

Prescriptivist discussion of Latin spelling

Data and description excerpted from Campbell (2004)

The *Appendix Probi* ('Appendix of Probus') was compiled in the 3rd–4th century CE. It lists 227 Latin words. These examples are of the form *X non Y*, that is, 'X not Y,' where the scribe considers the 'X' form 'correct' and the 'Y' form 'incorrect'.

For this exercise, assume that the forms on the left of *non* represent conservative and thus older pronunciations and that the forms on the right of *non* correspond to later pronunciations which result from changes in the language.

- (1)
- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| masculus non masclus | māsculus 'male, manly' |
| vetulus non veclus | vetulus 'little old, poor old' |
| vitulus non viclus | vītulus 'calf, foal' |
| vernaculus non vernaculus | vernāculus 'native, of home-born slaves' |
| articulus non articlus | articulus 'joint, knuckle, limb' |
| angulus non anglus | angulus 'angle, corner' |
| oculus non oclus | oculus 'eye' |
| tabula non tabla | tabula 'board, plank' |
| calida non calda | calida 'warm, hot' |
| frigida non frigda | frīgida 'cold' |
| viridis non virdis | viridis 'green' |
- (2)
- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| passim non passi | passim 'here and there, at random' |
| pridem non pride | prīdem 'long ago, long' |
| olim non oli | ōlim 'once, at the time, at times' |
| idem non ide | īdem, idem 'the same, likewise' |
| numquam non numqua | numquam 'never' |
| triclinium non triclinu | trīclīnium 'dining-couch, dining room' |
- (3)
- Set IVa* (the more common direction of change)
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ansa non asa | ānsa 'handle' |
| mensa non mesa | mēnsa 'table, meal' |
| Capsensis non Capsessis | Capsensis 'from Capsitanus' |
- Set IVb* (occasional examples)
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Hercules non Herculens | Herculēs |
| occasio non occansio | occāsiō 'opportunity, convenient time' |