Some neglected evidence on Vulgar Latin 'glide suppression': Consentius, 27.17–20 N.*

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Both *i* and *u* played an important role in the phonetic evolution of many Latin words. The complexity of that evolution is related to the ambiguous phonetic nature of those phonemes, which from the time of ancient grammarians are recognised to have the capacity of acting as either a vowel or a consonant.[1] This double capacity is particularly relevant in contexts where either of them is followed by another vowel forming a hiatus, for the possibility arises of either preserving the hiatus (this is the regular solution of *standard* Latin: *ui.ti.um*)[2] or grouping the two vowels into the same syllable (this is the most common solution in *substandard* Latin: *ui.tjum*).[3] However, evidence from both classical metre and inscriptions shows that there are two further possible ways of pronouncing those sequences, namely *uit.jum* (as seen in Vergil's [*Aen.* 2.16] *ab.ie.te*)[4] and *ui.t(i)um* (with loss of *i, u*). It is mainly the latter (for convenience we will refer to it as 'glide

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[1] See e.g. Char. *gramm.* 5.4–5 B. *harum duae, i et u, transeunt in consonantium potestatem, cum aut ipsae inter se geminantur aut cum aliis uocalibus iunguntur, ut Iuno uita et Ianus iecor uates uelox uox.* We cite Charisius from Barwick's edition as revised by Kühnert (1964). All other grammarians are cited from Keil (here cited as *GLK*) with the exception of Consentius *De barbarismis et metaplasmis*, for which we follow Niedermann (1937).

[2] We will use a dot to mark syllable boundaries, as well as *j* and *w* for non vocalic *i* and *u* respectively. When an originally long vowel is involved, it seems that the actual pronunciation in Classical Latin was *i.j* and *u.w*, as hypothesised by Zirin (1970) and supported with actual evidence by Moralejo (1981–82 and 1991). Whether or not this is directly reflected in some of the widely attested Vulgar Latin "glide insertions" (such as the one represented in Italian *vedova* from Latini *uidua*, *Padova* from *Padua*, etc.) probably varies from case to case, but it is clear that many late glide insertions (especially those with *j*) are surely independent of those described by Zirin and Moralejo (for glide insertions as repair strategies for hiatus removal, see Calabrese 2005: 22, Vennemann 1988: 14 and 75 (n.33), and note 44 below on Welsh *ystryw*). Moreover *i* and *u* are not equally treated in that context, since intervocalic *j* tends to disappear in Latin (Moralejo 1991: 37).We will discuss this matter further below.

[3] This process of hiatus removal (*i.a > ja*) is technically known as "glide formation" (see Casali 1997: 498, and Calabrese 2005: 22).

[4] See also Leumann (1977: 129–130), and Coleman (1999: 35), with examples from several Latin poets.

suppression' or, alternatively, 'glide deletion') that we will pay attention to in this paper, inasmuch as it is implied in a passage from the fifth century grammarian Consentius which, in our view, has not received the attention it deserves.

Consentius is believed to have lived in Gaul[5] in the fifth century A.D. He wrote a grammar[6] of which only two parts[7] are preserved. In respect to the history of the Latin language the most interesting of them is the chapter on *barbarismi* and *metaplasmi*, where the author, in dealing with grammatical faults and poetical devices,[8] makes interesting remarks about the Latin of his time. The accuracy and credibility of these kinds of remarks have been recently highlighted by authorities such as Herman (2006 [1991]: 176) and Mancini (2001: 313, and 2002: 229), and, among Latinists, Adams (2007: 205) and Maltby (2012: 736–737), thus rejecting previous ideas on Consentius' unfaithfulness.

Here is the passage we will comment on:

> Consent. *gramm*. 27.17–20 *N*. est ergo huius modi ecthlipseos haec uis, ut interdum uocalem solam excludat eamque nunc ut litteram, ut est 'regina e speculis', 'scio me Danais', 'per duodena regit mundi sol aureus astra'.

The passage comes from a sort of appendix to Consentius' *de barbarismis et metaplasmis*, the so-called *de scandendis uersibus*, in which the grammarian pays attention to cases of somewhat artificial

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[5] See Abbott (1909: 247), Holtz (1981: 83), Fögen (1997–1998: 170), Buffa Giolito (2003: 65–66), and Kaster (1988: 396–397).

[6] He may have been a teacher, but the title of *grammaticus* is not in any of the manuscripts preserving his work, where nothing implies that this was his profession. On this issue see Kaster (1988: 396–397), Vainio (1999: 15), Fögen (1997–1998: 168 ff.) and Buffa Giolito (2003: 71–72).

[7] These are preserved under the titles *De duabus partibus orationis nomine et uerbo* and *De barbarismis et metaplasmis*: both of them were edited by Keil (*GLK* V 338–385 and 386–404 respectively), and the latter has a more recent edition by Niedermann 1937. In the preserved parts there are references to other chapters, namely a chapter on analogy (*de analogia et de regulis* [*GLK* V 353.17]), another one on prose metrical clausulae (*de structurarum ratione* [14.15 N.]), and another one on syllables (*de syllabis* [23.17 N.]). For further details see Keil (*GLK* V 332–333) and Fögen (1997–1998: 165–166).

[8] 'Barbarism' is often paired with 'solecism' to describe the main categories of *uitia* against *Latinitas* (pure, correct Latin). The two are distinguished depending on their involving one (*uerba singula*) or more words (*uerba coniuncta*). But the relevant distinction here is the one between 'barbarisms' and 'metaplasms': both are deviations from correct language, but the former arises in non-educated environments, whereas the latter is supported by some authority (mainly the canonical poets), which has resorted to metaplasm either because of embellishment (*ornatus*) or because of meter (*metrum*).

scansion.[9] Two kinds of 'artificial' verses are considered: first, those in which a *communis syllaba* (the one which can be either short or long) is implied; then, those in which a metaplasm is involved. The latter kind is further classified into two main types: metaplasms which the poets themselves have written, and metaplasms that have been left for the reader to develop. In this second category several phenomena are considered:[10] systole, ectasis, dieresis, epysinaliphe and two very important metaplasms in scansion: *synaliphe* and *ecthlipsis*.

A substantial part of Consentius' chapter on verse scansion is devoted to the distinction of *ecthlipsis* and *synaliphe*. In short, both take place where a vowel (or diphthong or vowel plus *-m*) precedes another vowel, but whereas *ecthlipsis* implies suppression, *synaliphe* instead consists of passing rapidly over the preceding vowel.[11] Interestingly, most of the examples refer to a juncture of different words (28.14 *coniugi*o A*nchise*; 28.21 *femine*ae a*rdentem*; 29.2 *Ili*um e*t ingens*), and only two examples show the phenomenon 'inside a word': *sc*io *me Danais* and *per d*u*odena regit*. No other grammarian deals with these examples under the heading of either *synaliphe* or *ecthlipsis*, which makes Consentius' account even more singular.[12] Needless to say, the actual phenomena in both Vergilian verses is the so-called 'iambic shortening', *correptio iambica* or *breuis breuians* (*dŭŏ-* becomes *dŭŏ-* and *scīō* becomes *scĭŏ*), a process of the spoken language which made its way into poetry, but was hardly accounted for by ancient Latin grammarians (Consentius included), as we shall see below.[13]

The fact that the process as described by Consentius implies the loss of *i* and *u* is beyond doubt, since it is classified as *ecthlipsis*, and

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[9] As indicated above, metrical requirements are one of the causes of metaplasm.

[10] The criteria for classifying barbarism and metaplasm are the well-known (in ancient grammar) categories of *adiectio* 'addition', *detractio* 'subtraction', *immutatio* 'substitution' and *transpositio* 'transposition' (see De Nonno 1990: 464).

[11] Full discussion by Burghini 2012.

[12] To be precise, Diomedes (*GLK* I 453.1–2) puts under ecthlipsis a change such as *repsitum* from *repositum*, but as Dammer (2001: 245) shows, this is clearly a mistake.

[13] An overview of the "Iambenkürzung" in Leumann (1977: 108–109), Allen (1973: 179–185), Coleman (1999: 36–38), and extensively Bettini (1990). A useful account of its gradual introduction into poetry can be found in Austin (1964: 268–269), who notes the conversational or domestic tone of most of the uses of *nescĭŏ* in Vergil. An explanation of the phenomenon as a 'repair strategy' for imposing the preferred metrical foot in Latin (namely the 'quantitative trochee') has been given by Mester (1994), whose points of view are more recently supported by Baldi (2002: 265) and Oniga (2010).

excludere is the verb used to explain it.[14] Moreover, an actual reading *d(u)odena* is supported by both epigraphic evidence[15] and the Romance languages.[16] However, in respect to *scio*, as far as we know, inscriptions do not provide evidence for a pronunciation such as *sc(i)o*, and most of the Romance languages have substituted *sapere* for *scire*.[17]

Nevertheless, an interesting parallel for Consentius' remark is found in Charisius and Diomedes (fourth century A.D.) who write (we quote only Charisius' text, Diomedes' being almost identical):[18]

> Char. *gramm.* 13.32–14.8 *B. inuenitur tamen apud Vergilium in uerbo breuis posita, ut (ecl. 8.43) 'nunc scio quid sit amor' <et> (Aen. 3.602) 'hoc sat erit, scio me Danais e classibus unum'. quod quia in uno uerbo uidetur episynaliphe contrahunt qui seruandam uetustatis consuetudinem putant. spondeum ergo pro dactylo faciunt, et cum sit 'nunc scio', uolunt fieri 'nunc sco', quod quam absurdum sit perspicuum omnibus puto.*

From the phrasing of the passage one does not know whether glide formation (i.e., synizesis: *scjo*)[19] or glide suppression (*sc(j)o*) is involved,[20] for Charisius may have written *nunc sco* simply to represent the resulting *spondeus* (*nūnc scō*), irrespective of the actual pronunciation; in both cases the verb becomes monosyllabic, so that it must be read with a long *o*. The text refers to some anonymous grammarians (presumably Virgilian critics) who proposed to read Virgil's hexameters in the light of those of archaic poets. There are reasons to believe that Charisius borrowed the comment from one of the sources of the controversial chapter I 15,[21] so that the actual chronology of the remark may well be the first/second century A.D. This, together with the terminology (*contrahere*, *episynaliphe*), could lead us to think about synizesis (*scjo*) rather than ecthlipsis (*sco*), but a further parallel in Marius Victorinus (fourth century A.D.) still raises doubts, for it explicitly refers to the suppression of *i* (*elidunt inde i litteram*):

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[14] Note also the use of *perit* at Consent. 31.7 *N.*

[15] Examples in Kiss 1972: 56–57.

[16] The closest evidence is provided by the Romance results of Latin *duodecim*: Italian *dodici*, French *douce*, Spanish *doce*, etc. See Menéndez Pidal 1973: 83 (§.30.2.c), Väänänen 1988: 97 (§.79), Lausberg 1965: 283 (§.251).

[17] For the meagre evidence of Latin *scire* see Meyer-Lübke nr.7722

[18] Diom. *GLK* I 435.22–436.8; see also the account in Pomp. *GLK* V 232.16–38.

[19] This is the interpretation at *ThLL* V.2.686.74, and also by Lindsay 1894: 144.

[20] On the problem of *pronuntiatio plena* vs. elision, which is the same one that affects the accounts on *synaliphe*, see Burghini (2012), with further bibliography.

[21] See the account by Schmidt 2000: 271–272.

> Mar. Vict. *GLK* VI 28.16–18 et apud Vergilium inuenitur, ut est 'nunc scio, quid sit amor'. sed qui hanc syllabam longam esse semper uoluerunt elidunt inde i litteram, ut sit 'nunc sco'.

Very probably the anonymous grammarians in Marius Victorinus (*qui hanc syllabam longam esse semper uoluerunt*) are the same as those in Charisius (*qui seruandam uetustatis consuetudinem putant*). This means that a tradition existed of teachers who preferred to read Virgil in an "old-fashioned" way, and this is perfectly understandable: in effect, even if Virgil was acclaimed as a famous poet when still alive (Tac. *Dial.* 13.2), even if his contemporary Caecilius Epirota used him in the classroom (Suet. *gramm.* 16.3), and even if Augustus' freedman Iulius Hyginus commented on the *Aeneid*, this was somehow exceptional, and actually Ennius remained the canonical poet in grammar teaching for a long time (Holtz 1981: 114–117). Whether those grammarians belong to the period immediately after Virgil or rather to the archaizing movement of the second century A.D., is difficult to say. In either case the scansion *nunc sco* is more likely to be thought of as a conventional 'erudite reading' than as one based on colloquial pronunciation. In other words, our anonymous grammarians forced the reading of the verse in a similar way as Priscian who, unable to grasp the so-called iambic shortening,[22] resorted to an unnatural reading of Terence in this passage:

> Prisc. *GLK* II 17.1–6 apud Latinos quoque hoc idem (*scil.* digamma) inuenitur pro nihilo in metris, et maxime apud uetustissimos comicorum, ut Terentius in Andria: 'Sine inuidia laudem inuenias et amicos pares'. est enim iambicum trimetrum, quod, nisi 'sine inui' pro tribracho accipiatur, stare [uersus] non potest.[23]

These are not unique examples of conventional or artificial verse reading. Leaving aside the metaplasms listed by later grammarians, we can mention a chapter of Gellius (Gell. 4.17) in which some compounds of the verb *iacio* (*subicio*, *obicio*, *inicio*, *conicio*) are dealt

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[22] Note that Victorinus also sees the final short *o* in *scio* as an oddity, and consequently tries an *ad hoc* explanation, namely that the verb *scio* is shortened to avoid confusion with the singular dative-ablative of the adjective *scius*: *GLK* VI 28.19–21 *quamquam causa est super hoc uerbo, quare necesse est o litteram corripi. in his enim uerbis quae nominum speciem gerunt eandem corripi oportet propter discretionem. nam scio, si corripias o litteram, uerbum est; si producas, nomen est singularis datiui uel ablatiui.*

[23] It is difficult to say whether Priscian is thinking of a "soppresione di *-u-* in *inuidia*" (Bettini 1990: 384) or rather of a synizesis of *inuidja* (De Nonno 1990: 492 n.101). Actually, it is also possible to read the verse as *si.n(e)i.nwi.di.a*, where *w* does not count metrically ("è priva di valore", as Lomanto [2009: 193] puts it).

with. Gellius reports that many people wrongly read them with a long vowel in the first syllable (namely *sū.bi.cit*) in order to get a good verse reading. But this is not at all necessary, Gellius says, for *-icio* should actually be written *-iicio*, so that the previous syllable is long by position (namely *sūb.ji.cit*).

Nevertheless, we think there are reasons to believe that this kind of artificial reading is not the case with Consentius' *duodena* and *scio*, and that the scansions *d(u)odena* and *sc(i)o* were founded on actual pronunciation. Our first piece of evidence comes from the grouping itself of the two examples exclusively[24] under the heading of *ecthlipsis*. Secondly, the phrasing of the text suggests that, as in other cases, Consentius does not seem to draw on earlier sources, but rather he is exposing his ideas by trying to adapt verse reading to actual speech. In fact, unlike Charisius and Victorinus, he shows no more interest in the controversial matter of the quantity of final *-o*, nor does he consider the possibility of an alternative reading: on the contrary, he takes for granted that both the *o* of *scio* and *duodena* are long and consequently gives glide suppression as the only natural solution.[25] One must bear in mind that iambic shortening was not fully understood by ancient grammarians: even if Quintilian and other grammarians were aware of the iambic shortening of two-syllable words, they resort to very different explanations when they need to account for other *correptiones iambicae*: in those cases they often go into the "nebuloso territorio delle *synaliphae* ed *episynaliphae*" (Bettini 1990: 382–385, esp. 385).

But there is more: if we have a look at the examples offered by Kiss (1972: 53–57) for glide suppression as attested in inscriptions, we find the interesting evidence that the majority of the examples comes from the West of the Empire, and that Consentius' Gaul offers many examples.[26] More interestingly, if we look for inscriptional evidence of initial *d(u)o-*,[27] it is Gaul and its environment which mainly provide

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[24] Unlike interverbal examples such as *fuit Ili*um *et ingens* (29.2 *N*.), which, according to Consentius, can be described as either an *ecthlipsis* or a *synaliphe*.

[25] It is worth mentioning that Consentius is aware of the process of synizesis in words such as *etiam*, as implied in Consent. 17.2–4 *N*.; on the problems of this passage see Vainio (1999: 99–100), Adams (2007: 203–204), and most recently Maltby (2012: 735). The fact that he does not consider that possibility for *scio* is an additional support for glide suppression.

[26] See also the remark Adams (2007: 548) makes on *lect(u)arius*, noting it "is widely reflected in Romance languages, and as a neuter noun = 'bedspread' is common in later Latin, particularly *in writers from Gaul or with a Gallic connection*" (our italics).

[27] Needless to say, there are differences in the treatment of *uo* depending on the phonetic context: Pensado (1986) takes into account the various possibilities. Rich

it,[28] a fact that gives additional support to the idea that Consentius' account relies on actual pronunciation.

A sharp reader may be thinking that so far we have offered evidence accounting for *d(u)odena*, but not for *sc(i)o*. Indeed, 1) we lack both inscriptional and Romance evidence for a pronunciation *sc(i)o*, 2) we are aware of the differences between the pairs *u-w* and *i-j* in Latin prosody,[29] and 3) unlike *duodena*, which has an originally short *u*, *scio-scīre* presents an originally long *i*, so we must first of all explain why the pronunciation [*sci-jo*] does not apply here.[30]

Firstly, it can be observed that *scio*, together with *fio*, on the one side and *queo* and *eo* on the other,[31] belongs to an isolated group of disyllabic *-io* verbs that resist the classification suggested, e.g., by Cygan (1989: 303) and Mester (1994: 24–27),[32] namely that those *-io* verbs with a preceding heavy syllable or two light syllables (*aūdio*, *ăpĕrio*) belong to the fourth conjugation (*audīre, aperīre*), whereas those *-io* verbs with a preceding light syllable (*căpio*) belong to the third conjugation (*capĕre*); this lack of adscription could have led to some instability and hesitation. Secondly, there is a tendency of Latin to drop *i* in intervocalic position (Leumann 1977: 126),[33] so had *scio* been *sci-jo* at a certain stage, it probably did not last long. Therefore,

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material is already provided by Schuchardt (1866–1868: II 464–485); see also Leumann (1977: 130 for "Schwund des *i*", and 133 for *u*).

[28] E.g. CIL V 1741 *dodecimu* (from Aquileia, in Gallia Cisalpina), CIL XII 2654 *dudecema* (from Alba, in Gallia Narbonensis), *dodece* (from Gondorf, in Gallia Belgica; see further Kramer 1997).

[29] See Rodríguez-Pantoja (1978: 99), and Moralejo (1981–82: 569–570). For an ancient account on some differences between *i* and *u* see Ter. Maur. 165, 617 and 673, with the relevant commentary by Cignolo (2002).

[30] Obviously, if we admitted a pronunciation [*sci-jo*] in Consentius' time, there would be no hiatus anymore, so the repair strategy of 'glide deletion' would be inapplicable.

[31] There is also *cio*, which "raro legitur" (*ThLL* III 1054.11–12) and it is normally used in the second declension form *cieo* (however, Leumann [1977: 544] reports Sommer's proposal that *cio* is a phonetic simplification of the three vowel group of *cieo*). Moralejo (1981–82: 569) is probably right in adding *uieo* (in view of *uīmen* and *uītus*). As for *-io* verbs, Thurneysen's essay (1879) is still valid in many respects.

[32] Mester's explanation of this classification as an imposition of a general prosodic principle is approved by Baldi (2002: 376).

[33] Moralejo (1991: 37) makes the point that "the tendency of Latin *y* to disappear between vowels, could have deprived us of important evidence [*scil.* for *Ci.jV*]"; see also Moralejo (1981–82: 569–570): "es bien conocida la caducidad de -*y*- intervocálica latina, lo que nos obliga a preguntarnos por las posibilidades de supervivencia de una secuencia *ĭyA*". Needless to say, this does not affect the well-known exceptions such as *aiio, maiior, eiius*, in which the phonetic context is different (Leumann 1977: 127).

we must exclude the possibility that *scio* was pronounced with an inserted glide in Consentius' time.

Now we shall try to offer evidence to support the loss of *i* in *scio*, and we shall take it from studies on Latin syllable structure and its historical changes. In short, our contention is related to the well-known relationship between preceding consonant groups and glide suppression.[34] Why glide suppression (instead of resyllabification) takes place in those contexts is well explained by Pensado (1989: 138–139): she sees (as Nyman [1978: 85] also does) resyllabification and glide loss as alternative strategies. However, whereas resyllabification seems to be the regular development in Vulgar Latin, it "did not take place when other phonological factors (word initial position, stress, a consonant cluster etc.) conspired against this phonologically unnatural phenomenon. In these contexts the alternative strategy of glide loss was adopted" (Pensado 1989: 139).

Obviously, this is relevant to *scio*, where both (or either?) the position of the *i* (initial syllable)[35] and the preceding consonant cluster *sc* could have triggered glide suppression.[36] Therefore, relying on the parallel offered by *duodena*,[37] and on the evolution of other words

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[34] See Lausberg 1965: §.251, and most recently Kramer 2007: 30 ("Vollständiger Verlust des ersten Vokals im Hiat trat ein, wenn zwei Konsonanten vorausgingen: *quattuor* wird zu *quattor*, *battúere* wird zu *battere*, *quiētus* wird zu *quētus*".). When the change occurs word-medially one wonders whether it is the avoidance of an unwanted metrical structure which mainly provokes it, and as *lāridī* becomes *lardi* due to a 'trapping' of a light between to heavy syllables (Mester 1994: 38) so, e.g., *āctuārius* is sometimes replaced by *actarius*, even if the two of them coexisted (cf. Vel. *GLK* VII 74.11 *…actarios an actuarios et dicere et scribere debeamus…*; inscriptional evidence for *actarius* is supplied by *ThLL* I 449.3–5).

[35] It seems that glide loss in initial syllable is restricted to some phonetic contexts, namely when the glide is preceded by: 1) a consonant group (e.g. *Clopatra* for *Cleopatra*, *Clentius* for *Cluentius*, *trennio* for *triennio*), 2) the 'complex' sounds *qu-* and *th-* (e. g. *quetos* for *quietos*, *Thodoro* for *Theodoro*, *Todosio* for *Theodosio*), 3) voiced stops, fricatives, L and N: B (*benu* for *biennium*), D (*debus* for *diebus*, *detarii* for *dietarii*, *dodeci* for *duodecimo*), S (*sauium* for *suauium*, *Setonius* for *Suetonius*), F (*ferint* for *fuerint*), H (*Herusalem* for *Hierusalem*), N (*Napolitanus* for *Neapolitanus*, *nofite* for *neofite*), L (*Lonice* por *Leonice*). It seems to be no coincidence that voiceless plosives are excluded from this list, since they are at the end of the so-called scale of consonantal strength or sonority hierarchy (see for example Restle-Vennemann 2001: 1312, Pensado 1989: 116). We leave aside the problematic "Nebenformen" of the Latin *pronomina possessiua* (*sis* for *suis*, *tis* for *tuis*, etc.), about which see Leumann (1977: 465).

[36] Moreover, if we look at the precise Vergilian contexts in which *scio* is commented on by grammarians, we find that *sc-* is actually treated word-initially: *ecl*. 8.43 *nunc scio*; *Aen*. 5.602 *hoc sat erit, scio* (in this case a pause and a *caesura* immediately precede *scio*).

[37] As Pensado (1989: 120) puts it, even if the developments of consonant + *j* are not as clear as those of consonant + *w*, there are still "uncontroversial instances where both consonant + *w* and consonant + *j* provide us with the same results".

from Latin to the Romance languages, we can infer that *scio* underwent hiatus avoidance in Vulgar Latin,[38] but the complexity of the word head[39] prevented a change from *sci.o*[40] to **scjo, [skj]* being a structure which would have violated the so-called 'head law'.[41]

It cannot be a coincidence that the few Latin words[42] beginning with *sCgV*[43] have left but a meagre trace (if any) in the Romance languages: *spuere* (replaced with either *sputare* or *conspuere*) and *struere*[44] (unlike *destruere, instruere*) are not recorded by Meyer-Lübke, and *scire* provides, as indicated above, very few Romanic descendants, none of them from French, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian. We are aware that the sort of replacements such as *spuere-sputare* are common in the history of Latin (e.g. *canere-cantare*) and we are not claiming that they are exclusive of words presenting the above-mentioned structure, but only that this peculiar structure could have played a role.

In conclusion, we think that we have rightly emphasised the importance of Consentius' remark on *scio* and *duodena*, because it has been neglected by all scholars[45] who paid attention to glide suppression in Vulgar Latin. The merit of Consentius relies in having been able to

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[38] On hiatus avoidance as a trait of Vulgar Latin see Pensado (1989: 117), following Dressler (1973). For a more general approach to languages intolerance of hiatus, see Casali 1997, Picard 2003, and Calabrese 2005.

[39] We use 'head' technically as the part of the syllable preceding the nucleus (Vennemann 1988: 5).

[40] As indicated above, we exclude a pronunciation [*ski.jo*].

[41] Vennemann (1988: 13–14): "A syllable head is the more preferred: (a) the closer the number of speech sounds in the head is to one, (b) the greater the Consonantal Strength value of its onset, and (c) the more sharply the Consonantal Strength drops from the onset toward the consonantal Strength of the following syllable nucleus". Clusters of consonant plus yod are not permitted in Classical Latin (Devine and Stephens 1977: 59).

[42] We exclude the borrowings from Greek.

[43] Where *C* is a stop, *g* is either of the glides (*i, u*) and *V* is a vowel.

[44] Interestingly, *struere* seems to leave a trace in Welsh *ystryw* which comes from **struwo*, where the "hiatus-filling *u*" was seen as typical of the Latin of Britain (Omeltchenko 1977: 315). Adams (2007: 590) is right in rejecting the proposal that this was exclusive to the Vulgar Latin of Britain; however, it is possible that the tendency was more marked there, as it occurs (in the case of *struo > *struuo > ystryw* after a very complex (with three letters) syllable head, a context in which glide insertion is not found elsewhere, whereas two-letter heads allow for that solution: *clouaca* for *cloaca*, and Petronius' (44.18) *plouebat* for *pluebat* have many parallels (we have seen above that the number of sounds in the syllable head is a relevant feature in the so-called head law). It is also probable that *ystryw* from **struuo* is a reference to a time when *ū* and *ī* split into *u-w* and *i-y* in more contexts than they did later on; we mean that it could be a matter of chronology rather than geography.

[45] To be fair, we must say that Radford (1905: 181 n.4) mentions Charisius' approach to the problem, but he does not seem to draw the right conclusions.

explain under a new light (the Vulgar Latin glide suppression) a phenomenon which actually originated as iambic shortening. Whereas the common source of Charisius, Diomedes and (probably) Victorinus had rejected the scansion *nūnc scō* as an absurd solution and proposed *nūnc scĭŏ* as the preferred reading, Consentius, writing two or three centuries later in a much more vulgarised environment, does not even mention the latter possibility and, very probably relying on the actual way of reading Vergil in his time, was able to adapt an old explanation (which he probably knew) to the current pronunciation of his age, by proposing glide suppression as the key to a correct scansion of the verse. The fact that Consentius' remark appears in a 'metrical environment', together with the little credit Latin grammarians are given in metrical matters,[46] caused this interesting observation to escape the notice of both Romanists and Vulgar Latin experts.

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[46] See Lindsay (1916: 33–34), and De Nonno (1990: 466–480).

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