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Nouns and Cases; First Declension; Agreement of Adjectives; Syntax

NOUNS AND CASES

As a Latin verb has various inflections or terminations which signal its particular role in a given sentence, so a Latin noun (from **nōmen**, *name*) has various terminations to show whether it is used as the subject or the object of a verb, whether it indicates the idea of possession, and so on. The various inflected forms of a noun are called “cases,” the more common uses and meanings of which are catalogued below; you will encounter several other case uses in subsequent chapters, all of which you must be able to identify and name, so it is advisable to begin now keeping a list for each case, with definitions and examples, in your notebook or computer file. For illustrative purposes it will be convenient to refer to the following English sentences,¹ which later in the chapter will be translated into Latin for further analysis.

- A. The poet is giving the girl large roses (*or* is giving large roses to the girl).
- B. The girls are giving the poet’s roses to the sailors.
- C. Without money the girls’ country (*or* the country of the girls) is not strong.

¹ These sentences have been limited to the material available in Chs. 1 and 2 so that they may readily be understood when turned into Latin.

Nominative Case The Romans used the nominative case most commonly to indicate the *subject* of a finite verb; e.g., *poet* in sentence A and *girls* in sentence B.

Genitive Case When one noun was used to modify² another, the Romans put the modifying, or limiting, noun in the genitive case, as we do in such instances as *poet's* in sentence B and *girls'* in sentence C. One idea very commonly conveyed by the genitive is *possession* and, although other categories besides the genitive of possession are distinguished, the meaning of the genitive can generally be ascertained by translating it with the preposition *of*. A Latin noun in the genitive case usually follows the noun it modifies.

Dative Case The Romans used the dative to mark the person or thing indirectly affected by the action of the verb, as *girl (to the girl)* in sentence A and *to the sailors* in B; both of these nouns are *indirect objects*, the most common use of the dative. In most instances the sense of the dative can be determined by using *to* or *for* with the noun.

Accusative Case The Romans used the accusative case to indicate the *direct object* of the action of the verb, the person or thing directly affected by the action of the verb. It can also be used for the object of certain prepositions: e.g., **ad**, *to*; **in**, *into*; **post**, *after, behind*.³ In sentences A and B, *roses* is the direct object of *is (are) giving*.

Ablative Case The ablative case we sometimes call the adverbial⁴ case because it was the case used by the Romans when they wished to modify, or limit, the verb by such ideas as *means* ("by what"), *agent* ("by whom"), *accompaniment* ("with whom"), *manner* ("how"), *place* ("where; from which"), *time* ("when or within which"). The Romans used the ablative sometimes with a preposition and sometimes without one. There is no simple rule of thumb for translating this complex case. However, you will find little difficulty when a Latin preposition is used (**ab**, *by, from*; **cum**, *with*; **dē** and **ex**, *from*; **in**, *in, on*); and in general you can associate with the ablative such English preposi-

² Modify derives its meaning from Latin **modus** in the sense of "limit"; it means to limit one word by means of another. For example, in sentence B *roses* by itself gives a general idea but the addition of *poet's* modifies, or limits, *roses* so that only a specific group is in mind. The addition of *red* would have modified, or limited, *roses* still further by excluding white and yellow ones.

³ A preposition is a word placed before (**prae-positus**) a noun or pronoun, the "object of the preposition," to indicate its relationship to another word in a sentence; prepositional phrases can function adjectivally ("a man *of wisdom*") or adverbially ("he came *from Rome*").

⁴ Latin **ad verbum** means *to or near the verb*; an adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

tions as *by, with, from, in, on, at*.⁵ The more complex uses will be taken up at convenient points in the following chapters.

Vocative Case

The Romans used the vocative case, sometimes with the interjection⁶ *Ō*, to address (*vocāre, to call*) a person or thing directly; e.g., (*Ō*) *Caesar*, (*O*) *Caesar*; *Ō fortuna*, *O fortune*. In modern punctuation the vocative (or noun of *direct address*) is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. With one major exception to be studied in Ch. 3, the vocative has the same form as that of the nominative, and so it is ordinarily not listed in the paradigms.

FIRST DECLENSION⁷ — NOUN AND ADJECTIVE

The listing of all the cases of a noun—or an adjective—is called a “declension.” Just as we conjugate verbs by adding endings to a stem, so we “decline” nouns and adjectives by adding endings to a “base.” The nominative and genitive singular forms of a noun are provided in the vocabulary entry, which must be completely memorized, and the base is then found by dropping the genitive ending; the procedure for an adjective is similar and will be clarified in Chs. 3–4. The following paradigm, which should be memorized (and remember to practice *aloud!*), illustrates the declension of a noun/adjective phrase, *porta magna, the large gate*:

	<i>porta, gate</i> Base: port-	<i>magna, large</i> Base: magn-		Endings
Singular				
<i>Nom.</i>	pórtā	mágna	<i>the (a)⁸ large gate</i>	-a
<i>Gen.</i>	pórtae	mágnae	<i>of the large gate</i>	-ae
<i>Dat.</i>	pórtae	mágnae	<i>to/for the large gate</i>	-ae
<i>Acc.</i>	pórtam	mágnam	<i>the large gate</i>	-am
<i>Abl.</i>	pórtā	mágnā	<i>by/with/from, etc., the large gate</i>	-ā
<i>Voc.</i>	pórtā	mágna	<i>O large gate</i>	-a

⁵ For instance: *pecūniā*, *by or with money*; *ab puellā*, *by or from the girl*; *cum puellā*, *with the girl*; *cum irā*, *with anger, angrily*; *ab (dē, ex) patriā*, *from the fatherland*; *in patriā*, *in the fatherland*; *in mēnsā*, *on the table*; *ūnā hōrā*, *in one hour*.

⁶ Lat. *interiectiō* means, lit., *throwing something in*, i.e., without syntactical connection to the rest of the sentence.

⁷ The term *declension* is connected with the verb *dē-clīnāre*, *to lean away from*. The idea of the ancient grammarians was that the other cases “lean away from” the nominative; they deviate from the nominative.

⁸ Since classical Latin had no words corresponding exactly to our definite article *the* or our indefinite article *a*, *porta* can be translated as *gate* or *the gate* or *a gate*.

Plural

<i>Nom.</i>	pórtae	mágnae	<i>the large gates or large gates</i>	-ae
<i>Gen.</i>	portárum	magnárum	<i>of the large gates</i>	-ārum
<i>Dat.</i>	pórtīs	mágnīs	<i>to/for the large gates</i>	-īs
<i>Acc.</i>	pórtās	mágnās	<i>the large gates</i>	-ās
<i>Abl.</i>	pórtīs	mágnīs	<i>by/with/from, etc., the large gates</i>	-īs
<i>Voc.</i>	pórtae	mágnae	<i>O large gates</i>	-ae

GENDER OF FIRST DECLENSION = FEMININE

Like English, Latin distinguishes three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. While Latin nouns indicating male beings are naturally masculine and those indicating female beings are feminine, the gender of most other nouns was a grammatical concept, not a natural one, and so a noun's gender must simply be memorized as part of the vocabulary entry.

Nouns of the first declension are normally feminine; e.g., **puella**, *girl*; **rosa**, *rose*; **pecūnia**, *money*; **patria**, *country*. A few nouns denoting individuals engaged in what were among the Romans traditionally male occupations are masculine; e.g., **poēta**, *poet*; **nauta**, *sailor*; **agricola**, *farmer* (others not employed in this book are **aurīga**, *charioteer*; **incola**, *inhabitant*; **pīrāta**, *pirate*).

In this book, as a practical procedure the gender of a noun will not be specifically labeled *m.*, *f.*, or *n.* in the notes, if it follows the general rules.

AGREEMENT OF ADJECTIVES

The normal role of adjectives is to accompany nouns and to modify, or limit, them in size, color, texture, character, and so on; and, like nouns, adjectives are declined. Naturally, therefore, an adjective agrees with its noun in gender, number, and case (an adjective that modifies more than one noun usually agrees in gender with the nearest one, though sometimes the masculine predominates). An adjective (**adiectum**, *set next to, added*) is a word *added* to a noun. As its Latin root meaning also suggests, an adjective was usually positioned next to its noun (except in poetry, where word order is much freer). Most often the adjective followed the noun, a logical arrangement since the person or thing named is generally more important than the attribute; exceptions were adjectives denoting size or number, as well as demonstratives (**hic**, *this*; **ille**, *that*), which normally precede, as do any adjectives which the speaker or writer wishes to emphasize.

SYNTAX

The Greek verb **syntattein** means *to arrange* or, in particular, to draw up an army in orderly array. Similarly, in grammatical terminology “syntax” is the orderly marshaling of words according to the service which they are to perform in a sentence. To explain the syntax of a given noun or adjective, you should state its form, the word on which it most closely depends, and the reason for the form (i.e., its grammatical use or function in the sentence). The sample sentences given above, here translated into Latin, provide some examples. Notice in the subject and verb endings the rule that *a verb must agree with its subject in person and number*; notice too that where a noun ending such as **-ae** can represent more than one case, word order and context provide necessary clues to a sentence’s meaning (hence **puellae** is the indirect object in A, subject in B).

- A. Poēta puellae magnās rosās dat.
- B. Puellae nautīs rosās poētae dant.
- C. Patria puellārum sine pecūniā nōn valet.

The syntax of some of these words can be conveniently stated thus:

Word	Form	Dependence	Reason
<i>Sentence A</i>			
poēta	nom. sg.	dat	subject
puellae	dat. sg.	dat	indirect object
magnās	acc. pl.	rosās	modifies and agrees with noun
<i>Sentence B</i>			
puellae	nom. pl.	dant	subject
nautīs	dat. pl.	dant	indirect object
rosās	acc. pl.	dant	direct object
poētae	gen. sg.	rosās	possession
<i>Sentence C</i>			
pecūniā	abl. sg.	sine	object of preposition

Be ready to explain the syntax of all nouns and adjectives in the sentences and reading passage below.

VOCABULARY

- fāma, fāmae**, f., *rumor, report; fame, reputation* (famous, defame, infamy)
- fōrma, fōrmae**, f., *form, shape; beauty* (formal, format, formula, formless, deform, inform, etc.; but not formic, formidable)
- fortūna, fortūnae**, f., *fortune, luck* (fortunate, unfortunate)
- īra, īrae**, f., *ire, anger* (irate, irascible; but not irritate)
- naūta, naūtae**, m., *sailor* (nautical)

pátria, pátriae, f., *fatherland, native land, (one's) country* (expatriate, repatriate)
pecúnia, -ae,⁹ f., *money* (pecuniary, impecunious; cp. speculation)
philosóphia, -ae, f. (Greek **philosophia**, *love of wisdom*), *philosophy*
poéna, -ae, f., *penalty, punishment*; **poénās dāre**, idiom, *to pay the penalty*
 (penal, penalize, penalty, pain, subpoena)
poēta, -ae, m., *poet* (poetry)
pórta, -ae, f., *gate, entrance* (portal, portico, porch, porthole)
puélla, -ae, f., *girl*
rósa, -ae, f., *rose* (rosary, roseate, rosette)
senténtia, -ae, f., *feeling, thought, opinion, vote, sentence* (sententious, sentencing)
víta, -ae, f., *life; mode of life* (vital, vitals, vitality, vitamin, vitalize, devitalize, revitalize)
antíqua, -ae, adjective,¹⁰ *ancient, old-time* (antique, antiquities, antiquated, antiquarian)
mágnā, -ae, adj., *large, great; important* (magnify, magnificent, magnate, magnitude, magnanimous)
méa, -ae, adj., *my*
múlta, -ae, adj., *much, many* (multitude, multiply, multiple; multi-, a prefix as in multimillionaire)
túa, -ae, adj., *your*, used when speaking to only one person
et, conjunction, *and; even*; **et . . . et**, *both . . . and*
sed, conj., *but*
Ō, interjection, *O!, Oh!*, commonly used with the vocative
síne, preposition + abl., *without* (sinecure, sans)
est, *is*

SENTENTIAE ANTÍQUAE¹¹

1. Salvē, Ō patria! (Plautus.)
2. Fāma et sententia volant. (Virgil.—**volāre**, *to fly, move quickly*.)

⁹ **pecúnia**, -ae = **pecúnia**, **pecúniae**; this abbreviated format will be employed in all subsequent entries for regular first decl. nouns.

¹⁰ Given here are the adjectives' nom. and gen. forms, the latter abbreviated as with first decl. nouns; after the masculine and neuter forms are learned in the next two chapters, adj. entries will provide the nom. endings only for all three genders (see, e.g., **bónus**, -a, -um in the Ch. 4 Vocab.).

¹¹ Sentences of ancient Roman origin. Henceforth, the author of every ancient Latin sentence will be named. An asterisk before an author's name means that the sentence is quoted verbatim. The lack of an asterisk means that the original sentence had to be somewhat altered to bring it into line with the student's limited knowledge of Latin, but the student may be assured that the thought and the expression are those of the ancient author indicated. The specific passage from which each sentence is adapted is identified below, p. 508–10, for students who are interested in the context and wish to do further reading.

3. Dā veniam puellae, amābō tē. (Terence.—**venia**, -ae, *favor, pardon*.)
4. Clēmēntia tua multās vītās servat. (Cicero.—**clēmēntia**, -ae, *clemency*.)
5. Multam pecūniam dēportat. (Cicero.—**dēportāre**, *to carry away*.)
6. Fortūnam et vītā antīquae patriae saepe laudās sed recūsās. (Horace.—**recūsāre**, *to refuse, reject*.)
7. Mē vītāre turbam iubēs. (*Seneca.—**vītāre**, *to avoid*; do not confuse this verb with the noun **vīta**.—**turba**, -ae, *crowd, multitude*.—**iubēre**, *to order*.)
8. Mē philosophiae dō. (Seneca.)
9. Philosophia est ars vītae. (*Cicero.—**ars**, nom. sg., *art*.)
10. Sānam fōrmam vītae cōservāte. (Seneca.—**sāna**, -ae, adj., *sound, sane*.)
11. Immodica īra creat īnsāniam. (Seneca.—**immodica**, -ae, adj., *immoderate, excessive*.—**creāre**, *to create*.—**īnsānia**, -ae, *unsoundness, insanity*.)
12. Quid cōgitās?—dēbēmus īram vītāre. (Seneca.)
13. Nūlla avāritia sine poenā est. (*Seneca.—**nūlla**, -ae, adj., *no*.—**avāritia**, -ae, *avarice*.)
14. Mē saevīs catēnīs onerat. (Horace.—**saeva**, -ae, adj., *cruel*.—**catēna**, -ae, *chain*.—**onerāre**, *to load, oppress*.)
15. Rotam fortūnae nōn timent. (Cicero.—**rota**, -ae, *wheel*.—**timēre**, *to fear*.)
16. The girls save the poet's life.
17. Without philosophy we often go astray and pay the penalty.
18. If your land is strong, nothing terrifies the sailors and you ought to praise your great fortune.
19. We often see the penalty of anger.
20. The ancient gate is large.

CATULLUS BIDS HIS GIRLFRIEND FAREWELL

Puella mea mē nōn amat. Valē, puella! Catullus obdūrat: poēta puellam nōn amat, fōrmam puellae nōn laudat, puellae rosās nōn dat, et puellam nōn bāsiat! Īra mea est magna! Obdūrō, mea puella—sed sine tē nōn valeō.

(Catullus 8; prose adaptation. For this 1st cen. B.C. poet, see the Introd., and for unadapted excerpts from the original poem, see Ch. 19.—Note the poet's shift from first person, to third, and back to first; what is the intended emotional effect?—**obdūrāre**, *to be firm, tough*.—**bāsiāre**, *to kiss*.—**tē**, *you*.)

ETYMOLOGY

Note that "etymology" comes from the Greek **etymos**, *true, real*, and **logos**, *word, meaning*. Consequently, the etymology of a word traces the deri-

vation of the word and shows its original meaning. Under this heading will be introduced various items not covered by the derivatives listed in the vocabularies. Each chapter so abounds in such material, however, that complete coverage cannot be attempted.

Pecūnia is connected with **pecus**, *cattle*, just as English *fee* is related to German **Vieh**, *cattle*.

Fortūna derives from **fors**, *chance, accident*.

Explain the meanings of the following English words on the basis of the appropriate Latin words found in the sentences indicated. Further aid, if needed, can be obtained from a good dictionary; *Webster's New World Dictionary* and the *American Heritage Dictionary* are especially helpful with etymologies.

volatile (2)	tenet (10)	onerous (14)
venial (3)	creature (11)	rotary, rotate (15)
turbulent (7)	nullify (13)	obdurate ("Catullus")
insane (10)	concatenation (14)	

LATĪNA EST GAUDIUM—ET ŪTILIS!

Salvēte, discipulī et discipulae! From the Vocab.: To do something **sub rosā** is to do it secretly or in confidence (the rose was in antiquity a symbol of secrecy); **aqua vītāe**, lit., *the water of life*, is an old Latin phrase for "whiskey"; and a "sinecure" (from **sine** + **cūra**, *care*) is an office or position that is largely *without responsibility*.

And here's some more conversational Latin:

Quid agis hodiē? *How are you today?*

Optimē! *Great!*

Pessimē! *Terrible!*

Bene! *Good!*

Satis bene. *So-so or Okay.*

Nōn bene. *Not well.*

Et tū? *And you?*

Discipulae et discipulī, valēte!