

RULES OF SCANSION

Dactylic Hexameter

- most common meter in Latin poetry
- commonly employed by both Romans and Greeks in epic poetry
 - e.g. *Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, Metamorphoses*
- hexameter = six “feet” + dactylic = combination of beats per foot
 - compare “iambic pentameter” (most common meter in English poetry)
 - first five either dactyl (long-short-short) or spondee (long-long)
 - although fifth foot is almost always a dactyl
 - last foot always treated as spondee

Elision

- process by which two syllables are contracted into one (can not = can't)
- if word ends in vowel or m and next word begins with vowel or h:
 - vowel/m vowel/h---
 - the end of the first word is contracted into the beginning of the second
 - e.g. ...multum ille... = mult'ille

Rules of Scansion

1. perform elision where possible
2. mark sixth foot (last two syllables) as spondee
3. mark fifth foot as dactyl
4. mark first syllable **long**
5. mark diphthongs (two vowels in a single syllable) **long**
6. mark vowel followed by two separated consonants or by j, x or z **long**
 - BUT** h never helps to make a syllable long
 - and
 - vowel followed by pbtcdg + lr could be **long or short**
7. mark following endings **long**:

1 st Decl:	a ae ae ārum ae īs am ās ā īs	3rd Decl:	--- ēs , a, ia is um, ium ī ibus em īs, ēs , a, ia e, ī ibus
2 nd Decl(M):	us ī ī ōrum ō īs um ōs ō īs	4th Decl:	us, ū ūs , ua ūs uum uī, ū ibus um, ū ūs , ua ū ibus
2 nd Decl(N):	um a ī ōrum ō īs um a ō īs	5th Decl:	ēs ēs eī ērum eī ēbus em ēs ē ēbus