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Volume 1,

Henry John Roby

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Henry John Roby (1830–1915) was a Cambridge-educated classicist whose influential career included periods as a schoolmaster, professor of Roman law, businessman, educational reformer and Member of Parliament. His two-volume *Grammar of the Latin Language* went through seven editions during his lifetime. It provides in-depth analysis of Latin phonetics, noun and verb construction, and syntax and morphology, taking a descriptive approach. Drawing examples from the corpus of classical writings dating from circa 200 B.C.E. to 120 C.E., this first volume (1872) discusses sounds and syllable quantities, noun and verb inflexions, and the basic elements of word formation, organized according to noun and verb stems. Appendices include pronoun tables, lists of weights and measures, and a chronological compilation of inscriptions from the republican era. A work of remarkable breadth and depth, Roby's book remains an essential resource for both historical linguistics and the study of Latin grammar.

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VOLUME 1

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A GRAMMAR
OF THE
LATIN LANGUAGE
FROM PLAUTUS TO SUETONIUS

BY
HENRY JOHN ROBY,
M.A. late FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLL. CAMBRIDGE.

PART I. containing:—
BOOK I. *SOUNDS.*
BOOK II. *INFLEXIONS.*
BOOK III. *WORD-FORMATION.*
APPENDICES.

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Preface.

General Observations.

As the present work differs in many respects from other grammars in use, it may be desirable that I should briefly note some of the more important changes which I have made, and in some cases discuss the grounds of the change. In the work itself I have refrained from dissertation, and aimed at giving the facts of the language in as few words as possible. If facts are stated with their real limitations, they either explain themselves, or at least afford a sound basis for theory to work on. If they are grouped according to their natural affinities and arranged on natural principles, the briefest statement is the most illustrative.

I have called the book, *A Grammar of the Latin Language from Plautus to Suetonius*. Now first, by *Grammar*, I mean an orderly arrangement of the facts which concern the *form* of a language, as a *Lexicon* gives those which concern its *matter*. The ordinary division into four parts seems to me right and convenient. The first three Books on Sounds, Inflexions, and Word-formation, are often comprehended under the general term *Formenlehre*. The fourth Book, on Syntax, contains the *use* of the inflexions and of the several classes of words. I have given much greater extension than is usual to the treatment of Sounds and Word-formation, and on the other hand, have cut away from the 2nd and 4th Books several matters which do not properly belong to them. For instance, numerals and pronouns are often included in Book II. in a way which conceals the fact, that it is only so far as their inflexions are peculiar, that they demand specific notice. Again, the use of prepositions and conjunctions is often discussed in the Syntax; whereas, so far as the use depends not on the class to which a word belongs, but on the meaning of the individual, the discussion belongs to lexicography. The error lies in thinking, that because certain words

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PREFACE: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

are more general than others in their application, they are therefore *formal*. However, there is no doubt a convenience in including some of these matters in a Grammar, and accordingly I have put them, or some of them, in the Appendices to this or the second volume. Further, I have not attempted to twist the natural arrangement of the facts so as to make it suitable for persons who are first learning the language and cannot be trusted to find their own way. There are plenty of other books for that purpose.

Secondly, it is a Grammar of the *Latin* language. It is not a Universal Grammar illustrated from Latin, nor the Latin section of a Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European languages, nor a Grammar of the group of Italian dialects, of which Latin is one. I have not therefore cared to examine whether the definitions or arrangement which I have given are suited to other languages of a different character. A language in which, like Latin, the Verb is a complete sentence, or in which e.g. *magnus* can be made to denote *great men* by a change in the final syllable, may obviously require very different treatment from one in which, like English, the verb requires the subject to be separately expressed, or the adjective *great* requires, in order to gain the same meaning as *magni*, the prefix of the definite article, or the addition of the word *men*. I have confined myself, with rare exceptions, strictly to Latin, and this for two reasons. First, Latin is the only language which I have studied with sufficient care to enable me to speak with any confidence about its Grammar, and I have learnt in the process how little trustworthy are the results of an incomplete examination. Greek I have referred to in Books I. and III. because of its close connexion with Latin, and I could rely, for the purposes for which I have used it, on Curtius' *Griechische Etymologie*. The Italian dialects, other than Latin, I have studied but little. Such results, as can be drawn from the scanty remains which we have, will probably be found in Corsen's pages, but I hesitate to regard them as sufficiently solid to allow one to rest any theories of Latin Grammar upon them. My second reason for declining frequent reference to other languages, is the belief that such reference is incompatible with a natural treatment of my own proper subject. Each language has its own individuality, and this is distorted or disguised by being subjected to a set of general categories, even though

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guaranteed by Comparative Philology. It is no doubt true that progress in the knowledge of language is to be attained only, as in other sciences, by the constant action and reaction of theory and observation; of the comparison of phenomena in different languages with the special investigation of each for itself. I have chosen the latter part of the work, without supposing that all the secrets of Latin etymology could be discovered by so limited a view. But it is true all the same, that if one's eyes are but armed or practised (and some study of Comparative Philology alone can arm them), a closer and longer gaze detects something which might otherwise be overlooked.

Lastly, this is a Grammar of Latin *from Plautus to Suetonius*. That is to say, I have confined my statements of facts and lists of words or forms (except with distinct mention) to the period from the commencement of Latin literature to the end of the silver age, i. e., roughly speaking, to the three centuries from cir. 200 B.C. to cir. 120 A.D. There are but few inscriptions before 200 B.C. What there are I have of course taken into account. On the other hand, the imperial inscriptions which come within this period are not yet conveniently accessible in trustworthy texts. The silver age I take to end at latest with Tacitus and Suetonius¹, and I am convinced that this is as real a division with the line drawn at the right place, as literature admits of. It is quite remarkable how many forms and words are wholly confined to later writers or are used in common with only one or two rare instances in Pliny the elder, Suetonius, &c. Nor can any subsequent writer be fairly regarded as within the pale. The literature of the second century p. Chr. is but small. Aulus Gellius and Fronto are near in time, being indeed contemporaries of Suetonius' later life, but their claims are vitiated by so much of their language being conscious antiquarianism. The lawyers Javolenus, Julianus, Pomponius, Gaius, &c. have perhaps the strongest claim, for they naturally, as lawyers, use a somewhat older style than their age would imply. Their inclusion however would not noticeably affect the statements. But it is intolerable to find frequently given, in modern Grammars, without a word of warning, forms and words which owe their existence to Apuleius or Tertullian—imaginative antiquarian Africans, far removed indeed from insig-

¹ Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* date about 120 A.D., though he lived to cir. 160 A.D. Teuffel, *Gesch. Röm. Lit.* § 324.

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nificance, and not at all wanting in interest, but certainly not representative of the ordinary or normal language of the Romans. Some other writers, e.g. Justin, Florus, &c. are of too uncertain an age, and too unimportant, to be worth considering. Writers of the third and fourth century, however good, are quite inadmissible. Nor am I at all disposed to attach weight to a mention of a word or form in Priscian or other Grammarians, unless accompanied by a clearly intelligible quotation from an author before 120 A.D., or thereabouts. I do not mean that distinct proof can or need be alleged e.g. for every person of every tense of an ordinary verb; but any typical form not shewn to have been used in the period here taken, ought to be excluded from a Grammar of Classical Latin, or mentioned only with the authority affixed. E.g. **indultum** is usually given as the supine of **indulgere**, but neither it nor its kin (**indultor**, &c.) are found before Tertullian; and this fact is seen to be important when it is observed that they deviate from the regular analogy of stems in **-ig** (§ 191, 3), and that their occurrence is in fact contemporaneous with the use of **indulgeri** as a personal passive. Again, I have said in § 395 that **quercus** has no dative singular or dat. abl. plural. But Servius uses (and the form seems right enough) **quercibus** (*Neue*, i. p. 376). It should be understood therefore that a statement in the following pages that a form or word is not found, does not necessarily mean more than that it is not found within the classical period. A form or word first found in subsequent writers may be legitimate enough, and the absence of authority for it may be only accidental, but in such cases the subsequent use does not appear to me to add anything to the evidence for its legitimacy; i.e. it does not make it more probable that Cicero or Livy, or Horace, or Quintilian, or even Plautus might have used it. The character of the formation and the probability that, if no objections had been felt to lie against it, it would have been used by some now extant author, who wrote before 120 A.D., form the real turning-points of such a discussion. And to gain a firm basis for the discussion we must have the facts of the normal Latin usage clear from later and inferential accretions. Corssen has made his wonderful collection of facts much less useful than it might have been, by not distinguishing *always* between later and earlier forms. Of course an exclusion of the later forms from a book like his is not at all

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to be desired; but it is thoroughly misleading to put together words first found in the 4th century of the Christian Era, along with well-known words belonging to the ordinary language of the Romans. To take one instance—(hundreds might be given); he adduces (*Beitr.* p. 107; *Ausspr.* i. § 77) nine substantives in *-ēdīn* (*ēdōn*, as I call it), which he says are from verbs with *-e* stems, and stand beside six adjectives in *-īdo*, from six of the same verbs. Now the six adjectives are all well accredited. But of the nine substantives, two only (*torpedo*, *gravedo*) are well accredited; one more (*pingvedo*) occurs once in Pliny the elder, and then not again till the 4th century: one other (*frigedo*) is quoted by Nonius from Varro; three others are first found in Apuleius, two more not until the 4th century p. Chr. Now these last five words are probably mere creations of a later age in conscious imitation of the earlier words, and, it may be, imitating them, *because* they were rare. But as soon as we get to conscious imitation by literary speculators, the value of the words as evidence of the proper development of the language is gone.

[Another instance may be taken. Gustav Meyer, in an interesting essay on *Composition in Greek and Latin* in *Curtius Studien* v. 1. p. 42, quotes from Corssen 11². 318, as proofs “that the weakening of *a*, *o*, *u* to *i* in compounds was not always the rule” (nicht von je her überwiegend üblich), the examples *sacro-sanctus*, *Sacrovir*, *Ahenobarbus*, *primogenitus*, *mulomedicus*, *albo-galerus*, *albo-gilvus*, *merobiba*, *sociofraudus*, *vicomagister*, and says that “these justify the supposition that originally the *o*-stems entered unaltered into composition.” I take these words in order.

Sacro-sanctus is not an ordinary compound, but its precise components are not clear. I have suggested (§ 998) that it is possibly a spurious compound. For in Pliny 7. § 143 we have *resistendi sacroque sanctum repellendi jus non esset*. Probably *sacro* is an ablative, *by a sacrifice*; or *victim*; or *curse*. *Sacrovir* is only known as the name of a Hæduan in Tacitus. The origin of the name is obscure. Is it Roman at all? The first *Ahenobarbus* of whom we have any historical account held office about 200 years B.C., though the family traditions carried the origin of the name to the battle of Lake Regillus. *Primogenitus* appears to be first found in Palladius: (in Pliny 11. § 234, I find (in Detlefsen and Jan’s editions) only

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primis genitis). *Mulomedicus* is in Vegetius; *albogalerus* in the extracts of Paulus from Festus. *Merobiba* and *sociofraudus* are each found once only in Plautus. They are evidently compounds framed on the spur of the moment and not part of the ordinary stock of the language. Moreover *sociofraudus* must retain the *o* after *i*. *Vicomagister* appears to be found only in the barbarous *Curiosum urbis Romæ regimen*, which is referred to the end of the 4th century p. Chr.

Of the whole number of ten words, one only (*Ahenobarbus*) can be taken as an instance of some weight for the matter in question.]

My authorities then are the writers of the classical period as above defined; and I have not knowingly admitted, without distinct mention, any word which they have not used, or made any statement which their writings critically examined do not justify. But Donat and Priscian have so long reigned over Latin Grammar, and Latin Grammar has so impregnated literary speculation, that it is next to impossible, if it were desirable, to emancipate oneself from their influence. Still it is important to decline to recognize them as authorities for the grammatical usage of classical Latin, except where they may be taken to be witnesses to facts. They no doubt had access to some writings which are now lost, and they often transmit the theories of older grammarians; but they no doubt also sometimes misunderstood them, they avowedly regarded Greeks as their supreme authorities, they lived when Latin had long ceased to be pure, and they probably would have regarded a statement by Cæsar or Pliny of what ought to be said, as of more importance than the actual fact of what Cæsar or Pliny did say. But it is to the usage, not to the grammatical theories, of good writers that we should look for our standard of right. And for my part, if canons of grammar are to be laid down, I prefer Madvig to any
xxii Roman whatever, and believe Ritschl and Mommsen know a great deal more about the Duellian inscription (§ 467) than Quintilian did.

The arrangement adopted requires a few words.

In Book I. I have thought it important to give a sketch, however slight, of the analysis of vocal sound and of the laws of phonetic change. The special Latin phenomena are treated at some length; but I have been desirous rather that the instances given

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should be tolerably certain, than that all possible instances should be included. In most grammars these phenomena are collected and arranged under the heads of *Omission, Contraction, &c.* If any one desires such an arrangement, he can make it for himself, by simply turning to those heads under each letter. But as the primary division of the matter it seems to me much more natural and fruitful to make each particular letter the centre of discussion. Whether it be changed or inserted or absorbed must ultimately depend on the sound it represents and on the relations of this sound to others. The ordinary procedure is the same as if a treatise on chemistry arranged all the phenomena of chemical action under such heads as *Explosion, Solution, Combination, &c.* Schweizer-Sidler's arrangement by the affections of *groups* of letters is rational enough, but not, I think, very convenient.

I have distinguished with some care between instances of *correspondence* and *representation* (see note on p. 24). The distinction of these two classes of phenomena is ignored in many of the earlier grammars, and is still not unfrequently forgotten. Yet the distinction is of great moment. In questions of pronunciation *representation* gives very important evidence, while *correspondence* witnesses at most to the pronunciation of primæval or at least præ-historical times. On the other hand, in discussing the affinities of language, *correspondence* bears the whole weight of the argument, and *representation* can only mislead.

The arrangement of the letters has been adopted as the one which best brings into connexion allied sounds. Gutturals have a tendency to pass into dentals, and dentals into linguals; and these classes should therefore come in this order. Labials form a class somewhat apart from the rest, and I have therefore put them first, out of the way. The relations of the nasals are on the whole more with the labials, gutturals, and dentals respectively than with xxiii one another. The order of the vowels is that given by Ritschl, and is the same to a great extent as that given by Corssen. It is without doubt, so far at least as it is common to these two authors, the order of development in the history of the language. Any one referring to Bell's *Visible Speech* (p. 73), will see that the order has a physiological side also, in so far that the vocal cavity of the mouth is progressively diminished from a in this order to i.

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I have not followed Schleicher and others in the treatment of Latin vocalization according to what for brevity I may call Sanskrit principles. This method applied to Latin seems to me to fail both in basis and result. Corssen's elaborate treatment of vowel-intensification in the first volume of his new edition is not more satisfactory; and on this point I can refer to Curtius (*Studien*, I. 2, p. 294) who, commenting on Corssen's sanguine view of the result of his medley collection of long vowels in root-syllables, suffixes and endings, points out that vowel-intensification is "after all only a name for the fact that we often meet with a long vowel, when we expect a short one." The parts of my Grammar which deal with *contraction*, *hiatus*, *change of vowel quantity*, &c., are far from being what I should like; but there is a great difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory conclusions, owing to our ignorance of the precise quality and quantity of the vowels, which were, or may be regarded as having been, the components of the long vowel or diphthong, *at the time* when the long vowel or diphthong first arose. Our knowledge of the language begins at a later period, when this process was already over, and we have therefore not facts enough for the historical method. I have little right to speak on such a matter, but I venture to think that the greatest light upon this branch of philology is now to be expected from strengthening the theoretical side of this investigation, but strengthening it not so much by the study of literature and grammar as in Sanskrit, but by a more accurate study of the physiological conditions, and by a closer contact with nature as exhibited in groups of dialects of living tongues. But the application to Latin must in any case be difficult.

In Book II. I have regarded the main division as twofold only, Nouns and Verbs. Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions, have place ^{xxiv} here only as being originally parts of nouns or verbs. Numerals, as I have said before, have no right to a separate place at all: they are either adjectives or substantives or adverbs, and should be classed accordingly. (For convenience they are also given, in the ordinary arrangement, in Appendix D.) Pronouns are similarly referable to the other classes.

Understanding by a *declension* a mode of forming the cases by

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a separate set of inflexions, I have made two declensions only instead of five. The distinction of the stem is subordinate to this. At the same time it did not appear worth while to separate such forms as *filiabus* from the more usual forms, and put them under the head of the second class, to which they strictly belong. Pronouns are in their main features clearly words of the first class; but, as the genitive singular is differently formed throughout, they are here kept together in a separate chapter. *Qvis* of course belongs to the second class, but here again convenience seemed to forbid its separation from *qvi*.

The ordinary separation of substantives from adjectives, and the gradually growing tendency to confine the term *noun* to substantives, seem to me, in Latin at any rate, thoroughly wrong and misleading. The difference between substantives and adjectives is almost entirely syntactical, and, even as such, not so great as is generally assumed. What slight inflexional differences there are, will be found noted (cf. §§ 352, 403). The modification of adjectives to express degree in a comparison has clearly as little right to be put in Book II., instead of Book III., as the formation of diminutives, or any other common derivatives, which the language allowed to be formed very much at pleasure from any stem, because it retained a consciousness of the meaning of the suffix. (In Appendix C I have for convenience sake treated the matter more in the ordinary way.)

The formation of participles, &c. ought no doubt to be put in Book III.; but they have so much bearing on the inquiry into the nature of the verbal stem, that I have preferred to leave them as usual in Book II. The formation of the several parts of verbs has been treated under the appropriate heads. The endeavour to form the verbs into classes by combined consideration of their present and perfect and supine stems, as is done in Vanček's Grammar, after the analogy of Curtius' Greek Grammar, seems to me to lead to inconvenience without much compensatory advantage. Chapter xxx contains a list of so-called irregular verbs in alphabetical order, as being that which is far the most useful for ordinary reference.

I have followed the *Public Schools Primer* in putting generally the future instead of the imperfect next to the present tense.

It is very common, perhaps invariable, to prefix to Book II. a classification of the Parts of Speech. So far as this bears on

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xxvi PREFACE: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Book II. I have briefly touched it. But in the main it is of a syntactical nature, and in Book IV. it will therefore be found.

It may surprise some readers to see so imperfect an explanation of the meaning and origin of the inflexions of nouns and verbs. Where I have seen my way tolerably clearly, I have briefly stated the view which appeared most probable, but in many cases I have preferred merely to mention views entertained by others; in some cases I have stopped short at the facts, and left the origin untouched. This indeed seems to me, at any rate at present, the proper position of a Latin grammarian. What can be deduced from the facts of the historical language comes fairly within his province, but more than this can only be done by the light derived from other languages. And greater agreement among philologers is necessary before any theory of the precise origin and meaning of these inflexions can claim more than a very subordinate place in a grammar of historical Latin.

In Book III. will be found fuller lists of Latin words, arranged under their endings, than I have seen in any other grammar, except Leo Meyer's (which has too the advantage of containing lists of Greek words as well as of Latin). My lists are distinguished from his in two ways. His embrace a great many words, often without notice, which are only found in writers after the silver age; and the arrangement is more subjective and consequently less convenient than that which I have adopted. There is no doubt that almost any arrangement made on some principle brings together words which have a claim for common consideration and thereby may give rise to useful result. The ordinary arrangement, when of an etymological character, has been to class compound endings under ^{xxvi} the first part of the suffix, not the last¹. This seems to me wrong both as matter of convenience and theory. A word is not so easy to find, because the analysis is more uncertain: and the practice contradicts the essential character of a (Latin) suffix, that

¹ Key's *Grammar* is an exception. See his tables in pp. 26, 28, 8, 39.

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it is applied *at the end* of a word. Of course if we were quite certain what is suffix, what is root, either arrangement (i.e. by the first part of the suffix or by the last) would be in some sort natural. But when to the uncertainty, which in many words there is on this point, is added the fact, that though some compound suffixes are apparently used as if they were simple, and are appended at once to a root or simple stem, yet in the majority of cases the last part only of the suffix is to be regarded as truly suffixal in the feeling and apprehension of the people, the safest plan seems to be that followed in the present volume; viz. giving all the words of any importance and certainty, and arranging them under the final suffix, or that final part which, if anything, would be the suffix, or which is at least parallel to what is suffixed in other stems.

There are other principles of division which are followed in some grammars either with or without the above. One is the separation of substantives from adjectives and enumeration of the suffixes under these supreme heads. Besides the general objection to such a division, which I have spoken of before, the lists will shew, that in far the majority of instances the suffixes or endings belong to both classes, and the separation of them is cumbrous and misleading.

Another division is according to the part of speech from which the derivatives are formed. This again is liable to the same objections. Many substantives are not so different from adjectives as to render it desirable to establish any sharp distinction between their respective progenies. And though some suffixes are particularly or exclusively applied in derivatives from verbs, others in derivatives from nouns, or, subordinately, from substantives or adjectives, many have no such particular or exclusive attachment.

To treat the 'derivation of adverbs' as coordinate to the derivation of nouns and verbs, is the same as it would be to treat so the derivation of the several persons of a verb or cases of a noun. So far as an adverb is formed with derivative suffixes &c., of the same kind as adjectives, they may belong here, but most adverbs are merely cases of nouns.

Many words formed, so far as we know, directly from a root are, as I have implied (see also § 748), included in these lists. Where any tolerably certain indication of the meaning of these roots was