COLLOQUIAL AND LITERARY LATIN

What is colloquial Latin? What can we learn about it from Roman literature, and how does an understanding of colloquial Latin enhance our appreciation of literature? This book sets out to answer such questions, beginning with examinations of how the term 'colloquial' has been used by linguists and by classicists (and how its Latin equivalents were used by the Romans) and continuing with exciting new research on colloquial language in a wide range of Latin authors. Each chapter is written by a leading expert in the relevant area, and the material presented includes new editions of several texts. The introductory section presents the first account in English of developments in the study of colloquial Latin over the last century, and throughout the book findings are presented in clear, lucid and jargon-free language, making a major scholarly debate accessible to a broad range of students and non-specialists.

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In honour of

J. N. Adams

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Foreword

David Langslow

The present volume is to honour a man for outstanding contributions to scholarship, and to thank a friend for support and inspiration. Jim Adams is one of the very best and most important students of the Latin language who have ever lived. I attempt to sketch some of his achievements below, but first let me say this: I know that I can speak for the editors and many others besides (not only the contributors to the present volume, but generations of linguists, historians and classicists – not only Latinists – from many different countries), when I say that we are grateful to Jim not only for being the pre-eminent scholar that he is, for opening up and showing the way on numerous new or neglected aspects of Latin, and for publishing his findings so quickly, with such clarity and in such abundance, but also for inspiring us, pointing us in the right direction, and helping us to be better scholars. In my experience – and again I know that I speak for many – Jim has for decades been generous and unfailing in his readiness to share his learning, experience and approach, in answering questions, and in reading and discussing, and commenting and advising on, plans in germ and work in manuscript. For a linguist with work in draft, there are few things so beneficial as having it read by Jim, because he sees straight through the problems and tells you what the solutions are, and where to look to find the evidence to prove it. And he is nearly always right – even when you are actually working on a language other than Latin. Jim is a willing and selfless academic mentor to anyone he thinks may be able to profit from his help, and it has been well said that he is too loyal a friend for his own good. It is hard, if not impossible, truly to deserve what Jim has done for us and our subjects, let alone to reciprocate, given the range and depth of knowledge and understanding necessary to give him equivalent help. At least this volume is a tangible token of how keenly appreciated his help has been in so many of our endeavours over so many years.

Jim was born in Sydney in 1943. He was educated at North Sydney Boys' High School, and graduated from the University of Sydney with

the University Medal for Latin (a special award, made by no means every year). A clearly influential teacher, of whom he has often spoken, was G. P. Shipp. After two years as a teaching fellow at his home university, he came to the UK in 1967, and has stayed ever since. He completed his Oxford doctorate, a philological commentary on Tacitus, *Annals* 14.1–54, in under three years (as a Commonwealth Scholar, at Brasenose College), he held the Rouse Research Fellowship in Classics at Christ's College, Cambridge for two years, and was appointed to a lecturership in Greek and Latin at the University of Manchester in 1972, at the age of twenty-nine.

Jim spent twenty-two years in Manchester, being promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1978, to Reader in 1982, and appointed to a personal chair in 1993, the year after his election to a Fellowship of the British Academy. In Manchester, he was Chairman of the Departmental Board from 1983, and Head of Department from 1989. He took leave away from Manchester in 1994–5 in order to take up a one-year Senior Research Fellowship at St John's College, Oxford. Soon after, he moved more permanently, to a professorship at the University of Reading in 1995, and finally, in 1998, to a Senior Research Fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford. Since 1995, he has chaired to enormously good effect the supervisory committee of the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*; it is thanks in no small part to him that this great project is now as far as possible assured of being completed.

Jim's subject has always been the Latin language, in the broadest sense – Latin in all its forms and varieties, from the beginning of our record to the emergence of the Romance languages. This is always the backdrop, no matter how precise his focus at any given moment. This focus is normally very precise indeed, but a signal strength of his work lies in an unusually deft combination of the exhaustive analysis and presentation of details with investigations and conclusions of enormous scope and scale. There are few texts or documents of any sort produced in Latin of any sort, by speakers or would-be speakers of Latin of any period, place, register, ethnic origin or social class that he does not Know (I am happy to be able at last to reflect in print the correct observation made to me by a fellow PhD-examiner in the late 1990s that 'Jim Adams knows Latin with a capital K'!).

He has published steadily, at a high rate since the first year of his Cambridge research fellowship (his first article, on a type of hyperbaton in Latin prose, is from 1971), prolifically since the early 1990s, when the articles came even thicker and faster, and the big books started to appear: *Pelagonius*, *Bilingualism*, and *Regional Diversification* are each longer than

Vulgar Latin Chronicle, *Claudius Terentianus*, and *Latin Sexual Vocabulary* put together – and not a syllable less terse. Since 1990 his research has included (in addition to two jointly authored articles) participation in four large collaborative projects: on the publication and interpretation of the texts from Vindolanda (with their editors Alan Bowman and David Thomas), and, between 1994 and 2005, on jointly organising and editing the proceedings of three major conferences, respectively on the language of Latin poetry (with Roland Mayer), bilingualism in ancient society (with Mark Janse and Simon Swain), and the language of Latin prose (to honour Michael Winterbottom – with Tobias Reinhardt and Michael Lapidge).

Jim's published work is characterised by the greatest acuity, rigour, efficiency, and good judgement. There is also often a breathtaking boldness about both the questions that he takes on and the comprehensiveness of his answers to them. The questions either have never occurred to people to address before because the necessary connections have not been made, or they have seemed intractable given the (supposed) state of the evidence, or they have been much discussed, and the contradictory half-answers are well known, or they are (surely!) simply too large and difficult for anyone to tackle single-handed. As one reads Jim's findings and discussion of them, one has the sense of problems and earlier, inadequate solutions being transformed or swept aside, and a feeling of finality in his conclusions. His style is refreshingly unselfregarding, his writing is lucid, terse, urgent. The urgency of his oral delivery (often against a handout containing – for a one-hour paper – well over a hundred examples), which is transformed into efficiency and finality on the printed page, is also notable: the lecture that became the 1999 article on nominative personal pronouns was memorably compared in discussion both to 'scoring a century before lunch' and to 'driving through the Ardennes'.

Theory is scarce, though not absent; terminology is traditional, at least from the point of view of linguistics. Jim has always treated more theoretically laden work and new terminology (of the 'old wine in new bottles' type) with a healthy scepticism, and has regarded with equal respect and purely on grounds of merit and utility the fashionable and the little-known. An important consequence of the theoretical neutrality and straightforward empiricism of his approach is that his early works may still be read with undiminished profit side by side with his most recent.

His publications address explicitly texts and authors; grammatical and lexical topics; and, especially more recently in a head-on fashion, some of the big questions facing the student of Latin and Romance linguistics, Latin literature, and Roman history. His studies of named literary texts

and authors are concerned with prose much more often than verse – early on, Tacitus, the *Historia Augusta*, Livy, Cicero, Lactantius; most recently, the pseudo-Caesarian *Bellum Africum*, Petronius, Mustio (the subject of Adams 2005a) – but Ausonius, Martial, and Latin epic (especially Virgil) are the subjects of three early articles, Catullus and the Augustan poets are a main focus of the 1999 article mentioned above, Plautus has always been a central point of reference (and is still so in *Bilingualism* and *Regional Diversification*) – and, on the documentary side, let us not forget the remarkable poets of Bu Njem!

The grammatical domains for which Jim is best known are word order and vocabulary. His lexical studies sometimes serve to establish the existence, the form and the meaning of unnoticed or misunderstood words (a good number of veterinary terms, but also such ordinary words as the Latin for 'to canter', are thus saved from lexicographical oblivion or misrepresentation). Other articles or chapters on vocabulary (as in the cases of words for 'put' and 'throw', or of some of the anatomical terms transferred from animals to humans, or of some of the new words attested at Vindolanda) illustrate changes under way in Latin foreshadowing Romance usage. Most, however, provide object lessons in how to use the distribution of synonymous or complementary words as evidence for their register, their social or connotational meaning, so (e.g.) the articles on words for 'woman', 'wife', 'prostitute', 'kill', and the seven chapters of the *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, the publication of which prompted an article in the *Sunday Times*.

Jim's interest in word order dates from the 1970s. It is the subject of his very first article, on hyperbaton (mentioned above), and 1976 saw the publication of the still-important article on 'a typological approach to Latin word order'. It has yielded along the way the 1991 article on the construction infinitive + *habeo* in late Latin and the origin of the Romance future (Fr. *je chanterai*, Ital. *canterò*, etc.), in which a detail of variable word order is made in masterly fashion to throw light on an important problem of historical morphology and semantics. In many respects, his work on word order supersedes that of the great French Latinist Jules Marouzeau (*L'ordre des mots*), and here more than anywhere embraces recent developments in linguistic theory, notably in pragmatics. Jim's crowning achievement in the study of Latin word order is to have modified (in a pair of long papers both published in 1994) Eduard Fraenkel's modification of Wackernagel's Law by redefining the 'second position' as following not the first word of the clause (so Wackernagel) nor of the 'colon' (so Fraenkel) but rather a 'preferential host', one of a set of accented but not necessarily emphatic words to which unstressed elements (including pronouns and weak forms of the verb 'to

be') are attracted. In a brilliant coda to the 'unstressed pronouns' paper, a most appealing and suggestive historical connection is made between the enclisis on the newly observed 'host' in Latin and the proclisis on the verb characteristic of Romance. This is, by any standards and for any language-family, an unusually illuminating and satisfying account of the history of a syntactic pattern, from the prehistoric parent language to the modern vernacular languages.

In truth, however, although lexicography and word order are clearly more prominent in Jim's bibliography, there are few areas of the grammar (from spelling and phonology to sentence structure) that he has not covered in his studies of (e.g.) the *Anonymus Valesianus II*, Claudius Terentianus, C. Novius Eunus, the Bath curse tablets, the ostraca from Bu Njem, the Vindolanda letters, all of which amount to comprehensive, if selective, contrastive grammars of these texts. (I say 'selective' because that is how Jim presents them: in fact, nothing much worth saying is left to say at the end.)

The big questions about Latin that have clearly interested Jim, and continue to interest him, include: (a) What are the limits of variation that we can document within Latin, and against what sort of parameters – chronological, geographical, sociolinguistic, stylistic in the broadest sense – may we describe each variable? (b) What sorts of contact did Latin enjoy with other languages, and what are the grammatical effects, on Latin and on the other language, in each contact situation? (c) How did one language, Latin, evolve into the several Romance languages?

All three questions are addressed already in early publications. The evolution of Latin into Romance is illustrated in 1977 in the foreshadowing of French words in the *Annales regni Francorum*, and numerous aspects of the wider problem are discussed in a 1989 review article of Roger Wright's important book *Late Latin and Early Romance* (1982). Features of bilingualism and consequent linguistic interference are written up in the 1970s first for the influence of Greek on Egyptian Latin. Regional variation is investigated to begin with in the Latin of Egypt and Britain; sociolinguistic variation is documented in features of the Latin of military documents, and in characteristics of female speech in Latin comedy; stylistic variation, and what may be inferred from it about authorship and chronological development, prompts some of Jim's earliest articles, on Tacitus, the writers of the *Historia Augusta*, and Livy.

In pursuing these questions, Jim has for nearly forty years consistently both opened up important new areas to philological study and shed fresh light on familar authors and texts. Many of the writers and documents

that he has studied were largely unknown to students of antiquity, and, but for his work, would probably have remained so. Jim has shown that the most unpromising material, examined in the right way, can yield important insights of quite general relevance. His treatment of the high literary, the highly technical, and the most 'hopeless gibberish' alike renders his work essential reading for all Latinists and Roman historians. In many cases, it is evident from the titles or tables of contents of his works that a vast array of literary and documentary evidence will be surveyed and appraised, but the same is true also of, for example, *Pelagonius*, which treats an important but neglected chapter of Roman social history, offers an extraordinary number of instructive insights into the Latin language in various periods and registers, and has much to say on Latin literary topics (cf. my review in *BMCR* 97.04.01). In discussions of international collaborative work on technical Latin, Jim has argued repeatedly and forcefully against restricting oneself to the technical writers, since so much important evidence is to be found in non-technical literary Latin and in inscriptions of all kinds: conversely, to characterise the language of, say, Cicero, Virgil or Ovid with reference just to other literary authors risks no less yielding a partial, impoverished and misleading view.

If, more generally, we may readily agree that we ignore at our peril the contribution that the fullest possible understanding of a language can make to the historical or literary interpretation of texts and their contexts, it remains true that such an understanding of Latin is more easily aspired to than achieved. It is also true that few have approached such an understanding so closely or made its implications so widely available as Jim. A former colleague of mine rightly remarked that 'Jim Adams is as close as we can get to a native speaker of Latin.' The wise philologist, or literary critic or historian, knows to interrogate native speakers. Certainly, the extent to which 'Adams, J. N.' features in a bibliography is a good indicator of the degree to which the author regards the Latin language as of relevance to the theme.

W. M. Lindsay ended his appreciation of the life and work of Franz Skutsch (*CR* 26 [1912] 238) with the words, 'What shall we do now that our protagonist is gone?' Thank Goodness, ours is still with us, and showing no sign of slowing down. May Jim's forthcoming anthology and discussion of non-standard Latin texts and features be very far from his last words on the Latin language!