

I am certain that Plautus never dreamed of a rule such as I have formulated. Why, then, did he observe it? There hardly seems to have been any need to break up the cretic tetrameter, which was already short and split in half by a diaeresis. Nor can the word break have been heard as part of a regular system, for these syncopations do not generally come in groups, but are rather occasional sports in longer, more or less regular, cretic and bacchiac systems.

But these "systems" were songs sung to a tune. It is at least possible to suggest that, where our text is predominantly cretic or bacchiac, the tune was even more regularly so, so that even syncopated lines might be sung to the tune of an *un*-syncopated tetrameter,<sup>9</sup>



It would surely be awkward to have a single word straddling the one-*longum* rest; and this will be why Plautus regularly avoided such a thing. Had he placed the pause at the end of the third foot, rather than the beginning of the fourth, he would have left a short syllable before the pause: such a syllable would probably not be short at all, but an *anceps*, which would have no place in the middle of the line. In musical terms, I should think that the singer would either have to cut the syllable unnaturally short before the pause, or let it carry over inelegantly into the next note. Where the second *longum* is omitted rather than the first, the inelegance is avoided.<sup>10</sup>

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way). Two of our exceptions here, and another two in the first list (n. 2), belong to the drunken Pseudolus; I do not think this is accidental.

9. Some syncopations are too extreme for this explanation; there the tune must surely have changed.

10. My thanks to Professor G. P. Goold for introducing me to the labyrinth of Plautine metrics, and to much else in Latin letters.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF PRISCUS FRAGMENT 6

O. J. Maenchen-Helfen has conclusively demonstrated that the great Hun War mentioned in fragments 3 and 5 of Priscus occurred in 447.<sup>1</sup> The Peace of Anatolius mentioned in fragment 5 must therefore be dated to the same year. E. A. Thompson mistakenly dates the Peace of Anatolius to 443, and assigns fragment 6 to the following year (444).<sup>2</sup> I contend that fragment 6 is to be dated to 441 and not to either 444 or 447, in spite of the fact that fragment 6 follows fragment 5 in the *Excerpta de legationibus gentium*.

Priscus says in fragment 6 that after a certain treaty with the Romans the Huns sent repeated embassies to Constantinople on the pretext of demanding the

1. *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 111–25.

2. *A History of Attila and the Huns* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 87–88.

return of fugitives but actually to extort more money from the Romans. Because of other military problems that they faced the Romans invariably yielded. These military problems were: (a) the Persians were preparing for war; (b) the Vandals were harassing the seacoast; (c) Isaurian bandits were disturbing Anatolia; (d) the Saracens were overrunning the East; and (e) Ethiopian tribes were threatening the Nile frontier.

The disturbance in the Sudan was evidently not serious enough to have left its mark in any extant source other than Priscus. The other incidents, however, can be dated to 441 but not to a later year. The only war which the Romans fought with the Persians in this period began in 441.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore accurate to describe the Persians as preparing for war in 441 but hardly in 444 or 447, when the war was either still going on or finished. There are even more compelling reasons for believing that Priscus' comment about the Vandals can refer only to 441. The Romans and the Vandals had been at war since Geiseric seized Carthage in 439. But a treaty had concluded this war in 442.<sup>4</sup> Geiseric sent embassies to both Valentinian III and Theodosius II. No source specifically states that the Vandals violated the treaty, and there is every reason to believe that they did not. As part of the agreement of 442, Huniric, Geiseric's son, was sent to Ravenna as a hostage. This should certainly have deterred Geiseric from any piratical attacks against the Empire. There is even evidence that relations between the Vandals and the Romans became friendly. In connection with the treaty or shortly thereafter, Huniric was engaged to Eudocia, the daughter of Valentinian III.<sup>5</sup> In such circumstances it seems incredible that the Vandals would continue to attack the Empire. Finally, the Isaurians and the Saracens are known to have disturbed the peace in 441.<sup>6</sup> About later attacks there is not a word in any source. The treaty with the Huns discussed in fragment 6, then, would be the one-year treaty of 441 mentioned by Count Marcellinus.<sup>7</sup>

An additional conclusion can be drawn from this discovery. Thompson and several other scholars claim that the treaty which concluded the Persian War of 441 was only a one-year truce.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, none of them gives a reference for this statement, and none of the ancient sources that discuss the Persian War mentions it. Presumably they have inferred that this was the case from Priscus' statement in fragment 6 that the Persians were preparing for war. But, if this event is dated to 441, the unattested "one-year truce" vanishes. Priscus is really referring to conditions before the outbreak of the Persian War.

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3. Marcell. comes, s.a. 441. 1 (ed. Mommsen, *Chron. min.*, 2:80).

4. Prosper 1347 (ed. Mommsen, *Chron. min.*, 1:479); Victor Vitensis 1. 13 (ed. Halm, *MGH:AA*, 3:4); Procopius *BV* 1. 4. 13-14; and, wrongly, Theophanes, A.M. 5941 (p. 101 De Boor). Prosper dates the treaty to 442. Procopius tells us that Huniric was sent as a hostage.

5. Merobaudes *Carm.* 1. 7-8. This interpretation is doubted (with insufficient reason) by T. D. Barnes, "Merobaudes on the Imperial Family," *Phoenix* 28 (1974): 314-19. It is true that it is not strictly proper to refer to Huniric as *exul opes*, but this is easily understood as rhetorical hyperbole. Moreover, Barnes' suggestion, Tibatto, can hardly be covered by the term *novus*.

6. Marcell. comes, s.a. 441. 1.

7. Ibid.

8. *History*, p. 87; see also A. Gildenpenning, *Geschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Kaisern Arcadius und Theodosius II* (Halle, 1885), p. 348; C. D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 69.