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History

Down to the end of the nineteenth century, the comprehensive historical lexicon of classical Latin was only a dream; its realization began in 1893 with the decision by the five German-speaking academies then in existence to compile the Thesaurus linguae Latinae as a joint project, the moving spirits being Eduard Wölfflin and Theodor Mommsen; in 1894 the practical work began in Göttingen and Munich with the assembling of the material.

This progressed according to plan to the point where, in 1899, the actual work of compiling the articles could begin in Munich, which has been the home of the project ever since; the first fascicle appeared in 1900.

Even in the earliest years, however, it became apparent that – as with all lexica on this scale – both the difficulties and the time needed for completion had been drastically underestimated. Suitable methods of compilation could of necessity only be developed from practical experience and had to satisfy ever rising expectations, especially in the areas of Christian texts and Late Latin. As a result, during the fifteen years originally estimated for the whole project, the Thesaurus had got only as far as the first half of the letter D.

Time and again, the political catastrophes of the twentieth century brought the work to a standstill, so that it was necessary to start on a new administrative footing with the founding of the International Thesaurus-Committee in 1949. At present the lexicon is a communal undertaking of 31 academies and learned societies from both within Germany and abroad. By now it is more than two-thirds complete.

The following portions of the Thesaurus linguae Latinae have appeared:

Vol. I – VIII (A – M)

Vol. IX 2 (O) and X (P)

Volumes IX 1 (N) and XI 2 (R) are in the process of compilation.

Onomasticon, Vol. II and III (C – D)

Proper names beginning with A and B are included in the regular volumes.

Praemonenda de rationibus et usu operis

An introduction to the Thesaurus and how to use it, not only in Latin, but also in 7 modern languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.

Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum, ex quibus exempla afferuntur

This volume supplies the key to the abbreviations used in the Thesaurus for Latin authors and works and is in addition the most up-to-date and comprehensive overview of the textual heritage of Latin antiquity: for each work it gives, *inter alia*, the standard editions and, where necessary, the Greek originals. (Supplements to the Index are continuously added under: www.thesaurus.badw.de.)

All printed texts are published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, which also supplies an online version of the entire Thesaurus.

THESAURVS LINGVAE LATINAE

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