

**THE GENITIVE OF VALUE IN
LATIN AND OTHER
CONSTRUCTIONS WITH VERBS
OF RATING. DISSERTATION**

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The Genitive of Value in Latin and Other Constructions with Verbs of Rating. Dissertation by
Gordon J. Laing

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DISSERTATION

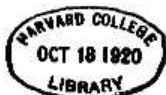
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BY

GORDON J. LAING

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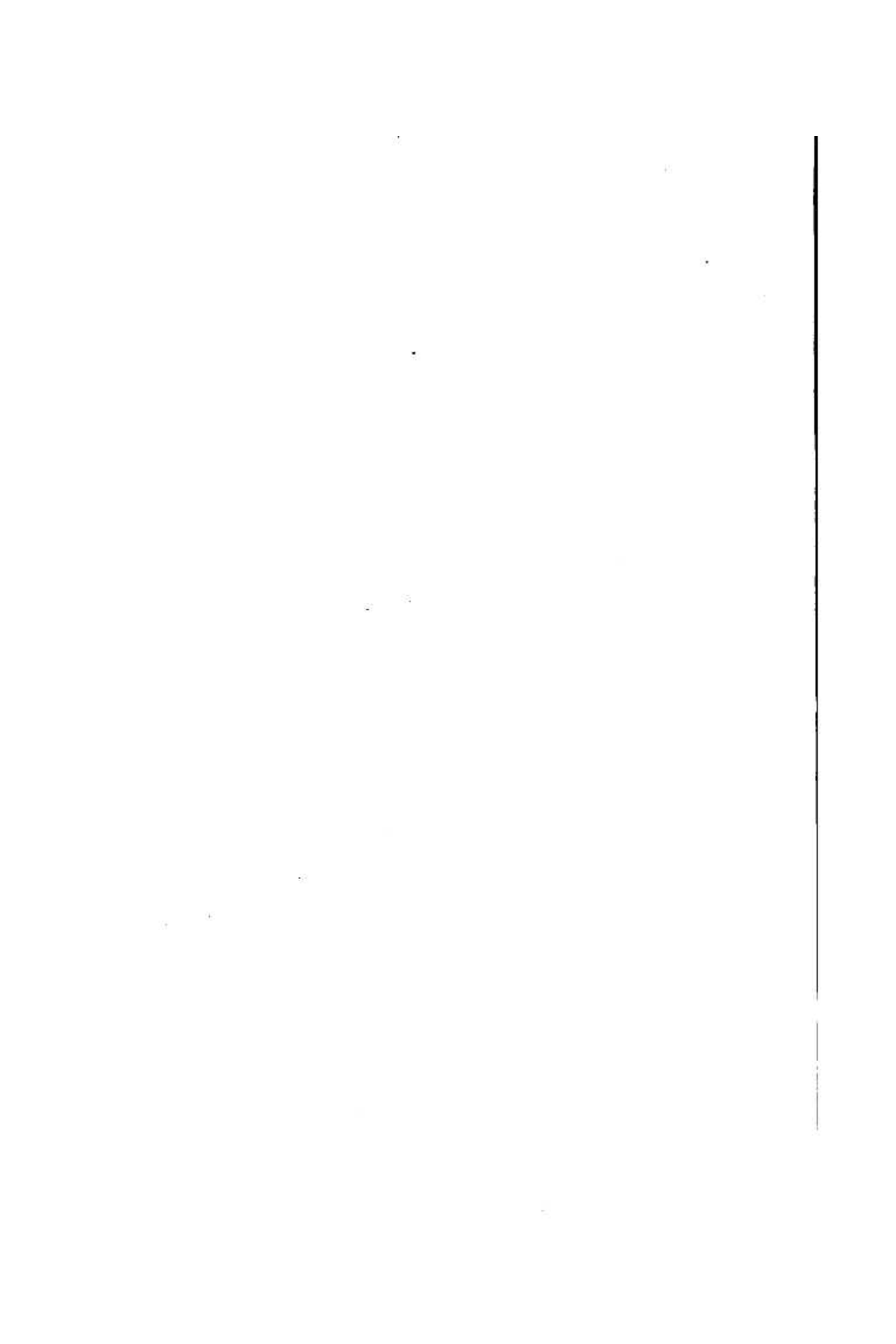
PREFACE

My purpose in this monograph is twofold: (1) to determine the origin of the genitive of value and (2) to ascertain the limits of the different combinations: what genitives and ablatives are used in expressions of valuation and with what verbs they are combined; and to what extent genitives, ablatives, and verbs vary in different authors and different spheres. Throughout the paper I have endeavored to show as clearly as possible the historical development of the individual expressions and of the construction as a whole. In my treatment of the expressions of worthlessness (*nihili, flocci*, etc.) I have departed from the strictly syntactical phase of the subject and added such material as is available on the origin of the words or phrases. The sections on "boni consulere," "aequi bonique facere," "nihil pensi esse," and "pro nihilo" have been reprinted by permission from my article in *Studies in Honor of Basil L. Gildersleeve* (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore).

Only constructions with verbs of rating have been included in the plan of the work. Accordingly the use of the genitive with *refert* and *interest* has not been treated; nor is there any discussion of the constructions with verbs of buying and selling (the ablative and genitive of price).

The following are the authors whose works I have examined. In addition my lists have been largely supplemented by examples collected from indices and other sources. I specify titles of works only where my examination of the author has not been complete: Plautus, Terence, Fragments of the Comic and Tragic Poets (Ribbeck), Cato, Fragments of Lucilius (Marx), Cicero, Caesar, Sallust, Catullus, Varro (*Satirae Menippeae*), Livy, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius, *Priapea*, Persius, Phaedrus, Petronius, Seneca the Philosopher, Martial, Juvenal, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Fronto, Apuleius, and Gellius. With a view to determining the later usage I have also examined considerable parts of Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Firmicus Maternus, Lucifer of Cagliari, Ausonius, Symmachus, Augustine, Sulpicius Severus, Orosius, Salvianus, Eugippius, Apollinaris Sidonius, and Gregory of Tours.

G. J. L.



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I. THE GENITIVE OF VALUE

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE CONSTRUCTION

A number of explanations of the origin of the genitive of value have been offered by grammarians. One theory is that the form is locative. According to another explanation, it is a development of the partitive genitive. The advocates of a third view see in it a variety of the genitive of quality. Finally, more recent writers have explained it on the analogy of that usage in Sanskrit by which certain genitive forms in *-i* are combined like a verbal prefix with *kr-*, "make," and *bhū-*, "become."

a) The Theory of Locative Origin

This is the explanation given by Roby.¹ He regards *magni, tanti*, etc., as locatives which express the amount at which, and thinks that the genitives *pluris, minoris*, etc., are used by analogy in the same sense. This view is held by Sloman² also. Sonnenschein in his *New Latin Grammar*³ says nothing about the origin, but in his *Greek Grammar*⁴ adopts the locative theory. None of these writers, however, advances any arguments in support of his view, and the theory is so inadequate in the case of many examples of the construction that it may be dismissed without further discussion. On one point, however, I believe it to be sound: it recognizes the original adverbial character of the construction.

b) The Theory of Partitive Origin

The explanation that the origin is to be found in the partitive genitive is given by Reisig:⁵ "Derselbe Teilbegriff findet statt bei den Wörtern des Schätzens mit einem Genetiv des Wertes: *aestimare, facere, ducere, pendere, habere, esse*. . . . Den allgemeinen Begriff fasst man als eine Idee, welche die Mannigfaltigkeit der Wirklichkeit in sich begreift, wozu das Einzelne gehört; *parvi ducere aliquid* ist etwas für einen Teil halten von alledem was gering ist, daher gering achten. So auch *magni, maximi, pluris, plurimi, minoris, minimi*." This theory is not without plausibility, and for one of the genitives regularly included

¹ *Grammar of the Latin Language*, II, 1186-87.

² *Grammar of Classical Latin* (Cambridge, 1906), p. 261.

³ Oxford, 1912.

⁴ London, 1903.

⁵ *Vorlesungen*, III, 572.