

Latin-English Dictionary

by

William Smith

(1813—1893)

William Smith was born in Enfield, England, in 1813. Following excursions into theology and law, he devoted himself to the classical languages, subsequently teaching at the University College School under Thomas Hewitt Key. A gifted scholar, he wrote numerous schoolbooks and published textual editions of ancient authors, achieving fame with, among other items, his “Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities” (1842) and “Bible Dictionary” (1860-65). A year before his death he was knighted, being thenceforth entitled to call himself Sir William — an honor which, it is said, he accepted only reluctantly. He died in London on 1893 October 7.

Smith’s Latin-English Dictionary is amazingly rich both in Latin vocabulary and in the detailed examples of usage of the individual headwords. It covers a vast range of Latin vocabulary extending far beyond the “classical” era of 100 B.C.—A.D. 100, and encompasses countless words which simply cannot be found in the usual school or classical dictionaries. Further, the rather expensive lexicon of Lewis and Short impresses one as often being a cut-and-paste copy of Smith’s work, one which even omits some of the rarer words considered Greek borrowings or “merely” glosses, all of which are found in Smith. Considering its compass and depth, one can easily rank Smith’s *opus magnum* as among the fullest Latin dictionaries found on the market even today.