XV.—A Note on Latin Prosody: Initial *S* Impure After Short Vowel

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In scenic verse initial *s* plus consonant occurs freely. In classical verse only *sv* (as in *suadere*) does; the other combinations (and *z*, *x*, *ps*) are avoided after words ending in a short vowel. A study of the few exceptions and of the somewhat different case of stop and liquid suggests that the avoidance is due to the conflict, in this one instance insoluble, between Roman tradition (and prose syllabification) demanding short, and Greek doctrine demanding long, scansion. *sv*, which has no match in Greek, remains unaffected.

Very justly, metrics has been called the field in which everything except the trivial is controversial.[1] The prosody of Latin verse after Plautus and Terence would seem to belong among the trivia. Yet there are details on which current doctrine is far from clear. This is particularly true of *s* impure — if we may use this term to denote word-initial *s* plus consonant and the closely allied cases of word-initial *z*, *x*, and *ps* — after a short vowel ending the preceding word in the same line.[2]

For example, in A. Kolář's recent manual we are told that just as in Homer and Hesiod σκ and ζ at the beginning of a noun do not lengthen a preceding word-final, neither do *sc*, *squ*, *st*, *sp* (*x*, *z*, *sm*) "apud poetas Romanos."[3] F. Vollmer, along the same line if somewhat more correctly, considers positional length before *s* impure an artificial imitation of Greek models which was never adopted by many of the great poets.[4] On the other side of the ledger, W. M. Lindsay puts down the much-labored short scansion in Vergil's *. . . ponite. spes . . .* (*A*.9.309) to special conditions of phrasing, thereby suggesting that the normal thing would be positional

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length.[5]   And according to C. Bailey the Lucretian *unde sciat* (4.475) is a "licence . . . rarely employed by the Augustan poets."[6]

Which, then, is "license": the short scansion or the long?   The truth is that both are exceedingly rare.   *In post-scenic verse, words ending in short vowel are not permitted before words beginning with* s *impure*, exceptions being limited to the ancipitia of the iambic trimeter or senarius, or else being of the same statistical order as other sporadic anomalies.[7]

This rule of avoidance has not always been unknown.   While L. Mueller did not, perhaps, make it quite explicit in *De Re Metrica*, many of the principal data are nevertheless assembled there.[8]   The linguist E. Hermann, in discussing syllabification, alludes to it;[9] E. Bickel and J. P. Postgate actually state it much as above;[10] and to many who know Latin poetry well it will not sound strange. There is more involved, however, than saving a bit of knowledge from oblivion.   For if these scholars deserve credit for formulating it, their interpretation of the facts is often such that it cannot be accepted.   Postgate says:

> In the Middle of a Latin word the *s*, wholly or in part, attached itself to the previous Vowel, thus making its syllable Closed and therefore Long.
> But at the End of a word the pronunciation in the Classical Period seems to have been unsettled.   And hence *the poets generally avoid placing a word ending with a Short vowel before another beginning with* sc, sp, *or* st.[11]

[5] W. M. Lindsay, *The Latin Language* (Oxford, 1894) 131.   For the same argument applied to Homer, see below, note 20.

[6] *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, edited by C. Bailey (Oxford, 1947) 1.126. — It would be easy to lengthen the list (see, e.g., R. Kühner and F. Holzweissig, *Ausführliche Grammatik der Lateinischen Sprache* [Hannover, 1912] 1.228–9).   Most writers state, correctly, that (a) long or (b) short value for such a syllable is the exception, and imply, wrongly, that (a) short or (b) long value is the rule.

[7] It should be obvious that this is not due to rarity of *s* impure (or of short-vowel final) itself.   See below, note 37, on *s* impure in Ovid.   Short-vowel final seems to have a frequency of from 16 to 40% (of all word finals) in the hexameter, perhaps according to greater or lesser preference for spondees.

[8] L. Mueller, *De Re Metrica*[2] (St. Petersburg and Leipzig, 1894) 381–91.   It is fair to say that some of the present-day confusion in the matter is traceable to different scholars reproducing different passages, complete with examples, from that poorly arranged and often maligned, but cheerfully used book.

[9] E. Hermann, *Silbenbildung im Griechischen und in den anderen indogermanischen Sprachen* (Göttingen, 1923) 219.

[10] E. Bickel, *Lateinische Prosodie* (in *Einleitung in die Altertumswissenschaft*[1] 1) 257, nowhere mentions the initial of *suadere*.   J. P. Postgate, *Prosodia Latina* (Oxford, 1923) 31–2.

[11] Italicized by Postgate.

This is poor argument. Granting for a moment that there is a sense in which the *pronunciation* of such combinations may be called unsettled, or more unsettled than that of other sounds, nothing would have been easier for the poets than either to settle its *prosody* by fiat one way or the other, or, still better, to keep it ambiguous, thus preserving their freedom to use it at will.

What is really significant is that the rule of avoidance seems to be unknown to comedy. Samples from Plautus indicate normal frequency of *s* impure after short-vowel final, with short scansion.[12] We are immediately reminded of the other important innovation to be introduced by the post-scenic poets, namely, the new prosody of stop and liquid in the interior of words.[13] As is well known, clusters of this type do not make position (*impetro, re-trahit*) in Plautus and Terence (nor, for that matter, for the purposes of the historical word accent), except where there is a compounding seam after the stop (*ob-ruo*).[14] In later, classical verse, however, positional length becomes optional in such words as *impetro* as well.[15] It is generally thought that this is an imitation of Greek practice with its similar (though wider) option for τρ, κλ and the like;[16] the

[12] Of 55 instances of forms of *spero*, at least 12 occur after a definitely short vowel final in the same line; see G. Lodge, *Lexicon Plautinum* 2 (Leipzig, 1926–32) s.v. If this is compared with the figures from post-scenic poetry in the text below, it will be conceded that no more than such a spot check is needed for the present purpose. For the short scansion of such sequences, see W. M. Lindsay, *Early Latin Verse* (Oxford, 1922) 257.

[13] Stop and liquid in *initial* position is here deliberately left out of account. In some ways the history of this group parallels that of *s* impure; see F. Vollmer and L. Mueller, *locc. citt.* But there is more to it than is commonly stated. A preliminary check (based on insufficient collections) yields the surprising result that only little more than 7% of the occurrences follow short-vowel final in the Tibullan corpus, while the figure for Propertius is 22%. In the *Aetna* the ratio is 14% against 29% in a book of the *Aeneid*. Nor does any of this seem to be correlated merely with the incidence of short-vowel final, or with the relative frequency of dactyls and spondees. Here lies a fertile field for further inquiry into the development of poetic technique. See also below, note 41.

[14] Here accentual effects are hard to ascertain. How was *quamobrem* (pronounced and) stressed?

[15] In *re-trahit* and the like (where the compounding seam precedes the stop) positional length remains rare. — All this is best stated in terms of syllable boundaries; see R. G. Kent, *The Sounds of Latin* (Baltimore, 1932) 62–4. It is hard to say whether the difference in treatment between *obruo* and *impetro* belongs to the spoken language or only to prosody. Perhaps the statement in *Language* 25 (1949) 392, note 3, should be liberalized.

[16] See P. Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique* (Paris, 1942) 108–9.

freedom was extended to *fr* which fell in easily with the rest,[17] but not to *qu* for which there was not even a remote model in the Greek sound system.[18]

Considering the identical chronology, the restriction of *s* impure becomes equally suspect of being a foreign importation on the part of the docti poetae. Hermann, with an unfortunate statement, implies that there is no difficulty about this at all.[19] His reference to Latin is only half a line; but in discussing Homer he says that such an initial sequence as στ makes position only in a close-knit phrase (e.g. τὸ στῆθος) where conditions equal those within a word, whereas "according to our feeling" the poet might have scanned ὁ στῆσε with a short first syllable.[20] "But this," Hermann goes on to say, "the poet avoided likewise. He preferred to do without such ambiguous combinations." This pronouncement on Homer was adopted into E. Kalinka's famous report on Meter and Rhythm without qualification.[21] In reality, Hermann has to admit that "the unifying force of the verse was able to place the word initial in the interior of a speech-beat, as it were, — in all arses and some theses," so that the long scansions are conceded after all. And even so, the facts are misrepresented. Actually, the σ-groups, with ζ, ξ, and ψ, do not seem to be seriously restricted in relation to the preceding word-end *in arsi*, and *in thesi* there are 95 examples

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[17] Hence Horace, *Sat.* 2.2.131: illum aut nequities aut uafri inscitia iuris. Truly medial *fr* is, of course, rare in the language, owing to the early history of the aspirates in Italic and Latin.

[18] See F. Sommer, *Handbuch der Lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre*[2] (Heidelberg, 1914) 284. On *liquidus* in Lucretius see M. Leumann and J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Grammatik* (Munich, 1928) 126. The prosodic behavior of *qu* should not be used to prove that the sounds so written were a unit phoneme (i.e. structurally on a level with other simple consonants) rather than a cluster (i.e. on a level with such other clusters as stop and liquid) of *c* and consonant *u* (*v*) in the spoken language. E. H. Sturtevant, in *Language* 15 (1939) 221–3, and *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*[2] (Philadelphia, 1940) 169–70, merely argues for the phonetic simultaneity of velar closure and lip rounding. He does not mention *su* (*sv*). It is significant that *qu* develops in many ways like stop and liquid, in late Latin prosody as well as in Romance (It. *acqua*, *labbra;* see below, note 25). Whether or not *qu* functioned as two consonants as far as vowel weakening was concerned we do not know. Compounds of *sequor* all show *e;* but this might be due to analogical restoration from the uncompounded verb (cf. *repeto*, not **repito*, after *peto*) as well as to syllable closure (*impet-ro*, not **impi-tro*, where the simple verb is *patro*). On the role of *qu* in iambic shortening see W. M. Lindsay, *Early Latin Verse* (Oxford, 1922) 45–6.

[19] *Op. cit.* 96–7, 219.

[20] The role of caesura and "punctuation" is often overrated, to say the least; cf. αἰ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε *Od.* 15.536 and many other cases.

[21] *Bursian's Jahresbericht*, Supplementband 250 (Leipzig, 1935) 376–7.

after short-vowel final in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[22]   Some of these, it is
quite true, involve what might be called close-knit phrases (e.g.
ὡς εἰπὼν τὸ σκῆπτρον *Il.* 7.412), and only four come in a thesis other
than the first or second of a line.   This, however, is trivial, reflect-
ing, as it does, the more general limitations upon the occurrence of
any kind of word end.[23]   The long and short of it is that Homer
does not eschew σ- (and related) groups after words ending in a
short vowel, and that the rule in such cases is positional length —
with the important[24] exception of three proper names (Σκάμανδρος
-ιος, Ζάκυνθος, Ζέλεια) and one common noun (σκέπαρνον) none of
which can be used in the hexameter unless a short syllable precedes.

Thus, the Latin rule of avoidance is certainly not, as is the new
treatment of stop and liquid, a direct imitation of Greek practice.
Yet it must be claimed as a result of Greek influence.   There are,
after all, characteristic differences between initial *s* impure and
medial stop and liquid.   Introduction of optional positional length
before the latter type of cluster, though a departure from Plautine
usage, was not a drastic departure: for one thing, Greek prosody
allowed, but did not require, length, so that the shift was merely
one from compulsion to freedom; and, secondly, long scansion, while
probably running counter to normal syllabification in standard
Latin at the time when the historical accent became fixed (*impe-tro*,
not *impét-ro*) and for some time thereafter, was nevertheless mar-
ginally possible as both prehistoric vowel weakening (*impet-ro* like
affec-tus rather than **impi-tro* like *affi-cio*) and data from Romance
(It. *labbra < labra;* also It. *acqua < aquam*)[25] seem to show.   In
the matter of *s* impure, however, Homer and Plautus were at oppo-

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[22] Including repetitions and possible ν ἐφελκυστικόν.

[23] See E. O'Neill, Jr., "Word-Types in the Greek Hexameter," *YClS* 8 (1942)
105–78, and in particular his description of the history of the problem which makes it
unnecessary to quote the older literature; see pp. 160–78.   The same author's article
on "Word-Accents and Final Syllables in Latin Verse" in *TAPhA* 71 (1940) 335–59
bears only indirectly on our question.   On some restrictions which may exist in Greek
dialogue verse, see I. Hilberg, *Das Princip der Silbenwägung* (Vienna, 1879) 206.

[24] Only in the sense that we shall return to it again.   From the point of view of
epic prosody they are isolated, anomalous makeshifts.   There are all in all 27 instances
involving those three names and σκέπαρνον.   Contrast with this the 604 cases of short
scansion before initial stop and liquid (F. Sommer, in *Glotta* 1 [1907] 180).   Hesiod
adds πετραίη τε σκιή *Op.* 589.   On (σ)μάραγδος see below, note 33.   Kolář's formula-
tion (see above, note 3) has no basis in the facts.

[25] See above, note 18.   *colúbram* (Kent, *loc. cit.*) cannot be used.   Fr. *couleuvre*
shows that the stress had come to fall on the *u*, but the treatment of the vowel still
points to an open syllable.   See Sommer, *Handb., loc. cit.*, and Leumann-Hofmann,
op. cit. 182.

site poles, and no gradual shift is conceivable.   To keep the scansion short was to be barbarous by the standards introduced with the new meters; to use long scansion was to violate Roman tradition and, probably, a Latin pronunciation in which word boundary was somehow marked.[26]   Hence the avoidance.   Postgate to the contrary, it was not an unsettled, but rather — sit venia verbo — a far too clearly settled pronunciation that accounts for the record.[27]
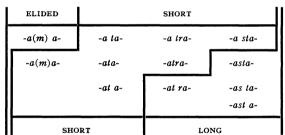
In classifying the scattered exceptions to the rule of avoidance we find positional *length* in

> Ennius, *Ann.* 100 Warmington: auspicio regni stabilita scamna
>   solumque[28]
> Catullus 17.24 (Priapean): si pote stolidum (potest olidum Ω) repente
>   excitare ueternum
>   22.12 (scazon): hoc quid putemus esse?   qui modo scurra
>   44.18 (scazon): nec deprecor iam, si nefaria scripta

[26] Writing *a* for "(short) vowel," *t* for "stop," and *tr* for "stop and liquid," we may summarize as follows:

ELIDED		SHORT		
-a(m) a-	*-a ta-*	*-a tra-*		*-a sta-*
-a(m)a-	*-ata-*	*-atra-*		*-asta-*
	-at a-	*-at ra-*		*-as ta-*
				-ast a-
SHORT		LONG		

We do not know how much of this is mere prosodic convention, and how much is part of the sound system of the spoken language.

[27] The lists which follow are based on the reading of authors from Ennius to Juvenal (and occasionally later).   I apologize for oversights of which I am inevitably guilty. The help of the following indexes and concordances is gratefully acknowledged: M. N. Wetmore, *Index Verborum Vergilianus* (New Haven, 1911); R. J. Deferrari, Sister M. I. Barry, and M. R. P. McGuire, *A Concordance of Ovid* (Washington, 1939); W. A. Oldfather, A. S. Pease, and H. V. Canter, *Index Verborum quae in Senecae fabulis necnon in Octavia Praetexta Reperiuntur* (*University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 4.2–4; Urbana, 1918); R. J. Deferrari, Sister M. W. Fanning, and Sister A. S. Sullivan, *A Concordance of Lucan* (Washington, 1940); R. J. Deferrari and Sister M. E. Eagan, *A Concordance of Statius* (Brookland, D. C., 1942); N. D. Young, *Index Silianus* (Iowa City, 1939). — The collections of L. Mueller (*loc. cit.*) and F. Vollmer, *SBAW* (*Histor. Abt.*) 1917.3, the latter made for a different purpose but dealing in part with the same material, provided a welcome control.

Where no meter is named, the line quoted is a dactylic hexameter.

[28] This, Grattius 142, and Martial 5.69.3, are the only examples of long scansion *in thesi*. Is this really important statistically, as Vollmer, *Röm. Metrik, loc. cit.*, seems to believe?

63.53 (galliambic): ut aput niuem et ferarum gelida stabula forem

64.186: nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta[29]

67.32 (pentameter): Brixia Chinea supposita (suppositum Ω) specula

Tibullus 1.5.28 (pentameter): pro segete (segete et *v.l.*) spicas, pro grege ferre dapem

Grattius 142: post ubi proceris generosa stirpibus arbor

259: uulpina species: tamen huic exacta uoluntas

Seneca, *Herc. fur.* 950 (iambic trimeter): hiemsque gelido frigida spatio refert

Pha. 1026 (iambic trimeter): immugit, omnes undique scopula adstrepunt (undique en sc. *Havet;* astrepunt sc. undique *Schmidt*)

Lucan 5.118: aut pretium; quippe stimulo fluctuque furoris

Statius, *Theb.* 6.551: praeceleris.   agile studium et tenuissima uirtus

Silius 9.575: immane stridens agitur, crebroque coacta

17.546: diuersa spatio procul a certamine pugnae

Martial 2.66.8 (pentameter): ut digna speculo fiat imago tua

5.69.3: quid gladium demens Romana stringis in ora

Aetna 471: pars lapidum domita, stanti pars robora pugnae

Juvenal 8.107: occulta spolia et plures de pace triumphos

Other passages are difficult textually; so Lucretius 3.493 (turbat agens anima spumas [animam spumans *codd.*] in aequore salso); Manilius 5.136 (suspensa [suspensa ad *Housman*] strepitus leuibusque obnoxia causis); Silius 7.273 (huc illuc castra scrutantem proelia Poenum); *Aetna* 433 (quamuis aeternum pingue scatet ubere sulphur).   Three instances in Vergil (Eurique Zephyrique *G.*1.371; Drymoque Xanthoque *G.*4.336; Brontesque Steropesque *A.*7.425) show *-que* scanned long.   They fall, of course, into a category by themselves which has nothing to do with *s* impure; cf. Accius, *Ann.* 1 Warmington: calones famulique metalli*que* *c*aculaeque, and thereafter.[30]

As Postgate remarks, it is only very rarely that one and the same verse writer has examples of *both* long and short scansion.[31]   This may well be due to the paucity of either kind of example.   But it might also be serious, if we consider that the choice normally involved the more fundamental issue of Greek against Roman.   As a matter of fact, a closer examination of those rare cases of dual usage in one author is revealing and favorable to our interpretation. Catullus has (64.357) unda *Scamandri* (at the end of a line), and Silius (likewise at the end of verses) colle *Zacynthos* (1.275), regna

[29] Ellis' conjecture: nullast spes.
[30] See Vollmer, *SBAW* (*Histor. Abt.*) 1917.3.15–6, note 1.
[31] *Prosodia Latina* 32.

Zacynthos (1.290), portata *Zacynthos* (2.603). This is, in other words, not traditional Roman versification at all, but merely the Homeric ὅς ῥα Σκαμάνδρου at the end of *Il.* 5.77, and ὑλήεσσα Ζάκυνθος at the end of *Od.* 9.24. The Greek anomaly has here been adopted together with the Greek rule, and the exception is only apparent.[32] The examples from Tibullus, Lucan, and Statius all involve another Greek word of the same prosodic build, *zmaragdus.*[33] Seneca has extended this usage in *Herc. fur.* 916 (iambic trimeter): trucis antra *Zethi*, nobilis Dircen aquae; *Oe.* 421 (Sapphic): lutea uestem retinente *zona; Oe.* 541 (iambic trimeter): enode *Zephyris* pinus opponens latus; *Ag.* 433 (iambic trimeter): tranquilla *Zephyri* mollis afflatu tremit; *Th.* 845 (anapaest): secat obliquo tramite *zonas.* Juvenal 5.45 has: ponere *zelotypo* iuuenis praelatus Iarbae.

Within Latin, the use of *Zacynthos* with preceding short scansion is Vergilian (iam medio adparet fluctu nemorosa Zacynthos *A.* 3.270), that of *zmaragdus,* Lucretian (e.g.: inter curalium uiridis miscere zmaragdos), with later instances in Propertius and Ovid. Manilius has (3.319): obliquos iaceat, recto tamen ordine *zonae.* In these poets, however, the learned items are prosodically indistinguishable from the instances of traditional Roman *short* scansion — the only one which they will use whenever the rule of avoidance is at all violated:[34]

> Lucilius 292 Marx: solem, auram aduersam segetem immutasse
>   statumque (satumque *Dousa*)
>   375: atque accurrere scribas
>   392: quamuis desubito trinis deducere scalis
> Lucr. 1.372: cedere squamigeris latices nitentibus aiunt
>   4.475: unde sciat quid sit scire et nescire uicissim
>   772: inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse uidetur
>   849: multo antiquius est quam lecti mollia strata
>   5.47: quidue superbia spurcitia ac petulantia? quantas
>   79: libera sponte sua cursus lustrare perennis

[32] Those who impute the "metrical shortening" to the Latin poets themselves without recognizing the need to find a Greek model do not appreciate their difficulties: "nobis non licet esse tam disertis / qui Musas colimus seueriores," says Martial 9.11.16–7 in a similar connection — although the problem must have been less painful for Catullus. Also it must be admitted that the same Martial once desperately scans (5.11.1) Sardonychas, zmarăgdos, . .

[33] The word does not occur in Homer or Hesiod. Interestingly, there is a variant μάραγδος, as in Menander 373 Kock. It is not improbable that Lucretius took the word from a Greek dactylic work, where it appeared at the end of a line.

[34] Instances of *zmaragdus* and *Zacynthos* are not fully listed in the following paragraph. The only example in Columella 10 is line 116: ut Pelusiaci proriret pocula zythi; this is best listed here.

6.195: speluncasque uelut saxis pendentibu' structas
943: sudent umore et guttis manantibu' stillent
1188: tenuia sputa minuta, croci contacta colore
Culex 195: horrida squamosi uoluentia terga draconis
Vergil, *A*.11.308: ponite. spes sibi quisque. sed haec quam angusta
uidetis
Hor.[35] *Sat.* 1.2.30: contra alius nullam nisi olenti in fornice stantem
71: uelatumque stola, mea cum conferbuit ira
3.44: siquod sit uitium non fastidire, strabonem
5.35: linquimus, insani ridentes praemia scribae
10.72: saepe stilum uertas, iterum quae digna legi sint
2.2.36: proceros odisse lupos? quia scilicet illis
3.43: quem mala stultitia et quemcumque inscitia ueri
296: haec mihi Stertinius, sapientum octauos, amico[36]
Prop. 3.11.53: bracchia spectaui sacris admorsa colubris
67: nunc ubi Scipiadae classes, ubi signa Camilli[36]
19.21: tuque o Minoa uenumdata, Scylla, figura[36]
4.1.41: iam bene spondebant tunc omina, quod nihil illam
4.48 (pentameter): tu cape spinosi rorida terga iugi
5.17: consuluitque striges nostro de sanguine, et in me
Manilius 3.364: sed teretem acclini mundum comitantia spera
(semper Ω)
Phaedrus 3.3.14 (senarius): Aesopus ibi stans, naris emunctae senex
app. 9.12 (senarius): licet horreum mi pateat, ego scalpam
tamen
[Ovid, *M.* 12.438: manat et exprimitur per densa foramina spissus
(the verse is found only in the *deteriores*)
Ep. Her. 10.106 (pentameter): strataque Cretaeam belua
strauit (texit *uel* pressit *pars codd.; alii aliter conii.*) humum][37]

Later, short scansion seems to survive in the learned (*zmaragdus*)
type only,[38] while much later again the long scansion begins to be
quite common as the rule of avoidance becomes less strict and per-

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[35] Only in the *Satires* (not in the *Epistles*); hence Lucilian?

[36] These proper names are of course not to be classed with *Scamander, Zacynthos,*
etc.

[37] Note the great purity in Ovid's technique: of 2646 instances of *s* impure (*z, ps.
x,* but not *sv* as in *suadere*) only these two, both textually suspect for reasons unrelated
to our problem, and one case each of *zmaragdus* and *Zacynthos* (*A.A.*2.6.21; *Ep.Her.*
1.87) occur after short-vowel final. That Persius does not have any examples at all is
perhaps only an accident.

[38] This is probably somehow related to the emergence of such epigraphic writings
as ISCOLASTICVS in the second century (J. Whatmough, orally; for the data see
Sommer, *Handb.*² 294). Not that the long scansions are to be read with elision and
normal medial positional length — the records show that the prothesis was in order
after consonantal final, but not after vowel. But it is this very fact which suggests
that word boundary ceased to be marked in the manner in which it was marked in
earlier times.

haps entirely obsolete in the fourth century.[39]   But these developments lie outside the scope of the present study.

Characteristically, a short vowel may stand before *s* impure *in ancipiti* where the meter provides an internal anceps.   Phaedrus has 17 such instances, Seneca (naturally only in the third thesis of the iambic trimeter) has 19.

Throughout the preceding discussion one particular variety of *s* impure has been ignored: *s* before consonantal *u* (*v*) as in *suadere*, *suauis*, *suescere*.   This initial is not avoided after short vowel.[40] Nor should we expect it to be.   If we are right in believing that medial *qu* remained virtually unaffected by the new optional treatment of stop and liquid because Greek happened to have no similar sound sequence, the same would hold for the initial of *suadere*. We could not ask for better evidence to support the argument set forth in these pages: that the curious rule of avoidance of initial *sc*, *sp*, *squ*, *st* (*z*, *x*, *ps*) after words ending in a short vowel was due to a clash between native prosody and Greek prosody which was, for once, irreconcilable.

[39] See L. Mueller, *op. cit.* 382, 386; also on positions before *qu* and sequences with *h*.

[40] Seven out of twenty-four instances of *sv* in Ovid occur after short-vowel final (compare the data in note 37).   However, there are differences.   It is not necessarily only an accident if the nine *sv*-words in Lucan (Aquilone Suebos, 2.51, is dactylic and does not belong here) do not so occur.   The distribution of *sv* may, in fact, parallel that of initial stop and liquid; see above, note 13.