LATIN WORDS
of Common English

BY

EDWIN LEE JOHNSON, A.M., Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LATIN AND GREEK
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

In the Classical Investigation of a few years ago the most widely approved ultimate objective of secondary Latin study was found to be the "increased ability to understand exactly and use accurately English words of Latin origin." Since that time the new textbooks, especially those for the first-year courses, have emphasized this feature of the study. The value of this emphasis is manifest in the elementary class: English words take on new meaning, and interest is aroused in the persistent life of an ancient language sometimes reported to be dead. But as the student proceeds with his courses in Latin or his reading in English, it is no longer enough for him to recognize English words of Latin origin; he has a right to know something further of the how and why of forms and meanings. Why do we have 'expose' but 'exponent,' 'invention' but 'pension'? How is 'royal' related to 'regal'? What of the *b* of 'humble' from *humilis*, or the *sh* of 'finish' from *finio?* What connection of meaning between 'Jove' and 'jovial,' between 'hearse' and 'rehearse,' between Latin *posse* and English 'posse'? When and how came the Latin words into English? Hundreds of questions like these the student may ask, and he deserves to be answered. It is to satisfy such a need that this volume has been prepared. Its purpose is to supplement what the elementary textbooks may have given and point the way to further study. It continues the story of Latin words at home and abroad, in church and market place, in court and camp; words formed and transformed, used and abused, from the time of the Caesars till the present day; words, finally, revealing a kinship with those of our own speech from a very remote period of the past.

The long story is to be told briefly: "a big book is a big evil." The account here given must not be technical; it cannot be exhaustive. It is important rather that the presentation of the subject be understandable for the student, serviceable to the teacher, and convenient for any who may have occasion to consult the book. Brevity and simplicity will mean a wider usefulness.

The "common English" of the title is the English of our ordinary reading, whether in the newspaper and the magazine or in our standard literature. Scientific terms are excluded, but the line between the scientific and the common is not always easy to draw. 'Mandamus,' 'coefficient,' 'dementia,' belong to certain special fields of study, yet the layman may meet them in his casual reading. Linguistic principles are given only as they may be illustrated in derived or cognate English words. Thus, while the book may find its primary place in the Latin class, it is an English study as well, and in fact only a slight acquaintance with Latin is prerequisite to its use.

While this work was in preparation I sent copies of a prospectus to a large number of teachers, with a request for criticisms. For the encouragement offered and the helpful suggestions made in replies from these teachers I am sincerely thankful. Particularly I am indebted to Professor Roland G. Kent of the University of Pennsylvania, who has aided me in dealing with several perplexing questions. I am under obligation also to Professor R. B. Steele of Vanderbilt University and to Professor W. L. Carr of Teachers College, Columbia University, for their critical reading of the manuscript, and to Professor Walter H. Storer of Vanderbilt University for valuable assistance on the chapter dealing with French-English forms.

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ABBREVIATIONS

abl., ablative

acc., accusative

adj., adjective

AF, Anglo-French, the French current in England after the Norman Conquest

AS, Anglo-Saxon (Old English), to approximately A.D. 1100

Cl. Lat., Classical Latin, approximately 100 B.C. to A.D. 100

dim., dimin., diminutive

Eng., English

fem., feminine

Fr., French

Germ., German

Grk., Greek

inf., infinitive

Ital., Italian

Lat., Latin

lit., literally

Low Lat., Low or Vulgar Latin, Latin of the common crowd (vulgus); see 158, 159

masc., masculine

Med. Lat., Mediæval Latin, approximately A.D. 476–1500

Mid. Eng., Middle English, approximately A.D. 1100–1500

Mod., Modern

N., note

NED, A New English Dictionary; see Bibliography

nom., nominative

OF, Old French, approximately A.D. 600–1200

OHG, Old High German, to approximately A.D. 1100

Old Lat., or *O. Lat.*, Old Latin, before 100 B.C.

Old Sax., Old Saxon, the language of the Saxons while still in Germany

Old Sp., Old Spanish, to the twelfth century

pers., person

pf., perfect

pl., plural

Port., Portuguese

pple., participle

pres., present

sing., singular

Sp., Spanish

voc., vocative

Cross-references are made by section numbers unless page is indicated (p.).

TYPOGRAPHICAL KEY

Latin words in boldfaced type:	**videre**
Meanings in italics:	*see*
Words cited from other languages than Latin (except in lists) in single quotation marks:	Fr. 'voir'
Derived words in small capitals:	VISION
Cognate words in boldfaced italics:	***wit***

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PART III — COGNATE WORDS

PART I

THE HISTORY OF LATIN WORDS
IN ENGLISH

CHAPTER I

ROME AND THE ANGLO–SAXONS

1. At the time of Rome's first contact with Britain, the inhabitants of the island were of the Celtic race, a people related in life and language to the Greeks, the Romans, and the Germans, as members of the great Indo-European family (220). In the spring of 58 B.C. Julius Caesar as governor of Gaul had begun his campaigns among those other Celtic tribes north of the Alps, and in two and a half years the Roman legions carried their conquests as far as the western coast. From here Caesar resolved to pass over into Britain, if to do nothing more than to visit the island, observe its people, and learn something of its geography, for it was then, for the most part, an unknown country to the people of the continent. Late in August 55 B.C. he landed with two legions near the present site of Dover, defeated the Britons in battle, and in less than a month returned to his camp on the Gallic coast.[1]

The next year he crossed the Channel again and advanced as far as the Thames, but, as Tacitus tells us, although he frightened the inhabitants by his success in arms and gained possession of the coast, he may be said to have directed attention to the country rather than to have conquered it.[2] Not until 43 A.D., during the reign of Claudius, was the conquest of the island undertaken again. At this time the Romans founded a colony, the beginning of an occupation that by the end of the first century had firmly established the power of the Empire in this new territory. Under this

[1] Caesar, *Gallic War*, IV, 20–36.
[2] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 13; Caesar, *Gallic War*, V, 8–23.

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power rose walled towns in the midst of cultivated and productive fields, a great system of military roads was introduced, forts and works of defence were constructed, tyrannical governors were put in charge, and the native Celts reduced to practical slavery. For three centuries this oppressive rule continued; then with the year 410 the legions were called away, for Rome, the conqueror of the barbarians, was herself threatened by the barbarian invaders from the north.

Thus was begun an intercourse between a great empire of antiquity and what was to become a great empire of modern times, an intercourse which in time should influence the language of that later people more profoundly than it influenced their political and military life. It was, however, a meager beginning as far as language was concerned. These Celts adopted but few words from their enemies. During the long period of Roman occupation, while Latin probably became common enough in the cities and among the educated classes, the great mass of the native population, in marked contrast to what had happened in Gaul and Spain, held tenaciously to their own speech. And upon the withdrawal of the Romans the Celtic language resumed its place with few traces of Latin remaining.

2. Before we inquire what these traces were, there are other characters to be presented in our story. The Roman conquest had never extended beyond the Forth, and the departure of the legions opened the way for the Picts and the Scots of the north to have their turn at their neighbors in the south, weakened as they were by the centuries of Rome's oppression, and plundered by pirate bands along their coast. These Britons in their desperate situation, according to Bede's account,[1] invited the German tribes along the North Sea, those indeed who had furnished the pirates, to come to their aid. In the year 449 a band of Jutes under the leadership of Hengist and Horsa, responding

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[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 11–12.

to the call, not only drove back the Picts and the Scots but also found territory for themselves. They were followed in 477 by their kinsmen the Saxons, and later (547) by the Angles, who eventually gave their name to the country (Angle-land). If modern historical research, no longer venerating the Venerable Bede, discredits much of the story and finds that Hengist and Horsa were but mythical characters or symbolic names, the fact remains that there settled in Britain, beginning in the fifth century or earlier, many immigrants belonging to the Low German branch of the Teutonic people, and the language which they spoke and which came to be called the Anglo-Saxon was in reality a German dialect.

3. Long before these people left their continental home, they had felt the influence of Roman civilization, and Roman soldiers pressing northward in the German wars had left their imprint on the German language. Especially words of Latin origin found as a common possession of other German groups, as well as of the invaders of Britain, may reasonably be assigned to a period prior to their separation. However, scholars are not agreed as to just what Latin words Jutes, Angles, and Saxons had adopted before their migration, and any list of such words may need revision as we consult this or that new authority. The significant fact is that our continental ancestors met and talked with Roman troops and traders and found some of their words worth borrowing, and German tribes invading Roman provinces brought back Latin terms which became widely adopted. Furthermore, whatever words may be ruled out of this group must be ruled into another received a little later when these Germans met the Latin influence again in Britain, and the result is much the same both for our Anglo-Saxon forebears and for us.

4. Whether blazing the way before the army or following in its rear, the Roman trader was as nearly omnipresent as

Roman power. He was known as mango, or establishing a shop and an inn, he became caupo. Suspiciously like mango is the Anglo-Saxon word 'mangere,' later altered into MONGER, still preserved in compounds like fish-MONGER and scandal-MONGER. Caupo apparently passed into the German 'kaufen,' the Anglo-Saxon 'ceapian,' *buy*, the noun 'ceap,' *price* or *market* (as in 'Cheapside'), and our adjective CHEAP, as indicating the good bargain we have made or missed. And apparently we have kept from CHAP-man, *trading-man*, the colloquial CHAP. The caupones must have known their patrons, for their chief article of merchandise seems to have been vinum. The Germans took it name and all, called it 'win,' and passed it on to us as WINE. Even the cup from which they drank it was Latin (though originally Greek), 'calic,' from calix, calicis, which was afterward lost but borrowed again both in the French form CHALICE and in the Greek form CALYX. BUTTER and CHEESE were probably in the merchant's stock, the one a Greek word, 'butyrum' (βούτυρον), AS 'butere,' the other Lat. caseus, AS 'cese.' A receptacle was cista (Grk.); the German repeats it as 'cist,' later to be pronounced CHEST, although Middle English kept also 'chiste,' and indeed some even yet, uncontaminated by learning, would call it 'chist.' Catillus, *a little bowl* (cf. catinulus), diminutive of catinus, *a bowl*, became AS 'cetel' or 'cytel' and later, perhaps from Scandinavian influence (20), KETTLE, sometimes called 'kittle'; culter, *knife*, was received as 'culter'; then COLTER and COULTER. Grain was ground at a MILL (*i.e.*, 'miln'), the Lat. molina, adopted as 'mylen' or 'myln'; or it was pounded in a MORTAR, AS 'mortere,' from mortarium, a word received again centuries later through the OF 'mortier.' Some of this food needs to be cooked and our primitive kinsman learns the process and takes the noun coquus (later cocus) as 'coc,' COOK, while the place of cooking, coquina, becomes 'cycene' or 'cicen,' and we know it as KITCHEN.

5. Of fruits and vegetables the Lat. **pirum** (through a late fem. **pira**) is represented in Anglo-Saxon by 'pera' or 'peru,' our PEAR; **prunum** (Grk.) became 'plume,' PLUM.[1] **Cerasum** became 'ciris' or 'cirs,' CHERRIES, as **pisum** (**pisa**) became 'pise,' PEAS, but CHERRY and PEA were of later development (CHERRY, 202). For serving food there was the 'disc,' *i.e.*, DISH, the Lat. (Grk.) **discus**. Articles sold by weight introduced the Lat. **pondus** or **pondo** (lit. *by weight*), to become 'pund,' later POUND (172). The Grk.-Lat. **sericum**, from 'Seres' as a name for the Chinese, came to be 'seolc,' SILK;[1] so there arose a need for lineal measurement and **uncia** was adopted as 'ynce,' INCH. **Uncia** meant *a twelfth part* (of a foot), practically our inch, the Roman foot (**pes**) being 11.65 inches of our measure.

6. Wares were paid for with a coin which the native called 'mynet,' furnishing us MINT as a place for making coins. But the Latin was **moneta**, so used because the Roman mint was in the temple of Juno Moneta, the latter name being that of an ancient goddess in classical times identified with Juno. This same **moneta** at a later time became MONEY (OF 'moneie'). The road built for the passage of the army was **via strata**, *paved way* (**sternere, stratus**, *strew*), and the participle was kept as 'straet,' STREET (cf. Germ. 'Strasse'). And on this road a measure of distance, 'mil,' a MILE, was adopted from the Lat. **milia**, in the sense of **mille passus**, *a thousand* (double) *steps*, or *paces* (plural **milia passuum**). SATURDay, the only name of a day of the week drawn from Latin, may possibly be listed with this group. It is a half translation of **Saturni dies**, *the day of* (the planet) *Saturn*, and in Anglo-Saxon was 'Saeternes-daeg.'

7. The words thus far cited are nouns, but a few adjectives may also belong to this period. CRISP from Latin **crispus**,

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[1] PLUM and SILK must have come indirectly from Latin or Greek, evidently through some language that changed the *r* to *l*.

curling, has been assigned here, and some regard Low Lat. **excurtus** (Lat. **curtus**) as responsible for AS 'sceort,' with its threefold survival in SHORT, SHIRT, and SKIRT (20).

We are not surprised that these Latin forms were somewhat altered upon their adoption, for they came by word of mouth; the speaker's Latin was far from perfect and his hearers were quite like the rest of us in misunderstanding strange words.

It is noticeable that practically all these words are simple terms for concrete and commonplace things. Language always reflects life. Our German ancestor at this time dealt not in abstractions, nor did he care for philosophy. His concern was what he should eat, what he should drink, and, in some degree, wherewithal he should be clothed. And had he desired the abstract and the philosophic, he could hardly have obtained them from the Roman soldier or the Roman trader.

8. Something like this then — possibly less than this — was the Latin vocabulary which the Low German tribes, later known as Anglo-Saxons, carried with them when they came into Britain forty years and more after the Romans had left the island. The Latin words they were to find there were the very few which had been kept over by the Celts. The Romans soon after their arrival had constructed here also a military road from the present Richborough near Dover to their permanent camp on the River Dee (**Deva**). This **via strata**, the name perhaps lingering here just as among the Germans, was the beginning of the road-building in Britain which has left to the present day its evidence of how well these Romans wrought. **Strata** was kept with variant spelling in a number of names of places, as STRATford, *Street-ford;* STREATham, *Street-home;* STRATton, *Street-town.* The camp was **castra**, which became AS 'ceaster' and survived also in the names of towns (eventually meaning *town*), -CASTER in the north, -CESTER in the midland country, and -CHESTER in the south. So we have the following:

CHESTER, AS 'Ceaster,' the *camp*.

COLCHESTER, AS 'Colnceaster,' the *camp on the River Colne*.

DONCASTER, AS 'Doneceaster,' the *camp on the River Don*.

EXETER, shortened from 'Ex-an-ceaster,' the *camp on the Exe*, or *stream*.

GLOUCESTER, AS 'Gleaw-ceaster' or 'Gleawan-ceaster,' **Glevum** being the Roman name of the place, and variously explained as *bright, fair*, or connected with **glaeba**, *soil*, GLEBE.

LEICESTER, possibly for **Legionis-castra**, *camp of the legion*.

MANCHESTER, AS 'Mameceaster,' 'Mamechestre,' etc., a combination of the British name of the place (probably 'Mamucio') with **castra**.

PORCHESTER, for 'Port-ceaster,' Lat. **portus**, the *harbor camp*.

ROCHESTER, AS 'Hrofes-ceaster,' *Hrof's camp*.

WINCHESTER, AS 'Wintan-ceaster,' 'wintan' meaning the *plain* or *open country*, the *camp of the plain*.

WORCESTER, AS 'Wigera-ceastre,' 'Wygracestre,' 'Wirecestre,' and many other forms, the first element being a local British name.

9. About the camp the Romans constructed a wall and a ditch, **vallum** and **fossa**. **Vallum** remained in the Celtic speech to be passed on to the newcomers as 'wal,' then WALL; **fossa** was kept in certain names, combining with native words, as Fossway, Fossbrooke, and Fossbridge. **Portus,** *harbor*, became PORT, and likewise entered into proper names, like FreePORT and PORTsmouth.[1] Vicus, *a village*, seems to survive in AS 'wic,' which remains in WarWICK and GreenWICH.[2] **Colonia**, COLONY, *a settlement of soldiers*, may explain '-coln' of LinCOLN, as also COLNE. **Lacus**, AS 'lacu,' later LAKE, and **mont-em**, AS 'munt,' MOUNT, also probably belong to this period. Even if a word or two of the group

[1] We may not in all cases be certain whether PORT in local names represents **portus**, *a harbor*, or **porta**, *a gate*, since it early came to mean a market town and the distinction of 'harbor town' might not be kept.

[2] On the continent also OHG '-wich' was a *dwelling-place* or *town*, Dutch 'wijk,' *a district*. Compounds made with this as a native word and those with -WICH (-WICK) from **vicus** cannot always be distinguished.