Saturnian Verse and Early Latin Poetics

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There are sound reasons for proposing an Greek genesis for the
Saturnian verse used by early Roman poets, but there are also
persuasive arguments for a native origin stretching back to a
common Italic and even Indo-European poetic culture. In this
paper I will argue for an indigenous Saturnian origin by
comparing this early Latin verse form to common elements of
Italic, Celtic, Germanic, and Indic verse and drawing parallels in
poetic form, stylistics, and vocabulary between Saturnian and the
poetry of these cultures.

Of the many verse forms used by Latin poets, the only Latin
surviving meter with a potential native and non-Greek origin is
the lowly Saturnian, an early meter disdained by Golden Age
poets as crude and preserved only in a few inscriptions and
scattered quotations by later authors The origin of Saturnian
verse has been hotly disputed since classical times, with many
ancient and modern scholars arguing for Greek inspiration — a
reasonable position as the Romans clearly adopted all their
other meters as well as poetic and literary genres from Greece.
But while there are sound reasons for proposing an Hellenic
genesis for Saturnian, there are also persuasive arguments for a
native origin stretching back through early Latin and Italic to a
common Indo-European poetic culture. In this paper I will
argue for an indigenous Saturnian origin by comparing this

Abbreviations used in this study:

CIE	*Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum* (1893-)
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (1863-)
CGH	*Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, vol. 1 (O'Brien 1976)
FPL	*Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum* (Blänsdorf 1995)
GL	*Grammatici Latini* (Keil 1855-1923)
KBo	*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (1916-)
elis.	elision
hiat.	hiatus
syn.	synizesis

early Latin verse form to common elements of Indo-European poetry, drawing parallels in poetic form, stylistics, vocabulary, and culture between Saturnian and Indic, Celtic, Germanic, Italic, and other Indo-European poetry.

SURVEY OF SATURNIAN VERSE

Horace characterized Saturnian poetry, which was required reading of any Roman school-boy, as *horridus*, while to Virgil's practiced ear it was *incomptus*.[1] It is difficult not to sympathize with their views when comparing the rough meter of Saturnian verse with Homer's flowing hexameters or the elegant iambic trimeter of Euripides. And yet, the pounding rhythm and harsh style of Saturnians does have a certain appeal, much like the rugged cadence of *Beowulf* or the solemn rhythm of a military march. Saturnian meter was used as a living poetic form only during the earliest period of Latin literature, with approximately 130 complete lines of verse from the waning years of the tradition preserved in quotations by later writers and in archaic inscriptions, though there are a number of textual problems in both media. It was a versatile meter used for hymns, satire, epic poetry, triumphal inscriptions, dedications, and epitaphs. The fragmentary late third-century BC translation of the *Odyssey* by Livius Andronicus, a Greek from southern Italy, and the surviving lines of the Naevius' slightly later epic poem on the Punic Wars account for the majority of literary Saturnians.[2] Most of the roughly 40 inscriptional verses written in Saturnian meter are epitaphs and dedications, such as those on the third and second-century BC tombs of the Scipio family along the Appian Way, now preserved in the Vatican Museum.[3] However, by the late third

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[1] Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.157; Virg. *G.* 2.386. Ennius, who lived while Saturnians were still being composed and introduced hexameters to Latin, also disliked the meter (*Ann.* 214).

[2] For an excellent introduction to the corpus of Saturnian verse, as well as many other aspects of the meter, see Cole 1969. Any subsequent and thoughtful study of Saturnian poetry is indebted to his research. Other studies of Saturnian verse are legion, but include Korsch 1868; Keller 1883; Lindsay 1893; Thurneysen 1885; Leo 1905; Koster 1929; Pasquali 1936; Todd 1940; Fraenkel 1951; Beare 1957; Barchiesi 1962; Luiselli 1967; West 1973: 175-9; Erasmi 1979; Radke 1991; Gasparov 1996: 68-70.

[3] See Cic. *Tusc.* 1.7.13, *Pro Arch.* 9.22; Livy 38.56.4.

century BC, Saturnian meter had already begun to fall out of fashion (even Livius and Naevius wrote many plays in Greek meters) and was rapidly being replaced by the hexameter verse of Ennius, the iambic senarius of Plautus and Terence, or other Greek-derived meters.

The debate over the structure of Saturnian has raged as long as the arguments over its origin, and in many ways the two debates are intimately intertwined. The only point on which most modern critics can agree is that each Saturnian line should be divided by a caesura into two sections or cola, as almost every line of the Saturnian corpus contains a word-boundary and very often a syntactical boundary in a central position. Beyond consensus on this basic structural division, scholars are generally divided between quantitative, accentual, and syllabic analyses of Saturnian meter, though some combine elements of two or even all three of these approaches.[4]

Proponents of a quantitative structure, often advocates of a Greek origin, see Saturnian as a pattern of predictably alternating long and short syllables, the fundamental basis of any Greek meter. All the grammarians of the ancient world shared this view, though they disagreed over metrical details. A Roman grammatical source identified with Caesius Bassus described Saturnian meter as derived, with many variations, from Greek meters.[5] Hephaestion compared Saturnian verse to Greek ἀσυνάρτητα ("disconnected") meters compounded from independent cola, such as the Archilochean dicolon, Ἐρασμονίδη Χαρίλαε Ι χρῆμά τοι γελοῖον.[6] Many modern scholars have also followed the quantitative approach.[7] The two parts of

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[4]There are many textual difficulties in surviving Saturnians, both inscriptional and literary, which pose serious problems in any type of analysis. In both types of Saturnians, it is not always clear where the poet meant for a line to end (e.g. Naevius 9: *deum adlocutus* vs. *adlocutus summi*). In inscriptions, parts of words are often missing (e.g. *CIL* I^2 9: *a[pud vos]*). In Saturnians quoted by writers centuries later, there are many variations in the textual tradition.

[5]*A Graecis enim varie et multis modis tractatus est, non solum a comicis, sed etiam a tragicis* (*GL* 6.265, cf. *GL* 6.138-9, 399-400). The evidence of the ancient grammarians on Saturnian has been collected in Luiselli 1967.

[6]Heph. 15 (Archil. frag. 15).

[7]Notably Leo (1905), Pasquali (1936), and Fraenkel (1951). Pasquali sees the two parts of a Saturnian lines as separately deriving from Greek meters, then subsequently joined in Rome to form a unit. Fraenkel prefers importation of the verse as a whole. Fraenkel sees an especially close relationship between the Saturnian line and a probable fourth century BC Cretan hymn to Zeus

a Saturnian line do often fall into iambic and trochaic rhythms, respectively. However, as the ancient grammarians themselves recognized, there is a bewildering variety of quantitative patterns among surviving Saturnians, even, it should be noted, among the more consistent examples.[8] Greek cultural and literary influence was felt in Rome from early Republican times and surely had a part in shaping early Latin hymns such as the *Carmen Arvale*, and even certain Saturnian rhythms and phrases.[9] For example, the phrase *quoius forma virtutei parissuma fuit* from the first Scipionic inscription is a close equivalent and probable borrowing of the standard Greek καλοκἀγαθία. In regards to metrics, however, surviving Saturnian quantitaive rhythms are so varied that finding a common Greek source is almost impossible. Taking the corpus of Saturnians as a whole, there are at least eighty different patterns of alternating long and short syllables. For example:[10]

Pattern	Reference
– – – ⌣ ⌣ ⌣ ‖ – ⌣ – – – –	*CIL* I^2 7.1
– – – ⌣ – – – ‖ – – ⌣ – – –	*CIL* I^2 9.4
⌣ – – ⌣ – – ⌣ ‖ – – – – ⌣ ⌣ ⌣	*CIL* I^2 10.3
– – ⌣ – – – – ‖ – – – – – ⌣	*CIL* I^2 11.2
⌣ – – – – – – – ‖ – – ⌣ – ⌣ ⌣	*CIL* I^2 1531.3
⌣ – – – – – ⌣ ⌣ ‖ – – – – – –	*CIL* I^2 626.2
– – – – ⌣ ⌣ ⌣ ‖ – – – – –	*CIL* I^2 1202.1
– – – – – ⌣ ‖ ⌣ – – – – – –	*CIL* I^2 364.6
⌣ – ⌣ ⌣ – – – ‖ – – – – –	Livius 1
⌣ – ⌣ – – – – ‖ – – – – –	Naevius 1
⌣ – ⌣ – – – – ‖ – – – – –	Metelli Reply
– – – – – – ⌣ ‖ ⌣ – – – – – –	Claudius Epigram 3
– – – – – ⌣ ‖ ⌣ – – – – – –	Glaubrio tabula
– – – – ⌣ – – ‖ – – – – – –	Aemilius tabula
– – – – – ⌣ ‖ ⌣ – – – –	Catalinus epitaph 1

The variety is so great that it would require a single metrical standard of unreasonable flexibility.

   Some modern critics have seen accent or stress as the basis

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Dictaeus: ἰὼ μέγιστε κῶρε Ι χαῖρέ μοι Κρόνειε (Diehl 1949-52, 2.6.131).

[8] *Nostri autem antiqui, ut vere dicam quod apparet, usi sunt eo non observata lege nec uno genere custodito ut inter se consentiant versus, sed praeterquam quod durissimos fecerunt, etiam alios breviores, alios longiores inseruerunt* (*GL* 6.265).

[9] See Cole 1969: 46-9.

[10] The list includes one line from each inscription or literary work, with a minimum of elision. For a detailed discussion of the metrical difficulties in a Greek origin of Saturnian verse, see Cole 1969: 46-59.

of Saturnian verse, most commonly with three stresses in the first colon followed by two in the second:[11]

vírum míhi Caména ínsece versútum	(Livius 1)
nóvem Ióvis cóncordes fíliae soróres	(Naevius 1)
Cornélius Lúcius Scípio Bárbatus	(*CIL* I² 7)

Spoken Latin did have a stress accent absent in Greek, making an accentual basis for Saturnian attractive. However, as with quantitative analysis, significant problems arise when attempting to find an accentual standard common to the whole Saturnian corpus. The 3/2 stress pattern occurs only in approximately 40% of all Saturnian lines:[12]

Stress Patterns	6/3 6/2	5/3	5/2	4/4	4/3	4/2	4/1	3/4	3/3	3/2	2/3	2/2 2/1
CIL I² 7								1	1	2		2
CIL I² 9								1		2		3
CIL I² 10	1	1			1	1			1	2		
CIL I² 11		1				1		1	2			1
CIL I² 1531			1		1	1				2		
CIL I² 626	1					1			1	1		
CIL I² 1202			2			1						
CIL I² 364						2			1	2		1
Livius			2	1	1	1	1	3	3	14		3
Naevius					3	7		1	8	23	3	6
Metelli reply										1		
Caecus					1	1				1		
Glaubrio										1		
Aemilius										1		
Calatinus										1		1

However, in many cases the common 3/2 pattern may simply be the necessary result of the reasonable number of words

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[11]Modern proponents of a stressed-based analysis include Keller 1883, Koster 1929, and Erasmi 1979. The accentuation shown here follows Classical Latin rules, though Latin, like many Italic dialects, early Germanic, Celtic, and even Etruscan, had an initial accent until the dawn of the literary period, with vestiges persisting even into Plautus (e.g. *fácilius*, *múlierem*) (see Allen 1978: 83-8).

[12]The percentage is slightly higher if selected prepositions, conjunctions, and other minor parts of speech are taken as unstressed, secondary accents are permitted in longer words, and elision is allowed.

which will fit in the average length of a Saturnian line.[13] Accent is an important element in early Germanic poetry and medieval Latin rhythmical verse, but an early Latin meter defined by stress alone would be an anomaly in the classical world. This is not to say that stress patterns play no role at all in the meter, but again given the corpus as a whole, it is extremely difficult to find a consistent accent pattern to use as a standard.

The final view of Saturnian meter is that it has a structure based on the number of syllables per line, most often seven in the first colon followed by six in the second, though surviving Saturnians have five to nine syllables in the first part with the second colon usually one to three syllables shorter. This view is commonly held, though not exclusively, by proponents of a native origin.[14] Seen in this fashion, the above lines would be as follows:

<div align="center">

virum mihi Camena insece versutum
x x x x x x x | x x x x x x

novem Iovis concordes filiae sorores
x x x x x x x | x x x x x x

Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus
x x x x x x x | x x x x x x

</div>

Not allowing for elision, hiatus, and synizesis, the 7/6 syllabic structure is found in only a quarter of the complete Saturnian lines:[15]

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[13]Take any line of Greek or Latin poetry and divide it into segments roughly the length of a Saturnian line. The accentual patterns will very often match those found in Saturnians:

"Ανδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον ...	3/2	*Od.* 1.1
Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ...	3/3	*Aen.* 1.1
Cui dono lepidum novum libellum	3/2	Catull. 1.1

[14]Modern proponents of the syllabic theory include Cole 1969 and West 1973. The statement of Servius (*ad Georg.* 2.385) regarding the pure rhythmic nature of Saturnian (*ad rhythmum solum*) should be approached with caution (see Todd 1940; Cole 1969: 5).

[15]In addition, without elision, hiatus, or synizesis permitted, there are five other syllabic patterns with one occurrence each: 11/7 (*CIL* I² 626.1), 10/7 (*CIL* I² 10.4), 10/6 (*CIL* I² 10.1), 10/5 (*CIL* I² 364.2), and 5/6 (Livius 18.3).

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Syll. Count	9/7	9/6 9/5	8/8	8/7	8/6	8/5	7/9 7/8	7/7	7/6	7/5	6/7	6/6	6/5
CIL I² 7				1				1	3	1			
CIL I² 9									2	1	1	1	1
CIL I² 10		2					2		1				
CIL I² 11						1		1	3			1	
CIL I² 1531					1	1			2	1			
CIL I² 626		1			1							1	
CIL I² 1202	1		1		1								
CIL I² 364	1			1				1	1	1			
Livius	1	1	1	1	2	1		3	10	3	1	3	1
Naevius	2	4	2	2	7	3	2	5	13	5	1	1	4
Metelli reply									1				
Caecus		1						1	1				
Glaubrio									1				
Aemilius				1									
Calatinus										1		1	

However, if one more reasonably allows elision, hiatus, and synizesis, favoring the 7/6 pattern when possible or at least a syllable count in which the initial colon is greater to or equal to the second, the results are as follows:

Syll. Count	9/6 9/5	8/7	8/6	8/5	7/8 7/7	7/6	7/5	6/8 6/7	6/6	6/5 5/5
CIL I² 7			1			4	1			
CIL I² 9						2	1		2	1
CIL I² 10	1	1				5				
CIL I² 11					1	3	1		1	
CIL I² 1531			1			2	2			
CIL I² 626	1	1				1			1	
CIL I² 1202		2	1							
CIL I² 364	1	1	1		1	1		1		
Livius		3				16	4		3	3
Naevius		3	1	1	4	29	7		2	4
Metelli reply						1				
Caecus				1		1		1		
Glaubrio						1				
Aemilius		1								
Calatinus							1		1	

Even with a generous allowance for elision, hiatus, and synizesis, the 7/6 syllabic pattern occurs in only 50% of the Saturnian corpus. Nevertheless, for consistency, a 7/6 syllabic basis found in half of all Saturnians rests on a much firmer

foundation than the several dozen quantitative variations. And although the 40% of Saturnians with a 3/2 accentual pattern form a larger block than any quantitative scansion, the 7/6 syllabic pattern is still more common. However, even for proponents of a syllabic foundation of Saturnian meter, there may be an uncomfortable number of exceptions to the 7/6 rule. But if one sees the meter as flexible enough for the poet to occasionally add or subtract extra syllables, the problem is greatly minimized.

Of the contending quantitative, accentual, and syllabic theories of Saturnian verse, a slightly flexible meter based on syllable count centered on 7/6 best fits the available evidence. However, taken simply as a meter based only on the number of syllables per line, there are more problems in consistency in Saturnian lines than the careful reader might desire. For this reason and the natural preference of Latin scholars, both ancient and modern, to see a Greek quantitative meter underlying Saturnians, the syllabic argument has never prevailed. I believe, nonetheless, that there is a fairly consistent solution to the mystery of Saturnian meter based partially on syllable count.

One of the most important structural features of Saturnian meter, evident regardless of one's preference for quantitative, accentual, or syllabic analysis, is the *caesura Korschiana*, named after its nineteenth-century discoverer, a word-boundary found before the last three syllables of most half-lines:[16]

virum mihi | Camena insece | versutum

novem Iovis | concordes filiae | sorores

Cornelius | Lucius Scipio | Barbatus

The strict *caesura Korschiana* before the final three syllables of a half-line (| x x x) is found in over 70% of all Saturnian cola, 80% if one allows for elision, hiatus, and synizesis:

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[16]Korsch 1868, 40; Cole 1969, 19-20; West 1973, 176-77. This caesura is also found in almost all surviving fragmentary Saturnians, e.g. *pater noster Saturni* || *filie...* (Livius 2); *...amborum* || *uxores...* (Naevius 5.1); *...imperator* || *dedicat...* (*CIL* I^2 626). West (1973, 177) does not see the second half-line of Saturnians as having a defining caesura before the antepenultimate syllable, but instead marked by a final two-syllable cadence.

Half-lines ending with:	1-2 syll.	3 syll.	3 syll. (elis., etc.)	4 syll.	5+ syll.
CIL I^2 7	2	9	1		
CIL I^2 9	1	8	1		2
CIL I^2 10	1	10	2	1	
CIL I^2 11		10	2		
CIL I^2 1531		10			
CIL I^2 626	2	5			1
CIL I^2 1202	1	2	1	1	
CIL I^2 364	2	8	1	1	
Livius	8	44	4	1	1
Naevius	11	72	9	6	4
Metelli reply		2			
Caecus	1	4	1		
Glaubrio		1	1		
Aemilius				2	
Calatinus	2	1	1		

In the first Scipionic epitaph, the name of the deceased, *Lucius Cornelius*, is even reversed to *Cornelius | Lucius* to better fit the caesura pattern. Several exceptions to this caesura rule are to allow for cola with unusually long words, such as *inserinuntur* (Livius 34), *ministratores* (Naevius 38), and, with elision, *Aleriaque urbe* (*CIL* I^2 9). A number of the two-syllable deviations from the general rule have three syllables in variant readings of the texts (e.g. Naevius 44: *sedent, sedentes,* or *sedere*). Another exception is a two-syllable word which was, at the same time period, still found in a three-syllable form, e.g. *supra / supera* (Livius 3) and *puer / puera* (Naevius 22, cf. Livius 3), suggesting the poet may have had an earlier pattern or formula in mind. Not all exceptions can be explained away, nor should we expect them to be, as poetic license, not to mention textual difficulties, necessitates variation from any poetic rule. However, even with deviations, the trisyllabic cadence after Korsch's caesura occurs with a far greater frequency than any other pattern in Saturnian verse, quantitative, accentual, or syllabic.

Another very common characteristic of Saturnian verse is the skillful use of alliteration, which often highlights and bridges the central caesura, the *caesura Korschiana*, and other word-boundaries. Repetition of sounds is found occasionally in Greek poetry and even more so in Latin verse from Ennius to Virgil and beyond, but never in the consistent frequency of its

use in Saturnians.[17] The infrequency of alliteration in Greek poetry compared to its common status in Saturnian is in fact a strong argument against a Greek origin. Livius' first line is a short masterpiece of binding ring-composition based on the repetition of sounds, with the first and final words, a noun and its modifying adjective, repeating the same *v-r-m* pattern and framing the invoked *Camena*, an Italic water-goddess serving as Livius' Muse:

virum mihi I Camena insece I **versutum**

Other examples of linking parts of the line by parallels of sound include:

argenteo I po**lubro aur**eo I ec**lutro**
(Livius 6)

prima incedit I Cereris **Pro**serpina I **pu**er
(Naevius 22)

scopas atque I verbenas **s**agima I **s**umpserunt
(Naevius 35)

quod bruti I nec **satis sar**dare I **qu**eunt
(Naevius 56)

consol censor I **a**idilis quei fuit I **a**pud vos
(*CIL* I² 7)

magna I sapientia **m**ultasque I virtutes
(*CIL* I² 11)

In some of the few literary fragments which preserve consecutive verses, alliteration is even found across line boundaries:

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[17]Examples of alliteration in classical verse include τίκτουσιν δὲ γυναῖκες ἐοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσι (Hes. *Op.* 235), *fraxinu' frangitur atque abies consternitur alta / pinus proceras pervortant* (Enn. *Ann.* 190), and *magno misceri murmure* (*Aen.* 1.124). Alliteration is found frequently in the earliest Latin poetry beyond the Saturnian corpus, such as Naevius' epitaph (Gell. 1.24) and the *Bellum Histrium* of Hostius (Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.121, etc.). Ennius carries the device to deliberate excess in his famous *O Tite tute Tati tibi tanta tyranne tulisti* (*Ann.* 109).

> ibi manens sedeto **do**nicum <u>v</u>idebis
> me carpento | <u>v</u>ehentem **do**mum | <u>v</u>enisse
> (Livius 15)
>
> **p**ostquam <u>a</u>vem | <u>a</u>spexit in templo | <u>A</u>nchisa,
> sacra in mensa | **P**enatium ordine | **p**onuntur;
> immolabat | <u>a</u>uream victimam | **p**ulchram.
> (Naevius 25)

The unvarying presence of a central caesura, the *caesura Korschiana* followed by a trisyllabic cadence in both cola, the flexibility of the syllabic count before the secondary caesura, and the equal or lesser number of syllables in the half-line following the opening colon in almost all cases, suggest that Saturnian verse originally consisted of two separate strophic lines of roughly seven and six syllables rather than a single stichic line of thirteen syllables on average:

Stichic

> virum mihi | Camena insece | versutum
> novem Iovis | concordes filiae | sorores
> Cornelius | Lucius Scipio | Barbatus

Strophic

> virum mihi | Camena
> insece | versutum
> novem Iovis | concordes
> filiae | sorores
> Cornelius | Lucius
> Scipio | Barbatus

It is not necessary to view Saturnians in this stanzaic way, but as the two lines act independently aside from binding alliteration, it is simpler to arrange them as a longer line alternating with a shorter or equal-length line rather than as continuous, stichic meter. As will be shown below, there are also historical reasons to prefer a strophic arrangement.

Given all the above evidence, I believe the definition of Saturnian meter may be stated as a syllabic, strophic, and

frequently alliterative verse with a caesura normally before the antepenultimate syllable, where the syllable count is flexible, but most commonly seven in the first line and six in the second:

$$(x\ x\ x)\ x\ x\ |\ x\ x\ x$$
$$(x\ x\ x)\ x\ x\ |\ x\ x\ x$$

In all but two late instances, the second line is equal to or, much more commonly, shorter than the first line. Certain quantitative and accentual patterns are often present in the meter, but are secondary. This is not an entirely new way of looking at Saturnian verse. Almost every modern commentator has noted the unusual amount of alliteration in Saturnian meter, though not all have seen its binding properties, and a number have proposed an underlying strophic structure. More importantly, Korsch obviously recognized his namesake caesura in the nineteenth century, though he saw it as a feature of a quantitative system, while others, especially Cole, have also noted the importance of the final three syllables of the half-line.[18] However, I propose that the trisyllabic unit after the caesura is not simply an important feature of Saturnians, but is the defining element of Saturnian verse and the basis on which the rest of the meter is constructed. I hope to support this argument by showing in the remainder of this study that the line-final trisyllabic core, along with binding alliteration and other features of Saturnian verse discussed above, have a long heritage stretching back through the history of early Latin, Italic, and Indo-European poetics.

INDO-EUROPEAN POETS AND POETRY

The Indo-European poet was the conscience, memory, and voice of his society, singing praise for heroes, kings, and gods.[19] The poet existed in a reciprocal relation with his patron, usually a chief or king, celebrating the patron and his ancestors in song, inspiring his warriors with tales of past valor, or entertaining his retinue at an evening banquet. For these

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[18]Cole 1969, 70-1.

[19]Studies of Indo-European poetry include Meillet 1923; Jakobson 1952; Watkins 1963; West 1973; Nagy 1974; Campanile 1977; Meid 1978; Gasparov 1996. One of the best and most comprehensive surveys of the subject is the recent book by Watkins (1995).

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services he received generous payment in turn, as he was a professional. The reciprocal nature of giving and taking in Indo-European tribal culture in general is so closely connected that the roots for these verbs are often interchangeable in different Indo-European languages, e.g. IE *do- becomes Latin *dare*, but Hittite *da-* ("take, receive"), while IE *nem- develops into Greek νέμω "give", but German *nehmen* "take". This giving of praise and receiving of rewards was carried out by poets like Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, who served Alcinous and the Phaeacean court by giving the gift of song (δίδου δ' ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδόν), remembering the κλέα of recent heroes, and singing tales of the gods.[20] The Indo-Europeans and their scattered descendants put a tremendous emphasis on the concept of gaining eternal fame, even passing on the same formulaic phrase for the concept into daughter languages, as Greek κλέ(ϝ)ος ἄφθιτον is a cognate of Sanskrit *śrávas ákṣitam*. Only the poet had the power to confer on his patron this imperishable fame, whether the Indic *sutra* praising the king at his consecration, Pindar extolling the athletic victor Aristomenes, or the tardy Gaulish bard singing the generosity of King Lovernius for a bag of gold.[21]

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[20]Hom. *Od.* 8.62-83, 255-369, 499-535. The role of praise-giver in service to a king was an office of the Indo-European poet, but it was not uniquely Indo-European. The medieval griots, or poets, of Mali in western Africa served a similar function, as they still do today in a much reduced fashion. In the opening words of the *Sundiata* epic, the poet makes a proclamation which could have easily been spoken by Demodocus or any Indo-European bard, from Ireland to India (Niane 1965: 1):

> I am a griot. It is I, Djeli Mamoudou Kouyaté, son of Bintou Kouyaté and Djeli Kedian Kouyaté, master in the art of eloquence. Since time immemorial the Kouyatés have been in the service of the Keita princes of Mali; we are the vessels of speech, we are the repositories which harbour secrets many centuries old. The art of eloquence has no secrets for us; without us the names of kings would vanish into oblivion, we are the memory of mankind; by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations.

[21]*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.4.3.5 (see Dillon 1975, 52-69); Pind. *Pyth.* 8; Ath. *Deip.* 4.37. This poetic tradition of the early Celts survives quite well into later times. The reciprocal nature of the poet-patron relationship even enters the word-play of a poem when the early Welsh poet Llywarch Hen describes his retreat from battle with his slain patron's head, *Pen a borthaf a'm porthes* ("I carry the head which carried me") (Ford 1974: 104-5). The Welsh word *pen* (Old Irish *cenn*) means both the body part "head" and "chief, lord", thus the double entendre of Llywarch Hen's burden. The poets of medieval Ireland

The poet also had the power to act as a check on individuals, for the good of his society or when obligations to him, financial or otherwise, were not fulfilled. Promised one of the daughters of Lycambes in marriage, the scorned Greek poet Archilochus poetically shamed the entire family to suicide when his would-be father-in-law changed his mind.[22] Hesiod's *Works and Days* is framed as a hexameter satire against his brother Perses but in reality is an indictment against society as a whole, especially against unjust rulers (e.g. the parable of the Hawk and the Nightingale).[23] The same poetic social criticism is seen in Theognis of Megara and throughout the dramas of Athenian state theater, especially in the comedies of Aristophanes. Celtic poetic satire is recorded as early as Posidonius who says the Gauls sang both praise and satire accompanied by lyres.[24] This tradition continued among the Irish and Welsh, with poets of both nations famous for their satirical power. Irish poets could reportedly cause horrible blemishes on their unfortunate victims, whereas the Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym, a contemporary of Chaucer, reputedly killed a critic by the power of his verse.[25]

The Indo-European poets and their descendants throughout Europe and Asia not only had a similar role in their cultures, but shared inherited poetic techniques as well. Meillet established the basic characteristics of Indo-European *Urvers* early in this century by linking forms of Aeolic lyric meter and Vedic poetry. He and subsequent scholars have shown that Indo-European poetry was loosely quantitative, syllabic, divided by a caesura, and that the rhythm of the line end was less flexible than its beginning.[26] The line was sometimes varied by

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were intimately involved in the same kind of reciprocal relationship with their patrons. The *Bretha Nemed Déidenach* law tract specifies payments due to poets ranging from a chariot for the best quality poem to a heifer and cauldron for the least admired style (Kelly 1991: 45).

[22]Hor. *Epist.* 6.11-6, etc.

[23]Hes. *Op.* 10, 210-12.

[24]Diod. Sic. 5.31.2.

[25]Robinson 1912: 102-3.

[26]Meillet 1923; Jakobson 1952; Watkins 1963; West 1973; Watkins 1995: 19-21. Indo-European verse was quantitative in that it commonly had an alternation of one long followed by one or two short syllables. The poet could choose between longer lines of 10-12 syllables or shorter lines of 7-8. This was the metrical standard at least in the later stages of the proto-language before Greek and Indo-Iranian separated, but perhaps after Anatolian, Germanic,

omitting the initial (acephaly) or final (catalexis) syllable, and frequently made use of alliteration and other word-play to emphasize, link, and frame key elements.

These features are seen in the daughter languages in varying degrees. Vedic poetry, the oldest examples of ancient Indic verse, is strophic and syllabic, although a quantitative iambic or trochaic rhythm is often present. Longer Vedic meters are divided by a caesura and allow flexibility in the beginning of the line, while strictly regulating the cadence of the final syllables. Avestan, Sanskrit's close relative in Persia, most commonly has an eleven-syllable strophic line with a four-syllable initial colon divided by a caesura from a seven-syllable ending or a sixteen-syllable line divided into a 7/9 pattern. Avestan lacks and apparently lost the regular quantitative rhythm of Vedic poetry. Greek meter was certainly quantitative, divided by a caesura, and more rigidly fixed at its end than its beginning, but had ceased to be syllable-based.[27] Across the Aegean, a great many of the surviving Anatolian records of the second millennium BC are ritual texts in verse, including Luvian poetry which made use of a central caesura and binding alliteration.[28] The isolated Tocharians of central Asia had a syllabic meter (often containing heptasyllabic cola) divided by a caesura and frequently grouped in stanzas of equal or alternating length lines.[29] Slavic meters commonly are strophic, syllabic, loosely regulated in the beginning of the line, divided by a caesura before the antepenultimate syllable in many forms, and quantitative, at least in the final syllables. Slavic meters are of different length, but the shorter Serbo-Croatian, Russian, and Czech historical song and ballad lines are all 5/3 with a final | x x x pattern.[30] Early Germanic poetry lost any regular quantitative rhythm of the parent language, but maintained a two-colon meter defined by stress, alliteration, and divided by a caesura. Celtic verse forms also lack any quantitative pattern, but, as represented by the earliest Old Irish poetry, are strictly regulated by syllable-count. Irish meters vary in the number of

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Celtic, Italic, and other branches had split from the parent tongue.

[27]The fragments of Bronze Age Greek formulae found in Homeric verse suggest the Mycenaeans were singing epic verse in hexameter at least as early as the fourteenth century BC (West 1988).

[28]Watkins 1986; 1995: 144-51.

[29]West 1973: 183.

[30]Jakobson 1952; Watkins 1963: 210-12; West 1973: 170-3.

syllables, but are characterized by a free initial and fixed line ending, with a heptasyllabic meter ending in a trisyllabic cadence (x x x x | x x x) being one of the oldest and most common.

Indo-European verse also had a fondness for extra-metrical poetic techniques such as binding alliteration, a feature seen in varying frequency in many of the daughter languages:[31]

Luvian:	*ahha-ta-ta a<u>lati</u>	a<u>wienta</u> <u>Wilus</u><u>ati</u>*
Sanskrit:	*<u>ś</u>rudhi <u>ś</u>ruta	<u>ś</u>raddhivaṃ te vadami*
Old Irish:	*Dind <u>Ríg</u> <u>r</u>uad	<u>t</u>uaim <u>t</u>enbad*
Old English:	*Oft <u>Sc</u>yld <u>Sc</u>efing	<u>sc</u>eaÞena Þreatum*

This repetition of sounds could be used by the poet in many ways, but a primary function was to bind parts of a poem together across a caesura and even beyond individual lines. Although alliteration is used in the verse of Greek, Indo-Iranian, and other daughter languages, it is most developed in the poetry of the Indo-European languages of western Europe, especially Celtic, Germanic, and Italic.

ITALIC POETICS

While ancient Greece was in general a land of one language with many dialects, early Italy was a mosaic of many different peoples and languages, some non-Indo-European, some speaking Indo-European languages of the Italic group, and others Indo-European but not part of the Italic language family.[32] In northeast Italy, the Veneti spoke an Indo-European

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[31] KBo 4.11, 46; *Rig Veda* 10.125; *CGH* 17-8; *Beowulf* 4. See the recent study by Bader (1993). I use the term alliteration in a traditional sense to include both the repetition of initial and internal vowels, consonants, and sound patterns, sometimes classified under assonance and consonance. Alliteration, as the role of the poet, should not be viewed as an exclusively Indo-European characteristic by any means, as it is found in Chinese, Japanese, and the poetry of many other language groups.

[32] For a more detailed survey of the languages of ancient Italy, see Vetter 1953; Conway 1967; Devoto 1972; Pallottino 1991: 36-40, 48-9. A survey of Italic poetry, from which I often draw readings and interpretations of these texts, is found in Watkins 1995: 126-34, 214-231.

tongue, but one of uncertain relation to the Italic dialects. To their west in the Po valley were the Celtic invaders from Gaul speaking the same tongue as their cousins across the Alps, aside from the Celtic Lepontii in a few Alpine valleys, whose language may be a more archaic form of Gaulish. The Rhaetians of the central Alps, the Ligurians of the northwestern coast, and the North Picenians of the upper eastern coast may have spoken Indo-European languages, but their remains are too fragmentary to be certain. South of the Appenines and north of Rome were the Etruscans, a non-Indo-European group of uncertain origin, though inscriptions in a very similar language have been discovered on the Aegean island of Lemnos. In the area where the Tiber met the coastal plains were the Latin-speaking inhabitants of Rome and its environs. Just to their north around the town of Falerii were the Faliscans, who spoke a language closely related to that of the Romans and grouped together with Latin as the Latino-Faliscan family of the Italic languages. The Italic group also included the Sabellic or Osco-Umbrian languages which occupied most of the remainder of the peninsula, aside from the Greek spoken by colonists in many coastal areas, especially in the south. Umbrian was spoken in the region east of Tuscany, while the Oscan language of the Samnites spread over much of the middle and south of Italy. South Picene, a member of the Sabellic group, survives in a few inscriptions of east-central Italy, while Messapic, of probable Illyrian origin, was spoken in Italy's heel. Other ancient Italian languages, such as Marsian, Siculian, and Elymian, survive only in scattered and meager inscriptions, making them difficult to classify.

Poetry certainly thrived in most if not all of these languages of early Italy, but the best surviving evidence, especially for comparison with early Latin and Saturnian verse, is from South Picene and Faliscan. A brief look at the poetry of both languages shows many of the elements of inherited Indo-European verse as well as parallels with Saturnians. In the area of Picenum, where the Pompey family would later rise to power, roughly twenty inscribed grave stelae from the sixth and fifth centuries BC have been preserved. One large grave stone from Bellante contains a clearly carved inscription, though the interpretation is difficult:[33]

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[33]Marinetti 1985: 203-8; Watkins 1995: 131-2.

postin ፧ viam ፧ videtas ፧ tetis ፧ tokam ፧ alies ፧ esmen ፧ vepses ፧ vepeten

The middle of the passage is unclear, but the beginning must translate as "you see along this road …", while the ending reads "… buried in this tomb". It is reasonable, though not certain, to see this inscription as a three-line, heptasyllabic verse with alliteration and final trisyllabic cadences after a caesura:

pos<u>tin</u> viam | videtas	x x x x | x x x	_ a | a
tetis tokam | alies	x x x x | x x x	b b | _
esmen vepses | vepe<u>ten</u>	x x x x | x x x	_ a | a

Alliteration binds across the caesura in the first and final lines, and also links these two lines together by repeating the same alliterative pattern and virtually the same final syllable in the first and last words of the epitaph. The dental repetition in the second line before the caesura adds to the poetic technique as a mirror image of the first and third lines. Carved on a Scipionic tombstone, these lines would be recognized as perfect Saturnians. It should be emphasized, however, that not all South Picene poetry is in this same form, though syllable-counting is apparent and alliteration is abundant throughout the corpus.[34]

The Faliscans to the north of Rome produced poetry which reflected their notoriously pleasure-loving nature, as seen from a late fourth-century BC vase inscription:[35]

foied . vino . pipafo . cra . carefo

easily translated as, "Today I will drink wine, tomorrow I will do without". Again, there is no certainty on how to divide the line,

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[34]See Marinetti 1985; Watkins 1995: 131-4; Eichner 1988-90: 195-206. From the same area as the Bellante inscription is the grave stone of Penna S. Andrea (Marinetti 1985: 215-17; line division after Eichner):

śidom safinús <u>e</u>stuf e<u>ś</u>elsít
tíom *p*ovaisis *p*idaitúpas
fitiasom <u>m</u>úfqlúm
<u>m</u>efistrúí nemúneí *p*raistaít
*p*anivú meitims safinas
tútas trebegies titúí
*p*raistaklasa *p*osmúi

[35]*CIE* 8179 (cf. Varro *Ling.* 5.22, 111; Mart. 4.54.8). Note also the Ceres Inscription, the oldest Faliscan text, a playfully erotic poem in which "Pravios" asks his "dear girlfriend" to give of her charms (Vetter 1953: 244), as well as the second-century BC Faliscan cooks inscription in Saturnian verse (*CIL* I^2 364).

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but parallelism strongly suggests a break after *pipafo*, splitting the inscription into a short, strophic verse:

<u>foi</u>ed vino I pipa<u>fo</u>	x x x x I x x x
cra I care<u>fo</u>	x I x x x

If this division is correct, the poem is a heptasyllabic line followed by a four-syllable variant. The syllabic and syntactic parallelism of *pipafo* and *carefo* also suggests a caesura before the antepenultimate syllable of each line. Alliteration binds across the caesurae of both lines and, if *foi-* is allowed to alliterate with *-fo*, frames the verse as well.

Neither the short South Picene or Faliscan examples are meant to prove that Saturnian meter was present as such in the Italic dialects, simply that the ancient languages of Italy preserved Indo-European poetic features and techniques commonly found in Saturnian as well. Syllable-counting, division by a caesura, a regulated line end, binding alliteration, and a preference for the heptasyllable found in other Indo-European languages must have been a common Italic heritage. The trisyllabic final cadence in Italic poetry, as a parallel to Saturnian verse, should especially be noted. Other Italic poetry, such as the Umbrian Iguvium Tables, resembles Saturnians less obviously than the above examples, but still exhibits many similar features which argue for an Italic heritage for early Latin poetry.[36]

EARLY LATIN POETICS

Though much of archaic Latin poetry has long vanished, sufficient fragments of early verse remain to see that Roman poetic culture shared in the Italic and Indo-European tradition. Cicero reports that Cato knew of *carmina de clarorum virorum laudibus* sung at banquets of the noble families of Republican Rome in almost Homeric (or Indic, Celtic, etc.) fashion.[37] It is not unreasonable to see the composers of the Scipionic epitaphs or Naevius in his *Bellum Poenicum* in this same tradition

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[36]For the Iguvium Tables, see Poultney 1959; Watkins 1995: 214-25. Pocetti (1983) suggests a Saturnian pattern in three short Oscan inscriptions.

[37]Cic. *Brut.* 75. It has been argued that reports of these songs were a literary invention (Momigliano 1957), though songs praising the deeds of famous ancestors would certainly seem appropriate in early Rome or any Indo-European culture.

of praise-poetry. Even Virgil, with Maecenas and Augustus as his patrons, could be viewed as an heir to an ancient Indo-European tradition.[38] Ancient Rome had its satirists as well, such as Naevius belittling the Metelli family's consular abilities in verse — *Fato Metelli Romae fiunt consules* — that is, the Metelli family acquired political office by fate alone, not by any skill or ability.[39] But Naevius' satiric poetry, though certainly influenced by Greek invective, was also part of an old Italic tradition. The Twelve Tables, an early codification of Roman customary law preserved only in scattered fragments, warn against the abuses of composing such malicious poetry.[40]

The Saturnian verses of the Scipionic tombs, Livius, and Naevius are not the oldest Latin poetry, though the few earlier examples are poorly preserved and contain many textual and interpretive problems. Nevertheless, these precursors and near contemporaries of Saturnians show important metrical and stylistic parallels to Saturnian verse. The song of the Arval Brotherhood is inscribed on a tablet from AD 218, but imperfectly records a processional hymn of perhaps the sixth century BC:[41]

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[38]The role of poet as intermediary between humans and the divine is also found in early Rome. Varro (*Ling.* 7.36) says, *poetas antiquos vates appellabant.* These *vates* were always viewed by Roman authors as poetic prophets and soothsayers (e.g. Plaut. *Mil.* 911; Lucr. 1.102; Cic. *In Cat.* 4.2), frequently in a frenzied state (Cic. *De Div.* 1.4), appropriately so since "frenzied" is the meaning of the Gothic cognate *wods*. Ennius derisively alludes to Naevius as a primitive *vates* (*Ann.* 214). By Augustan times, the word was a synonym for poet, though vestiges of divine inspiration lingered. The Latin authors also use the term *vates* for foreign soothsayers, such as Etruscans (Livy 1.56.5), the Greek prophet Tiresias (Prop. 4.9.57), and the druids of Gaul (Pliny *HN* 30.13).

[39]Ps.-Ascon. ad Cic. *Verr.* 1.10.29. The Metelli replied in the famous Saturnian verse, *Dabunt malum Metelli* ‖ *Naevio poetae* (*GL* 6.266).

[40]*Si quis occentavisset sive carmen condidisset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri...* (Cic. *De Rep.* 4.12). Pliny (*HN* 28.17) also quotes a similar fragment from the Twelve Tables, *qui malum carmen incantassit...*

[41]*CIL* I² 2 (*FPL* 9-11). All lines are repeated three times, except the final *triumpe* invocation which may be extrametrical. The text and line division follow the *FPL*, except for the grouping of *Marmar sins*, in which I follow Cole 1969: 70. Many interpretaions of the hymn have been offered (see *FPL* bibliography), with general consensus including *Lases* = *Lares*, *enos* = *nos*, and *Marmor* as a reduplicated form of *Mars*. Some of the same patterns and techniques are found in the even more obscure Carmen Saliare (*FPL* 2-9) and other *antiqua carmena*, such as Gellius' (4.9.1) *religentem esse* | *oportet* ‖ *religiosus* | *ne fuas.*

> enos Lases | iuvate
> neve lue rue | Marmar sins
> incurrere in | pleores
> satur **fu** | **fere** Mars limen **sali** | **sta** berber
> semunis | alternei advocapit | conctos
> enos Marmor | iuvato
> triumpe triumpe | triumpe triumpe | triumpe

All lines end with a regular trisyllabic cadence (reading *conctos* as representing a presyncope *concitos*) preceded by a variable opening of three to six syllables:

> (x x x) x x x | x x x

Alliteration across the caesura occurs in two lines, perhaps not incidentally the lines which are framed by the repetition of the similar phrases *enos Lases iuvate* and *enos Marmor iuvato*. An ancient foot-healing prayer recorded by Varro has a very similar pattern with a trisyllabic final cadence, a variable initial before the caesura, and binding alliteration:[42]

> ego tui | **me**mini
> medere **me**is | **pe**dibus
> terra **pe**stem | tenato
> salus hic | **ma**neto
> in **me**is | **pe**dibus

Not all passages of archaic Latin poetry have this final trisyllabic pattern by any means. A brief survey of early poetry prior to or contemporary with Saturnian verse shows that early Roman poets had a variable repertoire available to them, though one would be hard-pressed to find a sample of early Latin verse which did not consist of relatively short verses artfully using alliteration and other poetic techniques common to Saturnian verse.[43]

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[42]Varro *Rust.* 1.2.27.

[43]For example, Cato's lustration prayer for the fields: *fruges frumenta | vineta virgultaque* (*Agr.* 141; cf. Watkins 1995: 197-213). For a corpus of early literary and inscriptional verse, see the collections in the *FPL*; Warmington 1936, 1940; Ernout 1973; Palmer 1988: 346-57.

SATURNIAN AND CELTIC VERSE

Lindsay noted the similarity in form between Old Irish and
Saturnian verse as early as 1923 and others have followed in
drawing attention to these striking parallels and positing a
common origin.[44] Not only metrical patterns, but the role of
the poet and poetic vocabulary seem especially close between
early Romans and Celts. For example, the Indo-European root
wet ("to blow, inspire") is the source of key poetic terms in
both Latin and Celtic. The Roman *vates*, as noted above, was
regarded not only as a prophet and seer, but as a divinely in-
spired poet. The Gaulish οὐάτεις, part of the druidic class, could
step between warring Gallic armies and cause the fighting to
cease merely by the authority of his presence.[45] The later Irish
poet, who had magical and prophetic qualities, was called by
the cognate *fáith*, with the closely related Welsh *gwawd* and Old
Irish *fáth* being the terms for both "poetry" and "prophecy".
The common Latin verb of poetic recitation from the Twelve
Tables to Virgil and beyond, *canere* (< IE *kan-* "to sing"), aside
from Umbrian *kanetu*, has cognates with the same meaning in
Old Irish *canid*, Welsh *canu*, and Breton *kana*. This term also
has a supernatural dimension as seen in the Latin derivatives
carmen (< *kan-men*) "song, prediction, charm" and *oscen* (< *obs-
cen*) "a bird which sings for auguries".

In addition to the closeness of poetic vocabulary and
culture between early Rome and Ireland, the similarity in
metrical patterns of archaic Latin and Celtic verse are
surprisingly strong. Unfortunately, there are no certain
examples of Gaulish or other ancient Celtic verse to compare
with Latin.[46] However, one of the earliest Irish poems, as an
example of many similar poems, shows a number of features

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[44]Lindsay 1923: 9-10; Cole 1969: 66-73; West 1973: 177-79.

[45]Diod. Sic. 5.31.

[46]Though perhaps not in verse, several Gaulish inscriptions show poetic
features common to Indo-European and Italic poetry, such as alliteration, e.g.
the first-century AD inscribed lead tablet from Larzac (lines 1-5) with very
tentative translation (Lejeune 1985):

insinde · se · **bnarcom** · bricto[	In this tablet is the magic of women,
neianom · anuana · sanander[	their special underworld names,
na · brictom · ̲vidluias · ̲vidlu[	and the magic of the seeress
̲tigontias · so · adsagsona · seue[	who weaves this. Adsagsona ... Severa,
̲tertionicnim · *li*dssatim *li*ciatim[	daughter of Tertiu, artificer and offerer

recognizable in Indo-European, Italic, and early Latin verse:[47]

Dind **Ríg** ruad | t̲uaim t̲enbad
t̲richait n-airech fo | b̲rón b̲ebsait
*B*rúisius bréosuis bar niad | l̲onn *L̲*abraid
*l*ath Elgca húa Luircc | *L*óegaire
*L*ugaid lóeg l̲onn | s̲anb S̲étna
s̲ochla **Cóel Cobthach** m̲ál | m̲uiredach
*M*andrais **a**rmu **a**thar | *o*llomon
*o*rt **Móen macco** a̲in | A̲ugaine

Red Dind Ríg (is) a fire-kindled mound.
Thirty chieftains died in sorrow.
He crushed them, smashed them, savage, furious Labraid,
warrior of Ireland, grandson of Loéguire Lorcc.
(He slew) beloved Lugaid, mighty Sétna,
renowned Cobthach Coél, Muredach the prince.
The grandfather of Ollam destroyed the weapons.
Moén (i.e. Labraid) slew the sons of glorious Augaine.

This heroic poem of the early Christian period recalls the invasion and subjugation of Leinster (SE Ireland) by Labraid Loingsech Moen, king of the Laigin. The bard Ferchertne sings, as might Homer, of the sack of the fortress of Dind Ríg (in Co. Carlow) by his glorious patron Labraid. All lines of the poem end with a fixed trisyllabic cadence, though the syllable-count before the caesura varies from three to six. Alliteration is abundant, not only within a half-line and across the caesura, but linking the last word of each line to the first word of the next.[48] Stichic verse is common in Old Irish verse, but even more popular is strophic alternation of a long line followed by a line shorter by one or more syllables (8/7, 7/6, etc.). Irish poetry possessed great variety and flexibility, but most of the earliest verse is highly alliterative and closes with a final

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[47]O'Brien 1976: 17-18.

[48]A strophic technique also found in a South Picene verse from Castignano (Eichner 1988-90a; Watkins 1995: 133-4), (tr. Watkins):

matereíh patereíh **q**olofítúr	He who well ... mother (and) father
qupíríh arítuh ímih **p**uíh	(him) here the elders of the Picenes
púpúnum estufk **a**paiús	have set up with their own hands
adstaíúh súaís **m**anus	as a memorial
meitimúm	

trisyllabic cadence separated by a caesura from a variable initial.[49]

There is, however, a major theoretical problem in comparing Saturnian and Old Irish verse which has seldom been confronted — the survival of metrical patterns across periods of profound language change. Irish (and British) underwent radical apocope and syncope between the end of the Roman Empire and the earliest insular records.[50] In Irish apocope (*c.* fifth century AD), all final syllables ending in a vowel, *-h*, or *-n*, were lost, unless the vowel was long, in which case the syllable became short. About a century later, words of more than two syllables lost their second syllable through syncope. Thus the ancient Celtic name *Techtomaros* in first-century BC Ireland had become *Techtmar* by the time of St. Patrick. Other changes include **céssatho* > *césto* ("compassion") and *apostolus* > *apstal* ("apostle"). Thus to fairly compare similar patterns common to Old Irish and Saturnian verse and propose that they both preserve a cognate meter, one must assume that the metrical patterns of Irish poetry did not change during the period of apocope and syncope, even though the words of the language were greatly altered. If poetic patterns can exist independently at a different level than common language, then Old Irish and Saturnian meters can certainly be cognate. If not, then we are comparing poetic apples and oranges.[51]

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[49]For a detailed description of Irish metrics and poetic techniques, see Murphy 1961. The earliest Welsh poetry exhibits some of the same Indo-European characteristics, but to a lesser extent. The *Gododdin* (*c.* AD 600), an heroic poem attributed to the poet Aneirin, sings of the bravery of the 300 British warriors slain by the Anglo-Saxons at Catraeth (Williams 1938: 10):

| Gwyr a aeth Gatraeth, buant enwawc. | Men went down to Catraeth, they were renowned. |
| Gwin a med o eur vu ou gwirawt. | Wine and mead from gold was their drink. |

[50]See Thurneysen 1980: 67-72; Greene 1973; Jackson 1953: 618-33, 643-56; Klar, O'Hehir, and Sweetser 1983/4; Koch 1995. Burial stones inscribed in the Irish Ogam script beginning around the fifth century AD actually show some of these linguistic changes in progress (see McManus 1991).

[51]There are in fact examples of such metrical independence in various languages, including Greek. Homeric poetry of the eighth century BC preserves the otherwise unmetrical pattern of a number of words with an original syllabic ṛ which had lost their vocalic quality even before the time of the Mycenaean Greek records, a period of at least four hundred years. For example, after his death at Hector's hand, Patroklos' soul leaves his body

Celtic and Italic verse certainly do show significant similarities, but does this mean some form of proto-Saturnian verse was inherited by both from Indo-European? Possibly, if Old Irish did preserve an ancient Celtic metrical pattern through the radical changes of apocope and syncope. Celtic verse certainly bears a closer resemblance to Italic poetry than any other Indo-European language group, though elements found in Saturnian and other Italic verse are also found in India, Persia, Anatolia, and elsewhere. The particularly close linguistic heritage of Celtic and Italic inside the Indo-European language family is well established, as both probably left from the Indo-European homeland at a similar time and maintained close contact, presumably in the lands north of the Alps. Thus it should not be surprising if they also display many elements of a common poetic culture.[52]

A careful reading of the corpus of Saturnian verse shows no universal quantitative, accentual, or even syllabic pattern which regularly defines the meter, though there certainly is a general tendency towards iambic and trochaic rhythms, a 3/2 stress pattern, and a 7/6 syllable alternation in the poetry. However, the exceptions to these tendencies in each case are found in at least half the surviving lines and thus are too numerous for

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(*Iliad* 16.857. See West 1988: 156-9):

$$- \ - \ | \ - \ \smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ \smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ \smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ \smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ -$$

ὃν πότμον γοόωσα, λιποῦσ᾽ **ἀνδροτῆτα** καὶ ἥβην
lamenting her fate, leaving manhood and youth

The ἀ- of ἀνδροτῆτα should be long by classical Greek scansion rules since it is followed by more than one consonant. But since the word was earlier *anṛta´ta, with the syllabic ṛ serving as a short vowel, the original, pre-Mycenaean scansion is preserved.

$$\smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ \smile \qquad\qquad \smile \ \smile \ | \ - \ \smile$$

* anṛta´ta   >   ἀνδροτῆτα

One Homeric example does not prove the ability of metrical patterns to survive language change in all cases, but it perhaps points the way to the research needed before Saturnian and Celtic verse can be reasonably compared.

[52]Close similarity between Celtic and Italic of course does not necessitate positing an Italo-Celtic linguistic unity after the breakup of Indo-European, no more so than the mutual linguistic and poetic features of Italian and French require a post-Roman period of unity (see Watkins 1966).

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comfort. The only pattern which obtains in the vast majority of Saturnians is a final trisyllabic cadence after the *caesura Korschiana* with a variable initial syllabic count. This is true even if we put aside historical and comparative evidence and look at Saturnian verse from a purely synchronic and descriptive point of view. There are, admittedly, exceptions to this pattern as well, but we only possess the late verse of a presumably older metrical pattern. I believe deviations from the trisyllabic final cadence should be seen, aside from textual difficulties, as inevitable innovations as the genre succumbed to the influence of imported Greek meters.

Indo-European culture passed down to its daughter languages a metrical tradition of syllabic, alliterative verse divided by a caesura in which the rhythm of a line ending was more fixed than its beginning. These qualities are seen in varying degrees in poetry from the British Isles to the plain of the Ganges, including the dialects of early Italy and the Celtic lands. It does seem clear that the basic elements of Saturnian verse (alliteration and especially the caesura before the antepenultimate syllable) were present in the poetry of the Italic dialects, most notably South Picene, Faliscan, and, of course, Latin. The evidence of early Latin verse, such as the *Carmen Arvale*, suggests that the ancestor of what we know as Saturnian verse was thriving in archaic Rome as an alliterative and variable syllabic meter ending regularly in a three-syllable final cadence. Certainly, the influence of Greek poetry was felt throughout Italy from early Republican times and in some minor ways influenced Saturnian style and rhythm, but there is no need to see Saturnian as deriving primarily from Greek prototypes when the native elements of the verse were present at Rome from the beginning.[53]

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