



Syllable and Segment in Latin (Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics)

Ranjan Sen

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Syllable and Segment in Latin offers new and detailed analyses of five long-standing problems in Latin historical phonology. In so doing, it clarifies the relative roles of synchronic phonological structure and phonetics in guiding sound change. While the phenomena can predominantly be explained by a reductionist view of diachronic phonology, claiming that demands of speech production and perception alone motivate and constrain historical development, the author shows that synchronic structure played the pivotal role of governing significant (but not immediately apparent) categorical and gradient surface variants, and that some phonetically explicable developments were in fact initiated and constrained by structural analogy.

Ranjan Sen considers examines clear and dark /l/; inverse compensatory lengthening; syllabification before stop + liquid in vowel reduction; vocalic epenthesis in stop + /l/; and consonantal assimilations. He ascertains the phonological conditions for each phenomenon, reconstructs the motivations for the changes, and develops a methodology for the appropriate use of evidence from non-current languages to evaluate theories of diachronic phonology. He evaluates the likely phonetic and phonological influences by investigating studies across languages, establishing a secure evidence base through detailed philological examination, and reconstructing the phonetics - through both general principles and pertinent experimental studies - and the relevant phonological structure of the language.

The book will appeal to graduate students and researchers in historical linguistics, phonology, Classical philology, and Indo-European linguistics.

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