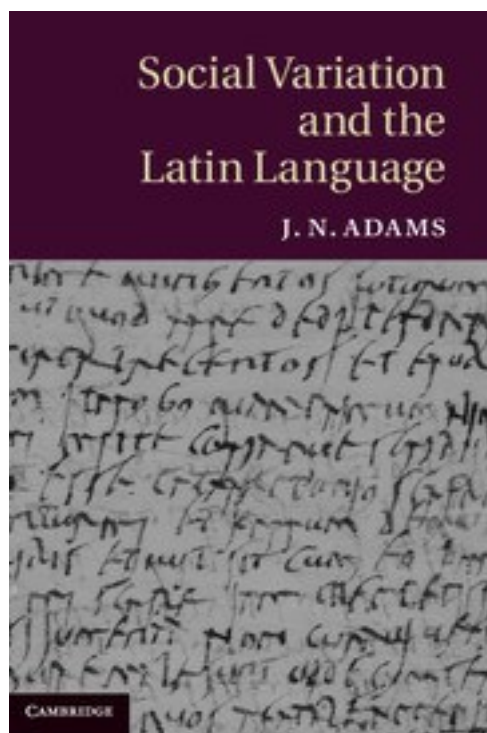


# Social Variation and the Latin Language



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出版者:Cambridge University Press

出版时间:2013

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780521886147

Languages show variations according to the social class of speakers and Latin was no exception, as readers of Petronius are aware. The Romance languages have traditionally been regarded as developing out of a 'language of the common people' (Vulgar Latin), but studies of modern languages demonstrate that linguistic change does not merely come, in the social sense, 'from below'. There is change from above, as prestige usages work their way down the social scale, and change may also occur across the social classes. This book is a history of many of the developments undergone by the Latin language as it changed into Romance, demonstrating the varying social levels at which change was initiated. About thirty topics are dealt with,

many of them more systematically than ever before. Discussions often start in the early Republic with Plautus, and the book is as much about the literary language as about informal varieties.

New history of the development of Latin from early Latin to the emergent Romance languages, by a leading expert in the field

Presents new material as well as old evidence that has long been neglected in histories and grammars of the language

Departs from the old concept of 'Vulgar Latin' and is influenced instead by modern sociolinguistic research

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