

SOME MORE INFORMATION ON A AND AB

In a previous paper¹⁾ I examined the occurrence of preconsonantal *ex* and *ab* in Latin literature and pointed to the fact that *ab* before consonants is comparatively frequent in *Livy*, *Sallustius* and *Lucretius*, occurs less in *Ennius*, *Plautus* and *Terence*, while it is rather rare in *Vergil* and practically missing in *Ovid*²⁾. The fact that some writers preferred *ab* instead of *a*, could not be explained, the less so as there is no difference in meaning between these parallel forms. So much is certain, however, that although preconsonantal *ab* is less frequent in later literature, no straight chronological line of decreasing frequency could be discerned.

Whereas my previous paper had for its object the examination of the relative frequencies of *a/ab* in various writings, I intend to deal here with some aspects of usage of this preposi-

1) "Observations on the Occurrence of the Parallel Forms 'a' = 'ab' and 'e' = 'ex' in Latin Literature". *Rheinisches Museum*, 119. Bd., Heft 1, 1976, 14-29.

2) See below, p. 348 and Note 23.

The list following shows, in how many words 1 preconsonantal *ab* is found in every one of the writings examined.

There is 1 preconsonantal *ab* in:

- 35,000 words in Ovid's *Fasti*
- 22,000 words in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*
- 14,167 words in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
- 14,000 words in Horace's *Epistles*
- 6,500 words in *Catullus*
- 4,667 words in Vergil's *Aeneid*
- 3,500 words in Horace's *Carmina*
- 3,000 words in Vergil's *Georgics*, Horace's *Iambi* (?)
- 2,850 words in Vergil's *Eclogues*
- 1,875 words in Cato's *De agricultura*
- 1,575 words in *BellGall 8*
- 1,111 words in Sallustius' *Catilina*
- 929 words in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*
- 833 words in *BellAlex*, *BellHisp*
- 810 words in Caesar's *BellCiv*
- 435 words in Sallustius' *Jugurtha*
- 375 words in *BellAfric*
- 312 words in Caesar's *BG 1-7*
- 289 words in *Livy*

tion, which may be helpful in finding conditions and reasons governing the choice of one of the alternatives. First, words following *a/ab* have been closer scrutinized³). Secondly, the possibility has been investigated that the existing predilections and dislikes for either *a* or *ab* may have been influenced by the initial consonant of the word following the preposition. Presentation and discussion of the results of these examinations form the bulk of this paper. Some other questions concerning *a/ab* have been mentioned briefly.

As the percentage of *a/ab* out of the total of words is sometimes very small, especially in poetry, conclusions which have to be drawn from such small numbers, may not always be fully reliable.

In the following the most frequent words after *a/ab* are listed⁴).

(A) POETRY

(1) *Catullus*: *ab* (C): (2), *a*: *te* (3), *gremium* (2), *me* (2), *mea...domo* (2), *vertex* (2), $15 \times 1 = 26$. *ab* (V): $9 \times 1 = 9$. Total 37. No names. *a/ab* = 0.28% of total of words⁵).

3) Cp. J. C. Rolfe, *A, ab, abs*, Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik, vol. 10, 465-486, who points to certain groups of words after *a/ab*.

4) As a rule, words with a frequency above 2 are recorded in full, while for those occurring twice or once, the total number only is given. The order is that of decreasing frequency. Data have been taken from the following sources: *Lucretius*: Roberts, A Concordance to Lucretius, Berkeley, 1968; *Vergil*: W. Ott, Rückläufiger Wortindex zu Vergil, Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis. Tübingen, 1974.

Livy: D. W. Packard, A Concordance to Livy, Harvard Univ. Press, 1968; all those prepared by computers. For the remainder I had to use conventional – and unproductive and rather boring – methods which took much time and are not free of mistakes. *R. Lecompe's* Indices verborum to Caesar's BellGall 1-7 and to Vergil's Eclogues (Olms, 1968 and 1970, respectively) were of assistance in checking the results obtained by conventional counting.

5) The texts examined comprised more than 900,000 words, about 2/3 prose and 1/3 poetry; distribution is approximately as follows: Cato, *De agricultura*: approx. 15,000 words – 20 *a/ab*.; Caesar, *BG* 1-7: 43,000 – 473, *BC*: 34,000 – 325; – *BG* 8: 6300 – 39; *BellAlex*: 10,000 – 77, *BellAfr*: 12,000 – 149, *BellHispan*: 5,000 – 59; *Sallustius, Catil.*: 10,000 – 55, *Jugurtha*: 20,000 – 151; *Livy*: 505,000 – 5060.

Catullus: 13,000 – 37; *Lucretius*: 52,000 – 180. Vergil: *Eclogues*: 5700 – 26; *Georgics*: 15,000 – 38; *Aeneid*: 70,000 – 181; Horace: *Iambi*: 3000 – 4; *Odes*: 14,000 – 26; *Satires*: 15,000 – 31; *Epistles* (incl. *Ars poetica*): 14,000 – 14; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*: 85,000 – 283.

- (2) *Lucretius*: *ab* (*C*): *res* (21), *sensus* (7), *se* (6), 6×2 , $10 \times 1 = 56$.
a: *verus* (12), *terra* (8), *nos* (5), *tergum* (5), *caelum* (4), *principium* (3),
 5×2 , 28×1 , *Names*⁶⁾. *Phoebus* (2) = 77. *ab* (*V*): *omnis* (6), *unda* (4),
imus (4), *ictus* (3), *ignis* (3), *origo* (3), *hic/haec/hoc* (3), 3×2 , 14×1 ,
Names: *Iacchus* (1) = 47. *Total* 180. *a/ab* = 0.34% of total of words.
- (3) *Vergil*: (a) *Eclagues*: *ab* (*C*): *limes* (1), *Names*: *Jove* (1) = 2. *a*: $7 \times 1 =$
7. *ab* (*V*): *urbs* (11)⁷⁾, $6 \times 1 = 17$. *Total* 26. *a/ab* = 0.46% of total
of words.
(b) *Georgics*: *ab* (*C*): *radix* (3), *litus* (1), *Names*: *Jove* (1) = 5. *a*: *tergum*
(3), $15 \times 1 = 18$. *ab* (*V*): *altum* (3), *origo* (3), 6×1 , *Names*: $3 \times 1 = 15$.
Total 38.
a/ab = 0.25% of total of words.
(c) *Aeneid*: *ab* (*C*): *sedes* (6), *litus* (2), 4×1 , *Names*: *Jove* (3) = 15. *a*:
sanguis (5), *stirps* (5), *quisquis* (5), *tergum* (4), *navis* (3), *vertex* (3),
 4×2 , 14×1 , *Names*: *Tenedos* (2), *Troia* (2), $3 \times 1 = 54$. *ab* (*V*):
altus/a/um (27), *ora* (9), *origo* (5), *aether* (4), *annus* (4), *urbs* (4), *os/oris*
(3), *ille* (3), *unda* (3), 12×2 , 15×1 , *Names*: *Aurora* (2), *Argi* (2), *Ida* (2),
 $5 \times 1 = 112$. *Total* 181.
a/ab = 0.26% of total of words.
- (4) *Ovid*, *Metamorphoses*: *ab* (*C*): No appellatives, *Names*: *Jove* (6) = 6.
a: *pectus* (7), *dexter* (6), *pars* (6), *se* (6), *frons* (5), *me* (5), *corpus* (3),
sanguis (3), 6×2 , 47×1 , *Names*: *Pallas* (3), $4 \times 1 = 107$. *ab* (*V*): *ille*
(22), *altus/a/um* (9), *hic/haec/hoc* (9), *hostis* (7), *arbor* (6), *aether* (5),
imus (5), *ipse* (5), *os* (4), *ora* (4), *unus* (4), *aedes* (3), *ignis* (3), *ortus* (3),
aurum (3), 17×2 , 29×1 , *Names*: *Apollo* (2), *Elis* (2), *Isthmus* (2),
Haemonius (2), $7 \times 1 = 170$. *Total* 283.
a/ab = 0.33% of total of words.

(B) PROSE

- (1) *Cato*, *De agricultura*: *ab* (*C*): *solum* (3), $5 \times 1 = 8$. *a*: *mare* (2), *caput*
(2), $2 \times 1 = 6$. *ab* (*V*): *herba* (2), $4 \times 1 = 6$. *Total* 20.
a/ab = 0.13% of total of words.
- (2) *Caesar*: (a) *BellGall* 1-7: *ab* (*C*): *se* (12), *latus* (7), *nostri* (7), *dexter* (5),
reliqui (4), *suus* (4), *castra* (3), *decumana* (3), *signa* (3), 16×2 , 19×1 ,
Names: *Romani* (6), *Caesar* (4), *Suebi* (4), 6×2 , $13 \times 1 = 138$. *a*: *se* (7),
maiores (5), *qui* (5), *quidam* (1), *castra* (3), *finitimi* (3), *flumen* (3),
frater (3), *me* (3), *nostri* (3), *populus Romanus* (3), *primus* (3), *senatus*
(3), 13×2 , 20×1 , *Names*: *Caesar* (14), *Vercingetorix* (3), 5×2 , $20 \times 1 =$
138.
ab (*V*): *is/ea/id* (53), *idem* (3), *hic/haec/hoc* (20), *hostis* (21), *omnis* (6),
ipse (5), *opus* (4), *equites/equitatus* (3), *hiberna* (3), *infimus* (3), *initium*
(3), *uterque* (3), 8×2 , 30×1 , *Names*: *Aedui* (6), *Helvetii* (5), 2×2 ,
 $9 \times 1 = 197$. *Total* 473.
a/ab = 1.09% of total of words.

6) In *De rerum natura* *a/ab* occurs only three times before a name: *tripode a Phoebii* 1.739 = 5.112, *ab Iaccho* 4.1168, while in Catullus there is no such occurrence. More about names after *a/ab* see below, p. 351s.

7) The refrain in Ecl. 8.

- (b) *BellCiv*: *ab* (C): *suus* (6), *rex* (5), *latus* (3), 3×2 , 17×1 , *Names*: Cn. (2), $3 \times 1 = 42$.
a: *castra* (9), *quisquis* (7), *qui/quo* (7), *nostri* (4), *mare* (3), *se* (3), 11×2 , 40×1 , *Names*: *Caesar* (20), *Pompeius* (8), *Petreius* (3), *M.* (3), *Pompeiani* (2), $14 \times 1 = 147$.
ab (V): *equitatus/equites* (13), *is/ea/id* (26), *hic/haec/hoc* (9), *uterque* (8), *inimici* (6), *arma* (4), *initium* (4), *opus* (4), *oppidum* (3), *urbs* (3), *idem* (3), *ille* (3), 8×2 , 18×1 , *Names*: *Afranius* (4), 3×2 , $8 \times 1 = 138$.
 Total 327.
a|ab = 0.96% of total of words.
- (3) *Sallustius*: (a) *Catilina*: *ab* (C): *senatus* (2), 3×1 , *Names*: $4 \times 1 = 9$.
a: *res publica* (3), *patres* (2), *legati* (2), *multitudo* (2), 13×1 , *Names*: $4 \times 1 = 26$.
ab (V): *arma* (2), $18 \times 1 = 20$. No names. Total 57.
a|ab = 0.55% of total of words.
 (b) *Jugurtha*: *ab* (C): *rex* (4), *tergum* (4), *latus* (3), 3×2 , 13×1 , *Names*: *Jugurtha* (5), *Numidae* (3), $8 \times 1 = 46$.
a: *vos* (5), *populus* (4), *principium* (4), 5×2 , 20×1 , *Names*: *Bestia* (2), *Marius* (2), $8 \times 1 = 57$.
ab (V): *is/ea/id* (10), *hostis* (6), *alius* (3), *imperator* (3), 5×2 , 15×1 , *Names*: $3 \times 1 = 50$. Total 151.
a|ab = 0.72% of total of words.
- (4) *Livy*⁸⁾: (A): *ab* (C): *c*: *consul* (32), *various* (35), *Names*: *Carthago* (23), *various* (28) = 118. *d*: *domus* (31), *dii* (19), *dictator* (17), *dexter* (15), *various* (70), *Names*: (25) = 177. *f*: (6), no names = 6. *g*: (3)^{8a)}, *Names*: *C.* (7), *Cn.* (10) = 20. *j*: (17), *Names*: *Jove* (1), *various* (5) = 23. *l*: *latus* (22), *legati* (16), *laevus* (13), *various* (32), *Names*: *L.* (28), *various* (59) = 170. *m*: (2), *Names*: (8) = 10. *n*: (63), *Names*: (25) = 88. *p*: (7), *Names*: (4) = 11. *q*: (4), *Names*: (10) = 14. *r*: *rex* (68), *res* (21), *various* (32), *Names*: *Romanus* (134), *Roma* (54), *various* (29) = 338. *s*: *se* (124), *senatus* (110), *suus* (46), *socius* (23), *various* (96), *Names*: (106) = 505. *t*: *tergum* (112), *tribunus* (32), *various* (36), *Names*: (82) = 262. *v*: *vos* (1), *Names*: (4) = 5. Total 1745.
 (B): *a*: *b*: *bellum* (18), *various* (5), *Names*: (25) = 48. *c*: *consul* (58), *castra* (31), *collega* (15), *various* (119), *Names*: (105) = 328. *d*: (22), *Names*: (9) = 31. *f*: *frons* (20), *various* (77), *Names*: (16) = 113. *g*: (8), *Names*: *C.* (20), *various* (38) = 66. *j*: (3), no names = 3. *l*: (19), *Names*: (13) = 32. *m*: *mare* (33), *me* (22), *various* (90), *Names*: *M.* (43), *various* (48) = 236. *n*: *nos* (17), *various* (4), *Names*: (5) = 26. *p*: *patres* (31), *pater* (19), *populus Romanus* (23), *populus* (14), *praetor* (18), *porta* (17), *various* (208), *Names*: *P.* (26), *various* (122) = 478. *q*: *qui/quis* (59), *quidam* (4), *various* (14), *Names*: *Q.* (17), *various* (9) = 103. *r*: (7), *Names*: *Romanus* (8), *Romulus* (1) = 16. *s*: *se* (23), *suus* (10), *senatus* (7), *various* (24), *Names*: (18) = 82. *t*: *te* (15), *tergum* (6), *tribunus* (6), *various* (16), *Names*: (22) = 67. *v*: *vos* (51),

8) In view of the rather large number of occurrences as a rule only words with a frequency of 15 and above are recorded in full, while the total number is given for the remainder, under the heading *Various*. The order is alphabetical, but within each group according to decreasing frequency.

8a) For C. and Cn. listed under *g* see Note 15.

various (54), *Names*: (30) = 135. *x*: *Names*: (1) = 1. *z*: *Names*: (1) = 1.
Total 1764.

(*C*): *ab* (*V*): *a*: aediles (20), various (139), *Names*: (196) = 355. *e*:
 is/ea/id (116), idem (23), equites (20), exercitus (14), various (47),
Names: (73), *eu*: *Names* only (17) = 310. *b*: hostis (121), hic/haec/hoc
 (45), various (23), *Names*: (95) = 284. *i*: iis (52), iisdem (11), ille (20),
 ira (16), imperator (12), ipse (38), various (128), *Names*: (14) = 291.
o: omni parte (33), omnis (12), various (76), *Names*: (19) = 140. *u*:
 urbs (109), uterque (19), ullus (9), various (31), *Names*: (3) = 171.
Total 1551.

a/ab: *Total* 5060.

a/ab = 1.00% of total of words.

The data listed above show inter alia that the number of different words occurring frequently after *a/ab* is rather limited, a fact which has been observed before⁹⁾. The number of words in this position occurring only once is also comparatively small.

Here are a few remarks on these data:

(a) The difference between poetry and prose with regard to the frequency of *a/ab* is obvious: While the percentage of these prepositions out of the total of words¹⁰⁾ ranges from 0.10% in Horace's *Epistles* (0.13% in the *Iambi*, *Odes* – 0.19%, *Satires* – 0.21%) to a maximum of 0.47% in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* (*Amores* – 0.20%, *Ars amatoria* = *Heroides* – 0.29%, *Tristia* – 0.41%, *Fasti* – 0.44%), prose has much higher shares: Except for 0.13% in Cato's *De agricultura* (who uses much more *de*¹¹⁾, the lowest value is 0.55% in Sallustius' *Catilina*, while *Livy* has 1%, and Caesar's *BellGall* 1-7 – 1.09% (*BellCiv* – 0.96%, *BellHisp* – 1.18% and *BellAfr.* a maximum value of 1.20%).

The average percentage for *a/ab* in poetry is 0.28%, in prose 0.98%.

(b) Among the words following *a/ab* the following groups deserve to be mentioned: (1) *Pronouns* – among the most frequent words in Latin; in poetry the personal pronouns as well as *ipse*, *ille* are quite frequent after *a/ab*, in prose *is*, *hic*, *qui* occur more often. (2) *Words connected with the subject-matter*; these differ for the various writings. We shall mention only a few: *Lucretius*: *res*, *sensus*, *verus*. *Vergil's Aeneid*: *sedes*, *stirpis*,

9) See Note 3.

10) See Note 5.

11) Even a superficial glance at the relative frequencies of *a/ab* and *de* – no detailed examination has been carried out – shows that *de* is more frequent both in poetry and in prose, although its use before vowels in poetry was necessarily limited.

sanguis, altum. Caesar, *BellGall*: hostes, castra, nostri, latus. *Livy*: consul, senatus, hostis, urbs, populus.

While it is usual for *a/ab* to be followed immediately by the ablative – mostly of a noun, rarely of an adjective – there is a number of instances where *a/ab* is followed by an attribute in the genitive¹²), while the ablative is further away. This unusual word order – liked by *Livy* – serves to draw special attention to the passage. (3) *Proper Names*: *Cato* and *Catullus* have no names after *a/ab*, *Lucretius* has three instances only. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* preconsonantal *ab* occurs only in the expression *ab Jove*; this is also the only name after preconsonantal *ab* in *Vergil*, who has one each in the *Eclogues* and in the *Georgics* and three in the *Aeneid*¹³). The poets were at liberty to use different

12) Such hyperbata are rare in poetry and in prose, cp. Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, vol. II, 216 who state – somewhat too categorically, it seems –: “Die vorausgehende Praep. wird in klassischer Prosa so gut wie nie von ihrem Nomen getrennt, abgesehen von dem Archaismus der Schwurformel *per te deos oro*, dem Dazwischentreten von Enklitika wie *-que...* und *-ve*, seltener *autem, vero* u.ä. und der Vorausstellung des Objekts in Fällen wie *in regnum appetentem*, Cic. Phil. 2. 114... Der chiasmische Typus scheint besonders häufig bei Liv. zu sein.”

In *Livy* we found altogether 41 occurrences of chiasmus-hyperbaton (17 for *a*, 3 of them before a name, 15 for *ab* (C), 7 of them before a name, and 9 for *ab* (V), 1 of them before a name). According to the word separating *a/ab* from its noun they fall into the following groups:

- (a) *Pronoun* (10): *alterius* (2), *eius* (1), *cuius* (2), *huius* (1), *sui* (1), *utriusque* (3).
- (b) *Adverb* (6): *multo* (1), *tam* (3), *tot* (1), *totiens* (1).
- (c) *Proper Name* (11).
- (d) Adjective in genitive (2).
- (e) Substantive in genitive (12).

I dare not suggest an answer to the obvious question why *Livy* chose to change the customary word order. When summarizing we find that in 21 of the 41 instances one word only separates *a/ab* from its noun, there are 14 instances of two words separating, which includes the cases where the adjective in the ablative case precedes the noun, 3 instances of 3 separating words and one only of 4 words. The remaining two instances, however, are worth mentioning: 32. 34. 11: in qua *orsus* ab Antigoni primum suis deinde erga *gentem* eam *meritis* recitari decreta eorum iussit. 33. 2. 1: *orsus* a maiorum suorum suisque et communibus in omnem *Graeciam* et propriis in *Boeotorum gentem meritis*...

These two instances of a most complicated hyperbaton are so remarkably similar (*orsus, gentem, meritis*) that it seems that *Livy* wanted the reader to refer one to the other.

13) This may have been influenced by the Greek *ἐκ Διός*, which is metrically similar; the earliest occurrence of *ab Jove*, as far as we know, is in *Ecl.* 3. 60: *Ab Jove principium Musae; Jovis omnia plena*. Cp. *Aratos*,

forms of names or epithets in order to overcome metrical difficulties and to reach euphony, because the names used by them were mostly mythological – names which, by the way, came to the Romans through Greek poetry, and had therefore some metrical form or alternative¹⁴).

Names in prose are quite a different matter: they had to be used as they were, because they were mostly referring to historical or to living persons; prosodical changes were unnecessary, alternative forms were usually not available. This fact seems to be important for our research: it can be seen that while in certain groups of initial consonants after *a/ab* almost no appellatives occur, names are found in these groups, because there were no alternatives. Here are two examples: Words beginning with *g* are rather rare in Latin: In Livy we find after *ab* only 3 appellatives beginning with *g*, but 17 names, after *a* there are 8 appellatives, but 58 names. Another example: Livy has after *ab* no appellatives beginning with *eu* – a specifically Greek combination, while 17 names begin with this diphthong.

We shall now proceed to the examination of the initial consonants of words following *a/ab*. First it will be necessary to clarify the relation between spelling and pronunciation¹⁵). We should not be deceived by the spelling: there is a difference in pronunciation of the preposition between *ab* duce (voiced *-b*) and *ap* consule (voiceless *-p*), no matter how it is written.

Phain. 1-4: Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχόμεσθα ... Μοῦσαι | μεστὰὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι
μὲν ἀγναί | πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί, μεστή δὲ θάλασσα | καὶ λιμένες.

14) A Study of Proper Names in Vergil's Eclogues by this author has been published in the *Classical World*, vol. 69, no. 2, Oct., 1975, 97-112. – The frequency of names after *a/ab* depends of course upon the general frequency of names beginning with a certain consonant, e.g. few Latin names begin with B- or F-.

15) A typical example is the spelling *ap* found in inscriptions as well as in some manuscripts: this spelling does, however, not prove that the word was actually pronounced *ap*, just as the spelling *ab* does not prove that a voiced *-b* was heard; the pronunciation depended upon the sound following the preposition, or for that matter, of any other word. For more about this see below p. 353ss. Another inaccuracy should be mentioned: The abbreviations C. – for Gaius and Cn. = Gnaeus usually listed under *c* have been accounted for in this research under *g*. Such considerations were not unknown to the ancients; cp. Quintilian, *Inst. or.* 1. 7. 7-8: “quaeri solet in scribendo praepositiones sonum, quem iunctae efficiunt, an quem separatae, observare conveniat, ut, cum dico ‘optinuit’ (secundam enim *b* litteram ratio posuit, aures magis audiunt *p*)” etc.

Although ancient grammarians do not specifically mention this difference, it seems that they were aware of it¹⁶).

Voiced *ab*¹⁷) was pronounced before: *b-*, *d-*, *g-*, *j-*, *l-*, *m-*, *n-*, *r-*, *v-* and before vowels, while voiceless *ap* was spoken before *c-*, *f-*, *p-*, *q-*, *s-*, *t-*. It seems that words following *a/ab* were preferred or disliked not on account of their content, although we have seen that certain words tend to recur, but according to their initial consonant: some sound combinations were preferred, others were avoided as far as possible¹⁸). Although there may have been changes in these "tastes", which may have been influenced also by literary genre, subject-matter and metre as well as by other factors unknown to us, there are nevertheless certain trends to be observed which are in keeping with facts known from other sources.

The following consonants are rather rare at the beginning of Latin words¹⁹): *b-*, *g-*, *j-*, *l-*, *n-*, *q-*, *v-*, while words frequently

16) See preceding Note. Cp. also E. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*², Philadelphia, 1940, paragr. 146ss.

17) Here and in the following *ab* and *ap* will be used as symbols to indicate pronunciation and *not* spelling.

18) The question of consonant sequences in Latin literature and its syntactical implications have been examined by the author, and the results published in *Glotta*: "Konsonantenfolgen im Lateinischen und ihre syntaktische Bedeutung". LIII. Bd, 1.-2. Heft, 1975, 101-121. It could be shown that the meeting of consonants terminating a word and beginning the word following it frequently signals syntactical incisions.

19) See O. Gradenwitz, *Laterculi vocum Latinarum*, Leipzig 1904. Distribution according to initial consonants given there - translated into percentages by me in order to facilitate comparison - is listed below. It should, however, be kept in mind that every word, as usual in a dictionary, appears once only, while in the context of a literary work every *form* of every word is counted, as many times as it occurs. Until we have - hopefully with the aid of computers - exact data on the frequency of occurrence of every word found in the fragmentary Latin literature which has come down to us, we have to be satisfied with approximations like this. It goes without saying that counting of the lemmata only in literary texts (every word only once without regard to the frequency of occurrence) would not do justice to the variety of language in literature.

b-	c-	d-	f-	g-	j-	l-	m-	n-	p-
3%	18%	8%	5%	2½%	1%	4½%	6½%	2½%	17%
q-	r-	s-	t-	v-	Total				
1½%	5½%	15%	6%	4%	100%				

Rare: (5.9% and below) : b-, f-, g-, j-, l-, n-, q-, r-, v-.

Medium: (6%-10%) : d-, m-, t-.

Frequent: (14% and over) : c-, p-, s-.

begin with *c-*, *p-*, *s-*. More scarcely than these, but more often than the former *d-*, *f-*, *m-*, *r-*, *t-* occur as initial consonants. Not only the initial consonant of the word following the preposition is important, but also the preposition itself, i.e. its closing sound: here may be one of the reasons for the distinction between the parallel forms *ab* and *a*. There are "unpopular" sound combinations, e.g. *ab b-*, *ab f-*, *ab g-*, *ab m-*, *ab p-*. This may be due to two factors: Either the initial sound of the word following *ab* is disliked or the combination as a whole. Sometimes both factors cooperate.

Having this in mind, we should expect that *ab* be scarcely used before words whose initial consonant belongs to the group of the "rare" consonants or to those which produce with the *-b* of *ab* a sound combination which is not liked, perhaps because the second consonant is too close to *-b*: *b-*, *f-*, *m-*, *p-*. We may therefore expect approximately the following grading after *ab*: (R = rare, F = frequent, M = medium).

ab (C): R: *b-*, *f-*, *g-*, *j-*, *l-*, *n-*, *q-*, *r-*, *v-*; to these should be added: *m-*, *p-*, disliked after *ab*.

F: *c-*, *s-*; *p-*, frequent as initial consonant, should be rare after *ab*.

M: *d-*, *t-*; *m-*, generally of medium frequency, to be rare after *ab*.

With regard to *a*, we should expect it to be rare before consonants belonging to the "rare" group, while no other limitations hold in this case.

R: *b-*, *f-*, *g-*, *j-*, *l-*, *n-*, *q-*, *r-*, *v-*; F: *c-*, *p-*, *s-*; M: *d-*, *m-*, *t-*.

Table 1 shows²⁰⁾ in absolute numbers – the distribution of *a/ab* according to the initial *consonant* of the subsequent word in all writings examined, separate for poetry and for prose. Table 2 shows the data for *prevocalic ab*.

The only Latin words to end in *-b* are the prepositions *ab*, *ob*, *sub*; these forms, so Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, vol. I, 129, developed from *ap*, *op*, *sup* (indoeuropean *apo, *opi, *upo) before voiced stops and from these occurrences came to be used generally. I suggest another possible source: *ab*, *ob*, *sub* before *vowels*.

20) For works examined see Note 5.

Table 1: Distribution of a|ab according to initial consonant of word following.

Initial conson.	a	ab	Poetry Total	approx. ratio a:ab	a	ab	Prose Total	appr. ratio
b	1	—	1	—	66	—	66	—
c	33	—	33	—	440	144	584	2.5:1
d	10	5	15	2:1	43	207	250	1:5
f	26	—	26	—	132	6	138	22:1
g	4	—	4	—	79	27	106	3:1
j	—	12	12	—	4	33	37	1:8
l	11	8	19	1.5:1	47	200	247	1:5
m	35	—	35	—	306	19	325	15:1
n	20	7	27	3:1	54	110	164	1:2
p	45	—	45	—	558	18	576	28:1
q	9	—	9	—	129	18	147	6:1
r	—	31	31	—	26	381	407	1:13
s	35	29	64	1:1	137	591	728	1:4.5
t	44	—	44	—	95	279	374	1:3
v	31	—	31	—	158	6	164	25:1
x	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
z	—	—	—	—	1	3	4	1:3
ph	4	—	4	—	3	—	3	—
Total	308	92	400		2279	2042	4321	

Table 2: Distribution of ab according to initial vowel of word following.

Initial vowel	Poetry	Prose
a	151	444
e	13	476
h	32	372
i	102	379
o	72	212
u	47	209
Total	417	2092

Table 3 shows an attempt to contrast results expected on account of the overall frequency of initial consonants with those actually obtained by examination.

Table 3: Results expected versus Results obtained.

ab (C)	b	c	d	f	g	j	l	m	n	p	q	r	s	t	v
Expected	R	F	M	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	F	M	R
Found	Nil	F	M	R	R	R	M	R	M	R	R	F	F	M	R
a	b	c	d	f	g	j	l	m	n	p	q	r	s	t	v
Expected	R	F	M	R	R	R	R	M	R	F	R	R	F	M	R
Found	R	F	R	M	R	R	R	F	R	F	R	R	M	R	M

In general, the results are seen to agree; there are, however, some divergencies which call for a brief comment: (1) Initial *l*-, not found in Lucretius and especially liked by Livy is found to be much more frequent after *ab* than in the average. (2) Initial *r*- occurs more frequently after *ab*, but much rarer than expected after *a*. (3) After *a*, *d*- is rarer, *f*- is more frequent than in the average, there is less initial *s*- which is preferred after *ab*; *m*- and *v*- are more frequent than in the average.

On the basis of the data presented in Tables 1-3, the following list of consonant sequences (after *ab*, *ap*) according to their frequency has been prepared:

Rare combinations: -bb-, -pf-, -bg-, -bj-, -bl-, -bm-, -bn-, -pp-, -pq-, -br-, -bv-.

Frequent combinations: -pc-, -ps-, -pt-. *Medium frequency*: -bd-.

Ab before vowels (and *h*) is of course always voiced. It has already been remarked that in this case the connection between the preposition and its noun is closer than that between *ab* and the word following beginning with a consonant²¹).

Table 4 shows agreement and disagreement between overall frequency as listed in Gradenwitz' lexicon and results of our examinations.

21) This fact was known to Quintilian who considers *ab oris* as one word. (*Inst. or. 1. 5. 27*). A distinction should, however, be made between the closed syllable *ab* (before a consonant) and the open syllables *ab* (before a vowel) and *a* (before consonants only). In terms of close contact between preposition and noun the grading seems to be as follows: *a consule* = *ab oris* - close connection; *ab consule* - loose connection. See Note 18. It would be interesting to know whether or not Quintilian considered expressions like *ab consule* as one word, too.

Table 4: Initial consonants – Average and Frequency after a/ab.

Initial Cons. (Gradenwitz)	Grade of Freq.	Cons. Sequ. (ab/ap)	Grade of Freq.	a	Grade of Freq.	Remarks
b	R	-bb-	Nil	-ab-	R	
c	F	-pc-	F	-ac-	F	agreement
d	M	-bd-	M	-ad-	R	
f	R	-pf-	R	-af-	M	
g	R	-bg-	R	-ag-	R	agreement
j	R	-bj-	R	-aj-	R	agreement
l	R	-bl-	M	-al-	M	
m	M	-bm-	R	-am-	F	disagreement
n	R	-bn-	M	-an-	R	
p	F	-pp-	R	-ap-	F	
q	R	-pq-	R	-aq-	R	agreement
r	R	-br-	F	-ar-	R	
s	F	-ps-	F	-as-	M	
t	M	-pt-	F	-at-	R	disagreement
v	R	-bv-	R	-av-	M	

Explanation: (1) Grade of Frequency in italics (*R*), if one of the three data differs from the two others. (2) "Disagreement" = all three data differ from each other.

Table 4 shows that there is generally agreement between all three or at least two of the columns. The result of this examination may also be stated as follows: voiced *ab* tends to occur before rare consonants, while voiceless *ap* is used before the frequent consonants. There are some exceptions: (1) Initial *m-* is of medium frequency in the average, but the combination *ab m-* has been found to be extremely rare²²⁾ and is therefore replaced by *a m-*; this consonantal sequence is suppressed also in composition (*submitto* – *summitto*, *obmitto* – *omitto* and others.) (2) Initial *l-*, usually rare, has medium frequency after *ab* and after *a*. *n-* appears more often after *ab* than after *a* and in the average. (3) Initial *p-*, very frequent in the average, is extremely rare after *ap* and is replaced by *a*. (4) *r-*, rare in the average, is frequent after *ab*, but mostly avoided after *a*. (5) *s-* is much less frequent after *a* than

22) *Terentius Scaurus*, 7. 14. 3 K, quoted by Sturtevant, op. c., paragr. 198a, may provide the reason: "*B cum p et m consentit, quoniam origo earum non sine labore coniuncto ore respondet*" – which seems to mean that *b*, *m*, *p* are similar in origin and in pronunciation.

expected, while *t-* is much more frequent after *ap* than after *a*.
 (6) Finally, *v-* is avoided after *ab*, but quite frequent after *a*.

A glance at the relation of preconsonantal *ab* and *a* shows a marked difference between poetry and prose as can be gathered from Table 1. Theoretically, there are three possibilities: (1) No alternative form. (2) A clear majority for one of the alternatives. (3) Balance between them. Out of the 16 initial consonants (including *ph*, but excluding *x-*, *z-* which are not found in this position in poetry), we found in the poetical works examined 12 with one alternative only, mostly *a*, but *ab* only before *j-*, *r-*. One more (*s-*) has a balanced ratio, while the remaining three have ratios ranging from 1.5:1 (*l-*) over 2:1 (*d-*) to 3:1 (*n-*) in favour of *a*.

In prose, on the other hand, in three instances (among them *ph-* and *x-* with very few occurrences) there is one alternative only, while ratios are spread widely from 28:1 in favour of *a* (*p-*) to 1:13 in favour of *ab* (*r-*). This seems to show that the language of poetry is regulated by certain restrictions.

In poetry the following initial consonants have not been found after *ab* in the works examined by us, or – reversely stated – *ab* has not been found to occur before: *b-*, *c-*, *f-*, *g-*, *m-*, *p-*, *q-*, *t-*, *v-*, *ph-*, *x-*, *z-*, while *a* was not found before *j-*, *r-*²³.

In prose, *ab* was not found before *b-*, *x-*, *ph-*, while *a* occurred before all initial consonants.

The majority of *ab* before *r-*, *s-* is found in Lucretius, while the other poems examined have none except for a few in the *Aeneid*; this may mean that there is some indication of a chronological line of decreasing frequency, but even Lucretius limits this usage to *r-*, *s-* and to an occasional *d-*, *n-*.

23) In Ovid's elegiac poems – see APPENDIX – *ab Jove* was not found, while *a Jove* occurs 5 times: *Fasti* 1. 236, 3. 796, *Heroides* 8. 48, *Ibis* 326, *Ex Ponto* 1. 7. 50. Preconsonantal *ab* occurs – in part of the Mss – twice only, and in both cases significantly before *r-* where – as we have seen – *a* is avoided as a rule. *Fasti* 2. 21: *ab rege*, *Ex Ponto* 4. 71 *ab rerum cura*, which somehow reminds me of Lucretius. After *a*, there is some initial *r-* in Ovid's Elegies, but it is rather rare: *Heroides*, 3. 1: *a rapta Briseide*, where *ab rapta Briseide* would have been much less euphonous. (1 *a* before *r-* out of 82 occurrences of *a/ab*); *Fasti*, *a ripis* (3. 524), *a remis* (4. 290). (2 out of 154 *a/ab*); *Ars amat.*, *a radiis* (1. 724) – (1 out of 47 *a/ab*). *Amores*, *Tristia*, *Ex Ponto* and *Others* have no *r-* after *a*. Under these circumstances I suggest to leave preconsonantal *ab* in the text, as it has been done in the Oxford edition (*Ex Ponto*) and in Loeb edition of the *Fasti*, but we should not forget that these are the only two instances of *ab* before consonants in Ovid's poems save *ab Jove* in the *Metamorphoses*.

We should, therefore, be careful not to overestimate the frequency of preconsonantal *ab* in poetry, but it certainly is there and has its place in the sound-structure of the verse and it seems to be subjected to the tendency to reach euphony. A remarkable example for such a tendency, in this case common to poetry and to prose, is the startling dislike for a *r-*: against almost 600 occurrences of *ab* in this position in poetry and prose together there are only about 30 *a*.

Finally, a few words have to be said about *ab* before vowels investigated by the way in the course of our examinations. Here again is a difference between poetry and prose: While initial *e-* after *ab* is very rare in poetry – no more than 13 instances, including 2 *eu-* out of 417, it comes first in prose with 476 out of 2092 occurrences.

Table 5: Distribution of prevocalic *ab* – %²⁴⁾

	a	e	i	o	u	h ²⁵⁾	Total
Poetry	36.21 %	3.12 %	24.46 %	17.27 %	11.27 %	7.67 %	100 %
Prose	21.22 %	22.75 %	18.12 %	10.13 %	9.99 %	17.79 %	100 %

The grading of frequencies in poetry: *a, i, o, u, h, e*, seems to correspond with the expressive value of the several vowels; therefore *e*, the emotionally weakest and least expressive vowel, comes last. In sharp contrast to this order, prose has the following line of preference: *e, i, a, h, o, u*; the vowels *a, e, i*, have about

24) Gradenwitz' (overall) distribution is as follows: Out of more than 52,000 lemmata beginning with consonants and with vowels, words with initial vowel constitute about 29%: *a* – 10%, *i* – 8%, *e* – 5%, *o* – 3%, *u* – 1%, *h* – 2%, all values approximate. The 15,000 words beginning with vowels fall into the following groups: *a* – 33.09%, *i* – 28.60%, *e* – 17.31%, *o* – 10.59%, *u* – 3.36%, *h* – 7.05%. When comparing these data with those obtained by our examination, these limitations should be kept in mind: (a) Gradenwitz' data are given for prose and poetry together and no separation is possible. (b) Every word is counted only once. (c) The present examination was limited to a small portion of all occurrences, namely to those after *ab*.

25) *h* has been included here separately, as usual in dictionaries. It may be objected that if it was pronounced, it should have been listed as a consonant, if not, words with initial *h* should be classed under the vowel following *h*. Likewise: *ap* was voiceless before a pronounced *h*, but it was voiced *ab* before a mute *h*. As such distinctions are most uncertain, I chose the only way practicable.

equal shares and together constitute about two thirds of all vowels after *ab*, while the remainder is split up into almost equal parts between *b* and *o = u*.

This brings the present study to an end; before trying to summarize what the examination of the doublet forms *a/ab* has shown, I should like to point out that it was not my intention to examine *a* and *ab* per se, but to use the interplay of these parallel forms as a means to reveal certain traits characteristic of the Latin literary language. It is hoped that this paper succeeded in showing that the usage of *a/ab*, in spite of their comparative rarity, can serve as an indicator for some linguistic facts.

Summary

1. Preconsonantal *ab* is more frequent in prose than in poetry. Maximum values are: *PROSE: Livy* – 3.46 occurrences of *ab* before consonants per 1000 words, *Caesar's BellGall 1-7 – 3.21, BellAfric.* – 2.67, *Sallustius' Jugurtha* – 2.30; *POETRY: Lucretius' De rerum natura* – 1.08, *Vergil's Eclogues* – 0.35, *Georgics* – 0.33.

Ovid has preconsonantal *ab* in his *Metamorphoses* only in the expression *ab Jove*, which is replaced by *a Jove* in the other poems; there are two more instances of *ab* before *r-*, but both are not entirely certain.

2. *a/ab* constitutes in poetry an average of 0.33 % of the total number of words, while prose has an average of 0.98 %. The relation between the percentage of *a/ab* and style and content of writings is further illustrated by the fact that among Ovid's elegiac poems the "lighter" *Amores, Ars amatoria, Heroides* have less *a/ab* (0.20 %–0.29 %) than the serious *Fasti, Tristia, Epistulae ex Ponto* (0.41 %–0.47 %).

3. The assumption that the choice of preconsonantal *ab* instead of *a* may be connected with the initial consonant of the subsequent word is supported by the fact that the contact between a monosyllabic preposition and its noun is very close.

It appears that there are predilections for one of the alternatives *a/ab* both in prose and in poetry, but while the majority of occurrences in prose shows a clear trend towards either *a* or *ab*, such tendencies are less pronounced in poetry, and balance between the alternative forms is more frequent.

4. A comparison of average frequencies of initial consonants in general (based on *Gradenwitz*' Laterculi) with the frequencies of initial consonants of words following *a/ab* revealed remarkable agreement. Before rare initial consonants (*g-, j-, q-* etc.) both *a* and *ab* are less frequent; *ab* occurs more rarely before consonants close to the palatal *-b* (*p-, m-*). *A* is rare before *r-*.

5. Before proper names there are divergences, especially in prose, where names of persons and of places usually lack alternative forms and where the "regulating" influence of prosody and metre is absent. Before a name *ab* may occur even when its initial consonant would demand *a* before an appellative noun.

6. The examination of initial *vowels* of words following *ab* revealed another essential difference in this respect between prose and poetry: While initial *e* after *ab* is very rare in poetry – it comes last after *a, i, o, u, h – e, a, i*, have almost equal shares in prose, constituting about 2/3 of all vowels in this position.

7. A probe into metrical patterns involving *a/ab* in Ovid's elegiac poems (excluding the *Metamorphoses*) revealed that these are quite similar in the single poems.

The most frequent are: *a* after the first dactyl – about 30% (somewhat less in the *Tristia* and the *Epist.exPonto*); *ab*: at the end of the hexameter (type: *ab illis*) about 25%, (less in *Amores, Heroides, Fasti*); at the end of the pentameter (type: *ab urbe* ∪́ |) about 12%; after the first trochaeus – about 10%.

In general *a* tends to occur at the beginning of the verse, while *ab* is more frequent towards its end.

8. The question, why sometimes *ab*, sometimes *a* occurs before consonants, can – it seems – be answered indirectly by revealing the factors governing the occurrence of the alternative forms: (1) The quality of the initial consonant of the subsequent word. (2) The literary genre (poetry or prose).

Appendix

a/ab – Examination of Metrical Patterns –
Ovid's Elegiac poems.

For Ovid's Elegies – the hexametric *Metamorphoses* were excluded from this examination – a separate research was briefly carried out in order to establish metrical patterns involving the occurrence of *a/ab*.

Table A shows details of the poems examined and percentages of *a/ab*.

Table A: Frequency of *a/ab* in Ovid's Elegies.

Poem	approx. number of words (= verses × 7)	occurrences <i>a/ab</i>	% of total of words
Amores	17,416	35	0.20%
Ars amatoria	16,310	47	0.29%
Fasti	34,804	154	0.44%
Heroides	27,818	82	0.29%
Tristia	25,046	103	0.41%
Ep. ex Ponto	22,120	103	0.47%
Others*)	11,830	54	0.46%
Average	155,344	578	0.37%

*) Remedia amoris, Medicamina faciei femineae, Ibis, Halieutica.

The average share of *a/ab* out of the total of words is somewhat higher than in the *Metamorphoses* – 0.37% compared with 0.33%; it seems remarkable that the “lighter” poems (*Amores*, *A.A.*, *Heroides*) have a smaller percentage of *a/ab* (0.20%–0.29%) than the serious *Fasti*, *Tristia*, *Ex Ponto* (0.41%–0.47%).

From Table B it can be seen that the distribution of metrical patterns is rather similar in the various elegiac poems of Ovid.

The data listed therein show among others:

(1) There is slightly more *a* than *ab*, except for the *Tristia* and the *Epist. ex Ponto*, which have much more *ab*.

(2) The most frequent metrical pattern of *a* is of the type:
| $\underline{\text{a}}$ \cup \cup | á vobis = | $\underline{\text{a}}$ \cup \cup | á patri | á, where *a* begins the

Table B: *a|ab in Metrical Patterns in Ovid's Elegies - %*

Pattern	Amores	A. A.	Heroides	Fasti	Tristia	Exp.	Others	Average
a:								
(1) $\ddot{v}\ddot{v}$ á vobis	17.14%	21.28%	18.29%	22.07%	15.53%	13.59%	11.11%	17.47%
(2) $\ddot{v}\ddot{v}$ á patriá	14.28%	12.77%	12.20%	9.09%	8.74%	8.74%	5.58%	9.69%
(3) $\ddot{v}\ddot{v}$ á duce	—	2.13%	4.88%	3.90%	2.91%	3.88%	9.26%	3.98%
(4) Others	22.86%	17.02%	18.29%	15.58%	7.77%	13.59%	7.41%	14.01%
Total	54.29%	53.19%	53.66%	50.64%	34.95%	39.80%	33.33%	45.15%
ab (V):								
(5) \ddot{v} ab aúditis	5.71%	4.26%	4.88%	7.79%	5.83%	7.77%	3.70%	6.23%
(6) \ddot{v} ab ádmonitú	5.71%	4.26%	6.10%	5.19%	6.80%	8.74%	7.41%	6.40%
(7) ab urbe \ddot{v}	14.29%	8.52%	18.29%	12.34%	14.56%	10.68%	22.22%	14.01%
(8) ab illis	11.42%	25.53%	13.41%	16.88%	28.16%	24.27%	25.93%	20.93%
(9) Others	8.57%	4.26%	3.66%	7.14%	9.70%	8.74%	7.41%	7.27%
Total	45.71%	46.81%	46.34%	49.36%	65.05%	60.20%	66.67%	54.84%
GRAND TOTAL				100%				

second verse foot and the word following it is necessarily in clash. These patterns together constitute about 30% of all occurrences of *a/ab*; the extremes are: some 34% in *Ars am.* and 23% in *Epist.exP.*

(3) *a* at the beginning of the verse is comparatively rare – in *Amores* it does not occur at all.

(4) In conclusion it may be said that *a* tends to occur near the beginning of the verse.

(5) The most frequent patterns for *ab* are of the types: *ab urbe* $\cup \acute{x}$ |, to be found in the pentameter only, and: *ab illis* |, at the end of the hexameter. Both of these patterns have in common that they occur at the end of the verse and are excluding each other. If we consider that each of them can appear only in half the verses, we can assess that they both are quite frequent. They constitute between them around 30% of alloccurrences of *a/ab* and the large majority of all instances of *ab*; extremes are: a maximum of about 43% of *a/ab* in *Tristia* which has about two thirds *ab* and only one third *a* – and a minimum of 26% in the *Amores*.

(6) The pattern | \underline{a} \cup *ab* | *aúdit* | *ís* = | \underline{a} \cup *ab* | *ádmoni* | *tú* at the beginning of the verse, after the first trochaeus, comes next in frequency with about 10% of all occurrences. There the word following *ab* is in clash, while in the most frequent patterns, near the end of the verse, it is in coincidence.

(7) Summarizing the results of this examination we may say:

(a) The overall relative distribution of *a* and *ab* in Ovid's Elegies is similar in the several poems: Slightly more *a*, which tends to occur mostly at the beginning of the verse, with the subsequent word in clash.

(b) *Tristia* and *Epist.exPonto* have more *ab*, which occurs mostly at the end of either hexameter or pentameter, with the subsequent word in coincidence. Less frequent is *ab* near the beginning of the verse, after the first trochaeus with the word following it in clash.

(c) It seems that these patterns prove that *a/ab* was felt to be an integral part of the word following it – as stated by Quintilian – and not a monosyllable which would have been out of place in most of these positions in verse.

(d) The fact that these prepositions in their doublet forms are limited to certain places in the verse is another proof of the “regulating” trend of the poetical language.