

Metrical Evidence for an Interlude Theory of Weight  
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This study provides an analysis of resyllabification across word boundary in the classical meters of Greek and Latin. It uses this metrical evidence to support the proposal that the weight categories employed in quantitative meters are based in part on the duration of the entire consonantal interlude (CI) and are thus, in part, independent of syllable assignment. The CI is the sequence of consonants separating two nuclei from each other. Based on observations about weight variability in the classical meters and on comparisons with phonetic studies of contemporary languages, I divide the initial clusters of Greek and Latin into two sets, compressible and incompressible: stop-liquid clusters, and, in Greek, voiceless stop-nasal clusters are compressible, most others are incompressible. Compressibility refers to the extent of possible interconsonantal overlap (Mattingly, 1981, Wright 1996, Browman and Goldstein 2001): incompressible clusters are then hypothesized to have yielded systematically longer CI's; while the CI defined by compressible clusters would vary as a function of actual overlap.

The main finding I present is this: a short-nucleus syllable cannot be light, in classical Greek and Latin meters, if followed by a long CI, *no matter where syllable boundaries fall*. To reach this conclusion, I show that leftward resyllabification ( $V_1\#.CCV_2 \rightarrow V_1\#C.CV_2$ ) occurred, but not as standardly assumed. It was strictly limited in Greek to cases where  $V_1$  was in strong metrical position (Schade 1908; this study), resembling in this respect the resyllabification of English consonants into stressed syllables (Kahn 1976). In Latin post-Plautinian poetry, leftward resyllabification was suppressed across the board (Hoenigswald 1949). How then were  $V_1\#CCV_2$  strings scanned whose  $V_1$  occupied a metrically weak position? Such strings should occur unproblematically with the metrical value of  $\sigma$  (light-X), if resyllabification fails and weight is determined exclusively by syllabic assignment; and they should occur with the metrical value of  $\bar{\sigma}$  (heavy-X) if leftward resyllabification did in fact occur. But neither option is attested: both Greek and Latin poets systematically avoided such sequences in weak position, if the initial cluster is incompressible. The avoidance is motivated, I claim, by the fact that the first syllable in such strings could not be assigned a metrical value: its CI that was too long for a light syllable; and, with resyllabification blocked, the first syllable was still too short to count as heavy.

This and other findings motivate an Interlude Theory of Weight (ITW) in which two conditions must hold for a syllable to be heavy or light: one involves standard syllable assignment while the other regulates syllable-independent CI duration. The mechanism of weight computation proposed in the ITW is partly summarized below:

1. A short nucleus projects a heavy syllable iff followed by a long CI **and** some tautosyllabic element, vowel or consonant
2. A short nucleus projects a light syllable iff not followed by either a long CI **or** any tautosyllabic element, vowel or consonant

The effect of requiring heavy and light syllables to meet both CI duration and syllable assignment conditions makes it possible for this theory to define intermediate cases: syllables that are neither heavy nor light enough to be usable in the meter. These coincide with the sequences avoided.