

# LEARNING LATIN ACCIDENCE AND VOCABULARY WITH THE

## AID OF LINGUISTICS AND PHILOLOGY

B.E. Lewis, University of Port Elizabeth

### 1. DESPERATE REMEDIES

With the virtual extinction of Latin as a school subject an unfortunate reality, teachers need to try to devise new methods of making the subject interesting, and, if possible, to reduce the large amount of rote learning it demands. A valid reason for Latin's bad press is its notorious number of irregular forms. If a teacher can, by the Socratic method, guide pupils into explaining why apparent anomalies are in fact "regular irregularities",<sup>1</sup> then the more curious pupils will regard Latin as an intellectual challenge. The material suggested here correlates with the aims stated in the draft core syllabus laid down by the Department of Education and Culture for Latin Higher grade, Standard 6 and beyond.<sup>2</sup>

Firstly I think we need to drive home to pupils that Latin was a living language and that it shows the same signs of being a spoken language as the English or Afrikaans of here and now. Pupils would of course not be expected to remember the linguistic facts; once they have been given, they may be forgotten, but they could be useful to jog the memory in case of a lapse. The material is presented here systematically, but it is left to the teacher's discretion to sense what his class can grasp, and he will be guided by the order of presentation in the textbook he is using.

### 2. SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ONE

Though *Latin for today* is no longer in vogue in the 1990s, I still find the introduction on Latin's position in relation to modern languages<sup>3</sup> a good starting-point for the first lesson. In order to make known his empathy with the pupil, the teacher could consider reading the following extract from *Jude the obscure*, which tells about the ambition of a young man to learn Latin and Greek and eventually to study at Oxford.

"Jude had meditated much and curiously on the probable sort of process that was involved in turning the expressions of one language into another. He concluded that the grammar of the required tongue would contain, primarily, a rule, prescription, or clue of the nature

---

<sup>1</sup> I owe this humorous paradox to the late Mr. Milne, who taught me my first Greek at Rhodes. With his lively method of tuition he used to quiz the class to explain how, for instance, *genous*, the genitive singular of *genos*, was in fact no exception to the rule of the third declension gen. sg. ending in *-os*.

<sup>2</sup> See 1.1.1 (a) "gain an insight into the structure of language" and (g) "improve their working vocabulary in a multilingual situation by attention to questions of etymology".

<sup>3</sup> *Latin for today Part 1*, pp.xv-xx explains how the Romance languages came into being (through Norman French, and through borrowings which retain their original forms, and which have undergone changes). While one of the cultural aims of the school syllabus is to impart "some knowledge of the derivatives of the Lingua Romana" (1.1.3 (c)), this paper suggests giving pupils a glimpse of a much earlier stage. See also Kennedy par. 1.

of a secret cipher, which once known, would enable him, by merely applying it, to change at will all words of his own speech into those of the foreign one."<sup>4</sup>

Little did Hardy himself know that, although there was not a secret trick to acquiring grammar, a new field of scholarship was being opened up in the 19th century, which could help the beginner to learn vocabulary and which shows the ways in which words change their forms. This was because thousands of years ago one language was spoken in most parts of Europe and India. In the same way as Afrikaans is descended from Dutch, so Latin, Greek, the early forms of Dutch, German, Anglo-Saxon and the languages spoken in much of eastern Europe and the Indian subcontinent arose from this very ancient language. One can help to bridge the gap between Latin and English or Afrikaans by mentioning that they share some characteristics due to their common descent from the same family of languages. In the course of time languages tend to become simpler - which is why we find ancient languages so complicated.

Some simple illustrations of the process by which consonants changed between Latin and Dutch/Afrikaans and English are as follows:

*maTer* =<sup>5</sup> *moTHer* = *moeDer*; *fraTer* = *broTHer* = *broeDer*;  
*aGer* = *aCre* = *aKker*; *eGo* = *eK*;  
*Porcus* = *Vark*; *Pater* = *Vader* = *Father*;  
*Flos* = *Blossom*; *Frater* = *Brother* = *Broeder*.

(See Section 4 below for more complete information.)

In order to stress the spoken nature of Latin, the teacher could try a practical demonstration. The class could be asked to experiment, perhaps in pairs, and then say whether they thought *scriptum* or *scribium* was the right form. The answer would create the realisation that organs of speech act in the same way, whether the speakers be Romans two thousand years ago or South Africans today, and that the ear and speech-organs are a fairly reliable guide to deciding which is the correct form, even though the pupil knows nothing of a language. This is certain to build confidence. It needs to be impressed on the pupil that sounds and words work in systems, and that languages are not conglomerations of isolated elements.<sup>6</sup> Another exercise to make the pupils aware of how sounds behave, is to let them put the finger over the larynx and feel the difference between the voiced consonants *b*, *d*, *g*, and the voiceless *p*, *t*, *c*. They may also discover empirically which other consonants are voiced and voiceless, and which are labials, plosives, palatals, dentals, nasals, liquids, sibilants<sup>7</sup> and semivowels.<sup>8</sup>

---

4 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the obscure*, cap. 4.

5 The symbol /=/ is used to designate "is connected with", or "is related to", but not "is identical with".

6 This suits the linguistic aims of the syllabus, viz. 1.1.1 (a) and (b).

7 See Kennedy par. 6.

8 Two other points need clarification: (a) While /i/ and /u/ are vowels, both long and short, they sometimes merge as it were into the consonants /y/ and /w/, as can be seen in the pronunciation of *see-Ying* and *do-Wing*, as opposed to *see* and *do*. It is for this reason that *i* and *u* are called semi-vowels. In Latin, no doubt due to an awareness of the /ij/ relationship, there was no difference in script between the vowel and the consonant *i* as in *in* and *iam*. The English *corlander* and Afrikaans *kolJander* illustrate that this ambiguity between the vowel and consonant forms exists even today. Where Latin has the vowel *u* English has consonant *w*, e.g. *vidUa* = *widoW*, *sUdor* = *sWeat*. (b) The so-called liquid consonants, *l* and *r*, are sometimes used interchangeably, e.g. there is no *r* sound in Chinese and no *l* in Japanese, and there is also the difference between the English *coRiander* and Afrikaans *kolJander*.

So far little Latin will have been taught on Day One, but a new perspective on the way in which languages work, will have been opened up. The rest of this article contains the factual material from which the adventurous teacher may like to draw.<sup>9</sup> It will require time to make transparencies to illustrate the facts, and it is left to the teacher to decide whether the pupil's sensitivity to language is worth his effort. If he has reservations about the proposals, he may at least try drawing a diagram of *sum* (as given below), to see if pupils remember the forms more easily.

### 3. SOME RULES IN LANGUAGE THAT WE APPLY UNSELF-CONSCIOUSLY

- 3.1 One of the commonest features in languages is the rule of assimilation. In English we say *iMpossible*, *iLliterate* but *iNdistinct*, though the prefix is *in-*. The *n* adjusts to a lip-sound when the next sound is also made with the lips. This rule accounts for changes in combinations with various consonants.
- 3.2 The opposite tendency of assimilation is dissimilation. As the word suggests, the change brings about difference instead of similarity. For instance Latin has *puRpura*, *maRmor*, but English has *puRpLe*, *maRbLe*.
- 3.3 Vowels change in the course of time. The country conquered by the southern German tribe, the Angles, was once called *Angleland*. Then the pronunciation changed to *Engleland*, and in fact the country is still called *Engeland* in Afrikaans. The modern spelling *England* gives us a frozen image, so to speak, of the pronunciation at an earlier stage.
- 3.4 In English and Afrikaans we find variation of the vowel sounds between different parts of speech, between singulars and plurals and in various stems of the verb, e.g. *sOng*, but *sIng*, *sAng*, *sUng*; *knOw*, *knEw*; *bEAR*, *bORE*; *sEE*, *sAW*; *gEt*, *gOr*; *mAN*, *mEN*; *mOUse*, *mIce*; *fOx*, *vIxen*;<sup>10</sup> Afrikaans *skJEt*, *skUt*, *skOOt*; *rUIk*, *rEUK*, and the Afrikaans *sterk verlede* deelwoord used as an adjective as in *gekOse*, *opgewOnde*, *geskrEwe*, and *aanbevOle* as opposed to *gekJEs*, *opwEn*, *geskryf* and *aanbevEEl*.
- 3.5 A consonant<sup>11</sup> may be inserted to make the change from one sound to another easier to pronounce, e.g. *HeNRy*, but *HeNDRik*; *ThoMPson* for *ThoM-Son*; Latin *caMeRa* and Afrikaans *kaMeR*, but English *chaMBer*; Latin *teNeR* but English *teNDeR*; *huMiLis*, but English *huMBLe*.
- 3.6 Consonants also change, as the *s* in the English *was*, which becomes *r* when it stands between vowels, giving rise to *were*. This phenomenon occurs in other languages too.
- 3.7 A vowel in English may have a certain quality in a specific position in the word, but when it occurs in a different syllable, it may change. To put it differently, where the accent falls in an English word sometimes determines the sound of the vowel. (Most

---

<sup>9</sup> The information presented here (which is partly covered by Kennedy parr.10-23) is a selection of topics studied in courses in comparative philology and the history of Latin. Unfortunately there are few universities world wide which teach the subject, and it is missing from the syllabus of Method of Latin. The facts are naturally oversimplified, but I think we can afford to take this risk, as we are not training philologists. Ideally the material could be treated in a one-day workshop for teachers.

<sup>10</sup> *Vixen* is from another dialect; *fixen* would correspond more closely to the masculine.

<sup>11</sup> Its technical term is a glide consonant.

often the stress occurs on the vowel in the first syllable, and the vowel in the syllable which does not begin the word becomes a nondescript sort of sound.) We say *mán* but *wóm<sub>a</sub>n*, *plóus* but *ímpious*, *pótent* but *ímp<sub>o</sub>tent*, *júry* but *ínj<sub>u</sub>ry*, *húm<sub>a</sub>n* but *humánity*.

- 3.8 There is a theory of "economy of effort", which is a polite way of saying that a sound becomes indistinct to save the speaker from the exertion of pronouncing all the components of a word with accuracy. Whatever the true reason, this trend is found in many languages. Examples which illustrate the loss of both consonants and whole syllables are: English *fo'c'sle* for *forecastle*, *ma'am* for *madam*, modern English *king* for Old English *cyning* (cf. Afrikaans *koning*); American English *plenny* for *plenty*, *gonna* for *going to*; Afrikaans *hanne* for *hande*, *soggens* for *des oggends*.

#### 4. THE IE (Indo-European) CONNECTION (or LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH SOUND LAWS)

Some hidden links between Latin and English and Afrikaans via the conversion of consonants from Latin to their mother tongue were presented as fare for the first lesson. Many other illustrations may be given. Sounds change along certain lines, and though linguists speak of sound laws, they should not be regarded as operating constantly like the laws of nature. Somebody once quipped, "Language is psychological, not logical."

Other examples which may be quoted are as follows:

- \* While the so-called New Pronunciation is more honoured in the breach than in the observance because it is perceived as being pedantic, I would advocate that the class be taught that /v/ in Latin was pronounced in Latin as the English /w/, e.g. *Video* (meaning "know by seeing") = English *Wit* = Afrikaans *Weet*; *oVis* = *eWe*; *noVus* = *neW*; *VidUa* = *WidoW*; *sUavis* = *sWeet* [the verb *persuadeo* means "to make it sweet for (hence the dative of the person) another"]; *sUdor* = *sWeat*
- \* *(G)nosco* = *Know*; *Genu* = *Knee*; *Genus*, *Gens* = *Kin* (the *Janata* party in India is the People's party)
- \* To the list of *frater*, *flos*, add *Fero* = *Bear*
- \* *Hanser* = *Gander*, *Goose* = Afrikaans *Gans*; *veHo* = *waGon*; *Homo* = *(bruide)Gom* (literally *bride-man*)
- \* To the list of *pater*, *porcus*, add *Pes/Pedis* = *Foot*; *Piscis* = *Fish*; *Pluo* = *Flow*; *Porcus* = *Vark*
- \* To *aGer*, *eGo*, add *iuGum* = *yoKe* = Afrikaans *juK*
- \* *Cent-um* = *Hund-red*
- \* *morTuus* = *murDer*; *cenTum* = *hunDred*; *suDor* = *sweat*; the Latin present participial ending *-nT* = Afrikaans *-nD*, e.g. *lopend*
- \* *Tu* = *THou*; *paTer* = *faTHer*
- \* *oNs* = *Nos*
- \* The accus. sing ending *-m* is found also in *hiM*, *whoM* and Afrikaans *hoM*.

## 5. USING THESE RULES TO FACILITATE LEARNING FORMS

### 5.1 Assimilation

- \* *ad-* adapts (or assimilates) to give *aFfero*, *aCcipio*, *aPpello*, *aTtraho*;
- \* *cum-* changes in front of various consonants giving rise to *coMpono*, *coLligo*, *coRripio*;
- \* *scriB-tum* changes to *scriP-tum* as it is awkward to pronounce a voiced consonant immediately before a voiceless consonant;
- \* *suM-Mus* <<sup>12</sup> *suP-Mus* as in *suP-remus*; *max-imus* < *maG-simus* as in *maG-nus*;
- \* *puer-La* (*-la* is the diminutive suffix added to *puer*) > *puel-La*.

### 5.2 Dissimilation

This feature operates in particular where there are *l/r* combinations. It causes the change from the Latin *caeLuLeus* (*caeLum* + an adjectival ending) to *caeRuLeus*, to avoid two *l* sounds in consecutive syllables; similarly *regalIs*, but *popuLaRis*, *puerILis* but *puellLaRis*, cf. *maRmoR* but English *maRbLe*, and in *meRiDies* for *meDi-Dies* (meaning "the middle of the day"), to avoid two *d* sounds in consecutive syllables.

### 5.3 Vowel Alternation

- 5.3.1 It is most often the *e/o* sounds that are involved, e.g. *sEquor sOcuis*; *tEgo tOga*; *pEndeo pOndus*; *vElle vOlo*; *mEntio mOneo*; *vEster vOs*, but the alternation occurs also in *fido fOEdus*; *Eo tRe It*.
- 5.3.2 However the variation in spelling between *epistUla* and *epistOla* is due to a change of pronunciation in Latin itself, and is not an example of vowel alternation in the Indo-European parent speech. It also is to be found in the second declension nouns, e.g. *servUs* but *servO*, *servOs*, *servOrum*.

### 5.4 Vowel changes as a result of position in the word

It has been shown that the vowel in the second syllable often changes as a result of the position of the accent. In early Latin the accent fell on the first syllable, but its position changed later.<sup>13</sup> When dealing with compound verbs, both when using a lexicon and to relate it to the simplex, it is generally helpful to have a rough guide as to how the vowel, which was in the first syllable, will change. Some examples are:

<i>cAEdo</i>	but	<i>occlDo</i>
<i>cApio</i>	but	<i>inclpIo</i>
<i>rApio</i>	but	<i>corrIpIo</i>

<sup>12</sup> Conventionally the sign /</ denotes "comes from"; similarly />/ denotes "becomes".

<sup>13</sup> Originally the Latin accent fell on the first syllable, but the position later changed to the second-last or third-last.

<i>fAcilis</i>	but	<i>diffIcilis</i>
<i>fActus</i>	but	<i>perfEctus</i>
<i>clAUusus</i>	but	<i>inclUusus</i>

The difference between *pArio* and *pepEri* (for *pepAri*) is also due to the position of the vowel in the word.<sup>14</sup>

### 5.5 Hidden connections obscured by changes in pronunciation

<i>mUnio, mUrus</i>	but	<i>mOEnia</i>
<i>pUnio</i>	but	<i>pOEna</i>
<i>PUnicus</i>	but	<i>POEni</i>

### 5.6 Shortened forms

Sometimes Latin has shorter forms of words, such as *nil* for *nihil*, *petii* for *petivi*. In these examples a consonant between two identical vowels is eliminated, and the two vowels combine. This illustrates the tendency towards "economy of effort".<sup>15</sup> This tendency may be taken a step further. The starting-point is forgotten and even a whole syllable can be eliminated, e.g. *nosse* and *delerunt* (for *novisse* and *deleverunt*).<sup>16</sup>

## 6. SYSTEMATISING THE DECLENSIONS

Despite their numerous apparent differences, there are several points of similarity between the declensions. With the exception of some third declension nouns, all declensions have a vowel before the ending; all the accusative singulars end in *-m*; the ablative singulars end in a long vowel (with the obvious exception of the third declension consonant stems); and the masculine and feminine accusative plurals end in a long vowel + *s*.

### 6.1 The third declension and its apparent oddities

The third declension contains nouns with consonant stems (which make up the vast majority), and a few nouns with *i*-stems. Because the declension of the two types was originally so similar, they influenced one another.

Pupils have already met several facts which explain apparent difficulties in the third declension, viz.

- \* There are nouns which have no additional ending for the nom. sg., e.g. *puer pueri*.

<sup>14</sup> Not only do vowels change as they occur in a later syllable, but sometimes the vowel disappears altogether, as the following examples show: *rettuli* for *re-tetuli* (the perf. being *te-tuli*); similarly *repperi* for *repeperi* (*re + pepari*).

<sup>15</sup> See 3.8.

<sup>16</sup> See *cyning* in 3.8.

- \* Nouns in *-er* in the *o*-declension are of two kinds, viz. those which keep the *-e* of the nom. sg. throughout (e.g. *puer pueri*) and those which lose the *-e* (e.g. *ager agri*).
- \* An *o* may change with an *e*, e.g. *servO servE*.
- \* Sometimes an *s* changes to an *r* when it stands between vowels, e.g. *iuS* but *iniuRia*;<sup>17</sup> *honoR* (nom.) was originally spelt *honoS*, but the later form of the nom. was introduced to make it look more like the stem.
- \* Combinations of consonants cause changes that disguise the original spelling, as was seen in *scrip-tum*.

## 6.2 The basic pattern of the third declension

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom./Voc. (m./f.) (Neuters have no special ending)	<i>-is, -es, -s</i> OR stem without an additional ending	<i>-es</i> <i>-a, -ia</i>
Acc. (neuters have same ending as nom.)	<i>-em/-im</i>	<i>-es, -is</i> <i>-a, -ia</i>
Gen.	<i>-is</i>	<i>-um, -ium</i>
Dat.	<i>-i</i>	<i>-ibus</i>
Abl.	<i>-e, -i</i> (in <i>-i-</i> stems)	<i>-ibus</i>

## 6.3 Notes to the third declension

- 6.3.1 In the abl. sg. the ending *-i* belongs to *-i*-stems and corresponds with *-ā* and *-ō* of the *a*- and *o*-stem declensions.
- 6.3.2 In the acc. pl. the *-es* is the nearest equivalent of *-ās* and *-ōs* in the vowel-stem declensions.
- 6.3.4 The original *-i*-stem declension survives in the *-is* of the nom. sing., the *-ī* of the abl. sg., *-ia* of the nom./acc. neut. pl. and the *-ium* of the gen. pl. (Contrast the consonant-stem endings *-e, -a* and *-um* of the abl. sg., nom./acc. neut. pl. and gen. pl. respectively.) This is the true explanation for the different gen. plural endings. The interpretation of increasing and non-increasing nouns<sup>18</sup> has no basis in fact.

<sup>17</sup> See 3.6.

<sup>18</sup> See Kennedy, parr. 44-49, and *Latin for today* II, rules 16-18.

## 6.4 Some examples of third declension nouns

- 6.4.1 Some nouns have a nom. sg. consisting of the stem only, e.g. *consul consulis*, *animal animalis*, *mulier mulieris*, *victor victoris*.
- 6.4.2 The vowel in the last syllable of the stem may differ from the vowel in the last syllable of the nom. sg., e.g. *crimEn crimInis*, *homO homInis*.
- 6.4.3 The nom. sg. in *-x* stands for *g + s* or *c + s*, e.g. *leX leGis*, *duX duCis*.
- 6.4.4 Nouns whose stems end in *-d* or *-t* lose that letter before the *-s* of the nom., e.g. *custoS custoDis*, *virtuS virtuTis*, *mileS miliTis*, *genS genTis* (for *custods*, *virtuts*, *milets*, *gents*).
- 6.4.5 Some nouns lose the *-n* in the nom. sg., e.g. *ratio ratioNis*, *condicio condicioNis*, *homo homiNis*, *sanguis sanguiNis*; but words like *nomeN nomiNis* and *crimeN crimiNis* are regular.
- 6.4.6 Nouns ending in *-er* are of two types, viz. those which lose the *e* in the genitive sing., e.g. *pater patris*, *mater matris*, and those which keep the *-e*, e.g. *mulier mulieris*, *carcer carceris*.
- 6.4.7 A noun ending in *-s* may change to *-r* in the stem, e.g. *iuS iuRis*, *aeS aeRis*, *tempoS tempoRis*, *honoS honoRis*.
- 6.4.8 The vowels *-o* and *-u* appear in different cases, e.g. *corpUs corpOris*, *tempUs tempOris* (for *corpOs* and *tempOs*).<sup>19</sup>
- 6.4.9 The *-u* (which was originally an *-o*) changes to an *e*, e.g. *opUs opEris*, *genUs genEris*.
- 6.4.10 Some *-i* stem words do not show that they have an *-i* in the nom. sg., e.g. *animal*, but regular *animall animalla animallum*; *mare*, but regular *marl marla marlum*.
- 6.4.11 Some important nouns show a mixture of *-i* stem and consonant-stem endings:

<i>civis</i>	<i>cive/civi</i>	<i>civium</i>
<i>aedes</i>	<i>aede</i>	<i>aedium</i>
<i>finis</i>	<i>fine</i>	<i>finium</i>
<i>hostis</i>	<i>hoste</i>	<i>hostium</i>
<i>ignis</i>	<i>igne/igni</i>	<i>ignium</i>
<i>iuvenis</i>	<i>iuvene</i>	<i>iuvenum</i>
<i>gens</i>	<i>gente</i>	<i>gentium</i>
<i>pars</i> <sup>20</sup>	<i>parte</i>	<i>partium</i>
<i>urbs</i> <sup>20</sup>	<i>urbe</i>	<i>urbium</i>

<sup>19</sup> See 5.3.2.

<sup>20</sup> For *partls* and *urbls*, just as the *e* was lost from *retetuli* and *repeperi*.



## 7. LEARNING THE COMPARATIVES

The English comparative suffix *-er* is the same in origin as the Latin *-ior*. Both come from an ending in *-s*, with the change to *r*. This explains why the neuter has the ending *-ius*.

7.1.1 There are several suffixes which indicate the Latin comparative, viz.

- \* *-ior/-ius*, e.g. *durior durius, maior* (<mag-*ior* as in *mag-nus*) *maius*;
- \* *-ter* (cf. English *better*), e.g. *posterus, noster* (ours rather than anyone else's);
- \* *-erior*, e.g. *posterior, superior, inferior*

7.1.2 The suffixes for the superlative are:

- \* *-mus*, e.g. *primus, minimus, imus, infimus, extremus, postremus*
- \* *-timus*, e.g. *optimus*
- \* *-simus*, e.g. *maximus* (<mag-*simus*), *facillimus* (<facil-*simus*), *celerrimus* (< *celersimus*) where assimilation is at work.
- \* *-issimus*, e.g. *audacissimus, paratissimus*.

## 8. MAKING MOLE-HILLS OUT OF VERBAL MOUNTAINS

### 8.1 Principal Parts

Certain changes in the perfect and supine stems may be explained as due to assimilation, e.g. the first consonant becomes voiceless in front of the voiceless *t* or *s*, e.g.

*scriPTum* for *scriB* + *Tum*; *laPSus* for *laB* + *Sus*; *reCTum* for *reG* + *Tum*, *taCTum* for *taG* + *Tum* (cf. *tanGo*), *fraCTum* for *fraG* + *Tum* (cf. *fra(n)Go*). Somewhat harder are *reliCTum* for *reliQU* + *Tum*, and *loCUTus* but *loQUor*.

### 8.2 Ways of forming the perfect stem

8.2.1 The first consonant of the stem is repeated and joined to the beginning of the word by a vowel, most often an *-e*,

e.g.	<i>cecīdi</i>	<i>cādo</i>
	<i>peperi</i>	<i>pario</i>
	<i>cecīdi</i>	<i>cāēdo</i>
	<i>fefelli</i>	<i>fallo</i>
	<i>dedi</i>	<i>do</i>
	<i>tetigi</i>	<i>tango</i>
	<i>cucurri</i>	<i>curro</i>

8.2.2 The suffix *-s* is added to the present stem,

e.g.	<i>dixi = dic-si</i>	pres.	<i>dico</i>
	<i>rexī = reg-si</i>		<i>rego</i>
	<i>scripsi = scrib-si</i>		<i>scribo</i>
	<i>sumpsi = sum-si</i> <sup>21</sup>		<i>sumo</i>

8.2.3 The suffix *-u/v-* is added to the present stem,

e.g.	<i>ama-vi</i>	<i>mon-ui</i>
	<i>audi-vi</i>	<i>consul-ui</i>

8.2.4 A short vowel in the pres. stem > a long vowel in the perf. stem,

e.g.	<i>legi</i> (perf.)	<i>lego</i> (pres.)
	<i>lēgi</i> (perf.)	<i>lēgo</i>
	<i>sēdi</i>	<i>sēdeo</i>
	<i>ēmī</i>	<i>ēmō</i> ( <i>emptum = em + tum</i> ) <sup>22</sup>
	<i>vēni</i>	<i>vēnio</i>
	<i>vīdi</i>	<i>vīdeo</i>
	<i>fūgi</i>	<i>fūgio</i>

8.2.5 The short vowel of the pres. stem changes to another vowel and this becomes a long vowel in the perf. stem, *-e*,

e.g.	<i>fēci</i>	<i>fācio</i>
	<i>ēgi</i>	<i>āgo</i>
	<i>cēpi</i>	<i>cāpio</i>
	<i>frēgi</i>	<i>frā(n)go</i>

8.2.6 Certain verbs have exactly the same stem for both pres. and perf. stems,

e.g.	<i>verto</i>	<i>verti</i>
	<i>volvo</i>	<i>volvi</i>

#### 8.4 Ways of forming the present stem

There may be instances of the present stem appearing to differ from the perfect, but this is because the present stem itself has a suffix or a nasal sound inserted, e.g.

8.3.1 *-sco* = begin, as in *cresco* = grow, *nosco* = get to know

---

<sup>21</sup> *Sum-si* and *sum-tum*, as well as *em-tum*, acquire *p* as a means of making the pronunciation easier. (See note on *Thompson* in 3.5.)

<sup>22</sup> These are the glide sounds one finds in *Thompson*, *humble*, etc.

### 8.3.2 -n/-m,

thus	<i>reli(n)quo</i>	but	<i>reliqui</i>
	<i>ru(m)po</i>	but	<i>rupi</i>
	<i>ta(n)go</i>	but	<i>tetigi</i> (cf. <i>tactum</i> )
	<i>fra(n)go</i>	but	<i>fregi</i> (cf. <i>fractum</i> )

## 8.5 Some irregular verbs

We begin learning regular verbs like *amo* and *moveo*, and the regular pres. infinitive in *-re*. The earlier ending of the present infinitive was *-se*, the *r* being from *s* between vowels.<sup>23</sup> Where there was no vowel before the *-se* the *-s* remained, or changed to other consonants by assimilation, as in *vel-le*, *fer-re*.

- 8.5.1 What about the bugbear *sum*? It need not be daunting at all if the pupil is shown a schematic diagram<sup>24</sup> of the paradigm, which illustrates that the stem is simply an *s*; the other components are personal endings or sounds added (*u* or *e*) to make pronunciation possible:

*Sum*

eS (for eS + s of the personal ending)

eSr

*Sumus*

eSris

*Sunt*

The imperfect and future simple indicative need give no trouble either. The *e* at the beginning of *eram* and *ero* is of the same nature as one finds in the 2nd and 3rd pl. in the present indicative; and *s* > *r* between the two vowels, e.g. *eram* < *esam*; with the 1st singular and 3rd plural endings *-am*, *-o* and *-unt*, etc. one might compare the endings *-bam*, *-bo*, *-bunt*.

The present subjunctive consists of the same stem, *s*, followed by *-i* and the personal endings.

The present infinitive *esse* is no more than (e)S + *se*.

- 8.5.2 Learning *volo* is not as frightening as it appears. Firstly there is variation between *o* and the *e*; secondly we have an instance in the second person sg. and pl. of the *o* changing to a *u*,<sup>25</sup> though some books still print *vOlti vOltis*. The only difficulty remaining is *vis* of the second person. *Volo/velle* shows the vowel change *o/e*. *Velle* stands for *vel* + *se* (as in *es* + *se*), with the second *l* arising as a result of assimilation to the first. In the present subjunctive the *-i-* is the same as in the subjunctive of *sum*.

---

<sup>23</sup> See 3.6.

<sup>24</sup> The picture has deliberately been oversimplified.

<sup>25</sup> See 5.3.2.

- 8.5.3 Even *fero* can present an interesting puzzle. Regular verbs have a vowel which forms the theme of the conjugation, viz. *-a*, *-e*, *-u* and short and long *-i*. There is no vowel forming the theme for *fero*. Hence the forms *fers*, *fert*, *fertis*, *fer*, *ferte*. The pres. infinitive consists of *fer + se*, which changed to *ferRe* by assimilation.

## 9. QUO USQUE TANDEM?

Even a brief acquaintance with Latin should convince the learner that words behave much like people. Members of the same family resemble one another. They alter their appearance in the course of time (some members being more prone to change than others) in much the same way as peer group pressure brings about change in society. Rules there are, but a minority are non-conformists. Ill-matched companions are turned into neighbours one can live with by means of buffers. So too in languages one finds assimilation and glide sounds.

The usefulness of the approach to teaching along the lines mentioned in this paper is its potential for (1) making pupils more aware of linguistic phenomena in their own tongue,<sup>26</sup> which may well lead to enhanced competency in their first or second language, and (2) facilitating the acquisition of a foreign language,<sup>27</sup> which is certainly an asset in today's global village.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Buck, C.D. 1933. *Comparative grammar of Greek and Latin*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Gray, M.D. & Jenkins, T., ed. McEvoy, C. 1932. *Latin for today Part I*. London: Longman.
- Kennedy, B.H., ed. Mountford, J.F. 1977. *The revised Latin primer*. London: Longman.
- Palmer, L.R. 1954. *The Latin language*. London: Faber & Faber.

---

<sup>26</sup> See the syllabus, 1 (d).

<sup>27</sup> See the syllabus, 1.4.