

Questions and answers

Questions and answers form a naturally paired class of sentence-types in terms of their functions in discourse, but from a descriptive (and purely structural) standpoint they show differences that make them hard to integrate into a single presentation. Most significantly, questions can often be readily identified as such by various markers, certainly so in Latin, but more generally in many languages; whereas answers for the most part, again certainly for Latin, but also cross-linguistically, are not a formally distinct sentence-type.¹ That is, for questions one typically finds special morphemes, whether affixes or independent words,² which mark different question-types; and many languages, perhaps including Latin, have a special question prosody. However, it is rarely the case that there are overt markers or special intonational contours signaling an answer.³

To illustrate these points, we give in (1) a typical question and answer pair.

(1) Plaut. *Aul.* 256:⁴ *sponden ergo? :: spondeo*

‘so do you promise? :: yes, I promise’

¹ This raises the problem of the relation between formal and functional types, which we address below. We take it as significant that standard grammars of Latin (and in general, grammatical descriptions and pedagogical grammars of other languages) do *not* have separate sections on answers or at most have a few lines about answers, versus pages and pages on questions. Joseph and Philippaki-Warbuton (1987) and the grammars in the (now Routledge) series of which it is a part are notable exceptions. For typical discussions of answers, see Hale and Buck (1966: 137); Allen and Greenough (1903: 208)).

² —We do not use the term “clitic” (see Zwicky 1994 for an eloquent defense of an approach to the classification of morphosyntactic primitives that is limited to WORDS and AFFIXES), while recognizing that there can be degrees of typicality in each of these categories. What are usually, and sometimes mistakenly, called *clitics* are simply, in our view, atypical words or atypical affixes.

³ Note, however, the Irish responsive verb form (discussed below) and the special *felicity* conditions applying to answers (or better, responses), by which we mean, the social and pragmatic constraints on when such a form can, cannot, or must be used.

⁴ All translations are the authors’.

1 The question is unambiguously interrogative, marked with *-n(e)*, whose only function is
2 to signal a question (either direct or indirect);⁵ however, the answer can be a response to a
3 question (as here) or, if occurring independently—with the exact same form—simply an
4 assertion.

5 (2) *spondeo*

6 ‘(it is the case that) I (am) mak(ing) a promise/promises’

7 It is only when *spondeo* is paired in discourse with a question such as *sponden*⁶ that it
8 becomes an “answer”. Answers, we would say, are inherently tied to some other
9 utterance and thus cannot actually be discourse-initial, whereas questions can initiate a
10 discourse.⁷ Note, however, that even in Plautus or Terence, and in Latin in general, one-
11 word assertives, such as *spondeo*, are relatively infrequent in contexts other than as
12 responses. Therefore, we do not integrate the two parts but instead treat them as a pairing
13 of a Section 1 on questions with a Section 2 on answers, though we include in Section 1
14 some indication regarding answers, with cross-references to a more elaborated discussion
15 in Section 2.

16 A discussion of any phenomenon found in Latin raises several methodological
17 questions pertaining to temporal focus and genre. Neither poses an insurmountable
18 problem for our topic.

19 First, there is a historical question, as there are some 1200 years of what might be
20 characterized as Latin, from early inscriptions of the late seventh century BCE through

⁵ See 1.2.2 for details on the syntax and use of *-ne* and on the other ways of signaling questions in Latin.

⁶ *Spondēn* can be reconstructed as *spondēs-ne*. Coda *-s* within words before a following voiced sound is lost, with compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. The stem vowel of *spondēn* is long in Old Latin (*/spondēs(n)e > spondēn(e)/*). This change is not to be confused with the loss of word-final *-s*. In this position *-s* is lost only when preceded by a short vowel and only when the next word begins with a consonant, i.e., *-Vs ## C-*.

⁷ For instance, you can walk up to someone you have never met before and begin a conversation by asking a question (e.g., *Come here often?*), but you cannot begin such a conversation with an utterance that is to be interpreted as an answer: compare how infelicitous it would be to lead with an elliptical statement; ellipses are common in answers, such as *in the refrigerator*, a possible answer to a question *where is the beer?* Note, however, that contextually, answers that correspond to metalinguistic “questions” expressed by such gestures as facial expressions can often appear to be discourse-initial.

1 the literary Old Latin of Plautus, Ennius, Terence, Cato the Elder, and so on; the Classical
2 Golden Age works of Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, and others; the Silver Age stylings of
3 Petronius, Seneca, and Tacitus, among others; and even including what is usually called
4 “Late Latin” authors, such as Tertullian and Macrobius. Over such a length of time, of
5 course, changes would not be unexpected. However, it seems that there really are no
6 major structural changes in the syntax of questions and answers in Latin between the final
7 centuries of the Republic and the period of the Empire, approximately 200 BCE to 300
8 CE; at most, there are some changes in the use of individual question words (see Section
9 3.1).⁸

10 Second, with regard to genre, it must be recognized that the evidence for Latin
11 comes from various sources, some literary, some inscriptional; and in general, languages
12 can show real differences in usage correlating with genre.⁹ Again, though, it is our
13 observation that neither inscriptions, whether from pre-Republican Rome or from
14 Pompeii; nor more literary Latin, whether high-style poetry such as Ovid’s *Heroides* or
15 dialogic material found in the plays of Plautus; nor even the carefully crafted rhetoric of
16 Ciceronian orations differ in any significant structural way with regard to the formation
17 of questions and answers.¹⁰

18 Therefore, our focus here is on literary varieties of Latin from Plautus to Tacitus,
19 which covers a narrower time period, approximately 350 years, but offers the reader a
20 suitable overview of these constructions and gives a basis for discussing further some
21 details of their historical development. Examples are thus freely drawn from the major
22 Latin authors within this period.

23 Once we establish the grosser aspects of questions and answers in Latin, defined
24 in this way, we turn in Section 3 to historical considerations, revealing the detailed

⁸ On chronology see Cuzzolin and Haverling (this work, vol. 1).

⁹ For instance, the inversion that occurs with subjects and verbs that introduce quotations in English, as in ‘*that is something I will never do again*’, asserted *John confidently*, is restricted to written usage and is not typically found in conversational English.

¹⁰ This is not to say that some specific question words might not be restricted to certain registers and styles; one would not expect a president to greet a foreign dignitary with *whassup?* or for Cicero to have used the Latin equivalent of *what the heck are the associates of Caesar doing?*

differences evident within the Latin family, but also the issue of the development of Proto-Italic into Latin and even Proto-Indo-European into Italic.

1. Questions

1.1. Introduction

What are questions? It is worth noting at the outset that questions as a category present certain problems for linguists. First, both formally and functionally, questions do not constitute a single, clearly defined category. Thus formally we can distinguish constituent or *wh*-questions from polar (yes/no) questions (in Latin, as in English, not itself a single formal category) from echo questions. In English, these share certain formal similarities, specifically certain phrase level intonation patterns; and while it is possible that something similar held for Latin, this cannot be established with certainty.¹¹ On the abstract level, these formal categories have distinct functions as well. In general, questions are understood, abstractly, to represent a request for information. *Wh*-questions function on the abstract, sentence level, to narrow the identity (broadly defined) of the entity (broadly defined) denoted by the *wh*-element. For example, the question *when will you be here?* seeks to narrow the time frame within which the state of affairs *you will be here* applies. In such questions, the *wh*-element is typically focal. Polar questions, on the other hand, function on the abstract level to confirm or deny some state of affairs, and some lexical item reflecting an aspect of that state of affairs is typically focal, although it receives no specific morphological marking.¹² Formally, echo questions typically repeat some or all of the previous segment of the discourse but in a way which marks them as a question. In English, they share the special intonation pattern typical of other formal categories of questions. As a separate category in English, echo questions also differ both formally and functionally from polar questions. First, they do not exhibit the subject–verb inversion or *do*-support typical of polar questions. Functionally, echo questions such as *you're coming with us?* are most often used to express surprise or critique. They differ

¹¹ See Section 1.1.1 for a discussion of the possibility of special Latin question prosody.

¹² It is possible that one function of the Latin postpositive *-ne* was to mark the preceding element as focal. See Section 1.2.2.1.

1 from assertives, such as *you're coming with us*, only in their phrase level intonation
2 pattern, whereas the polar question equivalent *are you coming with us?* is also marked by
3 subject–verb inversion and typically functions as an invitation.¹³ Since the use of such
4 formal patterns is not a feature of questions in Latin, it remains to be seen whether such a
5 category as echo questions can be maintained for Latin. Distinct from polar questions,
6 echo questions have a number of pragmatically defined discourse functions but typically
7 do not function to request information.

8 The plurality of functions that questions perform within discourse (i.e., as
9 utterances) has been extensively discussed in the linguistic community.¹⁴ These functions
10 cut across formal classes. Thus, while abstractly, on the sentence level, questions express
11 requests for information,¹⁵ they are often used specifically, as utterances, to perform other
12 functions within their discourse, including making directives (*can you please shut up?*),
13 initiating social relationships (*how's it going?*) or change in activities (*is everyone ready*
14 *to leave?*), indicating surprise (*surely you're joking?*), criticizing (*really?*), and so on.
15 These functions are always pragmatically defined and discourse-specific.¹⁶

16 On the abstract level, questions serve to elicit a verbal response from a potential
17 addressee in the form of an answer. In this regard, they share abstract function with
18 directives. Both directly attempt to elicit some type of action or behavior from a potential
19 addressee. Questions and directives behave on the functional level in ways that are also
20 similar to each other. Thus, directives can elicit answers, as in *get out of here! :: no*.
21 Similarly, formal questions are often functional directives and elicit responses
22 appropriate to directives from addressees, as in *you gonna eat the rest of that?* followed
23 by the addressee passing the remainder of the sandwich. In Latin, as in other languages,
24 the closeness of function between commands and questions is reflected in their tendency
25 to cluster in discourse.

¹³ Thus, English assertives show overall falling pitch contour with a particular high-to-low contour over the focal element, whereas echo questions show an overall rising contour with a correspondingly steep low-to-high contour over the focal element.

¹⁴ See especially the works of Searle (e.g., 1979) and Austin (e.g., 1962). See also Grundy (1995: 48–70).

¹⁵ That is, in terms of their *locutionary force*.

¹⁶ That is, their *illocutionary force* cannot be predicted solely on formal grounds.

1 (3) Plaut. *Aul.* 415: *redi! Quo fugis nunc? Tene, tene*
2 ‘come back! Where are you going now? Hold on, hold on’

3 Formally, then, we can distinguish the three categories of questions discussed above:
4 constituent or *wh*-questions, polar questions, and echo questions. In keeping with the
5 general approach followed in this work, we use the formal classification laid out above
6 while bearing in mind an overarching functionally based division between questions that
7 do not seek information and questions that do (admitting that these categories are
8 pragmatic and not formal).

9 Constituent questions are characterized in Latin by the presence of some element
10 marked by the initial sequence *qu-* or its later reflexes. This sequence corresponds to
11 English initial *wh-* or *h-* and is a reflex of a PIE voiceless labiovelar stop $*k^w$.¹⁷ This *wh-*
12 element is most often found as the sentence focus. That is to say, in those contexts where
13 questions request information, the information requested will be the important new
14 element in the discourse, which is the commonest definition of *focus*.

15 Italic maintains a distinction in non-oblique case forms between
16 interrogative/indefinite pronouns on the one hand and interrogative adjectives/relative
17 pronominal adjectives on the other. This distinction is reflected in the differentiation
18 between the Latin interrogative pronoun *quis, quid* and indefinite pronoun *quis, quid* on
19 the one hand (Oscan **pis, píđ** and Umbrian **psi**) and the relative pronominal
20 adjective/interrogative adjective *qui, quae, quod* on the other (Oscan **pui, paí, píđ**,
21 Umbrian *poi, pae(i)*).¹⁸ However, this distinction is not maintained in the oblique cases or
22 in the plural. Thus it is possible, in some cases, for constituent questions and relative
23 clauses to be formally indistinguishable. A sequence such as *qui peruenere, illos*
24 *apropinqemus* could be read in two ways: as *who arrived? we should go up to them*; or as
25 *let us go up to the ones who arrived* (depending on whether *qui peruenere* is read as a

¹⁷ Forms like *cur, cum* are explained as derived from forms with initial k^w - ($*k^w or$, $*k^w om$) via the loss of labial articulation (rounding) before a [+round] vowel. Forms such as *ubi* or *uter* are explained as resulting from resegmentation (cf. Sihler 1995: 399 § 381.3). It is also possible that word-initial $*k^w$ was lost before *-u*, e.g., $*kwudhey$ ‘where’ > *ubi*, but survived as *k* medially. See J. Schmidt 1893: 407.

¹⁸ See Buck (1928: 144–145); Untermann (2000: 558–560) for interrogative/indefinite; and Untermann (2000: 595–597) for relatives.

question or a relative clause). This formal ambiguity is particularly noticeable in the case of indirect questions.¹⁹

A similar problem holds for polar and echo questions. Polar questions are often marked by the interrogative affixal element *-ne*, although the inclusion of this element is not necessary and diminishes in frequency in some later writers.²⁰ Thus, in theory a sequence such as *ego intus seruem* (Plaut. *Aul.* 81) could function as a statement, *let me work inside*, or a question, *am I to work inside?* and only context (and perhaps prosody) serves to distinguish between the two.

In addition to the tripartite formal distinction, Latin makes a formal distinction in the case of direct (i.e., not embedded) questions between those whose verb is in the indicative mood and those whose verb is in the subjunctive. The latter are usually referred to as deliberative questions and seem originate as hortatory subjunctives found in pragmatically defined question settings.

(4) a. *fecine ea?*

‘did I do that?’

b. *ea fecerim*

‘I should/might have done that’

c. *ea fecerim?*

‘I should have done that? / was I supposed to do that?’

It is true that *-ne* is not obligatory in polar questions, but even without *-ne*, possible polar questions are usually not ambiguous when viewed *in situ*, functionally. First, as a question, an example like (1) *sponden* is followed in its discourse by a response, its answer *spondeo*. Thus, for the most part questions pattern differently within their discourse than assertives; they are typically followed by some response on the part of the addressee (the answer) and are subject to different *felicity conditions*.²¹

¹⁹ On which see Section 1.3.

²⁰ Especially Petronius and Persius. Both of these writers are important for the fact that they often employ examples of colloquial or at least non-Classical Latin and so *may* suggest ways in which non-standard (i.e., non-Roman) Latin was developing in contrast to the Classical Latin of the Roman aristocracy. However, such evidence can give us tentative answers at best.

²¹ The term *felicity conditions* is applied to special social and pragmatic constraints—as opposed to

1.1.1 Latin question prosody

The question arises as to whether Latin had a special question prosody. The potential for formal morphosyntactic ambiguity displayed by all categories of questions suggests that it is likely that questions in Latin were marked additionally in some other way, perhaps prosodically. Touratier states this outright: “Dans la langue orale, les interrogations ... se reconnaissent à leur *intonation*.”²² This claim relates to a passage from Quintilian where that author describes a distinction, which he labeled with the term *pronuntiatio*, between, for example, *spondee* used as a question and in other functions:²³

(5) Quint. *inst.* 11,3,5: *quid, quod eadem uerba mutata **pronuntiatione** indicant, adfirmant, exprobrant, negant, mirantur, indignantur, **interrogant**, irrident, eleuant*

‘so what then of the fact that, by a change of delivery, one can use the same words to either demonstrate or affirm, express reproach, denial, wonder or indignation, interrogation, mockery, or to make light of something?’

Quintilian’s statement here raises an interesting possibility for any discussion of Latin syntax and prosody. What exactly did Quintilian mean by the term *pronuntiatio*? He himself states that he intends the term to refer to a combination of *uox* and *gestus* (*inst.* 11,3,1), which he compares with Cicero’s ascription to the term of the features *uox* and *motus* (*inst.* 11,3,1). Quintilian also seems to refer the term specifically to oratory rather than to speech in general.²⁴ In examining this question, we should closely examine the

grammatical constraints—on when elements can, cannot, and must be used. Thus, the constraint on referring to the President as *they* is grammatical, the constraint on referring to him as *emperor* is a felicity condition.

²² Touratier (1994: 447–448).

²³ This poses problems for editing certain types of texts—putting in punctuation such as a question mark may not always be called for by the *form* and thus is an editorial decision. For example, Petron. *Sat.* 36,8: *uides illum inquit qui obsonium carpit* is read by Heseltine and Warmington in the 1987 Loeb edition (p. 65) as a question: “‘you see that fellow’ he says ‘who is carving his way through the meat?’”, although they do not change the punctuation of the Latin to reflect their reading.

²⁴ Quint. *inst.* 11,3,2: *habet autem res ipsa miram quandam **in orationibus** vim ac potestatem* ‘this very thing (*pronuntiatio*) has an amazing force and power at least in the case of oratory’.

examples that Quintilian uses to illustrate his claim that different types of utterance are distinguished by differences in *pronuntiatio*. He lists his examples as follows:

(6) Quint. *inst.* 11,3,8–11: *aliter enim dicitur: tu mihi quodcumque hoc regni et cantando tu illum? et tunc ille Aeneas? et meque timoris argue tu, Drance* ‘in different ways one says “you (reconcile) me to this kingdom, whatever it is,” and “you (defeated) him at *playing*?” and “are you that Aeneas?” and “you, Drancus, prove me a coward”’

In all four of Quintilian’s examples, the distinction at issue clearly revolves around the pronoun *tu*, which is “said differently” (*aliter enim dicitur*) in each case. All four examples are quoted from Virgil. Note that two of them, the second and third, are read as questions in the standard editions of Virgil, the former an echo question and the latter a polar question. In each of Quintilian’s examples, the position and prosody of the pronoun *tu* differs in important ways within the context of the dactylic hexameter line. In the first example (quoted from *Aen.* 1,78), *tu* is in initial position within its foot. This position was called, by Latin grammarians the *thesis* and was felt to carry the beat, the *ictus*, of the rhythm of the verse. In this first example, *tu* is then followed by a weak pronoun (*mihi*), which was possibly tonic, although it may well not have been.²⁵ In the second example (*ecl.* 3,25), the vowel of *tu* is elided (i.e., it should be read as *t’ ill’*). In the third example (*Aen.* 1,617), *tu* is again foot-initial and is followed by the atonic interrogative affix *-ne*. In the last example (*Aen.* 11,383–384), *tu* is followed by a vocative noun phrase (*Drance*) and so is probably best taken as prepausal. Unfortunately, while all four examples seem to differ vis-à-vis the prosody of this pronoun *tu* in conjunction with the element that follows, it is not clear that one single prosodic feature is at issue across all four of Quintilian’s examples; thus how this passage can help us identify some specific question marking prosodic feature for Latin is equally and frustratingly unclear.

Importantly, the *form* of the question is unaffected by whether it is information-seeking or not; the same devices, such as the marker *-ne* or *wh*-words, are found

²⁵ There is an argument in favor of the tonic reading for *mihi*, namely that if it were read as tonic at *Aen.* 1,78, its accent would have established, within the first foot of the verse, the conflict between word accent and verse ictus so important in Latin hexameter.

1 regardless of the function. We cite in (7)–(10) deliberative questions from Plautus and
2 rhetorical questions from Cicero, with both polar and *wh*-questions.

3 (7) Plaut. *Aul.* 81–82: *quippini? / ego intus seruem?*

4 ‘c’mon, am I supposed to work inside?’

5 (8) Plaut. *Aul.* 296: *quid negoti est?*

6 ‘what’s going on?’

7 (9) Cic. *Catil.* 1,1: *nihilne te nocturnum praesidium Palati ... mouerunt?*

8 ‘doesn’t the night guard on the Palatine get your attention?’

9 (10) Cic. *Catil.* 1,1: *quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?*

10 ‘how long are you going to abuse our patience, Catiline?’

11 It is important to recognize that, as with so much in language, context is crucial;
12 each of the sentences cited above as non-information-seeking could, under appropriate
13 circumstances, be construed as indeed seeking some particular piece of information. For
14 instance, if Cicero really had been interested in Catiline’s feelings—if, say, they had been
15 *amici*—he could have queried him with the questions that were similar in form to those
16 cited above as rhetorical.

17 Thus it is perhaps more revealing to look at the form of questions rather than to
18 worry excessively about their function, beyond the matter of information-seeking versus
19 not, and the matter of what has been called polar questions versus constituent questions,
20 roughly equivalent to the distinction made in English grammar between yes/no and *wh*-
21 questions—in Latin terms, *-ne* versus *qu*-questions.

22 The traditional literature on Latin is actually mixed between functional/notional
23 rubrics such as “deliberative questions”, “rhetorical questions”, and the like,²⁶ and purely
24 structural aspects, such as reference to *qu*-words, presence of question particles, and use
25 of particular moods in questions (e.g., subjunctive in indirect questions). Thus in our
26 discussion here, we cannot and do not ignore the traditional classifications but neither do
27 we adhere to them slavishly; indeed, they present a suitable starting point for any

²⁶ Not all of the classificatory schemes used in the standard grammars are all that revealing. Cf. Hale and Buck ([1903] 1966: §503) regarding “questions of perplexity”, “questions asking for instruction”, “quaestio absurda,” etc.; this is much too fine a classification.

discussion of Latin questions, but embellishment with other perspectives is needed as well.

In what follows, therefore, in developing our typology of Latin questions, we borrow from the traditional classification and exemplify the various categories with material from authentic Latin texts.

1.2. Direct questions

1.2.1 Wh-questions

The inventory of *wh*- elements includes the following: interrogative pronominal forms *quis, quid* ‘who’; *ecquis* ‘is there anyone who’; interrogative adjective forms: *uter* ‘which of two’; *cuius, -a, -um* ‘whose’, *qualis, -e* ‘of what kind’, *quot* ‘how many’, *quantus, -a, -um* ‘how great’; interrogative adverbial forms: *quo(modus)* ‘how, in what way’; *ut* ‘how’, *quam* ‘how’; *ubi* ‘where’, *cur* ‘why’, *quare (qua ... re)* ‘why’, *quando* ‘when’; *quo* ‘to where’; *unde* ‘from where’; *qui* ‘how’; and others. Adverbial *quid* ‘why’ is common in Plautus and Terence, and again in post-Classical Latin; in the Classical period it appears more often in indirect than in direct speech (see Cic. *div.* 1,59). *Quare* ‘why’ occurs once in Plautus (*Epid.* 597), then in Cicero and Varro, where it is also more frequent in indirect questions.

1.2.1.1 Information-seeking

The classification of examples like (11) and others is determined solely on the basis of context; most directly, by the presence of a following answer.²⁷

- (11) Plaut. *Amph.* 450: *quo agis te? :: Domum*
‘where are you going? :: Home’

1.2.1.2 Non-information-seeking

- (12) Petron. 10,1: *quid ego, homo stultissime, facere debui ...*
‘what was I supposed to do, you moron ...’

²⁷ In the case of (12), any following response seems to have dropped out of the extant text.

1 The distinction between information-seeking questions and non-information-seeking
2 questions is not hard and fast. Often questions can have multiple discourse functions.

3 (13) Petron. 20,5–6: *'quid? ego', inquit, 'non sum dignus qui bibam?'*
4 “‘what about me,’ he said, ‘don’t I get to have a drink?’”

5 In the context of the *Satyricon*, this question arouses laughter from Aschyltos’s (the
6 speaker’s) companion. This laughter is then followed by the maid (*ancilla*) producing a
7 container of wine (20,6: *apposui quidem adulescens* ‘I put it next to you, boy’). Thus
8 contextualized, the question appears to constitute a reproach and a request at one and the
9 same time. Note that in (13) the position of postpositive *inquit* strongly suggests that,
10 despite the accepted punctuation, *quid ego* forms a single prosodic unit.

11 **1.2.1.3 Questions with multiple *wh*-markers**

12 Occasionally, as in other languages, several elements in a single clause may be in the
13 form of *wh*-words. The cross-linguistic rarity of such constructions may be due to the
14 potential they offer for cognitive processing difficulties.

15 (14) Cic. *Q. Rosc.* 21: *considera ... quis quem fraudasse dicatur*
16 ‘think about who is said to have cheated whom’

17 **1.2.1.4 *Quid? Quidni? Quippini?***

18 Often *quid* (or *quidni*, *quippini*) is found in cases in which it is clearly not a verbal
19 complement but rather seems to function adverbially to introduce a following question. In
20 such cases it functions as an evaluative particle. In this capacity, the particle *quid* and
21 others are often paired with questions having an evaluative function, such as deliberative,
22 rhetorical, or echo questions.

23 (15) = (7) Plaut. *Aul.* 81–82: *quippini? / ego intus seruem?*
24 ‘c’mon, I’m supposed to work inside?’

25 (16) Cic. *Verr.* 1,10,27: *quid? hoc planius egissem, si ita narrassem?’*
26 ‘what? Could I have done this more openly, if I had told it in *this* way?’

27 The standard punctuation suggests that editors read the element *quid?* as a distinct
28 phrasal unit. However, cases like (17) and (13) above suggest that this may not always

1 have been the case.

2 (17) Cic. *div. in Caec.* 35: *quid? illa, Caecili, contemnendane tibi uidentur esse ...?*
3 ‘what about these things, Caecilius, do they seem to you worthy of
4 *condemnation?*’

5 The position of the vocative, *Caecili*, and of the element *-ne* strongly suggest that
6 *quid? illa* is best taken as a single prosodic unit. Opposing this is (15), where *quippini?* is
7 separated from the rest of the question by the pause at verse end. Taken together, (16) and
8 (17), both of which can be multiplied, suggest that *quid?* and the like sometimes form a
9 separate prosodic unit and at other times are best taken with other extraposed elements as
10 part of a larger prosodic unit.²⁸ In the latter cases, the extraposed elements are usually
11 topical, and so *quid?* seems to function as a topicalizing particle in the mode of Gk. $\Upsilon\epsilon$.
12 Thus, while *wh-* words are typically focal, *quid?* is not.²⁹

13 1.2.2 Polar questions

14 As mentioned above, Latin has an element that functions as a marker of yes/no polarity
15 questions, namely the postpositive question marker *-ne*.³⁰ However, *-ne* is not obligatory
16 in such questions at any point in the history of recorded Latin, although it is more
17 common in earlier writers than in later and is most common in Classical and classicizing
18 authors. In negative leading polarity questions, *num* is employed instead.³¹ This suggests
19 that these markers were not original to the category but came to be so associated later. As
20 stated before, the absence of an overt question marker like *-ne* in some polarity questions

²⁸ We can compare this use with that of the evaluative particle *hwæt* in Old English.

²⁹ See (36) and (37) below, Section 1.2.2.5.

³⁰ We deliberately do not call this an “enclitic” even though it occurs postpositively, as it may well be an open question as to whether it is a prosodically weak word or a true affix. Since *-s#* is maintained before undeniable words starting with *n-* (e.g., Plaut. *Amph.* 46: *sed mos numquam*), forms like *uiden* for *vides-ne* would point to affixal status; the loss of *-e#* in *-ne* may not show anything, since some words lose *-e#* (e.g., imperatives like *duc/dic/fac* (though *fac* is odd for other reasons). In Plautus and Terence, final *s* is regularly dropped in the coda of unaccented syllables before a consonant in many mss.

Ter. *Phorm.* 106-107: *capillu' passu', nudu' pes, ipsa horrida, / lacrumae, uestitu' turpis: ut, ni uis boni*

³¹ Cicero and a few Classical authors occasionally employed *numne*.

1 can lead to a certain circularity in deciding whether some segment is or is not a question,
 2 although in the case of authors like Plautus, Terence, or Petronius, questions are often
 3 followed in the text by various types of responses, which make their identification qua
 4 questions less problematic. The frequent absence of any overt morphosyntactic question
 5 marker also suggests that Latin possessed, at some point in its development, some other,
 6 nonmorphosyntactic, marking for questions, such as specific phrase level prosody.
 7 Unfortunately, the evidence does not allow us to reconstruct with any degree of certainty
 8 what this marker might have been.

9 1.2.2.1 Polar questions marked with *-ne*

- 10 (18) Ter. *Phorm.* 102: *uoltisne eamus uisere?*
 11 ‘do you want us to go to see her?’
 12 (19) CIL I², 2187: *postquam ceciderunt s[p]es [o]m[nes] | consulis tun me?*
 13 ‘after all hopes have fallen, do you ask me for advice?’
 14 (20) Plaut. *Trin.* 470–473: *apposita cena sit.../ .../ .../ edisne an incenatus ...accubes?*
 15 ‘if dinner were set out, would you eat or lie back and not eat?’

16 *-Ne* is typically found following the first word of the clause (often referred to as Second
 17 Position). When *-ne* is not found in second position, the question arises as to whether we
 18 can assume that constituents have been extraposed. The tendency, as indicated by the
 19 traditional punctuation of most editors, suggests that these elements have not been read as
 20 separate prosodic domains. However, the position of *-ne* in examples like (21)–(22)
 21 suggests that the elements which precede the “host” word for *-ne* (i.e., first position) may
 22 have been intended to be read as prosodically distinct.

- 23 (21) Cic. *rep.* 1,61: *quid? domi pluresne praesunt negotiis tuis?*³²
 24 ‘what about at home? are there *many* people in charge of your affairs?’
 25 or ‘what? Are there *many* people at home in charge of your affairs?’
 26 (22) Cic. *Phil.* 1,14: *quid? de reliquis rei publicae malis licetne dicere?*
 27 ‘what about the rest of the state’s enemies? Can you speak about them?’

³² Perhaps (21) could be better punctuated as *quid domi? pluresne praesunt negotiis tuis?* and (22) as *quid*

The prosodic interpretation of *quid* in examples like (16) and (22) and thence the pragmatic significance of that element are dependent on prosodic information which is unavailable. If *quid* in these examples represents a separate prosodic unit, as the traditional orthography (reproduced above) suggests, then it would appear to function as an evaluative expression, questioning some premise of the ongoing discourse much as English *what?* does in expressions like *what? I didn't do that*. Note, however, that in examples like (13) and (21), the position of the postpositive elements *inquit* and *-ne* suggest that here at least, *quid* forms part of a larger prosodic unit, inviting a similar interpretation for other, less clear cases as well. Again, in the absence of data related to phrase-level prosody in Latin, the argument about extrapositioning becomes circular. In the above examples, it seems that the extraposed elements function as cases of topicalization. In such cases, it seems that *-ne* typically follows the focal element in such sentences.

[*quid* ... TOPIC] [FOCUS-*ne* ...]

In examples like (22), it appears, based on the position of *-ne*, that the sequence *quid de reliquis rei publicae malis* represents a single prosodic unit as well.³³

For a series of questions, *-ne* is usually found only in the first: *nonne hunc* in Cic. *Catil.* 1,27: *uincla duci, non ad mortem rapi, non sumo supplicio mactari imperabis?* ‘will you not order this man to be arrested, will you not order him to be hurried to execution, will you not order him to be put to death by the supreme penalty?’

1.2.2.2 Unmarked polar questions

- (23) Plaut. *Rud.* 1011: *uis pugnare? :: quid opust? quin tu potius praedam diuide*
 “‘you want to fight?’” :: “‘what’s the point? no, better you divide up the loot’”
- (24) *CIL* I², 2174: *credis quod deicunt? non | sunt ita. ne fore(s) stultu!*
 ‘do you believe what they say? (things) are not so. don’t be a fool!’

de reliquis rei publicae malis? licetne dicere?

³³ The translations of (13), (16), (21), and (22) are intended to reflect this reading of evaluative *quid*.

1 **1.2.2.3 Disjunctive polar questions**

2 **1.2.2.3.1 -Ne ... an**

- 3 (25) Cic. *Att.* 16,8,2: *Romam ne uenio an hic maneo an Arpinum fug<i>am?*
4 ‘do I go to Rome, or stay here, or should I flee to Arpinum?’

5 **1.2.2.3.2 Utrum ... an**

- 6 (26) Cic. *Phil.* 1,21: *haec utrum tandem lex est an legum omnium dissolutio?*
7 ‘this one, is it a certain law or an undoing of all laws?’
8 (27) Plaut. *Persa* 341: *utrum pro ancilla me habes an pro filia?*
9 ‘do you take me for a servant or for a daughter?’

10 **1.2.2.3.3 Utrum ... -ne ... an**

- 11 (28) Plaut. *Rud.* 104: *utrum tu <m>asne an femina es ...?*
12 ‘what about you? are you male or female?’

13 **1.2.2.3.4 — ... an**

- 14 (29) Plaut. *Capt.* 334: *... priuatam seruitutem seruit illi an publicam?*
15 ‘is he a private slave, or does he belong to the state?’
16 (30) Ter. *Phorm.* 147: *pater eius rediit an non?*
17 ‘did his father return or not?’
18 (31) Plaut. *Bacch.* 162: *tibi ego an tu mihi seruos es?*
19 ‘am I your slave or are you my slave?’

20 **1.2.2.3.5 — ... necne**

- 21 *Necne* introduces a simple negative alternate, ‘or not’.
22 (32) Cic. *Tusc.* 3,41: *sunt haec tua uerba necne?*
23 ‘are these your words or not?’

1 **1.2.2.4 *Nonne/nihilne***

2 Polar questions which suggest a positive response are usually introduced by *nonne*, or less
3 often by *nihilne* and usually with the polar question marker *-ne* affixed.

4 (33) Pomp. 16,46: *Mithridates nonne ad Cn. Pompeium legatum misit?*

5 ‘Mithridates, didn’t he send an ambassador to Gnaeus Pompeius?’

6 (34) Plaut. *Amph.* 406: *nonne ego nunc sto ante aedes nostras?*

7 ‘aren’t I standing in front of our house right now?’

8 (35) Tac. *dial.* 3: *nihilne te ... fabulae malignorum terrent?*

9 ‘those terrible stories didn’t frighten you, did they?’

10 **1.2.2.5 *Non***

11 As with other polar questions, the marker *-ne* is often found omitted after *non* as well.

12 (36) Petron. 9,8: *non taces ...?*

13 ‘aren’t you going to shut up?’

14 (37) Cic. *Verr* 1,20: *quid? iudices non crimina, non testes, non existimationem populi*
15 *Romani sequentur?*

16 ‘what about the judges, won’t they follow the charges, the witnesses, the opinion
17 of the Roman people?’

18 **1.2.2.6 *Num***

19 In Latin from the Late Republic on, *num* introduces polar questions which suggest a
20 negative response. However, in earlier writers *num* does not necessarily presume a
21 negative answer when it is used as a subordinating conjunction (‘whether’) to introduce
22 indirect questions, or when it is joined to the indefinite pronoun *quis*.

23 (38) Cic. *Catil.* 1,8: *num negare audes?*

24 ‘you don’t dare to deny it, do you?’

25 Example (38) is typical of the most common use of *num*, which anticipates a negative
26 response. However there are examples where this can’t be the case.

27 (39) Plaut. *Rud.* 1304: *quid tu? num medicus, quaeso, es? :: immo edepol una littera*

1 *plus sum quam medicus*

2 ‘what about you? Are you a doctor?’ :: ‘Hardly, I’m one letter *more* than a
3 doctor’³⁴

4 The response initiator *immo* suggests that the negative response is in fact contra-indicated
5 by the question that elicited it.

6 (40) Ter. *Eun.* 549: *numquis hinc me sequitur?* :: *Nemo ...*

7 “‘is anyone following me out of here?’” :: “‘no one’”

8 **1.2.2.7 Deliberative questions**

9 Deliberative questions are generally not information-seeking and often suggest an
10 internal dialogue (hence the name). These are possibly hortatory in nature (e.g., *let me kill*
11 *Caesar?*).³⁵ These are often evaluative or critical in function.

12 (41) = (7) Plaut. *Aul.* 81–82: *quippini / ego intus seruem? an ne quis aedes auferat?*

13 ‘c’mon, I’m supposed to work inside? what? Is someone going to steal the
14 building?’

15 (42) Plaut. *Bacch.* 731: *scribe :: quid scribam?*³⁶

16 “‘write!’” :: “‘what should I write?’”

17 The indicative is as common as the subjunctive in questions that are truly deliberative.

18 (43) Cic. *Att.* 13,40,2: ... *quid mi auctor es? aduolone an maneo?*

19 ‘what do you advise me? should I stay or should I go now?’

20 (44) Cic. *Quinct.* 53: *ne hoc quidem tecum locutus es: “horae duae fuerunt, Quinctius*
21 *ad uadimonium non uenit. quid ago?”*

22 ‘nor did you even say this to yourself, “it’s been two hours, Quinctius hasn’t
23 appeared at his bail hearing, now what do I do?”’

24 The negative in deliberative questions is typically *non*.

³⁴ Namely a *mendicus*, as the fisherman goes on to suggest (*Rud.* 1305).

³⁵ Note, however, that the negation for a hortatory subjunctive is *ne* whereas the negation in deliberative questions is *non* (see (45)).

³⁶ This may well be read as an echo question; i.e., “what? I’m supposed to write now?”

1 (45) Plaut. *Aul.* 713: *perii, interii, occidi! quo curram? quo non curram?*

2 'I'm done for, ruined, dead! where can I run? where can I not run?'

3 **1.2.2.8 Mixed-type questions**

4 Often questions of two formal types will be combined in a single sentence. Again, this
5 suggests how form and discourse function are not necessarily concomitant. Rather, use is
6 determined by pragmatic considerations of which form is but one.

7 (46) Petron. 10,1: *quid* ego, homo stultissime, facere debui, cum fame morerer? *an*
8 *uidelicet audirem sententias ...?*

9 'what was I supposed to do, you moron, when I was dying of hunger, I suppose I
10 was supposed to go on listening to his sermon?'

11 **1.2.2.9 Questions in participle phrases**

12 **1.2.2.9.1 Questions containing non-absolute participles**

13 (47) Cic. *fin.* 3,37: *quam ... utilitatem ... petentes scire cupimus illa, quae occulta*
14 *nobis sunt ...?*

15 'what advantage do we seek when we desire to know those things which are
16 hidden from us?'

17 **1.2.2.9.2 Questions in ablative absolute phrases**

18 (48) Cic. *Verr.* 2,185: *tu uero quibus rebus gestis, quo hoste superato contionem*
19 *donandi causa aduocare ausus es?*

20 'but you, on the basis of what facts, when what enemy had been overcome, did
21 you dare to call this meeting to make this offer?'

22 **1.2.2.10 Multiple constituents questioned**

23 (49) = (14) Cic. *Rosc. Com.* 7,21: *considera ... quis quem fraudasse dicatur*

24 'think about ... who is said to have cheated whom'

1.2.3 Echo Questions

The term “echo question” is used to label a set of utterances that (1) repeat some segment of the previous discourse more or less recognizably as a repetition or echo, and (2) typically function as a critique or refutation of that previous discourse segment. Like polar questions, echo questions often show no formal morphosyntactic marking qua question. Again, this suggests that Latin had some other, prosodic marking for such questions. Often, but not always, the “echoed” material is presented as a quote, but often it is presented with appropriate formal markings (person, case, tense) of the shift in perspective (focalization).

1.2.3.1 With *-ne*

These are mostly found in early authors like Plautus.

(50) Plaut. *Men.* 162: *sed quid ais? :: egone? id enim quod tu uis*

““what did you say?” :: “me? just what you wanted””

(51) Plaut. *Amph.* 817–818: *quid ego tibi deliqui, si quoi nupta sum tecum fui? :: /*

Tun[e] mecum fueris?

““what did I do wrong if I was with you, my husband?” :: “you were with me?””

1.2.3.2 Without *-ne*

(52) Pers. 1–2: *nemo hercule :: nemo? :: uel duo, uel nemo*

““none, by Hercules” :: “none?” :: “well, either two, or none””

(53) Plaut. *Pseud.* 1226–1227: *saltem Pseudolum mihi dedas :: / Pseudolum ego*

dedam tibi?

““at least you should give me Pseudolus.” :: “I should give you Pseudolus?””

1.2.3.3 With *quid?*

The evaluative element *quid?* (see Section 1.2.1.4 above) often introduces echo questions in Early Latin. Such questions frequently present the material “echoed” as a direct quote, although, again, sometimes this material is presented with the grammatical changes necessary to show the appropriate shift in perspective.

- 1 (54) Plaut. *Amph.* 1021: *ego sum :: quid 'ego sum'?*
 2 “‘it’s me’ :: ‘what do you mean ‘it’s me’?’”
 3 (55) Plaut. *Amph.* 409–410: ... *cur non intro eo in nostram domum? :: / quid? uostram*
 4 *domum? :: ita enim uero*
 5 “‘why don’t I go into our house?’ :: ‘what do you mean? your house?’ :: ‘just
- 6 that’”
 7 (56) Petron. 49,5: (*cocus tristis*) *diceret se oblitum esse exinterare, 'quid, oblitus?'*
 8 *Trimalchio exclamat*
 9 ‘when the sad cook said that he had forgotten to put (the pig) in, “what do you
- 10 mean forgot?” shouts Trimalchio’

11 **1.2.4 Direct questions in *oratio obliqua***

12 The use of either the subjunctive or the infinitive in direct questions in *oratio obliqua*
 13 reflects the uncertain status of the verbal mood in super-subordination in Latin.

- 14 (57) Caes. *Gall.* 1,44,1–8: *Ariouistus ... respondit ... quid sibi uellet?*
 15 ‘Ariovistus answered, “what did he want?”’
 16 (58) Liv. 31,48,6–7: *magna pars senatus ... censebant ... quid tandem praetori*
 17 *faciendum fuisse?*
 18 ‘a great part of the senate was deciding what then should the praetor have done?’

19 **1.3. Indirect questions**

20 Clauses introduced by a matrix verb of asking, speaking, or some mental activity, which
 21 function as a complement of that matrix verb and contain an interrogative pronoun or
 22 adverb, are usually referred to as indirect questions. In practice, this category is ill
 23 distinguished from either the preceding or from the indefinite relative clause (i.e., the
 24 relative clause with no expressed antecedent). The formal distinction between direct and
 25 indirect questions is itself often redundant and so cross-linguistically not always
 26 maintained. This is the case, for example, in English as well as Latin. Thus we can
 27 compare standard English *I want to know who you called* beside nonstandard *I want to*

1 *know who did you call*.³⁷ In Classical Latin, direct and indirect questions are
 2 distinguished by the latter usually having their verb in the subjunctive mood in contexts
 3 where the indicative mood would be expected in similar but nonsubordinated structures.
 4 The use of the indicative in indirect questions is usually ascribed to register. However, in
 5 practice, even such Classical authors as Cicero occasionally show the indicative in such
 6 contexts.

7 (59) Cic. *Att.* 1, 1, 4: *uides ... in quo cursu sumus*³⁸
 8 ‘you see what course are we in’

9 This usage became more common in later Latin.

10 (60) Tert. *apol.* 42: *quomodo infructuosi uidemur ...non scio*
 11 ‘I don’t know why are we considered to be useless’

12 While the subjunctive is regular in Classical Latin, Old Latin and Later Latin admit the
 13 indicative in indirect questions. In Plautus and Terence, there are numerous examples of
 14 the indicative in indirect questions. Classical (Roman) Latin has the subjunctive in most
 15 instances. Where an indicative is found in the Classical language, it is possible to ascribe
 16 the use of verbs in the indicative to parataxis; although, again, due to the lack of
 17 indication in Latin texts of clause-level prosody, the argument is somewhat circular.³⁹
 18 The increasing failure to maintain the subjunctive in indirect questions suggests that the
 19 category, as distinct from that of the direct question, was of minor importance as a
 20 discourse strategy. Its maintenance in Classical Roman Latin, seen in this light, had more
 21 of a sociopolitical display function than any specific discourse function.⁴⁰

22 (61) Cic. *Tusc.* 1,10: *dic, quaeso, num te illa terrent?*
 23 ‘tell me, I beg you, if those things frighten you?’

24 We can, then, distinguish three formal types of indirect questions in Latin: those showing

³⁷ While this might at first glance appear to be a case of parataxis, for many English speakers these utterances appear as a single unit with respect to pitch/stress contour.

³⁸ Shackleton Bailey (1965: 128), after Lambinus, corrects *sumus* of the MS to *simus*.

³⁹ See, for example, Woodcock (1959: 134).

⁴⁰ See (70) in Section 1.3.3.

1 the subjunctive, those showing the indicative, and those with mixed classes of verbs.

2 **1.3.1 Indicative**

3 (62) Plaut. *Curc.* 543: *scire uolo quoi reddidisti*

4 ‘I want to know who you gave it back to’

5 (63) Plaut. *Aul.* 174: *scio quid dictura es*

6 ‘I know what you are going to say’⁴¹

7 (64) Plaut. *Most.* 458–459: *non potest / dici quam indignum facinus fecisti*

8 ‘it is not possible to say how unworthy a deed you have done’

9 (65) Cato *agr.* 6,4: *uineam quo in agro conseri oportet sic obseruato*

10 ‘note thus in what soil it is fitting for a vineyard to be planted’

11 **1.3.2 Subjunctive**

12 (66) Cic. *div.* 1,10: *quid ipse sentiam ... exponam*

13 ‘I will explain what *I* think’

14 **1.3.3 Mixed indicative and subjunctive**

15 (67) Plaut. *Amph.* 17–18: *quoius iussu uenio et quam ob rem uenerim / dicam*

16 ‘I will tell you at whose request I come and for what purpose I have come’

17 As stated above, often there is a confusion of relative and interrogative clause types.

18 (68) Plaut. *Capt.* 206a–b: *scimus nos / nostrum officium quod sit*

19 ‘we know our duty what it is’

20 (69) Petron. 50,7: *ignoscetis mihi quid dixero*

21 ‘please forgive me for what I have said’

22 Latin authors themselves noted this confusion. Thus, in Diomedes’ *Ars Grammatica*,

23 dating from the fourth century CE, we find a distinction between the use in indirect

⁴¹ It is clear in examples like this one and the following that *quid dictura es* is the complement of the matrix verb *scio*, and that *scio* is probably best not read as a separate prosodic unit (i.e., as “I know. What are you going to say?”)

1 questions of the subjunctive mood by those whom he labels as *eruditi* and the indicative
2 by those characterized by their *imperitia*. This distinction correlates well with that
3 indicated by the term register.

4 (70) Diom. *gramm.* I 395: *imperitia lapsi ... dicunt 'nescio quid facis', 'nescio quid*
5 *fecisti': eruditius dicetur 'nescio quid facias', 'nescio quid feceris'*
6 'the untrained say "I don't know what are you doing", (or) "I don't know what did

7 you do": This is said in a more educated register "I don't know what you are
8 doing" (or) "I don't know what you did"'

9 Again, the relatively minor importance from a discourse standpoint is reflected in
10 other cases of confusion of categories in *oratio obliqua*. The contamination of sentences
11 of the type *nescio quid dicam*—wherein the subordinate clause is ambiguous between
12 indirect and indirect deliberative—by those of the type *nescio dicere*, both with the
13 meaning 'I don't know what to say', has led to hybrid sentences of the type with both an
14 interrogative subordinator and a verb in the infinitive.

15 (71) *Vitae patr.* 3,14: *et non habeo quid bibere*
16 'and I don't have anything to drink'

17 (72) *Coripp. Ioh.* 1,273: *nescit quo flectere puppem*
18 'he doesn't know where to turn his ship'⁴²

19 **1.3.4 Num**

20 *Num* is the commonest of the conjunctions for introducing an indirect sentence-question
21 in Classical Latin. *-Ne* is also common, but *nonne* rarely occurs except after the verb
22 *quaero*. The use of *si* to introduce indirect questions seems to have been a feature of more
23 colloquial Latin, but a few examples do appear in literary prose, mainly after the verbs

⁴² See Hofmann & Szantyr (1972, 2: 539); E. Löfstedt (1956, 2: 171 ff.); Norberg (1944: 259); B. Löfstedt (1976: 117–157). Possibly related to this is the late re-emergence of the infinitive used in purpose constructions, especially after verbs of motion like *eo* or *uenio*, and verbs of giving like *(tra)do*. In the case of the infinitive, purpose may have been one of its original uses. This use never completely disappeared (it is common in Early Latin and in the language of the Classical poets, and it re-emerges in Late and especially Medieval Latin).

1 *exspecto, conor, experior, and tempto*; as in Cic. *de Inv.* 2,122: *ambigunt adgnati ... si*
 2 *filius ante quam in tutelam uenerit, mortuus sit* ‘the relatives dispute as to whether the
 3 son died before he came of age’; Liv. 40,49,6: *quaesiuit ... si cum Romanis militare*
 4 *liceret* ‘he asked if it were permissible to perform military service with the Romans’; Ter.
 5 *Haut.* 170: *uisam si domist* ‘I will go see if he is at home’; Caes. *Bell. Gall.* 6,37,4:
 6 *circumfunduntur hostes ... si quem aditum reperire possint* ‘the enemy poured around (to
 7 see) whether they can find any entranceway’.

8 **2. Answers**

9 As we suggested above, there is no single consistent formal feature or set of features that
 10 marks answers as a distinct formal category of sentence. However, functionally, answers
 11 appear as the second of a dyad of utterances and so share certain features in common with
 12 other types of responses. Pragmatically, answers are typically marked by the repetition of
 13 some relevant feature of the preceding utterance or by the presence of some element
 14 which corresponds to the “missing information” sought. However, as questions have
 15 other functions on the level of discourse besides information-seeking, answers can also
 16 have forms which (cor)respond to these other uses. Answers then represent a pragmatic
 17 category and not a formal category, at least as far as Latin is concerned.⁴³ Since answers
 18 are always situated within a discourse, they need not be maximally explicit; therefore for
 19 Latin—and most likely other languages as well, so this is likely a language universal that
 20 is realized in Latin—we note that answers show the potential for a high degree of ellipsis
 21 (see Section 2.1.2 for more detail).⁴⁴ Given the various discourse functions of questions,
 22 answers can be informative, actually providing the information requested (e.g., *Can you*
 23 *hand me that hammer? :: Yes, I can*) or they can be responsive in a variety of other ways
 24 (e.g., *Can you hand me that hammer? :: Go to hell!*). In principle, there are too many
 25 ways to be otherwise responsive so that an exhaustive discussion would not be possible
 26 (though it is a source of humor in Plautine comedy); thus we pay most attention to ways
 27 in which answers are informative. In terms of length, answers can extend anywhere from

⁴³ Again however, Quintilian claims a *pronuntiatio mutata* for utterances that confirm (*indicant*) and deny (*negant*), which likely reflect certain types of answers (see Section 1.1.1 above).

⁴⁴ Cf. especially Sperber and Wilson (1986).

a single word to an entire rather lengthy discourse. The information contained in an answer is also not formally determined. Rather, it is determined pragmatically, usually by the nature of the information sought. Thus the conditions which determine the form and content of some answers will usually be determined by the focal element of the question that elicits it. In a *wh*-question, the *wh*-element being typically focal, an answer which meets the felicity conditions will minimally contain the information which defines that *wh*-element; *what do you want for dinner?* :: *Pizza*. In polar questions, a felicitous answer will minimally define the state of affairs in question as true or not: *do you like pizza?* :: *Yes*. When the question is read as fulfilling some other speech act, then different felicity conditions come into play and so a felicitous answer will take a different form; *can you pass the salt?* :: *Here*. or *shall we begin now?* :: *I don't have my book with me*, and so on.

2.1. Affirmative

2.1.1 Affirmative echo responses

An affirmative response can be made in polar questions by repeating the verb, which may be an Indo-European feature if we read the Celtic “responsive” verb form as reflecting a Proto-Indo-European use of the injunctive.⁴⁵ However, pragmatic conditions on felicity seem always to apply. Note, in the following, how the focal element in the question helps determine the form the response takes.

(73) Plaut. *Trin.* 50: *ualen? ualuisti n'?* :: *ualeo, et ualui rectius*

“‘feeling well? were you feeling well?’” :: “‘I am well, and I’ve been rather well’”

(74) Plaut. *Rud.* 1054: *tuos hic seruost?* :: *meus est*

“‘he’s *your* slave?’” :: “‘he’s *mine*’”

(75) Plaut. *Asin.* 638: *iam dedit argentum?* :: *non dedit*

“‘did he *give* you the money yet?’” :: “‘he *didn’t*’”

⁴⁵ See Watkins (1969) and Joseph (2002b).

2.1.2 Affirmative particles: *etiam*, *ita*, *sic*, *sane*

As stated above, answers do not constitute a formal category unto themselves, but are pragmatically defined. Thus, even though forms such as *ita* can be used as a one-word affirmative answer, ‘Yes’, it is not exclusively an “answer word”, as it can be used in non-answer contexts (e.g., *ita loquitur Caesar* ‘thus speaks Caesar’). This holds for negative response words as well (see Section 2.2).⁴⁶

(76) Ter. *Eun.* 347: *numquis uis? :: etiam, ut actutum aduenias*

“do you want anything?” :: “Yes, that you should come immediately”

(77) Plin. *epist.* 4,13,3: *huic ego “studes?” inquam. respondit “etiam”*

‘I said to him, “are you in school?” He replied, “yes”

(78) Ter. *Andr.* 849: *quid istic tibi negotist? :: mihine? :: ita*

“what business do you have here?” :: “Me?” :: “Yes”

(79) Plaut. *Capt.* 262: *captus est? :: ita*

“was he captured?” :: “Yes”

(80) Ter. *Phorm.* 813: *illa maneat? :: sic*⁴⁷

“is she to stay?” :: “Yes”

(81) Ter. *Eun.* 361: *estne ut fertur forma? :: sane*

“is she as lovely as is reported?” :: “Yes”

2.1.3 Answers with the emphatic particles, including *enimuero*, *uero*, *sane*, *immo*⁴⁸

(82) Plaut. *Amph.* 362: *quid, domum uostram? :: ita enimuero!*

“what! your house?” :: “Yes indeed”

(83) Plaut. *Pseud.* 495: *numquid peccatum est, Simo? :: immo maxime*

“no harm’s been done, has it, Simo?” :: “Actually, a lot”

(84) Cic. *Att.* 9,7,4: *causa igitur non bona est? :: immo optima*

“our cause then, isn’t it a good one?” :: “Actually it’s the best”

⁴⁶ On the importance of sentence connective particles see Rosén (this work, vol. 1).

⁴⁷ Latin *sic*, as a mark of confirmation, is usually taken to be the origin of Romance *si* ‘yes’.

1 **2.2. Negative particles: minime, non ita**

- 2 (85) Cic. *Att.* 8,9,2: *num igitur peccamus?* :: *minime uos quidem*
3 “‘we’re not doing wrong, then, are we?’” :: “‘Well, not *you*, at least’”

4 **2.3. Providing requested information (answers to wh-questions)**

- 6 (86) Plaut. *Rud.* 237: *hem, quis est?* :: *ego Palae[m]st<ra>*
7 “‘e-hem, who is it?’” :: “‘It’s me, Palaestra’”
8 (87) Ter. *Phorm.* 390: *quem dixti?* :: *Stilponem inquam noueras*
9 “‘who did you say?’” “‘I said Stilpones, you know him’”

10 **2.4. Responding to an alternative question**

- 11 (88) Plaut. *Merc.* 903-904: *uidisti[s] an de audito [i]nu<n>tias?* :: *egomet uidi*
12 “‘did you see it or are you repeating something you heard?’” :: “‘I saw it’”

13 **3. Historical developments**

14 **3.1. Developments within Latin itself**

15 As we stated at the beginning, Latin as a language shows relative stability in terms of its
16 syntax across most of its later history. The primary shift, involving the loss of nominal
17 inflection and the development of relatively fixed patterns of word order, which
18 represents one of the major changes as the Latin languages developed into the various
19 early versions of Romance, is not attested within the corpus of written Latin as we have it
20 preserved from the third century BCE even into to the Medieval Latin authors. That is,
21 literary Latin shows a remarkable orthographic, morphological, and syntactic
22 consistency, a consistency whose origins are as likely sociopolitical as reflecting any

⁴⁸ See Melchert (1985) on Hitt. *imma* and Lat. *immo*.

1 diachronic stability in the spoken language.⁴⁹ Within Latin, there are two main
2 developments which can be observed in the syntax of questions, although in neither case
3 is the change ever absolute, nor do these changes seem to reflect any wholesale re-
4 analysis of the language. The first change consists of the replacement, in indirect
5 questions, of the subjunctive found in the Classical Latin of Rome with the indicative
6 mood. On the other hand, there seems to be a fondness, among Classical authors of
7 Rome, such as Cicero, and later Classicizing authors, such as Gellius, for the subjunctive
8 mood in super-subordinate clauses. Thus, while early writers, such as Plautus and
9 Terence, seem to use both moods in indirect questions, in later Latin there is a
10 differentiation between the elite language of the city of Rome and non-Roman Latin,
11 which seems to divide along class lines (see (90) in Section 3.1.2 below). However, it is
12 not the case, within the corpus of attested Latin, that either verbal mood was ever used
13 with perfect consistency in these contexts.

14 The origins of the use of the subjunctive mood in Latin subordination may likely
15 occur prior to the loss of the formal distinction between the subjunctive, optative, and
16 injunctive moods and therefore may not represent a single straightforward syntactic
17 change.⁵⁰ Adding to the complexity of this change, there is the tendency for confusion
18 between indirect questions and indefinite relative clauses in certain contexts. Thus,
19 sentences of the type *scit quem uidet* ‘he recognizes the one he sees’ versus *scit quem*
20 *uideat* ‘he recognizes whomever he sees’ may represent the initial locus for such
21 confusion. Moreover, at all stages of attested Latin, there is a tendency for the
22 subjunctive mood to be used in cases of subordination which reflect generic contexts (cf.
23 the relative clause of characteristic) as well as for potential and other *irrealis* contexts (cf.
24 the relative clause of purpose).

25 The other syntactic change observed involves the interrogative marker *-ne*. This
26 element as a marker of polar questions is found with some regularity in Early Latin

⁴⁹ Compare the case of the fairly stable Standard written English vs. Standard spoken English, which shows a fairly high degree of diachronic and geographical variation.

⁵⁰ We have left aside the problems of ascribing the injunctive mood as a category to any stage in the development of Latin from Proto-Indo-European, as this question lies outside the scope of this chapter; nor is it of particular relevance for the point here.

1 writers, such as Plautus and Terence, although it is by no means obligatory. In Classical
2 writers and in later Classicizing writers, its use is all but obligatory. However, in later and
3 more vernacular writers, its use seems to disappear within the second half of the first
4 century CE. Thus in Persius, polar questions appear both with and without the marker *-ne*
5 with about equal frequency, whereas its use is all but unknown in Petronius.⁵¹ The loss of
6 *-ne* as a marker of questions would suggest that some other marker, such as a distinct
7 interrogative type of phrase-level prosody, has made such morphological marking
8 redundant and thus allowed it to disappear. Cautiously, however, we note that it is often
9 possible for the status of polar questions to be deducible from context alone.⁵²

10 If the loss of *-ne* as a marker of polar questions in Latin does reflect the
11 development of a special interrogative phrase-level prosody, then this would constitute an
12 important syntactic development in the history of Latin. In this case, it is tempting to read
13 Quintilian's statement: *eadem uerba mutata pronuntiatione ... interrogant* (*inst.* 11,3,176
14 = (5)) as proof of such a state for Latin of the early second century CE. However,
15 Quintilian's claim is problematic in this regard (see Section 1.1.1), and we also have no
16 evidence for distinctions in phrase-level prosody outside of Quintilian in any stage of
17 attested Latin, nor for what distinction in prosody Quintilian is hinting at (such as tone,
18 speed of delivery, stress, etc.). Thus the question must at present remain tantalizingly
19 unanswered.

20 As far as Latin is concerned (but not Italic, due to questions in Sabellic
21 inscriptions), the relevant time span for studying questions is from the beginning of Old
22 Latin literature (ca. 250 BCE) to the end of Latin as we know it, the beginning of the

⁵¹ When we find *-ne* in Petronius, it is used only in verse and so seems to represent a portrayal of Classicizing Latin writers like Gellius. The suggestion here is that *-ne* was being lost from the vernacular, that is, outside the circle of elite Roman speech; however, literary evidence as evidence for what was happening in the vernacular is problematic at best, since of writers such as Petronius it can be said that (1) they were writing for that very elite audience, and (2) their motives were aesthetic and/or sociopolitical, not scientific; Petronius was not an ethnolinguist any more than Tacitus was an anthropologist.

⁵² Alan Kim (pers. comm.) has suggested that this may also be the case for Japanese and Korean, as neither language seems to have any morphosyntactic or prosodic marking specifically for polar questions. English statements as in: *I suppose you're going too* with non-interrogative tone contour can still often have an interrogative function, on part determined by pragmatic constraints on the use of *suppose*.

1 Romance languages. And any differences that do seem to exist are largely a matter of
2 detail, often involving lexical replacement (e.g., *si* for *num* in indirect questions) and the
3 like, and not a matter of differences in gross typological aspects of the phenomenon. The
4 same, moreover, seems to hold for answers.

5 **3.1.1 *Num* replaced by *numquid* in colloquialized varieties**

6 (89) Plaut. *Pseud.* 1330: *numquid iratus es ...?*
7 “‘are you angry?’”

8 **3.1.2 *Si* used for *num* in indirect questions**

9 In later writers, such as the fourth-century-CE author of the *Itinerarium Egeria*, *si* is often
10 found in place of the earlier standard *num* in introducing indirect polar questions.⁵³

11 (90) *Itin. Eger.* 45,3: *singulariter interrogat episcopus uicinos eius, qui intrauit dicens:*
12 *si bonae uitae est hic, si parentibus deferet, si ebriacus non est aut uanus?*⁵⁴
13 ‘the bishop, his neighbor, asks each one who comes in saying if this one is leading
14 a good life? if he respects his parents? if he isn’t drunk or vain?’

15 **3.2. Comparative evidence within Italic: Toward Proto-Italic** 16 **questions and answers**

17 There are some forms around Italic (at least Sabellic, maybe Faliscan) that pertain to the
18 question of questions, such as possibly related indefinite formations with *p-* from **k^w*-
19 that might give some clues as to the Pre-Latin/Italic situation. However, due to the state
20 of the corpus, these are difficult to interpret. Our reasoning here is that there appears to be
21 some nexus of usage minimally involving PIE **k^w*- in Latin for interrogatives and
22 indefinites (e.g., *quis* as a Latin interrogative beside **pis** in Oscan, *quisquis* as an
23 indefinite in Latin next to **pís.pís** in Oscan),⁵⁵ and there are lots of indefinites (more so

⁵³ Cf. the use by many English speakers of *if* for *whether* in similar contexts.

⁵⁴ Prinz (1960).

⁵⁵ See Untermann (2000: 561). Note, however, that the form is found cut into a wall in Pompeii with no other accompanying text.

1 than question uses) in Oscan and Umbrian, so we might be able to get a glimpse of what
 2 the Italic situation with interrogatives was by inference, by making some comparisons
 3 with indefinites around Italic.

4 **3.2.1 Evidence from Oscan and Umbrian**

5 While the corpus is small and lacks the kinds of texts which provided the most fruitful
 6 examples of questions from Latin (forensic texts, dramas, and the ancient novel), there
 7 are definitely some questions to be found in the Oscan and Umbrian corpus.

8 **3.2.1.1 Direct questions**

9 Within the corpus of Oscan and Umbrian, the only clear examples of questions seem to
 10 be constituent questions. Thus Sabellic does not offer any evidence for the origins of
 11 polar *-ne* outside of Latin. The one possible exception seems to be the use of Umbr. **sve**
 12 ‘if’ in Va 23–24 (see (95) below) to introduce an indirect polar question ‘whether it has
 13 been arranged properly’.

14 (91) Osc. Rix *ST* Cp 41: **per̄k̄ium : | p̄úieh s̄úm**
 15 gen.pl. gen.sg. 1st sg.pres.
 16 *nomen* interrog.adj. cop.

17 “‘whose am I? (I belong to) the Perkii’”⁵⁶

18 (92) Osc. Rix *ST* Sa 31: **pis : tiú : | íiv : kúru: |**
 19 nom.sg. nom.sg. nom.sg. nom.sg.
 20 interrog. PN 2nd PN 1st PN? ‘tomb’

21 **púiu : | baíteis | aadiieís : ayfineís**⁵⁷
 22 gen.sg. gen.sg. gen.sg. gen.sg.
 23 interrog.adj. *praenomen* *nomen* *cognomen*

⁵⁶ From Capua. Read line 2 before line 1; Rix (2002).

⁵⁷ From Saepinum. Rix (1996). Vetter (1953: 113 no. 161) reads **aífineís** at the end of line 4. The form **íiv** is as yet unidentified; however, in this context, where we expect the answer to a question seeking the identification of an element indexed by the second person pronoun **tiú**, an answer in the form of *I am (an) X* is not an unreasonable speculation.

1 “‘who (are) you? (I am) a tombstone. whose? (I am) of Baitus A dius Aefinus’”

2 (93) P-Umb. Rix *ST* Um 2: **faletne** | **poíeí** **şkerfs** | **skerfs** | **heruseí**⁵⁸

3 voc. dat.sg. nom.sg. gen.sg

4 *praenomen* interrog. adj. ptcp.

5 “‘O Falendus, for whom (is) the writing? the writing (is) for the one who has
6 asked’”

7 Here, the context, in the form of the answer ‘the writing is for the one who asked’,
8 identifies **poíeí** specifically as an interrogative pronoun.

9 3.2.1.2 Indirect questions

10 As in Latin, indirect questions are found in Umbrian with both the subjunctive and
11 indicative moods.

12 3.2.1.2.1 Indicative

13 (94) Umb. Va 7–8: **sakreu** : **perakneu** : **upetu** : **revestu** **puře** :

14 acc.pl. acc.pl. 3rd sing.pr. 3rd sing.pr. acc.sing.

15 neut. imper. imper. neut.

16 ‘sacred’ interrog.adj.

17 **teřte** : **eru** : **emantur** : **herte**⁵⁹

18 3rd sing.pr. gen.pl. 3rd sing.subj. 3rd sing.pr.

19 pass.indic dem PN pass. impersonal pass.

20 ‘oportet’

21 ‘let him select *perakneu* victims, and see, whatever is given, whether it is fitting
22 that (some) of them should be accepted’

⁵⁸ Rix (2002). Rix (1996) reads **heruses**.

⁵⁹ Rix (2002) *ST* Um 1, Va 7–8, also Vetter (1953: 220).

1 3.2.1.2.2 Subjunctive

- 2 (95) Umb. Va 23–24: **ehvelklu : feia : fratreks : | ute kvestur : sve : rehte :**
3 acc.sg. 3rd sg. nom.sg. conj ‘*quaestor*’ ‘*si*’ adv.
4 neut. subj.
5 **kuratu : si**⁶⁰
6 perf.pass. 3rd sg.
7 part. subj.
8 cop.
9 ‘let a member of the brotherhood make a vote, or the *quaestor*, as to whether it
10 has been arranged properly’
- 11 (96) Umb. Vb 1–3: **ehvelklu feia fratreks ute kvestur panta : muta : | ařferture : si**⁶¹
12 acc.pl acc.pl. dat.sg. 3rd sg.
13 interrog. subj.
14 ‘let a member of the brotherhood make a vote, or the *quaestor*, as to how great a fine
15 shall be for the priest’

16 3.2.2 Other Sabellic evidence

17 In general, outside of Oscan and Umbrian, Sabellic presents a problem. The corpus is
18 extremely limited and runs the gamut from difficult to impossible to interpret. Within
19 Sabellic, besides what we find in the Oscan-Umbrian, there *may* be some forms in South
20 Picene that may involve (pending interpretation) interrogative or, given the context, more
21 likely indefinite forms—at the very least, they have *p* forms that suggest PIE **k^w*,
22 including **pid** (TE 5), **pim**, and **poi** (CH 1). However, these texts are still obscure, and the
23 precise identification of the above forms is still *sub judice*.⁶²

⁶⁰ Rix (2002) ST Um 1, Va 23–24, also Vetter (1953: 221).

⁶¹ Rix (2002) ST Um 1, Vb 1–3, also Vetter (1953: 221).

⁶² Rix (2002) ST TE 5: **oidom : safinús : estuf : eelsít : tíom : po** ←
vaisis : pidaitúpas : fitiasom : múfqlúm →
me{n}fistrúí : nemúnei : praistaít : panivú : meitims : saf ←
inas : tútas : trebegies : titúí : praistaklasa : posmúi →

3.2.3 Remarks on the Proto-Indo-European situation to the extent it can be reconstructed with any confidence

Given the state of the evidence, reconstructing specific syntactic features for Proto-Indo-European is risky at best. Often all we can hope to do is observe the behavior of a few select morphemes in what amounts to little more than *applied historical morphology*. In the realm of question syntax, our observations here are thus limited to the reconstruction of a few morphosyntactic features; and even in the case of these, what we say amounts to little more than speculation.

3.2.3.1 PIE **mē*

Indic, Greek, and Albanian show the reflex of a particle **mē* (Ved. *mā*·; Gk. μή, Alb. *mos*) in certain (dubitative) questions.⁶³ The daughter reflexes of PIE **mē*, however, have other uses as well (prohibitions especially), and it is not clear that any dubitative uses do not simply amount to cases of a pragmatically driven extension of those other uses in those daughter languages. That is, dubitative *mā*, μή, and *mos* are pragmatic and not historical. Latin, however, shows no traces of PIE **mē* at least overtly, *ne* substituting in its place. If PIE **mē* were originally dubitative in use, the Latin situation appears to be a case of substitution, with the loss of the morpheme **mē* in some stage of the development from PIE into Latin.⁶⁴

3.2.3.2 PIE **ne*

It has also been suggested that the Latin polar question marker *-ne* is in some way derived from a PIE negative **ne*.⁶⁵ The loss of the negative force of *-ne* in Latin polar questions

ST CH 1: (A) *deiktam :h[-]lpas :pim oftorim: esmen adstaeoms: upeke[- : -]orom: iorkes: iepeten: esmen ekú sim: raeliom: rufra sim:poi ouéfs: iokipedu: pdufem: ok[r]jikam :enet: bie: (B) múreis: maróúm: -elíúm uelaimes: staties: qora: kduíú.*

⁶³ See Joseph (2002a).

⁶⁴ See Joseph (2002a). Italic shows no obvious traces of any reflex of PIE **mē*. Note that reflexes of a PIE negation **n(e)* have a fairly wide currency in Latin.

⁶⁵ See Ernout & Meillet (1964: 443–444).

1 may well have a parallel in the development of the Vedic comparative particle *ná*.⁶⁶ The
 2 Vedic particle *ná*, which is also postpositive and is used in comparative constructions,
 3 has been related etymologically to a Proto-Indo-European negative particle **ne*. If this
 4 etymology is correct, then like Latin *-ne*, the Vedic form *ná* has (also?) lost its original
 5 negative force and both particles have become postpositive.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Vedic
 6 *ná* exhibits greater flexibility in terms of its position within the clause and generally does
 7 not have clause-level domain, but phrase-level.

8 **3.2.3.3 Interrogative and relative and pronouns, PIE **kʷ***

9 Latin maintains a partial distinction between relative pronouns (and adjectives) on the
 10 one hand and interrogative/indefinite pronouns on the other.⁶⁸ In both cases, these
 11 elements seem to reflect a Proto-Indo-European pronominal stem **kʷi-/kʷe-/kʷo-*. It is not
 12 clear that Proto-Indo-European had an inherited morphological class of relative pronouns,
 13 as the daughter languages do not agree formally. Greek and Indic forms reflect a stem in
 14 **ye/o-*; the Germanic languages employ forms of an old Proto-Indo-European suppletive
 15 demonstrative pronoun in **so, seH, to*. However, the Greek of Homer and Herodotus
 16 (both primarily Ionic) also uses the reflex of this pronoun as both a demonstrative and a
 17 relative pronoun (besides forms of the relative built on the Proto-Indo-European stem
 18 **yo-*), whereas the Germanic languages came in historical times to employ forms of the
 19 interrogative pronoun as a relative (cf. Eng. *who, which*; Ger. *wer, was*) to varying
 20 degrees.⁶⁹ Italic seems to agree with Anatolian and Tocharian in employing forms of the
 21 interrogative pronoun as a relative.⁷⁰ Latin makes a formal distinction in the singular non-

⁶⁶ See Vine (1978).

⁶⁷ See Macdonell (1916: 236). Vedic *ná*, unlike Latin *-ne*, is accented in the oldest texts.

⁶⁸ These two categories, relative and interrogative/indefinite, are most clearly distinct in the nominative and accusative cases of the singular: interrogative *quis, quis, quid, quem, quem, quid* as opposed to relative *qui, quae, quod, quem, quam, quod*. In Classical Latin, this distinction is not maintained in the other cases or in the plural.

⁶⁹ German *der, das* beside *wer, was*; English *that* beside *who, which*; OE *(se)ðe*.

⁷⁰ See Freidrich ([1960] 1975) and Krause and Thomas (1960) respectively. The usual claim that Proto-Indo-European was originally paratactic and only developed more complex hypotactic constructions in the daughter languages relies on an evolutionary/teleological understanding of language development not

oblique cases between an interrogative/indefinite pronoun on the one hand and an adjective on the other, thus *quis, quid* beside *qui, quae, quod*. However, this distinction is incomplete, being lost in the other cases; and throughout the plural, Latin agrees with Greek, Anatolian, and Tocharian in that the indefinite pronoun differs from the interrogative pronoun in being atonic. In Italic, Anatolian, and Tocharian, tonic indefinite pronouns, or indefinite relative pronouns, are formed by placing the atonic indefinite pronoun after the interrogative pronoun: Lat. *quisquis*,⁷¹ Osc. **pís.pís**, Hitt. *kwis kwis*, etc. In these cases, both elements are inflected separately, as in *cuiuscuius*, etc. In Greek, this formation is created by attaching the forms of the atonic indefinite pronoun to either the uninflected relative stem *ho-*, as in ὅτου, ὅτινι, etc., or to the relative pronoun itself, in which case both elements are inflected, as in οὗτινος, ὅτινι, etc.⁷² These last parallels do not really amount to any real deep syntactic reconstruction per se, so much as reflecting how atonic elements may have worked prosodically, namely, Wackernagel's Law, and how interrogative and indefinite pronouns worked lexically.⁷³

3.2.3.4 *Quid* 'why'

From a functional standpoint, Latin uses accusative case forms of the neuter interrogative pronoun *quid* as 'why?' (as well as 'what'). This use may be an inheritance from Proto-Indo-European, since Greek uses τί for both 'why' and 'what', and Sanskrit uses *kim* in questions for 'why' and 'what' as well. Note also that the particle use of *quid?* in evaluative questions (e.g., (8) above, etc.) may have a parallel in the Old English use of the interjection *hwæt*.⁷⁴

supported here.

⁷¹ But also *ali-quis, ne quis, si quis*, etc.

⁷² See Sihler (1995: 384–401 §§ 374–385) for a detailed discussion of these points of morphology. A reflection of this in Sanskrit may lie behind indefinite uses of the pronoun *ka* as in RV 1,120,8 *ma: ká smai dhā tam abhi amitrine nah* 'don't hand us over to any enemy'. Old Latin may have *i*-stem forms of the relative (or indefinite) here, which will have some bearing on the differentiation issue (see Sihler 1995).

⁷³ On the former, see Hale (1987). It is not clear that Wackernagel's Law reflects syntactic processes so much as prosodic ones; it does not operate exclusively on the clause level or the phrase level but respects prosodic domains which themselves may reflect syntactic units like clauses or phrases.

⁷⁴ CF. Beowulf, line 1: *hwæt we gardenas || in geordagum* 'look, we (of the) Spearðanes, in days of old'.

4. Conclusion

In discussing the historical development of question syntax in Latin, two problems have confronted us. First, from the evidentiary standpoint, Latin is a written and not a spoken language; therefore we have no access to any information, such as phrase-level prosody, not recorded orthographically. While punctuation may offer some help, ancient, read *contemporary*, texts were generally not punctuated, and medieval manuscripts are not necessarily trustworthy, as the scribes who copied them were not native speakers of Latin. Second, Latin, as a literary language (the only language, outside of a few graffiti, preserved), shows a remarkable diachronic stability that is probably more sociopolitical than linguistic. This leaves us with precious little evidence for what was going on “on the ground”, so to speak. Despite these limitations, we have attempted to say some things about the slight changes that did take place within the corpus of written Latin. The most significant change, as indicated by the loss of the polar marker *-ne*, seems to have been a shift in importance for marking such questions away from morphosyntactic markers to some other kind of indication. Quintilian’s statements in Book 3 of the *Institutiones* seems to suggest some kind of interrogative phrase level prosody like the pitch contours of English. However intriguing the evidence of Quintilian is, it does not support any conclusive answer. And so this question about Latin questions must be allowed to linger tantalizingly unanswered.

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