

**A SHORT
HISTORICAL
LATIN GRAMMAR**

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A Short Historical Latin Grammar by W. M. Lindsay

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W. M. LINDSAY

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BY

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FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

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P R E F A C E

TEACHERS of Latin Grammar have for a long time felt the need of a book which will exhibit the historical development of Latin Accidence and explain the anomalies of Latin Declension and Conjugation, which will explain, for example, how *itineris* became the Genitive of *iter*, how *volo, vis, vult* differ from *lego, legis, legit*, why the Comparative of *magnificus* should be *magnificentior*, why the Preposition *circum* should have a by-form *circa*. In this *Short Historical Latin Grammar*, designed for the Universities and the Higher Forms of Schools, I have tried to present this information in an intelligible and, if possible, interesting form. While making full use of the discoveries of Comparative Philology, which have in recent years added so much to our knowledge of Latin, I have avoided the technical vocabulary of that science, and in quoting parallels to Latin words have restricted myself to the Greek, to the exclusion of Sanscrit, Gothic, and the other Indo-European languages. It is true that each and every problem of the Latin language has not yet been solved, but for all that the stability of most of the results reached by the methods of Comparative Philology is beyond question; and every one who has studied the

subject with any minuteness knows which results are certain and which may have to be modified by subsequent research. I have endeavoured to steer a middle course between leaving difficulties untouched and offering explanations which may have to be discarded later. For a discussion of questions which are still *sub judice*, and for a detailed account of the evidence on which judgements in this book are grounded, I refer the reader to my larger work, *The Latin Language* (Clarendon Press, 1894).

W. M. LINDSAY.

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September, 1895.

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INTRODUCTION

LATIN was the language of the Latini, who inhabited ancient Latium, the plain at the mouth of the Tiber. The subsequent greatness of Rome, the chief town of Latium, made the Latin language in time the language, not only of the whole of Italy, but also of the Roman provinces, Gaul, Spain, and the like. The languages of modern Italy and these other countries where Latin was formerly spoken are called 'Romance languages'; and it is possible with the help of inscriptions and parchments to trace step by step the way by which, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 A.D.), the 'Vulgar Latin' of Italy, France, Spain, &c., passed into the form of modern Italian, French, and Spanish; how, for example, Latin *caballus*, a horse, became Italian *cavallo*, Spanish *caballo*, Portuguese *cavallo*, Provençal *cavals*, French *cheval*, Roumanian *cal*.

A language is never stationary; and if what may be called the 'modern Latin' of the Romance languages has developed in this way, we may be sure that ancient Latin had a corresponding development. Of this we may mark several stages: (1) Prehistoric Latin, the language in its earliest form, (2) Preliterary Latin, till the beginnings of literature at Rome in the latter part