

The Variation in the Reduction of the Diphthong *au* from Latin to Portuguese

Leici Landherr MOREIRA¹

Evellyne Patricia Figueiredo de Sousa COSTA²

¹ Master's and Doctoral Student in Linguistics at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria - UFSM. Professor at Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade - AMF. Contact: leicimoreira@hotmail.com

² PhD in Linguistic Theory and Analysis at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul - PUCRS. Associate Professor at the Department of Classics and Linguistics at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria - UFSM. Contact: evellyne.costa@gmail.com

Abstract:

This work intends to discuss the variation of the reduction phenomenon of the primary diphthong *au* from Latin to Portuguese. We believe that, since past synchronies, it is possible to identify linguistic and socio-historic motivations that can explain the occurrence of the phenomenon that persists modernly as a mark of orality. With the theoretical support of Historical Sociolinguistics, we examined studies that seek an explanation inside diachrony to the phenomenon of the *au* diphthong reduction. We verified that this phenomenon already occurred orally in the less cultured Latin as proven by the sources from vulgar Latin, however, it has not necessarily evolved to changes in the romance languages. Due to the preservation of the *au* diphthong in the written register of cultured Latin, the phenomenon realizes itself again in the transition to the romance languages and continues to be represented as a variant in medieval Portuguese and eighteenth-century Portuguese *corpora* in Brazil. The socio-historical motivation points towards a less careful speech as an indication of the social status of the speaker/writer. The linguistic motivation is related to the conditioning environment of the phenomenon of the *au* diphthong reduction in front of occlusive consonants and with /S/ complex syllables, according to Oliveira (2008).

Keywords:

Diachronic variation. Diphthong. Monophthongization.

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INTRODUCTION

To look into the past is of absolute importance to explain the behavior of modern languages and, because of that, written testimony is one of the sources for research that are most important to acquire knowledge of the language's history. To the study of variation and linguistic change, beyond the explanation of phenomena that are still present nowadays, the written sources play an essential role, as demonstrated by researchers such as Conde Silvestre (2007). In fact, in past synchronies, without technological tools such as the recorder, the metaphor of "hearing the inaudible"³ is the challenge of the researcher in works of diachronic change and variation through the analysis of inscriptions, manuscripts or books.

In this perspective, this work proposes to discuss the phenomenon of reduction of the primary diphthong *au* from Latin into Portuguese⁴. The reduction of the diphthong, also called monophthongization, is the phonological phenomenon in which the diphthong changes to being produced by a single vowel. We present here some reading possibilities in a diachronic perspective aiming to show how this phenomenon already occurred, orally, in less cultured Latin as proven by the sources of vulgar Latin, not necessarily evolving to a change in the romance languages. Considering that there is the preservation of the *au* diphthong in the written register of the cultured norm, the reduction phenomenon realizes itself in the transition to the romance languages and continues to be represented as a variant in medieval Portuguese and nineteenth century Portuguese *corpora* in Brazil. With the theoretical support of Historic Sociolinguistics, we examine throughout this work studies that seek a diachronic explanation to the phenomenon of the *au* diphthong reduction. We intend, therefore, since past synchronies, to identify linguistic and socio-historical motivations that can explain the occurrence of the phenomenon that persist today as a mark of orality.

In this article, we present, in section 1, the variation under a diachronic point of view, parting from the theoretical referential of Historical Sociolinguistics; in section 2, we present a panorama about the phenomenon of diphthong reduction from classical Latin to vulgar Latin, as well as a specific analysis of the *au* diphthong reduction as a social and linguistic phenomenon; in section 3, we examine especially the linguistic motivations to the occurrence of the variation of the phenomenon of the *au* diphthong reduction from Latin into Portuguese, considering also the social motivation that persist since vulgar Latin; finally, we conclude with the final considerations.

1. LINGUISTIC CHANGE AND VARIATION IN A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, Historical Sociolinguistics has highlighted itself as a theoretical-methodological support for works about change and variation in language diachrony⁵. Worrying about the description and explanation of the change/variation phenomenon by the correlation between social and linguistic factor present in ancient

³ In the original "hearing the inaudible" (LASS, 1997).

⁴ Primary diphthongs come directly from classical Latin, while secondary diphthongs form through syncopation (*malu* > *mau*), vocalization of consonant groups (*absentia* > *ausência*), metathesis (*primariu* > *primeiro*) and epenthesis (*arena* > *área* > *areia*) (QUEDNAU, 2005).

⁵ About the works developed in Brazil, see "Os caminhos e descaminhos da Sociolinguística Histórica no Brasil" (SOUZA; SILVA, 2020).

written registers (CONDE SILVESTRE, 2007), the theory is based on the foundational works of Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (2006) and Romaine (1982). Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (2006) propose the study of linguistic change allied with variation parting from the observation and description of ordained heterogeneity of language. For such, they propose a model that takes into consideration the variable use of language and its social and stylistic determinants allowing for an understanding of variation as part of the sociolinguistic competence of the speaker and speaking community. Variation becomes, then, constitutive of linguistic change, since every change implies variability or heterogeneity in linguistic structure (WHEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG, 2006, p. 125). In fact, this theoretical model of investigation of the linguistic change through the interrelation between linguistic and social variables is what guides, in turn, the work of *Socio-Historical Linguistics: Its Status and Methodology* (ROMAINE, 1982). The linguist's proposal consisted on the use of methods of variationist analysis to examine processes of change and variation of linguistic phenomenon in ancient texts. Since then, the theory has developed and has had its empirical foundation and work methodology validated by the international linguistics community (CONDE SILVESTRE, 2007, p. 9).

From a methodological point of view, according to Conde Silvestre (2007), there are three basic principles to the development of Historical Sociolinguistics: reconstruction of the historical sources, reconstruction of the social context and the *principle of uniformitarianism*. Such principles guide this work insofar as the consideration of the diphthong reduction phenomenon in past synchronies occur through the exam of inscriptions and written testimonies that survived by chance in museums and public or private historical archives, requiring us “to make the best use of data considered to be bad”, as stated by Labov (1999, p. 11). Besides that, it is also a point of discussion the reconstruction of society, for example, about the social stratum, in which the cases of diphthong reduction occur, allowing the phenomenon to become representative as a mark of orality. In the same way, we emphasize the *principle of uniformitarianism* (LABOV, 1972), the mechanism that operate to produce changes in the past could be observed on changes in the present.

In the real of Historical Sociolinguistics, Conde Silvestre (2007) understands such principle as a pendular movement, because the behavior of languages in the present would allow to observe and explain the change throughout its history, whereas the projection of the past onto the present would allow for the investigation about the historical circumstances of change which, in turn, could help in the understanding of the change that is happening. It is, therefore, this pendular movement that guides the discussions and analysis about the variation in the *au* diphthong reduction process from Latin to Portuguese. Because of that, we intend to, in the coming sections, observe the socio-historical and linguistic mechanisms (or factors) that motivated the *au* diphthong reduction, mainly, from classical Latin into vulgar Latin, followed by from vulgar Latin into the romance languages, especially the Portuguese Language.

2. THE DIPHTHONG REDUCTION FROM CLASSICAL LATIN INTO VULGAR LATIN

To speak about the diphthongs in classical Latin and vulgar Latin it is firstly necessary to make a brief exposition on the factor of distinction between these two varieties. It is known, through the historical-comparative method that the romance languages come from Latin, specifically from vulgar Latin. From the point of view of internal history, according to Faria (1955), the history of the Latin language, which belongs to the family of the primitive Indo-European, can be traced since the pre-historic period (11th? Cent. – 7th? Cent.), through the Proto-historic period (7th? – 240 BC), the Archaic Latin period (240 BC-81 BC), the Classical Latin period (81 BC – 17 AD) until the Post-classical Latin period (17 AD – 5th Cent.), which includes a pre-romance phase between the 3rd and 6th centuries. However, this same history can also be told from an external (socio-historical) point of view based on the conquests, expansion and domination of the Roman Empire. These movements open space to the occurrence of diaphasic, diastratic and diatopic variations in the spoken language in different conquered territories, considering that Latin influenced and was influenced by many other languages. Because of that, to speak about the Latin language under a perspective of change, it is necessary to establish as a parting point the fact that, originally, Latin was the language of peasants and shepherds, a dialect of Rome, limited to the margin of the Tiber River, this variation of Latin was named vulgar Latin (BASSETTO, 2013, p. 85).

Coutinho (1938, p. 36) defines vulgar Latin, called *sermo vulgaris*, *plebeius* or *rusticus* by the grammarians, as a modality of the uncultured and illiterate class of Rome, whereas the classic modality, named *sermo urbanus*, *eruditus* or *perpolitus* referenced the renowned writing of Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, Horace and Ovid. In this way, the distinction between classical Latin and vulgar Latin is not chronological but rather social, and because of that they coexisted in the same historical period. Ilari (1999, p. 58), for example, affirms that vulgar Latin accounted for the variety effectively spoken in Rome in the same period in which classical Latin was in the service of the creation of an artificial and aristocratic literature with a heyday in the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire.

Bassetto (2013) evidences this social difference when classifying the varieties of Latin based on the concept of linguistic norm. According to the author, after the first conquests, due to the increase in the city's population, and around the 4th century with the rising cultural refinement of the higher classes, the differences between social classes grew in such a way that they echoed in the language. Because of that, Bassetto (2013, p. 89) proposes, then, two primary linguistic norms: the *sermo urbanus* and the *sermo plebeius*. While the last corresponded to the language of the uncultured masses, the first referred to the language of the more cultured social stratum. The *sermo urbanus*, language spoken by the cultured classes of Rome, received artistic and stylistic refinement in the literary level, reverting itself to the *sermo classicus* or *literarius* of Cicero's prose and Virgil, Horace and Ovid's verse. In the *sermo plebeius* norm are included the *sermo rusticus* of the peasants and shepherds, the *sermo castrenses* of the military and the *sermo peregrinum* of foreigners in general. These varieties receive, today, the designation of vulgar Latin.

Despite the designations of the varieties of Latin not being a peaceful point between the researchers, it seems that the principle of distinction is the same, that is, the varieties of the Latin language manifest in different forms in face of a greater or lesser degree of literacy and/or social condition of the speaker/writer. Then, if the process of the *au* diphthong reduction occurs initially from classical Latin to the vulgar Latin, as attested by the researchers of the language such as Faria (1955), Ilari (1999), Bianchet (2003), Quednau (2005), the first point of our discussion refers to the social motivation of the process of diphthong reduction from classical Latin into vulgar Latin.

According to Faria (1955, p. 58), classical Latin presented the diphthongs *ae*, *au*, *oe*, *eu* and *ui*, however, only the *ae* and *au* diphthong were frequent; the *oe* diphthong was rare and the *eu* and *ui* diphthongs were shown to be exceptional. The roman grammarians, such as Servius and Pompeius, mentioned *ae*, *oe*, *au* and *eu*, whereas Diomedes included the *ui* diphthong and Cledonius and Mallius Theodorus added yet the *ei* diphthong. (HUSBAND, 1910, p. 19-20). Faria (1955) characterizes each of these diphthongs, verifying the degree of occurrence in classical Latin: (i) in the *ae* diphthong, the *a* and the *e* sounded distinct, according to Latin grammarians, being sometimes spelled in the archaic form *ai* in latin inscriptions; (ii) the *au* diphthong, also pronounced as a true diphthong, was employed only at the beginning of words; (iii) appearing in Greek words that were introduced to Latin, the *oe* diphthong was used to transcribe the Greek diphthong *oi*; (iv) the *eu* and *ui* diphthongs, exceptionally rare, occurred in proper names that came from the Greek, such as *Euripides*, and in the interjection *hui*.

In vulgar Latin, the *ae*, *au* and *oe* diphthongs presented the tendency to be reduced to simple vowels (ILARI, 1999; QUEDNAU, 2005; VÄÄNÄNEN, 1968). Considered by the romans as a rusticism, and therefore, condemned by the grammarians, above all Varro⁶. The pronunciation of *ae*, *au* and *oe* as [ɛ], [o] and [e], respectively was frequent in words such as *caelu* > [ɛ]lu, *tauru* > t[ow]ro/t[o]ro, *poena* > p[e]na (FARIA, 1955; QUEDNAU, 2005). Other examples of reduction are attested by the sources from vulgar Latin.

Ilari (1999) proposes a typology for these sources, covering texts that oppose intentionally two forms of Latin (classical and vulgar), such as the *Appendix Probi*; works in which the vulgar Latin permeates partially, such as the *Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta*, from the monk Egeria, and *Satyricon* from Petronius, and the Latin

⁶ According to Ilari (1999, p. 66), masters of rhetoric and grammatians left dispersed observations about the “mistakes” committed by the uncultured. Varro, for example, is opposed to the current pronunciation in Rome and the pronunciation of the rural areas of the Lazio, especially concerning the *ae* diphthong reduction in “*Latia rure edus quod in urbe haedus*” (our highlight).

inscriptions that are presented in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Basseto (2013) describes systematically the following sources: popular inscriptions (parietal inscription, *tabellae defixionum*, tomb inscriptions, ancient papyri, registers of mistakes committed by less cultured people and constructions of popular use by the grammarians and masters of rhetoric since Appius (3rd century BC), Varro, Cicero, Quintilian, Donatus until Priscian (6th century AD), theoretical treaties, peregrination reports, late Latin texts such as *Satyricon*, *Testamentum Porcelli*, the Albertini Tablets, in addition to Christian texts and glossaries. Let us see then, for illustration purposes, the occurrence of diphthong reduction in the *Appendix Probi*, in some inscriptions and in the literary work *Satyricon*.

The *Appendix Probi* is a compilation of 227 variations in the writing of words according to the classical and literary form of Latin, opposing them with the register of the less cultured spoken variety. According to Araujo (2003), the document dates, probably, from the 3rd century BC, written by an anonymous author, receiving the name *Probi* because the source was annexed to a text written by the grammarian Valerius Probus, who lived in the 1st century AD. In the list, the author proposes a model of correct writing in Latin, aiming to preserve the tradition forms, opposing them to the variations, thus, the first word corresponds to the classical literary Latin, while the second word refers to the variation, that is, to the form produced in the spoken, less cultured, variety of the language. The reduction of the diphthong *ae* > *i*⁷, *au* > *o*, *ae* > *e* and *eu* > *o* occurs in⁸:

Chart 1 - Diphthong reduction examples in *Appendix Probi*.

22 aquaeductus non aquiductus
83 auris non oricla
159 terraemotus non terrimotium
184 c[a]lebs non celeps
190 [h]ermeneumata non erminomata

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

All the Latin inscriptions are present in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Among them we highlight the parietal inscriptions, the *defixionum tabellae* and the tomb inscriptions. The parietal inscriptions, also known as *graffiti*, were engraved with daggers on walls and monuments. Despite the official type containing fixed forms, there are popular inscriptions that expressed the less cultured classes' current language. The *defixionum tabellae*, known as curse tablets, were popular-originated texts cursing enemies engraved in metal, stone or terracotta, written in a less careful language than official inscriptions, manifesting a greater number of vulgarisms. The tomb inscriptions, in turn, had a more careful language, closer to a literary norm, however, in a later time, they presented characteristics of vulgar Latin (BASSETTO, 2013; ILARI, 1999).

Väänänen (1968) highlights the occurrences of the diphthong reduction documented in the parietal inscriptions of Pompei. The *ae* > *e* reduction is documented in “1345^a, 5339 *egrotas*, 444, 5203 *eris* = *aeris*, 1553 *Emilio*” (Väänänen, 1968, p. 75), from *oe* > *e* in “8975 *amenus*, *citaredus* 8873, 1890 *Phebus*” (VÄÄNÄNEN, 1968, p. 75). Basseto (2013) notes the reduction of the *au* diphthong into *o* in *caupo* > *coפו* (“innkeeper”) in the parietal inscription CIL, IV, 3948, and the reduction of *ae* into *e* in *boné memorie* in a tomb inscription in Cologne (CIL, XIII, 8481). Finally, Santos (2005) analyses the reduction of the *ae*, *au* and *oe* diphthong in roman inscriptions in Portuguese territory in three great regions of Portugal: the south region, south of the Tejo; center region, between the Tejo and Douro rivers; and north region, north of the Douro River.

A The literary work *Satyricon* from Petronius, probably dated from the 1st century AD, stands as an important source of vulgar Latin because of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, that is, “Dinner of Trimalchio”. In this part of the work, Petronius describes a banquet offered by a new rich, Trimalchio, to his guests, using vulgarisms as

⁷ According to Quednau (2005), When the *ae* is pretonic, it is reduced to *i* or *e*, if the *ae* is tonic, it is reduced to [e].

⁸ Taken from http://www.orbilat.com/languages/latin_vulgar/vocabulary/appendix_probi.html (ORBIS LATINUS, 2021).

a stylistic resource to characterize the speech of the characters, because of that there is a great approximation with the spoken language of the less cultured people in society (BASSETO, 2013; ILARI, 1999). In this sense, considering that the work may offer hints of interference from the oral register into the written mode of the Latin language, and therefore, supply data about the phonetic pattern present at the time, Bianchet (2003) uses the *Satyricon* to describe the phonetic-phonological characteristic of the 1st century AD, occurred in the Latin vocalic system. Bianchet (2003, p. 197) presents a chart, organized in three columns: (i) Standard and/or changed forms indicated as Latin dictionary entries; (ii) changed forms due to the diphthong reduction presented in the work; (iii) standard forms presented in the work. The occurrences are indicated by the localization within the text (chapter and chapter subdivision).

Chart 2 - Occurrence of the monophthong and diphthong forms in the *Satyricon*.

Entry	Monophthong Form	Diphthong Form
1. auricularius, -a, um: prophetic	<i>oricularios</i> (43, 6)	
2. cauda, -ae (f): tail	<i>coda</i> (44, 12)	<i>cauda</i> (89, 1, 38)
3. caudex, ĩcis (m): tree's trunk	<i>codex</i> (74, 13)	<i>caudice</i> (135, 8, 6)
4. cauliculŭs/colicŭlus (m): stalk	<i>coliculi</i> (132, 8, 2)	
5. caupo, -onis (m): innkeeper	<i>copones</i> (39, 12) (61, 6), <i>copo</i> (62, 12)	<i>cauponi</i> (98, 1)
6. claudo, clausi, clausum: close	<i>cluissem</i> (57, 2), <i>cluso</i> (63, 8)	<i>clausus</i> (55, 6, 2), <i>claudit</i> (122, 1, 147), <i>clausum</i> (137, 9, 10)
7. lautus, -a, -um: praised, praiseworthy	<i>lota</i> (30, 11), <i>lotam</i> (40, 7)	<i>lauta</i> (31, 8), <i>lantum</i> (65, 10), <i>lantas</i> (137,12)
8. nenĭa/naeniĭa, -ae (f): funeral chant	<i>nenias</i> (46, 4) (47,10)	<i>naenias</i> (58, 7)
9. paene: almost	<i>pene</i> (136, 6)	<i>paene</i> (15, 2) (29, 1) (33, 7) (62, 10) (64, 3) (64, 9) (66, 5) (70, 11) (79, 3) (88, 5) (92, 6) (100, 4) (113, 9) (115, 11) (126, 15) (140, 6)
10. plaudo, plausi, pausum: to clap	<i>plodo</i> (45, 13)	<i>plaudentibus</i> (25, 3), <i>plaudentes</i> (26,1), <i>plaudentem</i> (67, 5), <i>plaudebat</i> (70 ,10), <i>plaudente</i> (119,1, 8)
11. scaena, -ae (f): scene	<i>scenam</i> (5,1, 7) (33, 5), <i>scena</i> (117, 2)	<i>scaena</i> (80, 9, 5), <i>scaenae</i> (117, 10) (126, 6)

Source: Bianchet (2003, p. 197).

It is important to note how the work of Bianchet confirms the idea that the diphthong reduction is to be considered a mark of rusticity, by verifying that the monophthongs (*coda*, *codex*, *copo/copones*) are employed in the episodes of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, characterizing less cultured characters, while the diphthongs (*causa*, *caudize*, *cauponi*) appear in the final episodes, characterizing other characters. In the next section we employ this same view specifically on the *au* diphthong.

2.1. The *au* diphthong reduction in vulgar Latin: a social and linguistic phenomenon

To characterize the *au* diphthong reduction in vulgar Latin as a reflex of a pronunciation considered to be rustic, especially from the lower layers of the population, seems to be a peaceful point between researchers, such as Faria (1955), Väänänen (1968) and Niedermann (1991). Faria (1955) defends that the reduction of the diphthong *au* into *o* would be a change in the rustic variety already observed by the Latin grammarians:

Orata, genus piscis, appellatur a colore auri, quod rustici orum dicebant, ut aurĭculas orĭculas. Itaque Sergium quoque praediuitem, quod et duobus anulĭs aureis et grandibus uteretur, Oratam dicunt esse appellatum (Festo, 202, 13) “a species of fish called *orata* because of the golden color, because the peasants said *orum*, like *aurĭculas*, *orĭculas*. That is also why a certain Sérgio, a very rich man was nicknamed *Orata*, they say, because he used two very big golden rings” (FARIA, 1955, p. 60).

Väänänen (1968) uses the same example to explain in which way the monophthongization of the *au* infiltrated Rome, as a provincialism. It is worth noting that the author also justifies the pronunciation of *au* as *o* in certain words as a reflex of familiar treatment, exemplifying the *au* > *o* reduction in a proverbial phrase written by Cicero in a letter to his brother Quintus (*Ad Q. fr.* 2, 13, 4) *oriculā⁹ infimā molliorem*. It seems that written register in a familiar context is favorable to the occurrence of the diphthong reduction, once that there is not so much concern about the use of a literary norm.

Niedermann (1991, p. 65), in turn, considers the *au* into *o* reduction as a dialectal form, which permeated even the speech of cultured society. Consequently, there is a conservative worry from this class to stop the tendency of the diphthong reduction in the language, resulting in the hiperurbanism (hypercorrection), that is, in words spelled with *o* the *au* pronunciation is used, even if it differs from its original etymon (FARIA, 1995, p. 149; NIEDERMANN, 1991, p. 6). It seems that the *au* diphthong reduction is not about only a linguistic variation but about a social issue. In this perspective, Basseto (2013, p. 117) sustains that linguistic variety consisted also in a factor for social distinction, “as can be concluded from the decision of Claudius Pulcher, belonging to the *Claudii* clan and enemy of Cicero, he is to be called *Clodius* as from the moment he lost his patrician condition to become a commoner”. Maurer Junior (1959) presents a different version, still corroborating Basseto’s (2013) proposal: Claudius Pulcher made himself be adopted by a commoner family with the objective of being elected tribune of the commons, adopting the form *Clodius* to gain the sympathy of the commoners.

It is important to notice that, besides the reduction of the *au* to *o*, in the Empire’s vulgar Latin, in an initial syllable, there is also the occurrence of the reduction of an unstressed *au* into *a* when the following syllable contains a *u* (or *o*) (FARIA, 1955; NIEDERMANN, 1991, p. 67). For example, in the inscriptions in Pompei, *Agustus* appears instead of *Augustus*. In this case, it seems that the conditioning linguistic environment prevails over the social factor, however, with the exception of this rule, we did not find any study that investigates the linguistic environment of the reduction of the diphthong *au* into *o* in vulgar Latin as it occurs, for example, with the diphthong *ei* when referring to accentuation¹⁰. In another way, the transition from Latin to the romance languages present a new scenario and new possibilities of analysis, as we will see in the next section.

3. THE *AU* DIPHTHONG REDUCTION FROM LATIN INTO PORTUGUESE

To researchers such as Faria (1955), Väänänen (1968) and Niedermann (1991), the process of reduction of the diphthong *au* into *o* which results from a pronunciation considered to be rustic in vulgar Latin is different from the process that occurred later in the romance languages. The authors are unanimous to affirm that the *au* diphthong is the most resistant of the Latin diphthong and was preserved without changes until the romance. To Niedermann (1991), even in vulgar Latin, the *au* into *o* reduction never prevailed, except in isolated rustic words, the diphthong remained unchanged in the literary language, especially in the cultured norm, as we presented in the previous sections. Because of that, Faria (1955) and Niedermann (1991) indicate that the change from *au* into *o*, observed in some words modernly, occurred late in languages such as French and Italian. That does not mean that the existence of monophthongal varieties in vulgar Latin did not remain reduced in the transition from Latin into Portuguese, see, for example, the unstressed *au* reduction into *a* in the word *Agustus*. According to the Etymological Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (CUNHA, 2010, p. 19), the word “agosto *sm.* ‘eighth month of the civil year’” appears spelled in this way in the 1^{3th} century and its etymon is found in vulgar Latin as *agūstus*, from the classical *augūstus*. But it appears that the authors’ proposal brings to discussion an important premise: “Not every variability and heterogeneity in the linguistic structure implies change; but every change implies variability and heterogeneity.” (WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG, 2006, p. 125). In relation to variation in vulgar Latin, we have already observed the operation of the social factor; henceforth, we discuss the proposals of linguistic explanation in a diachronic perspective to the reduction of the diphthong *au* into *o* in the romance languages.

⁹ In classical Latin, *auriculā, ae* (BUSARELLO, 2007).

¹⁰ About the *ei* diphthong reduction, cf. “Quantity and Quality in the Vowel-System of Vulgar Latin” (SPENCE, 2015).

Lipski (1974, p. 417) comments that the *au* reduction in the romance languages occurred independently of the diphthong being accentuated or not. In the last case, the author brings forth the example of *auricŭlum* > *oreille* (French), *oreja* (Spanish), *orecchia* (Italian), *orelha* (Portuguese); the same tendency would apply to secondary diphthongs, formed later in the romance languages. In this case it is important to remember that the attribution of accentuation in a classical Latin word depended on syllabic weight (ALKIRE; ROSEN, 2010). The Latin vowel system had five vowels distributed in long and short (\bar{a} , \check{a} , \bar{e} , \check{e} , \bar{i} , \check{i} , \bar{o} , \check{o} , \bar{u} , \check{u}). Through the examining of the vowels, it is possible to determine the weight of a syllable, being heavy if consisting of two time units, that is, when it contained a long vowel or when it ended in a consonant. In turn, syllables that do not meet any of the criteria are light. If the penultimate syllable of a word is heavy, it is accentuated, if not, the preceding syllable is. The exception occurs in words containing only two syllables, given that the penultimate is accentuated independently of vowel quantity and its respective syllabic weight. Lipski's (1974) example about the non-accentuated diphthong reduction in the word *auricŭlum* seems to be in accord to the rule of accent attribution, however, the same may occur in words in which the diphthong is accentuated.

Alkire and Rosen (2010) present evidences that the *au* diphthong became a medium vowel in some examples from Italian, Spanish and French. Below, we present some examples, adding the change in Portuguese which we will discuss next.

Chart 3 - Primary *au* diphthong reduction occurrences in the romance languages.

Latin	Italian	Spanish	French	Portuguese
<i>aurum</i>	<i>oro</i>	<i>oro</i>	<i>or</i>	ouro
<i>thesauru</i>	<i>tesoro</i>	<i>tesoro</i>	<i>trésor</i>	tesouro
<i>paupĕru(m)</i>	<i>povero</i>	<i>pobre</i>	<i>pauvre</i>	pobre
<i>audit</i>	<i>ode</i>	<i>oye</i>	<i>oit</i>	ouve
<i>paucu</i>	<i>poco</i>	<i>poco</i>	<i>peu</i>	pouco

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to the rule of accent distribution in Latin, in all examples, the *au* diphthong reduction occurs from an accentuated syllable. Even in vulgar Latin, in reductions like in “*auris non oricla*” (*Appendix Probi*), *cauda* < *coda*, *caudex* < *codex*, *caulicŭlus* < *coliculi*, *caupo* < *copones*, *caupo* < *copo*, *lautus* < *lota*, *plaudo* < *plodo* (*Satyricon*), the variation is not justified by the regularity in the accentuation or not of the diphthong. We do not mean to say that etymology cannot be a source of explanation for linguistic change, however, in this case, the reduction or not of the *au* diphthong, justified by the rule of accentuation of Latin words, does not consist of a reliable parameter to determine the condition for the realization of the phenomenon.

In Chart 3, we observe that, in some Portuguese words derived from Latin, the *au* diphthong usually suffers changes into *ou*, that is, it occurred the closing and elevation of the central vowel through regressive assimilation ([aw] > [fw] > [ow])¹¹, especially following the 13th century: *aurum* > ouro, *thesauru* > tesouro, *audit* > ouve, *paucu* > pouco, *tauru* > touro, *ausare* > ousar, *autumnu* > outono, *pausare* > pousar (COUTINHO, 1938, p. 74). Carvalho (2018), when analyzing some change and variation phenomena involved in the historical trajectory of the decreasing oral diphthongs (primary and secondary) [aw], [aj], [ej] and [ow], in 153 original notarial documents (13th-16th centuries) from the funds of the Cistercian monastery of Alcobaça, presents occurrences of forms of the *au* diphthong resulting from a cultured evolution, in which the *au* diphthong present in Latin words remains, in addition to forms resulting from a traditional popular evolution (*au* > *ou*, *au* > *a*).

¹¹ In Portuguese from Portugal, the *oi* diphthong, being a dialect or popular pronunciation mark, alternates with the diphthong *ou* when it precedes the vocalization of the *c* in the *ct* group or when it is formed based on the primary iode of the following syllable as it occurs in the examples: *altarĭu* > outeiro (~ oiteiro), *nocte* > noite (~ noute), *octo* > oito (~ outo), *cōriū* > coiro (~ couro); *tonsōria* > tesoura (~ tesoura) (DIAS, 2014, p. 52).

From the Latin words, *auctōritas -ātis*, *auctor*, *causa*, *clausūla*, Carvalho (2018) localized in the *corpus* the following graphical forms and variants: *autoridade*, *auctoridade*, *autorydade*, *auptyrydade*, *autorjdade*, *autorridade*, *audiēcia*, *audiencya*, *audjenças*, *aud[yēcɣ]a*, *aud[iēcɣ]a*, *auto[r]*, *autor*, *autores*, *autoria*, *cauſa*, *cauſas*, *chauſa*, *causa*, *cauſa*, *cauſas*, *chauſa*, *causa*. In the 14th and 15th centuries, he verified the forms *outor*, *outoridade* and *outorjdade*, resulting from a closure and elevation of the central vowel by regressive assimilation¹², in addition to the forms *c[r]aſulas*, *clafſulas*, *clafſullaø*, *clafulas*, *clafulla*, *clafullas* e *clafullaø* when in the same word existed another *u*, because, in this case, the *au* diphthong simplified into *a*, by dissimilation. According to the author, in the medieval period, the variants with the monophthongization of primary *au* rivaled with the ones that preserved the diphthong, with it returning only after the last years of the 15th century, for example, in the word *clausula*. Câmara Júnior (1979), in another perspective, believes that the diphthong was reintroduced in the 16th century, through borrowings from classical Latin.

In Brazil, we noticed another movement of the reduction in the *au* diphthong in Oliveira's (2008) analysis about the diphthong reduction in 290 nineteenth century documents written in the scope of a black brotherhood, the Society for the Protection of the Underprivileged, founded in 1832, by Africans, in the city of Salvador/BA. These are documents from unskilled writers, written in a language closer to orality. In the *corpus*, there are 42 occurrences of the *au* diphthong reduction:

Cladi (Cláudio), Cladimir (Claudemir), Cladio (Cláudio), Sodoza (saudosa), Amentar (aumentar), homento (aumento), Omenos (ao menos), omentando (aumentando), Athoriza (autoriza), hoturizada (autorizada), Agusta (augusta), inauguração (inauguração), Exasta (exausta), Exsasto (exausto), Fastiniano (Faustiniano), Fastino (Faustino) (OLIVEIRA, 2008, p. 159).

Based on the data, Oliveira (2008) presents two products of the *au* diphthong reduction: (i) the suppression of the semivowel [w], that is why [aw] transitions to [a]; (ii) in a pretonic syllable, the fusion of the vowel with the semivowel, in which the [a] loses the [+ low] trace and [w] loses the [+ high] trace, resulting in an intermediate vowel. The author suggest that the phenomenon occurs in front of occlusive consonants and complex /S/ syllables. In this sense, if we compare the occurrences of the *au* diphthong reduction since the sources of vulgar Latin, going through medieval Portuguese in the *corpus* we presented in this work, it seems that the condition environment for the variation and/or change of the *au* diphthong, presented by Oliveira (2008), repeats itself:

Chart 4 - Reduction of the *au* diphthong in front of occlusive consonants and /S/ complex syllables in examples from vulgar Latin, Medieval Portuguese and Portuguese language.

Vulgar Latin	Medieval Portuguese (13 th – 16 th cent.)	Portuguese Language (19 th cent.)
Augustus > Agustus Claudius > Clodius cauda > coda caudex > codex caupo > copo cauponis > copones claudo, clausi, clausum > clusissem, cluso Lautus > lota, lotam Plaudo > plodo	<i>Clausūla</i> > <i>c[r]aſulas</i> , <i>clafſulas</i> , <i>clafſullaø</i> <i>clafulas</i> , <i>clafulla</i> , <i>clafullas</i> <i>clafullaø</i>	Cláudio > Cladi Claudemir > Cladimir Cláudio > Cladio, Saudosa > Sodoza autoriza > Athoriza autorizada > hoturizada Augusta > Agusta inauguração > inauguração exausta > exasta exausto > exsasto Faustiniano > Fastiniano Faustino > Fastino

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

¹² Beyond the *corpus* analyzed by Carvalho (2018), *outor* and *outoridade* are recurring in the 13th century (CUNHA, 2010).

In another way, the chart also reveals Oliveira's examples on the reduction of *au* into *a* in words which, traditionally, manifested alterations from *au* into *o*, like *Clodius*, in vulgar Latin and *Cladio* in Oliveira's (2008) *corpus*. A more accurate study could investigate the evidences of the motivation for this variation, once that it coexists in Oliveira's (2008) data: *amenar* and *omento*, *athorizado* and *hoturizada*. In this case, the rule that the *au* into *o* reduction would apply only on pretonic syllables would not be true, furthermore, through the work we have also presented *au* into *o* reductions on accentuated syllables. In any way, according to the studies of the *au* diphthong reduction in diachrony we have been able to verify that the social factor repeats itself since vulgar Latin until the Portuguese language, and, because of that, we understand why the monophthongization has been seen as a completely social phenomenon in the languages, however it may present recurring motivations of linguistic origin through the past synchronies.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

During this work, we presented a panorama about the trajectory of the phenomenon of the reduction of the *au* diphthong from Latin into Portuguese based on diachronic studies of the languages. Going from the principles that the distinction between classical Latin and vulgar Latin is not chronological but social, we have verified the occurrence of the phenomenon already in vulgar Latin as a mark of careless language and rusticity in the sources of the *Appendix Probi*, the parietal inscriptions, tomb inscriptions, the *defixionum tabellae*, the *Cena Trimalchionis* from the work *Satyricon* from Petronius and in the letters from Cicero to his brother. In these cases, in general, there is a reduction from the *au* diphthong into *o*, except in a beginning syllable, when occurs the reduction of the unstressed *au* into *a* if the following syllable contains a *u* (or an *o*).

Given that the diphthong *au* is kept on the literary variety of the language, in the transition from Latin into the romance languages, the phenomenon of reductions occurs again in Italian, Spanish and French. In Portuguese, it generally occurs the closure and elevation of the central vowel by regressive assimilation, changing it to *ou*, especially after the 13th century. Even so, through popular means, sources such as the original notarial documents of funds of the Cistercian monastery of Alcobça (13th – 16th cent.) analyzed by Carvalho (2018) and nineteenth century documents written in the scope of a black brotherhood, the Society for the Protection of the Underprivileged, analyzed by Oliveira (2008) attest to the variation of the diphthong *au* into *o/a*. From the linguistic point of view, we verified that the accentuation of word in classic Latin does not consist of a parameter of analysis for the *au* diphthong reduction in vulgar Latin and in the romance languages. In addition, we verified that the conditioning environment for the *au* diphthong reduction in front of occlusive consonants and /S/ complex syllables, proposed by Oliveira (2008) could be applied to the occurrences of reduction in the sources cited above, however, it will be necessary a more accurate study to investigate the evidences of motivation for this variation.

Finally, similarly to what happened in vulgar Latin, variation as a mark of orality, though registered in documents of past synchronies, remains in the less cultured variety of language. Knowing that "not every variability and heterogeneity in the linguistic structure implies change; but every change implies variability and heterogeneity." (WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG, 2006, p. 125), we observed, thus, that the *au* diphthong from Latin into Portuguese presented a variation in *a*, *o* (resulting from the phenomenon of reduction) and *ou/ ~oi*, however, in most cases, it remained the change to the *ou* diphthong in the cultured variety of language, while the reduction is limited to the less cultured variety as evidence of orality.

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