally similar to that found in neighbouring IE languages, although aspects of their behaviour is complex, and there are still areas of disagreement (Schrijver (1991) gives a detailed treatment of laryngeal developments in Latin, in a book of over 500 pages). The basic effects of laryngeals on neighbouring vowels is as follows, we have omitted the details of the development in Anatolian languages, citing Hittite or Luwian forms only where the laryngeal has a consonantal outcome (note that  $H$  = any of  $*h_1$   $*h_2$   $*h_3$ ):

- (a) following vowels laryngeals are lost with lengthening of a preceding short vowel; the three laryngeals have differing effects on the vowel  $*e$ :

$*iH >$  Latin  $\bar{i}$ , Greek  $\bar{i}$ , Sanskrit  $\bar{i}$

$*g^w ih_3 wo-$  ‘alive’  $>$  Latin *uīuus*, Sanskrit *jīvá-*

$*uH >$  Latin  $\bar{u}$ , Greek  $\bar{u}$ , Sanskrit  $\bar{u}$

$*d^b uh_2 mo-$  ‘vapour, smoke’  $>$  Latin *fūmos* Greek  $t^b \bar{u}mós$ , Sanskrit  $d^b \bar{u}má-$ , Hittite *tubhai-*

- \*oH > Latin *ō*, Greek *ō*, Sanskrit *ā*
- \*d<sup>h</sup>oh<sub>1</sub>- ‘put, place’ in Latin *sacer-dōs* ‘priest’
- \*eh<sub>1</sub> > Latin *ē*, Greek *ē*, Sanskrit *ā*
- \*d<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>1</sub>- ‘put, place’ > Latin *fēci*, Greek *tít<sup>h</sup>ēmi*, Sanskrit *dád<sup>h</sup>āmi*
- \*eh<sub>2</sub> > Latin *ā*, Greek *ā* (in Doric and other dialects), *ē* (in Attic and Ionic), Sanskrit *ā*
- \*peh<sub>2</sub>- ‘pasture’ > Latin *pāscō*, Hittite *pabs-*
- \*eh<sub>3</sub> > Latin *ō*, Greek *ō*, Sanskrit *ā*
- \*deh<sub>3</sub>- ‘give’ > Latin *dōs*, Greek *dídōmi*, Sanskrit *dádāmi*

- (b) before vowels laryngeals are generally lost, but, again, the three laryngeals have differing effects on the vowel \*e:

- \*Hi > Latin *i*, Greek *i* (but \*h<sub>2</sub>i may go to *ai*), Sanskrit *i*
- \*h<sub>2</sub>im- ‘copy’ > Latin *imitor* ‘I copy’, Hittite *himna-* ‘substitute’
- \*Hu > Latin *u*, Greek *u* (or possibly *eu*, *au*, *ou*), Sanskrit *u*
- \*h<sub>1</sub>us-to- ‘burnt’ > Latin *ustus*, Sanskrit *uṣṭá-*
- \*Ho > Latin *o*, Greek *o*, Sanskrit *a*
- \*h<sub>2</sub>owi- ‘sheep’ > Latin *ovis*, Greek *óvis*, Sanskrit *ávi-*, Luwian *hawis*
- \*h<sub>1</sub>e > Latin *e*, Greek *e*, Sanskrit *a*
- \*h<sub>1</sub>esti ‘is’ > Latin *est*, Greek *estí*, Sanskrit *asti*
- \*h<sub>2</sub>e > Latin *a*, Greek *a*, Sanskrit *a*
- \*h<sub>2</sub>ent- ‘front’ > Latin *ante*, Greek *antí*, Hittite *hant-*
- \*h<sub>3</sub>e > Latin *o*, Greek *o*, Sanskrit *a*
- \*h<sub>3</sub>ek<sup>w</sup>- ‘eye’ > Latin *oculus*, Greek *ómma* (< \*óp-m-), Sanskrit *ákṣi*

- (c) when laryngeals stand between other consonants, they develop to vowels:

- \*Ch<sub>1</sub>C > Latin *a*, Greek *e*, Sanskrit *i*, other IE language branches *a* or lost
- \*d<sup>h</sup>h<sub>1</sub>(k)tó- ‘put’ > Latin *factus*, Greek *t<sup>h</sup>etós*, Sanskrit *hitá-*
- \*Ch<sub>2</sub>C > Latin *a*, Greek *a*, Sanskrit *i*, other IE language branches *a* or lost
- \*sth<sub>2</sub>tó- ‘standing, stood’ > Latin *status*, Greek *statós*, Sanskrit *sthitá-*
- \*Ch<sub>3</sub>C > Latin *a*, Greek *o*, Sanskrit *i*, other IE language branches *a* or lost
- \*dh<sub>3</sub>tó- ‘given’ > Latin *datús*, Greek *dotós*

4 The reconstruction of the PIE vowel \*a and the long vowels. As the above tables relating to laryngeals show, the reconstruction of these vowels is closely related to the reconstruction of laryngeals. If Latin *a* can go back to PIE \*h<sub>2</sub>e or a laryngeal between two consonants, then is there any need to reconstruct a separate PIE phoneme \*a? If Latin long *ē* can be derived from a sequence \*eh<sub>1</sub>, can we then dispense with the reconstructed vowel \*ē in the PIE phoneme inventory? We have followed



- 2 Change in vowel quality within the same syllable (qualitative ablaut). For example the vowel of the suffix in the word meaning ‘family’ or ‘stock’ (the suffix is usually represented as *\*-e/os-*).

*\*ǵʰénh<sub>1</sub>-os* ‘family, stock’ nominative Greek *gén-os*, Latin *gen-us*  
*\*ǵʰénh<sub>1</sub>-es-os* ‘family, stock’ genitive Greek *gén-e-os*, Latin *gen-er-is*

The processes of quantitative and qualitative ablaut mean that every morpheme in PIE has (at least) three alternative morphs, one with the vowel *\*e*, one with the vowel *\*o* and one with no vowel. There are also reconstructed ablaut forms with a long vowel, *\*ē* or *\*ō* (for example, the nominative singular of the word for ‘god’ is sometimes reconstructed *\*dyēws*). However, these forms are more restricted in distribution, and the motivation for them is disputed.

In many roots, the effects of ‘laryngeals’ or other sound changes have disguised the original pattern and obscured the relationship between different ablaut forms. Latin *datus* ‘given’ < *\*dh<sub>3</sub>-to-* and *dos* ‘gift’ < *\*deh<sub>3</sub>-t-*, for example, are respectively reconstructed with the root in an ablaut form without a vowel, and one with the vowel *\*e*, although the vowels in Latin are *a* and long *o*. Compare also the attested Latin form with the reconstructed ablaut variants in the following:

*factus* ‘made’ < *\*dʰh<sub>1</sub>k-to-*  
*feci* ‘I made’ < *\*dʰeh<sub>1</sub>k-*  
*imitor* ‘copy’ < *\*h<sub>2</sub>im-*  
*aemulus* ‘rival’ < *\*h<sub>2</sub>eim-*

The reconstruction of laryngeals thus enables many different vowel alternations to be reconciled to either an *\*e/\*o* or an *\*e/zero* alternation.

In order to illustrate the operation of ablaut and its fate in Latin we can take the suffix which is used to form comparatives of adjectives. In PIE this could take the form *\*-yos-* (cf. Latin *melius* ‘better’ which continues an earlier *\*mel-yos*), *\*-is-* (continued in Latin *mag-is* ‘more’), and *\*-yes-* (probably continued in Latin *mulier* ‘woman’ < *\*ml-yes-*, perhaps originally part of the paradigm of *melior*, but with a later shift in meaning (from ‘the better woman’ to ‘the best woman in the house’, hence ‘wife, woman’, see Klingenschmitt 1992: 130). There was also a form with lengthened vowel *-iōs* which was restricted to the nominative singular. The Latin paradigm of the comparative, outside of the neuter nominative/accusative singular, alternates between *-ior* in the masculine and feminine nominative singular (as *melior*) and *-iōr-*, with lengthened vowel, in the rest of the paradigm. This pattern is a completely new development, and shows the spread of the lengthened form of the suffix throughout the

paradigm, with subsequent phonological changes. It is worth sketching out the hypothetical development of the paradigm in Latin prehistory, since this shows not only the analogical developments which led to the loss of ablaut as a regular process, but also the interchange between sound change and analogy in the creation of Latin paradigms.

Stage I	*-yōs	nominative singular masculine
	*-īs	nominative/accusative singular neuter
	*-yos-ṃ	accusative singular masculine
	etc.	

The first change to affect this paradigm in the prehistory of is the spread of the ablaut form \*-yos from the masculine forms to the neuter; Latin *melius* thus represents a very early replacement of \**melis*. The old form of the neuter in \*-īs survives only in *magis* ‘more’, which early became isolated from its paradigm owing to its widespread use as an adverb.

Stage II	*-yōs	nominative singular masculine
	*-yos	nominative/accusative singular neuter
	*-yos-ṃ	accusative singular masculine
	etc.	

The next change to affect the paradigm was the spread of the long  $\bar{o}$  from the nominative to the rest of the paradigm, with the exclusion of the neuter singular, which did not enter into any of the subsequent paradigmatic changes (hence Classical Latin *-ius*).

Stage III	*-yōs	nominative singular masculine
	*-yōs-eṃ	accusative singular masculine

Stage III must have been reached at the beginning of the historical period, since we have a few forms cited in later Latin authors, such as *melioseṃ* and *maiosibus*. However, in the course of the fourth century BC intervocalic \*-s- developed to -r- in Latin. This change reintroduced irregularity into the paradigm, since it led to a paradigm of the following type (a separate change also led to \*y realized as Latin *i* by this date):

Stage IV	*-iōs	nominative singular masculine
	-iōr-eṃ	accusative singular masculine

In order to avoid this irregularity, the form of the suffix was extended to the nominative masculine from the oblique cases, (although the neuter singular nominative was again left untouched by this change).

Stage V	<i>-iōr</i>	nominative singular masculine
	<i>-iōr-em</i>	accusative singular masculine

This stage is attested in Plautus, where the vowel of the final syllable of the nominative singular of a comparative can still be scanned as long, as *stultiōr*. But a change which took place at the beginning of the second century BC led to long vowels being shortened before final *-r*, *-l* and *-t*, and led to the paradigm as we know it from Classical Latin.

This rather lengthy exposition shows that ablaut had ceased to be a productive morphological process before the Early Latin period. While we can find traces of ablaut throughout Latin, not every morphological alternation of vowel quantity or quality can be attributed to it, and there may be an explanation within the history of the language. In some cases there may be two competing accounts of the same phenomenon. For example, there is a curious alternation between the nominative stem *iecur* ‘liver’ and the oblique forms such as genitive *iocineris* which exist alongside genitive *iecineris* and *iecoris* (see Rix 1965 for attestations). This word preserves a very archaic declension type, with a nominative/accusative marked in *-r* and a stem formed with *-n-* in the other cases, which is also found in Hittite, Sanskrit and Greek, but lost in other IE languages. Given the archaic nature of the paradigm, it has been thought that the alternation between the root form *iec-* and *ioc-* reflects an archaic ablaut pattern (Schindler 1994: 398). However, Latin nouns have generally obliterated all traces of paradigmatic ablaut in the root – so Latin has a genitive *Iouis* from *\*dyew-es* beside *Iu-piter*, from the vocative *\*dyew* (with added *-piter* ‘father’), in place of *\*diwés* which lies behind the Greek and Sanskrit forms (see above); and another possible account for *iocineris* has been given by Klingenschmitt (1992: 118) who takes *iocineris* to be metathesized from an earlier genitive *iecinoris* (with *-or-* from the nominative *\*iecor* > *iecur*).

### 1.4.3 Nominal declensions

PIE nouns were inflected for case and number. The case system comprised all the paradigmatic cases found in Latin (including the locative), and one further case, the instrumental which had the grammatical sense of *instrument* or *means* and could also be used locally to denote *path* or *association*. The locative case survived into Latin long enough to be retained in place names (such as *Romae* ‘at Rome’) and a handful of nouns in Classical Latin (such as *ruri* from *rus* ‘countryside’ and *humi* from *humus* ‘ground’); in Early Latin there is a greater number of locatives, including forms such as *militiae* ‘in the army’ in Ennius. In contrast, the instrumental was lost early in the prehistory of Latin, and its functions were merged with those of the ablative. The merger of instrumental and ablative

probably arose through overlap between the function ORIGIN of the ablative and PATH of the instrumental – compare the analogous overlaps in English between ‘he was hit by/with a stone’, ‘he came from the next room/he came through the door.’ Formally, the merged case was usually denoted by the old ablative marker. This is demonstrably the case for the second (*o*-stem) declension, where the ablative marker *\*-ōd* is directly continued in Early Latin *-od*, Classical Latin *-o*. The other stem classes did not have a separate marker for the ablative in PIE, but in a prehistoric Latin innovation, shared also by other languages of Italy, the pattern of ablative marked by long vowel + *\*d* was extended. This is the origin of the 1st declension ablative *-a* (Early Latin *-ad*), 4th declension *-u* (Early Latin *-ud*), and 5th declension *-e* (Early Latin *-ed*). The 3rd declension ending of Classical Latin, *-e* may instead continue the inherited locative ending *\*-i*, reflecting the late syncretism of the locative to the ablative-instrumental (all three cases being widely used after prepositions). In Early Latin there is inscriptional evidence for endings *-ed* and especially *-id* in the 3rd declension (see Meiser 1992: 210–2 on the Early Latin forms).

Latin has also reduced the dimensions of the category of *number* from PIE, which had a dual, used to denote pairs of objects and formally surviving only in the Latin forms *duo* and *ambo*, and possibly also a separate ‘collective’ used to denote several inanimate objects conceived of as constituting a group. The reconstruction of the category ‘collective’ is disputed. In form, the collective is thought to have taken the ending of the neuter plural, and originally it construed with singular verbs, as neuter plurals still do in some of the older IE languages. Vestiges of the collective might exist in Latin heteroclite plurals such as *loca* alongside *loci* from *locus* ‘place’, although there is little or no discernible difference in meaning here, and in the curious agreement rule of Classical Latin whereby an adjective in concord with two conjoined inanimate nouns of differing gender is inflected as neuter, as in the Livian formula *porta et murus tacta sunt* gate-FEM and wall-MASC touched-NEUT.pl be-3pl ‘the gate and wall were struck [by lightning].’

The actual *forms* of the different case inflections in Latin sometimes continue PIE forms directly, as is the case with the accusative singular ending *-m* which derives from a PIE marker *\*-m*; in the consonant declension the ending *-em* shows the normal Latin reflex of a vocalic *\*-m*. Other endings differ from PIE nominal inflections, but can be derived from earlier *pronominal* endings. The analogical extension of case endings from pronouns to nouns is a process that continued from within PIE itself, where the special *o*-stem ablative ending, *\*-od* most likely originates from a pronominal declension, all the way through to Classical Latin, in which endings such as genitive *-ius* are extended to some nominals (hence

**Table 1.1** Early Latin case endings and their origins

	PIE noun endings	PIE pronoun endings	I ( <i>a</i> -stems)	II ( <i>o</i> -stems)	IIIa ( <i>C</i> -stems)	IIIb ( <i>i</i> -stems)	IV ( <i>u</i> -stems)
Nom.sg. masculine/ feminine	*-s (except <i>a</i> -stems)	*-ø	-a	-os	-s	-is, -s	-us
Nom.Acc.sg.neut.	*-m/ø	*-d	(no neuters)	-om	ø	*i > -e	-u/-ū
Acc.sg.	*-m	*-m	-am	-om	-em (< *-m)	-im/-em	-um
Gen.sg.	*-es/*-os	*-osyo	-ās -āī	-ī -osio > -oeco	-es > -is -os > -us	*-eis	-ous/-uos
Dat.sg.	*-ei		-ai/-ā	-oi/-ō	-ei	-ei	-uei/-ū
Loc.sg.	*-i		-ai	-ei	*-i > -e	*-ēi	*-ēu
Abl.sg.	*-ōd/ø	*-d	-ād	-ōd	-e/-ēd	-īd	-ūd
Nom.pl.	*-es	*-oi	-ai	*-oi > -ei	-ēs	-eis > -īs	-ūs
Neut.pl.	*-a		(no neuters)	-a	-a	-ia	-ua
Acc.pl.	*-ms		-ās	-ōs	-ēs	-īs	-ūs
Gen.pl.	*-om	(*-āsom)	*-āsom > -ārum	-om -ōrom	-om	-iom	-uom
Dat./Abl.pl.	*-b <sup>h</sup> os/*-ōis ( <i>o</i> -stems) *-oisu ( <i>o</i> -stem loc. pl.)		*-ais > -eis *-ābos > -ābus	-ois > -eis	-ibos	-ibos	-ibos -ubos



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