

XI.—Ictus, Accent, and Statistics in Latin Dramatic Verse

KENNETH M. ABBOTT

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

This paper argues that, although the Latin accent was clearly one of stress, the evidence for stress ictus in dialogue verse is extremely weak. The high degree of harmony of ictus and accent which has principally supported belief in a stress ictus may be purely accidental, while at line closes there is no clear attempt on the part of Plautus and Terence to attain harmony. That the rhythm of verse requires a stress ictus is disproved by the example of Hungarian, which has a genuinely quantitative verse.

I take my text from T. S. Eliot: "The vast accumulations of knowledge—or at least of information—deposited by the nineteenth century have been responsible for an equally vast ignorance. When there is so much to be known, when there are so many fields of knowledge in which the same words are used with different meanings, when every one knows a little about a great many things, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to know whether he knows what he is talking about or not."¹

I must quite frankly confess that I should feel more comfortable if the remark did not apply to me, and if I could speak on the subject I have set with any conviction of superior knowledge. As it is, I believe I know what I mean by accent, but I cannot be quite sure that I know what anyone else means by it, while of ictus I have grave doubts that I know in any precise way—which is to say, in phonetic terms—what I mean by it. Nevertheless, I seem to detect in the immense bibliography on this subject² some signs that I am not alone in this difficulty. What I then propose

¹ *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1920) 8.

² The report by Ernst Kalinka, "Griechisch-römische Metrik und Rhythmik im letzten Vierteljahrhundert," *Bursian JB* 250 (1935) 290-494, 256 (1937) 1-126, 257 (1937) 1-160, performs its Herculean task so admirably that I forbear to cite what is there readily available. Particularly useful to me have been: W. M. Lindsay, *Early Latin Verse (ELV)* (Oxford, 1922), Eduard Fraenkel, *Iktus und Akzent im Lateinischen Sprechvers (Iktus)* (Berlin, 1928), W. A. Laidlaw, *The Prosody of Terence*, St. Andrews University Publications XL (London, 1938), and the various articles by E. H. Sturtevant: *TAPhA* 42 (1911) 45-52, *CPh* 14 (1919) 234-44, *TAPhA* 52 (1921) 5-15, *AJPh* 44 (1923) 319-38. There is much of value in Eirik Vandvik, *Rhythmus und Metrum, Akzent und Iktus*, *Symbolae Osloenses*, Fasc. Supplet. VIII (Oslo, 1937), but his ingenious and plausible operations with phrase accent do not seem to me to solve the question of ictus.

to do, is to raise some questions and suggest some tentative answers, in the hope that the answers, if not all accepted as correct, may at least be either right or wrong, and not, as so frequently is the case with statements about language, both right and wrong simultaneously.

Of the character of the Latin word accent, however, I shall merely repeat briefly what I have argued at length elsewhere,³ that the long and sometimes bitter debate over the nature of the Latin word accent has been based upon two convictions, both of them false: (1) that there is a clear difference between languages of pitch accent and stress accent, and (2) that we could tell the difference if it existed.

On the first point it was an early contribution of experimental phonetics to show that pitch and loudness regularly occur together in word accent. Yet this was taken by not a few to imply the existence, within any language, of a fixed and constant relationship between two distinct elements, of which one, almost always stress, was "dominant," a view which might seem to resemble A. E. Housman's acute scientific observation:

The tail behind, the trunk in front
Complete the usual elephant.
The tail in front, the trunk behind
Is what you very seldom find.⁴

But not many were deterred by any such consideration, for if examples of that rare beast, the language with stress behind and pitch in front, did not seem to be readily available, yet they could be supposed to occur, because the particular terms of our description allowed plenty of latitude. We are, I take it, agreed as to which end of an elephant is the front and which not, while the difference between a tail and a trunk is readily observable by the naked eye. With loudness and pitch, however, we are not in such comfortable case. Everyone knows, I imagine, that trained singers in chorus show a marked tendency to sharp in fortissimo passages; while in the laboratory it has been demonstrated that a tuning fork struck with greater force will be interpreted by the ear at certain frequencies as higher, at others as lower in pitch. The Roman grammarian, not being able to determine by ear the exact relation-

³ *Classical Studies in Honor of William Abbott Oldfather* (Urbana, 1943) 1-19.

⁴ Laurence Housman, *My Brother, A. E. Housman* (New York, 1938) 256.

ship of pitch, stress, length, resonance, and a number of other factors of word accent in the flow of speech, referred to it in terms of pitch, which was what he had learned in school. We have learned in school to call word-accent "stress," but that does not mean that the exact relationship among the various components is clear in English, either.⁵ Since the development of the Latin language forces us to assume that the accented vowel or syllable in Latin was distinct, and to a certain degree prominent, we call the Latin accent stress and are correct in doing so, but if the Frenchman wishes to call it *accent de longueur*, and finds that sort of description suitable for modern Greek, well and good, for modern Greek has a word accent which to the speaker of German or English is stress.⁶

Yet if the accent of the word was a stress accent, what are we to make of verse accent or ictus, and how interpret the verse? When Stevenson, who was certainly too unlearned to have heard of such a technical matter, spoke of Latin verse, he uttered the wish, "If but some Roman would return from Hades (Martial, for choice) and tell me by what conduct of the voice these thundering verses should be uttered—'*Aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum*' for a case in point—I feel as if I should enter at last into the full enjoyment of the best of human verses."⁷ And very sensibly he put it, "by what conduct of the voice," a phrase to which I shall recur. Still we might approve his wish even more heartily if he had asked to learn the truth about the dialogue metres rather than the hexameter. For, inadequate as our reading of hexameters admittedly is, we think we understand them, and can tell a good line from a bad, or think we can, which is much the same thing. Of a senarius, however, which gets off to a wobbly start in the first foot, staggers

⁵ "The exact relations among force, time, and pitch as affecting stress are not yet known. . . . In some syllables of nearly equal force, either pitch or time, or both, may help in producing a sense of difference in their relative prominence," J. S. Kenyon, *American Pronunciation*⁸ (Ann Arbor, 1940) 77. I do not, of course, mean that pitch when added to stress, as in an intonation scheme, or length when added to stress, cannot be distinguished from loudness. The case is also, of course, quite different in the pitch or tone languages, in which pitch is a primary phoneme indicating meaning or grammatical relationship. I should hesitate to believe that anyone could read a description of languages of this kind, say in Westermann and Ward, *Practical Phonetics for Students of African Languages* (Oxford, 1938), and persuade himself that he was learning anything about Latin or Greek word accent.

⁶ For most purposes there is enough on this point in E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* (Munich, 1939) 180, 393.

⁷ From an essay "On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature" reprinted in Lane Cooper, *Theories of Style* (New York, 1922) 375.

at the fourth, and falls flat in the sixth, we simply say that it is a way they have, and make correction only if the line does not fit rather elaborate "laws" applied by calipers and slide rules.

Still, since we cannot wait for the visitor from Hades, we may begin with what would seem to be the next best thing and apply to such information as is left us in the writings of the Romans themselves.⁸ Unfortunately, these are mainly random scraps of conversation and are frequently contradictory. Horace tells us in a celebrated passage of the *Ars Poetica*⁹ that the senarius had six *ictus*, which he does not pause to define, while Quintilian¹⁰ may be taken to mean that the senarius, like the iambic trimeter, had three *percussiones*, which are doubtless the same as *ictus*. Cicero appears to say in one place¹¹ that the senarii of the comic poets seemed closer to talking than to verse, but in another¹² that the audience in a theatre would howl at a false scansion. All the statements pertinent to the reading or reciting of verse have, in fact, been subjected to the most exquisite of philological tortures and have so far failed to give clear and distinct answers. The view perhaps least inconsistent with the statements of the grammarians would be that word accent is preserved, and that *ictus* means a kind of accent.

Taking the latter clue, a company of scholars of considerable stature, from Bentley on down,¹³ have conceived *ictus* to be accent, and if accent, stress; the senarius, then, is a line with six stress beats. This view, with some modifications, has come to be, not without some hot skirmishing about the borders and an almost unanimous veto from France, the dominant one.¹⁴ The principal

⁸ Collected by F. Schoell, *Acta Soc. Phil. Lips.* 6 (1876), there discussed 23-32; see also Sturtevant, *AJPh* 44 (note 1), M. G. Nicolau, *L'Origine du "Cursus Rythmique" et les Débuts de l'Accent d'Intensité en Latin* (Paris, 1930) 43ff., and Vandvik, *op. cit.* (note 1).

⁹ 253ff.: cum senos redderet ictus. On the whole passage cf. O. Immisch, *Horazens Epistel über die Dichtkunst*, *Ph. Supp.* 24.3 (1932) 158ff.

¹⁰ *Inst. Or.* 9.4.75 (cf. Vandvik, *op. cit.*, 65ff.): Trimetrum et <senarium> promiscue dicere licet: sex enim pedes, tres percussiones habet.

¹¹ *Or.* 55.184: Comitorum senarii propter similitudinem sermonis sic saepe sunt abiecti ut nonnumquam vix in eis numerus et versus intellegi possit.

¹² *Or.* 51.173: In versu quidem theatra tota exclamant si fuit una syllaba aut brevior aut longior. Much the same in *De Or.* 3.196. Immisch, *NJhb* 15 (1912) 33 considers this a *τόπος* referring to sung verse.

¹³ Fraenkel, *Iktus* 1ff. gives a very brief but excellent history of the question.

¹⁴ "Trotz dieser gewichtigen Stimmen ist aus den oben dargelegten Gründen nicht daran zu zweifeln, dass die lat. Dichter den Iktus nicht nur gekannt, sondern auch in den Sprechversen darauf Rücksicht genommen haben," Kalinka, *Bursians JB* 250 (1935) 362.

reasons are perhaps these: First of all, no one can read Latin dramatic verse without being struck by the high degree of harmony between the verse accent arrived at by scansion and the word accent. Further, that this harmony was deliberately contrived by the poets has been deduced from some of their divergences from the practice of Greek iambic trimeter: ¹⁵ (1) spondees are admitted to the second and fourth foot of the senarius, but not usually spondees in which ictus clashes with word accent; (2) there are restrictions in the use of resolved feet (*corpôre*, "torn anapaest") which tend to avoid clash of accent and ictus; (3) a tribrach word is not allowed to fill a foot, thus avoiding an ictus like *agére*; (4) an iambic word at a line-end must not be preceded by an iambus, preventing a double clash of verse and word accent; (5) caesura is regular.¹⁶

The remaining difficulty, however, lay in the apparently simultaneous use of two principles, the quantitative and the accentual, with the accentual violated often enough to cause pain to speakers of languages in which accentual verse seems "natural." The difficulty was brought into sharpest focus by Eduard Fraenkel, who, in his *Iktus und Akzent*, pointed to the implausibility of the assumption that Plautus and Terence made the word accent and the verse accent coincide "so far as they were able." His own answer, developed in an intricate and highly ingenious way, is that ictus is accent, and that deviations of ictus are accentual deviations which appear in Latin verse under certain set conditions: as, in word-groups, in close syntactical connection, in disjunction of closely connected words, at pause, under emphasis, enjambement, and so on. This thesis provided the most rigorous test of the equation, ictus = verse-stress; the book itself has been subjected to severe criticism—what work on this question has not?—particularly by Drexler and Vandvik.¹⁷ We must concede that the thesis was not proved, but the question still remains, will it work?

¹⁵ Lindsay, *ELV* 269.

¹⁶ It will be observed that none of these taken alone has great cogency; they all can be, and have been, explained in other ways: e.g., (1) The preference may rest on quantitative grounds, clash in any case is rare in the second foot, while no great effort is made by the poets to avoid it in the fourth; (4) this is more likely a quantitative rule, since fifth-foot clash is common; while (5) caesura has been contested particularly by Sturtevant *TAPhA* 54 (1923) 51, *AJPh* 45 (1924) 329, and supported by O. J. Todd, *CPh* 37 (1942) 22–37. Restrictions upon an ictus such as *corpôre* and avoidance of *agére*, however, can most easily be explained by regard for accent.

¹⁷ Hans Drexler, *Plautinische Akzentstudien*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1932–33), Vandvik, *op. cit.*; a convenient summary of the principal objections may be found in Kalinka, *JB* 250 (1935) 365ff.

To provide an independent test, it appeared to me that a fresh attempt should be made with a group of forms large enough to yield reliable statistics, yet not too large for explanation of irregularities. Proper nouns meet these requirements, with the additional advantage that they are of varying metrical pattern, provide fewer opportunities for accent shift under phrase accent or emphasis, and are, in the main, uncommon enough to make fixed phrases unusual. The proper nouns in the *Andria*, *Adelphoe*, and *Eunuchus* of Terence, and the *Menaechmi*, *Amphitruo*, and *Mostellaria* of Plautus¹⁸ were then examined, on the assumption (1) that ictus is accent falling where our scansion marks are set, i.e., six times in an iambic senarius, although with Kauer¹⁹ I believe that ictus in a resolved rise falls on both the short syllables, not on the first alone; and (2) that all proper nouns, whether of Greek origin or not, were accented on the Latin penultimate system. The latter may seem bold; it appeared necessary for the consistency of the statistics, and I pause only to point out that if the thesis, ictus = stress accent, be found true, the truth or falsity of this assumption will be apparent enough; if the thesis be false, how we assume the proper noun to have been treated will make no difference. Of secondary accent I take no account either for harmony or clash: *Antiphó*, for example, with initial and final under ictus I count as harmony, *Critó* as clash. On this basis, for 925 proper nouns in the six plays, the percentage of harmony runs upward from 73.4 per cent in the *Andria* to 83.6 per cent in the *Menaechmi*.²⁰ The difference is one of only ten points, and the variation seems to depend rather upon the names chosen for the characters than upon either period or technique.²¹ Clashes in Terence (not Plautus) are so largely limited to the last foot that the percentage of clash in his three plays, if we could drop out the last foot, would run only from 6 to 9 per cent. I do not, of course, propose to do anything of the sort, for Terence has an unmistakable tendency to close the line with a proper noun, clash or no clash.

¹⁸ For Terence I have used Kauer and Lindsay (Oxford, 1926) and Kauer's *Andria* (Leipzig, 1930), for Plautus, particularly Lindsay (Oxford, 1903).

¹⁹ Kauer (cf. note 18) so prints throughout his *Andria*.

²⁰ Full figures for harmony are: *Amphitruo* 83.3%, *Mostellaria* 77.1%, *Menaechmi* 83.6%, *Andria* 73.4%, *Adelphoe* 79%, *Eunuchus* 81%.

²¹ In point of fact, without allowing for error, 4% deviation for variant scansions and accentuations must be allowed.

At any rate, the results seemed highly encouraging for the thesis of stress ictus, which up to this point I expected to prove. Before, however, attempting to reduce the number of apparent clashes any further, it seemed well to compare the treatment of the proper noun in Menander, where a purely random coincidence of ictus and accent is to be expected. The results there were almost the reverse; in 351 names the clash in Menander is 68 per cent, the harmony 23.6 per cent, no verse accent 8 per cent. The contrast is startling, and almost convincing; it would seem most unlikely that the Latin harmony of nearly 80 per cent could have been produced by mere accident.

But the test is not a fair one. There is nothing in the rules for the Greek accent to bring the word into a verse pattern with harmony of ictus and accent, while, as Meyer²² long ago noticed, the Latin accent is governed by principles which adapt it naturally to dialogue verse in iambic or trochaic metre. Sturtevant²³ attempted to find the amount of accidental harmony by calculating the syllables in the line upon which stress would fall mechanically, and arrived at a total of 58 per cent for Plautus. Yet this method takes no account of caesura, which *might* mean something, and, more seriously, it does not recognize that the relative length of vowels and syllables must vary considerably in different situations.²⁴ It seemed to me a more accurate test to try the proper nouns in Menander's verse, accenting them under the Latin system and recording the amount of harmony or clash. Menander certainly could not be suspected of the attempt to gain harmony of verse accent and *Latin* word accent. The results were: clash 17.3 per cent, harmony 77.7 per cent²⁵ or a little higher than in the *Andria* and *Mostellaria*. The answer, I fear, is "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," at least to those of us who were at ease with stress ictus.

This brings back to mind that the Greek accent came to be

²² W. Meyer, *ABAW* 17 (1884) 1-120.

²³ *CPh* 14 (note 1) and *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*² (Philadelphia, 1940) 181-183, with slight and quite unimportant differences in the statistics. I do not mean the "mechanically" as a criticism of the statistics. I merely doubt that Sturtevant has proved that no more than 58% of accidental harmony might occur.

²⁴ Depending, e.g., upon the length of the word, upon its function, weak forms being particularly subject to iambic shortening, etc. The quantitative poet must observe quantities in actual speech as well as accents.

²⁵ The residue consists of forms with no verse accent.

accepted by classicists as an accent only after long and heated controversy,²⁶ largely because it was unrhythmical, and in Holland, Greek is still generally accented on the Latin system. Furthermore, Paulus Lieger in 1926,²⁷ in a book not accessible to me, reverted to something of the sort and attempted to prove the existence of his "Greek word-ictus" (really a penultimate accent) by the high degree of harmony it produced in the verse. Kalinka reports Lieger's discovery of 79.6 per cent of harmony of ictus and "word-ictus" in the fifth foot of the Homeric hexameter.²⁸ I notice here only the percentage. If we had only some 80 per cent harmony of ictus and accent in the fifth foot of the Latin hexameter, we could not assert that any intention of the poet was in evidence. How much harmony do we really have in Latin dialogue verse? The question appeared to me so important that I tested some 1900 senarii in the *Andria*, *Phormio*, *Mostellaria*, and *Pseudolus*, finding harmony ranging from 75.6 per cent in the *Pseudolus* to 80.6 per cent in the *Andria*.²⁹ Clash (discounting for the moment the first foot) rises in proportion sharply from the fourth through the sixth foot. Forty-one per cent of the clashes in each of the four plays occurs in the final foot.

Now clash in the first foot does no damage to a theory of intentional harmony of ictus and accent.³⁰ The rhythm is not necessarily set by the first foot even in English, and one could readily

²⁶ A very fair sample of the controversial work of this period is J. Foster, *An Essay on the Different Nature of Accent and Quantity* (Eton, 1763).

²⁷ *Der Akzent in der Verskunst der Griechen und Römer*, Program Wien. Schotten-gymnasium, 1926. I have it from Kalinka, *JB* 250 (1935) 298, 331.

²⁸ Kalinka, *JB* 250 (1935) 359.

²⁹ Harmony in *Phormio* 79.6%, *Mostellaria* 76.3%. I have counted, as did Sturtevant (*loc. cit.* [note 23]), with strict observance of the penultimate accent, and for the same reasons. Accentuations of the *fácilius* type are included as clashes, although no one any longer considers them such. If *fácilius* etc. are all added to the harmony column and *facilius* to the clash, one may get an increase of as much as 2%. Phrase accent, if consistently applied—I am not sure that it can be—will add to the percentages at line-ends but reduce them within the line, where *et*'s and *qui*'s are under ictus contrary to any plausible phrasing. One can, however, raise the percentage by believing in the recession of the accent with an elided final, i.e., *exempl(um)*, as Fraenkel (*Iktus* 14) does. I have never seen any sensible reason for this odd doctrine, and Fraenkel again does not offer one. It is contrary to everything we might expect, and Fraenkel does anything but support it; nor will it work consistently. If one starts with it in the *Andria*, it will carry one to line 12, where it fails at *dissímili oratione*, not *dissímili*. I reject it, with Lindsay, *ELV* 34, and Laidlaw, *op. cit.* (note 1) 15, where one will find further discussion.

³⁰ So also W. Kroll, *Gl* 19 (1931) 275–6, Sonnenschein *CQ* 23 (1929) 84f.

find by the hatful such specimens as,

Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts,

in which "Athens," shaped by nature in a somewhat trochaic mold, masquerades as an iambus in the first foot. But at line ends the case is vastly different.³¹ If the poet disliked clash, he must have recognized his failure at line ends more clearly than elsewhere. Yet there are two very obvious ways of avoiding so much clash of ictus and accent in the sixth foot of the senarius. First there is the possibility of ending with a cretic or dactylic word or word end. That this may be readily done cannot be doubted; Terence does it in twenty out of twenty-seven lines in the prologue to the *Andria*. But he does not maintain any such average throughout the play. Why not? The second, additional method is to close with a monosyllable; but, although Terence was more tolerant of final monosyllables than Plautus, his total of about 160 iambic closes in a round 3000 senarii³² would scarcely indicate a marked preference.

Furthermore, to let the final foot go and return to the question of proper nouns, the comic poets did not blindly follow their originals in choosing the names for their characters. Any reasonably intelligent poet with a strong urge to fit names into the verse with harmony, would, I think, see at once that *Davus* would do very well indeed, while *Simo*, *Crŭto*, *Chrĕmes*, *Drĕmo*, and so on, would manifestly have to be kept lurking in oblique cases or before words beginning with vowels. Yet such a consideration as this seems to have had no influence in the choice of names for characters.

Thus, then, if there is no greater harmony of ictus and accent than may have occurred by accident, and if the poets make no

³¹ Quint. *Inst. Or.* 9.4.67: Nam ut initia clausulaeque plurimum momenti habent, quotiens incipit sensus aut desinit: sic in mediis quoque sunt quidam conatus, ilique leviter insistent. Movement toward line ends is slower, quantities are there more readily apparent, phrase accent lighter.

³² Lindsay *ELV* 110; Laidlaw *op. cit.* (note 1) 48. Fully treated by Drexler, *Gl* 23 (1922) 225ff. Latin of course, in this respect differing from English and Chinese, dislikes the "autosemantic" or "autonomique" monosyllable, that is, those which are not mere "empty words." See E. Löfstedt's brilliant chapter "Wortform, Wortumfang, und Verwandtes," *Syntactica* 2 (Lund, 1933). The reason must lie in the inordinate length of the forms. The grammarians (cf. Leumann, *Lat. Gramm.* [Munich, 1928] 183) prescribe a circumflex, which may or may not be right for the syllable accent, but certainly means, as A. Schmitt (*Untersuchungen zur allgemeinen Akzentlehre* [Heidelberg, 1924] 188) saw, that they were "überlang" or protracted longs. It is not then highly reasonable to assign the rarity of monosyllabic close in the hexameter to avoidance of clash of ictus and accent, even though the desire for coincidence in the last two feet seems well assured.

visible effort to reduce the amount of clash, I fear that stress ictus as we previously understood it has little enough to support it in fact and is, indeed, highly implausible merely as theory. For we could not really imagine that poets would, in the first place, adopt a verse principle which did not fit the habits of their language, and then adapt it only so far as to make it fit no oftener than four times out of five. Again, everything in the study of comic verse has led us to recognize, if not to appreciate, the high degree of workmanship which went into it. Can we believe that its authors had the impudence to require actors to recite in public lines that every fourth or fifth time would make the audience wince as they make us wince? Certainly not, and I doubt that anyone since the time of Bentley has really believed so.

Where, then, does our difficulty lie? If we look at Fraenkel's attempts to establish principles for variations, I think we may see it. We begin with the thesis that accent is stress; that ictus is accent and therefore stress. What seem to be variations from harmony of word and verse accent are really variations in "accentual relations,"³³ or "accentuation," as I should call it. Here the ground has shifted. What is accentuation? Fraenkel refuses to say.³⁴ We find that it means word stress, pause, lengthening or drawl, interrogative pitch, parenthetical pitch, intonation or modulation—in short, accentuation is now what Stevenson called "conduct of the voice" and ictus has ceased to be stress. So we may now mark in English,

Athéns, the eye of Greece,

as lengthening before pause, or

Whethér 'tis nobler in the mind . . .

or

The óne red leaf, the last of its clan.

We may so mark, but we must not call our ictus stress and read as if it were. But if at this point, where his work is most original, Fraenkel is most successful, it is just in the attempt to explain final ictus by shift of word accent in word groups, a traditional

³³ "Betonungsverhältnisse" *Iktus*, e.g., 180.

³⁴ "Ich will hier noch einmal ausdrücklich sagen, dass wir gar nichts darüber wissen können, wie eng die Entsprechung eines auf der Endsilbe ruhenden Iktus zu dem Akzent der lebendigen Sprache ist, der zu ihm die Anregung gegeben hat, dass wir also zum Beispiel nicht behaupten dürfen, in Pausastellung habe der volle Hauptton auf der Schlussilbe geruht." *Iktus* 346.

method, in which he most notably fails. We may, to be sure, not know very precisely what a word is (nor a sentence, nor a syllable, nor a sound, nor a phoneme), but between a word and a word group there is a difference, semantically and phonetically—in modification of finals and occasionally initials, in stress, in pitch—in short, “juncture phenomena,” if one prefers the term. If we take a case which might fit all these requirements, *nescioquid* (= “the Lord knows what”) as contrasted with *nescio quid narres* (= “I don’t know what you’re saying”), where the difference in meaning must have been indicated by a difference in accentuation, does ictus always distinguish them? Not always, either in Plautus or in Terence.³⁵ How much of a case, then, could be made for *malámrem* or *malámcrucem*,³⁶ dubious as words on semantic grounds and more so on phonetic ones? Much simpler is the quantitative explanation, and a quite correct one, that *malam* has its second syllable longer than the first because the time of the *m* added to the time of the vowel makes it so.³⁷

The one last refuge of stress ictus is emphasis, a subject on which we do not have, and probably cannot expect, the slightest agreement whatever. Fraenkel points to *Miser Catulle* with *miser* first in emphasis and a consequent long final with ictus.³⁸ Lindsay³⁹ will have us read (*Eun.* 8) *ex Graecis bónis*, with *bonis* second in emphasis and consequent iambic shortening. Emphasis, even if it will account for a long final in some cases and a shortened final in others,⁴⁰ is in any event often consistent with ictus; yet often it is not. I cite one clear example. In *Ad.* 940, Micio, infuriated to hear that he has been promised in marriage by his adopted son, bursts out

Promisti autem? De te largitor, puer!

³⁵ Cf. Lindsay, *ELV* 173.

³⁶ *Iktus* 66, 67. Unless *malámrem* is something like *Novemres* (*CIL* xv 4653), and even that is better taken as merely graphic with Sommer (*Handbuch der Lat. Laut- und Formenlehre*² [Heidelberg, 1914] 250) than *Lautwandel* with Leumann (*op. cit.* [see note 32] 170). “Umgekehrte Schreibung” (Richter, *Chronologische Phonetik des Französischen*, [Halle, 1934] 151) is perhaps a little bold.

³⁷ The facts on this point have long been readily available, e.g., in Ed. Hermann, *Sprachwissenschaftliches Kommentar zu ausgewählten Stücken aus Homer* (Heidelberg, 1914) 1ff.

³⁸ *Iktus* 324.

³⁹ *ELV* 41.

⁴⁰ Much on this point in Vandvik, *op. cit.* (see note 2), e.g., 20.

Either *te* was accented in this sentence or it was nowhere in the language. Yet if we follow ictus we have

Prómisti áútem? Dé te lárgitór, puér.⁴¹

For all these reasons, is it not wiser to reject the hypothesis that ictus is stress accent and return to the belief that the verse is quantitative, and that the rhythm depends upon length or shortness, not upon word stress? We should, then, allow each word its accent in the line, but read quantitatively, which is what Sturtevant, for one, has been urging.⁴² This may be hard to do, but at least we must begin by reading for sense, and not, as Fraenkel marks:⁴³

amát: sapít; recté facít—animó quando obsequitúr suo (*Amph.* 995),

nor

sibi vixít, sibi sumptum fecit: omnes benedicúnt, amánt (*Ad.* 865),

nor

Sed quasi poeta, tabulas quom cepít sibi
Quaerít quod nusquam gentiumst, reperít tamen (*Pseud.* 401–2),

but, e.g.,

ámāt: sápit; réctē fáciť—animō quando óbsequitúr súq.⁴⁴

There is nothing in this which conflicts with the statements of the Romans themselves about reading verse, not even with the

⁴¹ Modern verse, for that matter, does not always follow emphasis: "Emphatische Gelegenheitsverstärkung einer Silbe zwingt den Dichter nicht, die Silbe in die Hebung zu tun. . . . Wo die Emphase Präfixe oder Endungen trifft, schafft sie vollends keine Hebungsfähigkeit," A. Heusler, *Deutsche Versgeschichte* (Berlin, 1925) 1.59.

⁴² Cf. *CW* 37 (1943) 15–17. I do not mean to imply that Sturtevant agrees as to ictus.

⁴³ I do not, of course, know how he would have us read, since I am uncertain as to the meaning of his "Iktus." It may be, of course, that a large part of the difficulty lies in the want of definition of the term "stress" (and its relatives). Kalinka, e.g., contends (*JB* 250 [1935] 357): "Da die Quantitäten auch in der Prosa beachtet werden mussten, kann somit das Metrum lediglich durch Verstärkung der Stimme zum Ausdruck gekommen sein." But then we could say of English or German that stress must be observed in prose, so that metre must be established in some other way, as by quantity. Ictus, if it means rhythmic beat, is subjective and non-phonetic; one can count five beats to English blank verse, but it cannot be read with five stresses. In reading, ictus may be stress, or length, or tenseness of the vowel and so on, or, as occasionally in the first foot, it may correspond to nothing in the voice. One must make up one's mind whether the term is being used psychologically or phonetically and not attempt both simultaneously.

⁴⁴ (') for word stress, (.) for rise of the verse, interpreted as a hold.

celebrated note of Aulus Gellius⁴⁵ which reports Valerius Probus's *affatim* in *Cist.* 231 and adds *exadvorsum* in *Phor.* 88, since the note makes it quite clear that these accents were not the usual practice in reading dramatic verse, yet Terence at least was a school author. But we do run upon an objection which is frequently made and violently urged, that rhythm cannot be established and maintained without stress marking. The debate upon this point has ranged from musical instruments to the tick of a clock, from dances to drum beats. Whether it is all relevant, I cannot say, and the fact that modern Greek folk dances with rhythms in 7/8 (*Kalamatianos*) or 9/4 (*Zeibekiko*) have to me no very marked beat but rather a continuous rhythm certainly proves nothing. Still, and here I must report from my own ear for want of anything better, there is at least one language in which quantitative verse *is* constructed in this way, and that is Hungarian.

Hungarian, as is well known, has a stress accent on the first syllable of each word, with secondary accent, much lighter, on alternate syllables. Long vowels are approximately twice the length of short vowels and can occur in any place in the word.⁴⁶ In recitation of verse⁴⁷ the rhythm is set by the quantity, the accented syllables being clearly and distinctly audible throughout, but, unless they are long as well as accented, they are not central to the rhythm. In a word under emphasis in the verse, the accented syllable seems to be stronger, but the voice dwells on the long vowel, or if the syllable is long, on the consonant. The general effect of such a verse is not one of strong beat (so little in fact that line ends are scarcely perceptible) and least of all, does it suggest the hammer blows of a stress ictus. On the contrary, the long vowels, being held (I should judge) about half again as long as those of English, allow the vowel pitch more scope, so that the intonation describes long sweeps instead of the quick rises and falls of English verse. The Hungarian sentence, in consequence, even in prose, comes to English ears much nearer to song. This, in short, is a verse which actually conforms to the descriptions of ancient verse we have; it illustrates also that nearness of verse and

⁴⁵ 6.7.1ff.

⁴⁶ R. A. Hall, *An Analytical Grammar of the Hungarian Language*, Language Monographs, 18 (Baltimore, 1938) 14, 20.

⁴⁷ I am deeply indebted to Mrs. Hugh A. Baldwin of Columbus for her patience with a slow pupil in Hungarian verse.

of oratorical prose to song which was so clearly both a beauty and a danger.⁴⁸ That Latin verse was exactly like Hungarian, of course one could not say; but the thesis that a rhythm without stress ictus cannot exist must first be explained to the Hungarians before we can regard it as well established.

In summary, then, there is nothing in Fraenkel's work nor in any previous or subsequent work to prove the stress ictus in Latin verse. Yet his principal thesis, that ictus variations from the position of the word accent should, and in some cases can, be explained, must be taken as correct, and some of his observations may make a contribution to the development of a phonetic rather than merely metrical account of dialogue verse. But before any extensive results can be expected, we must make careful and systematic use of comparative material from other languages, and we must frankly admit that if our explanations cannot fit the facts of any language we can observe in actual movement, we must grant the truth of the Norwegian proverb, "If the map does not agree with the coast-line, it is probably the map that is wrong."

⁴⁸ The facts are too well known to require citation; perhaps Caesar *ap.* Quint. *Inst. Or.* 1.8.2 will be enough: "si cantas, male cantas; si legis, cantas."