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Reflexive Pronouns and Possessives; Intensive Pronoun

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Reflexive pronouns differ from other pronouns in that they are used ordinarily only in the predicate and refer back to the subject. “Reflexive,” which derives from *re-flexus*, **-a, -um** (*reflectō, -ere, -flexī, -flexum, to bend back*) means “bent back,” and so reflexive pronouns “bend back” to the subject, or, to put it another way, they “reflect” or refer to the subject. English examples are:

Reflexive Pronouns

I praised *myself*.

Cicero praised *himself*.

Personal Pronouns

You praised *me*.

Cicero praised *him* (Caesar).

DECLENSION OF REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Since reflexive pronouns refer to the subject, they cannot serve as subjects of finite¹ verbs and they have no nominative case. Otherwise, the declension of the reflexives of the first and the second persons is the same as that of the corresponding personal pronouns.

¹ “Finite” verb forms are those which are limited (*finītus, -a, -um, having been limited, bounded*) by person and number; reflexives can serve as the subject of an infinitive, however, as you will see in Ch. 25.

The reflexive pronoun of the third person, however, has its own peculiar forms; these are easily recognizable because, as seen from the following chart, they are identical to the singular of **tū**, except that the nominative is lacking and the forms begin with **s-** rather than **t-**. Note also that the singular and plural are identical, or, to put it another way, singular and plural were not distinguished and did not need to be, since reflexives in fact “reflect” the number (as well as the gender) of the subject; e.g., **sē** is easily understood to mean *herself* in the sentence **fēmina dē sē cōgitābat** (*the woman was thinking about herself*) and *themselves* in the sentence **virī dē sē cōgitābant** (*the men were thinking about themselves*).

| | 1st Pers. | 2nd Pers. | 3rd Pers. |
|-----------------|---|-----------|--|
| Singular | | | |
| Nom. | — | — | — |
| Gen. | mēi (<i>of myself</i>) | tūi | sūi (<i>of himself, herself, itself</i>) |
| Dat. | mīhi (<i>to/for myself</i>) | tibi | sibi (<i>to/for himself, etc.</i>) |
| Acc. | mē (<i>myself</i>) | tē | sē (<i>himself, herself, itself</i>) |
| Abl. | mē (<i>by/w./fr. myself</i> ²) | tē | sē (<i>by/w./fr. himself, etc.</i>) |
| Plural | | | |
| Nom. | — | — | — |
| Gen. | nōstrī (<i>of ourselves</i>) | vēstrī | sūi (<i>of themselves</i>) |
| Dat. | nōbīs (<i>to/for ourselves</i>) | vōbīs | sibi (<i>to/for themselves</i>) |
| Acc. | nōs (<i>ourselves</i>) | vōs | sē (<i>themselves</i>) |
| Abl. | nōbīs (<i>by/w./fr. ourselves</i>) | vōbīs | sē (<i>by/w./fr. themselves</i>) |

PARALLEL EXAMPLES OF REFLEXIVE AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS OF 1ST AND 2ND PERSONS.³

1. Tū laudāvistī **tē**, *you praised yourself*.
2. Cicerō laudāvit **tē**, *Cicero praised you*.
3. Nōs laudāvimus **nōs**, *we praised ourselves*.
4. Cicerō laudāvit **nōs**, *Cicero praised us*.
5. Ego scrīpsī litterās **mīhi**, *I wrote a letter to myself*.
6. Cicerō scrīpsit litterās **mīhi**, *Cicero wrote a letter to me*.

PARALLEL EXAMPLES OF REFLEXIVE AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS OF 3RD PERSON

1. Cicerō laudāvit **sē**, *Cicero praised himself*.
2. Cicerō laudāvit **eum**, *Cicero praised him* (e.g., Caesar).

² See Ch. 11, n. 1.

³ The word order in these examples is modified for the sake of clarity.

3. Rōmānī laudāvērunt **sē**, *the Romans praised themselves*.
4. Rōmānī laudāvērunt **eōs**, *the Romans praised them* (e.g., the Greeks).
5. Puella servāvit **sē**, *the girl saved herself*.
6. Puella servāvit **eam**, *the girl saved her* (i.e., another girl).

REFLEXIVE POSSESSIVES

The reflexive possessives of the first and the second persons are identical with the regular possessives already familiar to you: **meus**, **tuus**, **noster**, **vester** (i.e., *my*, *my own*; *your*, *your own*; etc.). They will never cause you any difficulty.

The reflexive possessive of the third person, however, is the adjective **suus**, **sua**, **suum**, *his (own)*, *her (own)*, *its (own)*, *their (own)*. While the forms themselves are easily declined (on the same pattern as **tuus**, **-a**, **-um**, a regular first/second declension adjective), a few important points must be kept in mind regarding the word's usage and translation. First, like any adjective, **suus**, **-a**, **-um**, must agree with the noun it modifies in number, gender, and case. Its English translation, however, like that of the reflexive pronoun, must naturally reflect the gender and number of the subject to which it refers (e.g., **vir filium suum laudat**, *the man praises his [own] son*, vs. **fēmina filium suum laudat**, *the woman praises her [own] son*, and **virī patriam suam laudant**, *the men praise their [own] country*). Finally, the reflexive possessive adjective **suus**, **-a**, **-um** must be carefully distinguished from the nonreflexive possessive genitives **eius**, **eōrum**, **eārum** (*his/her*, *their*: see Ch. 11), which do not refer to the subject.

1. Cicerō laudāvit amīcum **suum**, *Cicero praised his (own) friend*.
2. Cicerō laudāvit amīcum **eius**, *Cicero praised his (Caesar's) friend*.
3. Rōmānī laudāvērunt amīcum **suum**, *the Romans praised their (own) friend*.
4. Rōmānī laudāvērunt amīcum **eōrum**, *the Romans praised their (the Greeks') friend*.
5. Fēmina scrīpsit litterās amīcīs **suīs**, *the woman wrote a letter to her (own) friends*.
6. Fēmina scrīpsit litterās amīcīs **eius**, *the woman wrote a letter to his (or her, i.e., someone else's) friends*.
7. Fēmina scrīpsit litterās amīcīs **eōrum**, *the woman wrote a letter to their (some other persons') friends*.

THE INTENSIVE PRONOUN *Ipse, Ipsa, Ipsum*

The intensive **ipse, ipsa, ipsum** follows the peculiar declensional pattern of the demonstratives in the genitive and the dative singular (i.e., gen. **ipsīus, ipsīus, ipsīus**, dat. **ipsī, ipsī, ipsī**); otherwise, it is like **magnus, -a, -um**.⁴ The Romans used the intensive pronoun to emphasize a noun or pronoun of any person in either the subject or the predicate of a sentence; consequently its possible translations include *myself/ourselves* (1st pers.), *yourself/yourselves* (2nd pers.), and *himself/herself/itself/themselves* (3rd pers.), as well as *the very* and *the actual*, as illustrated in the following examples:

Cicerō **ipse** laudāvit mē, *Cicero himself praised me.*

Cicerō laudāvit mē **ipsum**, *Cicero praised me myself* (i.e., *actually praised me*)

Ipse laudāvī eius amīcum, *I myself praised his friend.*

Fīlia scrīpsit litterās vōbīs **ipsīs**, *your daughter wrote a letter to you yourselves.*

Cicerō vīdit Caesaris litterās **ipsās**, *Cicero saw Caesar's letter itself* (i.e., *Caesar's actual letter*).

VOCABULARY

dīvītia, -ārum, f. pl., *riches, wealth* (cp. **dīves**, Ch. 32)

fāctum, -ī, n., *deed, act, achievement* (fact, faction, feat; cp. **faciō**)

sīgnum, -ī, n., *sign, signal, indication; seal* (assign, consign, countersign, design, ensign, insignia, resign, seal, signet)

ipse, ipsa, ipsum, intensive pron., *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, etc., the very, the actual* (ipso facto, solipsistic)

quīque, quīdque (gen. **cuiūsque**; dat. **cuique**—cp. **quis**, Ch. 19), indefinite pron., *each one, each person, each thing*

sūī, reflexive pron. of 3rd pers., *himself, herself, itself, themselves* (suicide, sui generis, per se)

dóctus, -a, -um, *taught, learned, skilled* (doctor, doctorate, doctrine, indoctrinate; cp. **doceō**)

fortūnātus, -a, -um, *lucky, fortunate, happy* (unfortunate; cp. **fortūna**)

súus, -a, -um, reflexive possessive adj. of 3rd pers., *his own, her own, its own, their own*

nam, conj., *for*

ānte, prep. + acc., *before* (in place or time), *in front of*; adv., *before, previously*; not to be confused with Greek **anti**, *against* (antebellum, antedate, ante-room, anterior, antediluvian, A.M. = **ante merīdiem**, advance, advantage)

⁴See the Summary of Forms, p. 448, for the full declension.

per, prep. + acc., *through*; with reflexive pron., *by*; **per-** (assimilated to **pel-** before forms beginning with **l-**), as a prefix, *through, through and through* = *thoroughly, completely, very* (perchance, perforce, perhaps, perceive, perfect, perspire, percolate, percussion, perchloride, pellucid)

olim, adv., *at that time, once, formerly; in the future*

ālō, ālere, āluī, āltum, *to nourish, support, sustain, increase; cherish* (alible, aliment, alimentary, alimony, coalesce, adolescence)

dīligō, dīligere, dīlēxī, dīlēctum, *to esteem, love* (diligent, diligence; cp. **legō**, Ch. 18)

iūngō, iūngere, iūnxī, iūnctum, *to join* (join, joint, junction, juncture, adjunct, conjunction, enjoin, injunction, subjunctive)

stō, stāre, stēfī, stātum, *to stand, stand still or firm* (stable, state, station, statue, stature, statute, establish, instant, instate, reinstate, stay; cp. **praestō**, Ch. 28)

PRACTICE AND REVIEW

1. Cōsulēs sē nec tēcum nec cum illīs aliīs iungēbant.
2. Tōtus populus Rōmānus lībertātem āmīsīt.
3. Rēx malus enim mē ipsum capere numquam potuit.
4. Ad patrem mātremque eōrum per illum locum tum fūgistis.
5. Dī animōs creant et eōs in corpora hominum ē caelō mittunt.
6. Ipsī per sē eum in Asiā nūper vīcērunt.
7. In hāc viā Cicerō medicum eius vīdit, nōn suum.
8. Nēmō fīliam acerbam cōsulis ipsīus diū dīligere potuit.
9. Hī Cicerōnem ipsum sēcum iūnxērunt, nam eum semper dīlēxerant.
10. Fēmina ante illam hōram litterās suās mīserat.
11. Ille bonam senectūtem habuit, nam bene vīxerat.
12. Māter fīlium bene intellēxit, et adulēscēns eī prō patientiā grātiās ēgit.
13. However, those young men came to Caesar himself yesterday.
14. Cicero, therefore, will never join his (Caesar's) name with his own.
15. Cicero always esteemed himself and even you esteem yourself.
16. Cicero used to praise his own books and I now praise my own books.
17. The consul Cicero himself had never seen his (Caesar's) book.

SENTENTIAE ANTĪQUAE

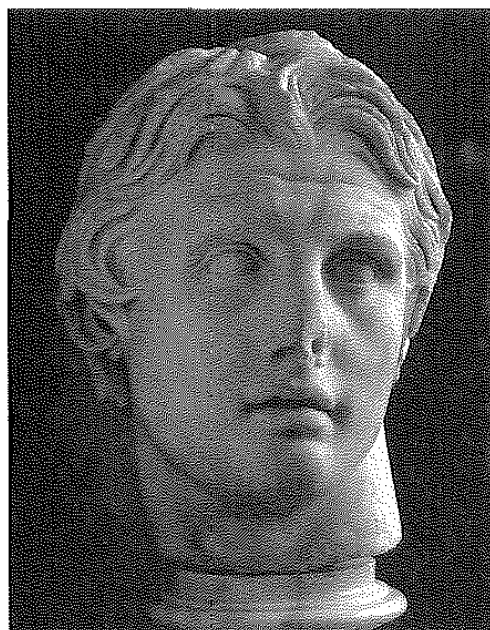
1. Ipse ad eōs contendēbat equitēsque ante sē mīsīt. (Caesar.—**contendō, -ere, to hasten.**—**eques, equitis, m., horseman.**)
2. Ipsī nihil per sē sine eō facere potuērunt. (Cicero.)
3. Ipse signum suum et litterās suās ā prīncipiō recognōvit. (Cicero.—**recognōscō, -ere, -cognōvī, -cognitum, to recognize.**)
4. Quisque ipse sē dīligit, quod quisque per sē sibi cārus est. (Cicero.)

5. Ex vitiō alterīus sapiēns ēmendat suum. (*Publilius Syrus.—sapiēns, -entis, m., wise man, philosopher.—ēmendāre, to correct.)
6. Recēde in tē ipsum. (*Seneca.—recēdō, -ere, to withdraw.)
7. Animus sē ipse alit. (*Seneca.)
8. Homō doctus in sē semper dīvitias habet. (Phaedrus.)

ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE POWER OF LITERATURE

Magnus ille Alexander multōs scriptōrēs factōrum suōrum sēcum semper habēbat. Is enim ante tumulum Achillis ōlim stetit et dīxit haec verba: “Fuiſtī fortūnātus, ō adulēscēns, quod Homērum laudātōrem virtūtis tuae invēnistī.” Et vērē! Nam, sine *Īliade* illā, idem tumulus et corpus eius et nōmen obruere potuit. Nihil corpus humānum cōservāre potest; sed litterae magnae nōmen virī magnī saepe cōservāre possunt.

(Cicero, *Prō Archiā* 24. —ille, usually when placed after the word it modifies, can mean *that famous*.—tumulus, -ī, tomb, grave.—Achillēs, -lis, m.—Homērus, -ī.—laudātōr, -tōris, one who praises [see Ch. 8, *Latīna Est Gaudium*], here chronicler.—vērē, adv. of vērus.—Īlias, -adis, f.—obruō, -ere, to overwhelm, bury.)



Alexander the Great
Pergamon, 3rd century B.C.
Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, Turkey

THE AUTHORITY OF A TEACHER'S OPINION

Magistrī bonī discipulīs sententiās suās nōn semper dīcere dēbent. Discipulī Pŷthagorae in disputātiōnibus saepe dīcēbant: “Ipse dīxit!” Pŷthago-rās, eōrum magister philosophiae, erat “ipse”: sententiae eius etiam sine ratiōne valuērunt. In philosophiā autem ratiō sōla, nōn sententia, valēre dēbet.

(Cicero, *Dē Nātūrā Deōrum* 1.5.10.—Pŷthagorās, -ae, m.—disputātiō, -ōnis, argument, debate.—sc. id as direct obj. of ipse dīxit.)

ETYMOLOGY

The adj. **altus**, -a, -um, *high*, literally means *having been nourished*, and so, *grown large*; hence altitude, alto, contralto, exalt, hautboy, oboe.

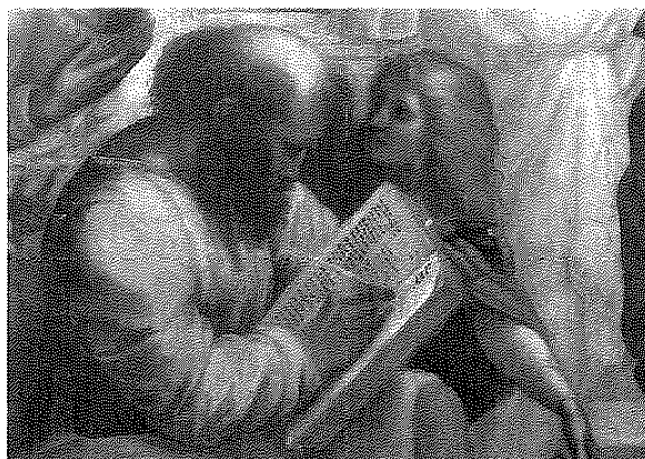
In the readings

1. contend, contention, contentious.—equestrian; cp. **equus**, *horse*.
5. emend, emendation, mend. 6. recede, recession. “Alexander”: tumulus, tumular, tumulose.—laudatory. “Authority”: disputable, dispute, disputant, disputation, disputatious.

LATĪNA EST GAUDIUM—ET ŪTILIS!

Salvēte! If you’ve spent much time in court, or even watching *Perry Mason* reruns, you’ve doubtless encountered some legal Latin. **Ipse** turns up more than once in the lawyer’s lexicon: there’s **ipsō factō**, *by that very fact*; **ipsō jūre** (classical **iūre**), *by the law itself*; and **rēs ipsa loquitur**, *the matter speaks for itself*. And from the third pers. reflexive there’s **suī jūris** (**iūris**), lit. *of his own right*, i.e., legally competent to manage one’s own affairs. Not a legal term, but from the reflexive and common in Eng. is **suī generis**, lit. *of his/her/its own kind* (see **genus**, Ch. 18), used of a person or thing that is unique. Another common Eng. phrase, seen in the above reading on Pythagoras, is **ipse dixit**, used of any dogmatic or arbitrary statement; likewise from the intensive pronoun are the phrase **ipsissima verba**, *the very words* (of a person being quoted), the medical term “ipsilateral,” meaning “on or affecting the same side of the body” (from Lat. **latus**, **lateris**, n., *side*), and the word “solipsism,” for the philosophical theory that the self alone is the only reality or that it conditions our perception of reality.

By now you’ve had all the vocabulary needed to translate the famous quotation from Constantine, **in hōc signō vincēs** (*under this standard*—i.e., the cross—*you shall prevail*), seen in more recent decades on a well-known brand of cigarettes; freely it means, *You’ll win with this brand* (but would the U.S. Surgeon General agree?). Well, **tempus iterum fūgit: valēte!**



School of Athens, detail of Pythagoras and a boy
Raphael, 1508
Stanza della Segnatura
Vatican Palace, Vatican State

Chapter 13

PRACTICE AND REVIEW

1. The consuls joined themselves neither with you nor with those others.
2. The entire Roman populace has lost its liberty.
3. The evil king has never been able to seize me myself.
4. At that time, you fled to their father and mother through that place.
5. The gods create souls and send them into the bodies of men from the sky.
6. They themselves have recently conquered him in Asia by themselves.
7. On the way, Cicero saw her doctor, not his own.
8. No one was able to love the bitter daughter of the consul himself for long.
9. These men joined Cicero with themselves, for they had always esteemed him.
10. The woman had sent her letter before that time.
11. That man had a good old age, for he had lived well.
12. The mother understood her son well, and the young man thanked her for her patience.
13. Illi autem adulescentes ad Caesarem ipsum heri venerunt.
14. Cicero igitur nomen eius cum suo numquam iunget.
15. Cicero se semper dilexit et tu etiam te diligis.
16. Cicero suos laudabat libros et nunc laudo libros meos.
17. Consul Cicero ipse numquam librum eius viderat.

SENTENTIAE ANTIQUAE

1. He himself was hastening to them and sent the horsemen ahead of himself.
2. They could do nothing by themselves without him.
3. He recognized his own seal and his own letter from the beginning.
4. Each loves himself, because each is precious to himself by himself.
5. Out of the fault of another, a wise man corrects his own.
6. Withdraw into your very self.
7. The very spirit nourishes itself.
8. A learned man always has riches in himself.

Chapter 13

ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE POWER OF LITERATURE discussion

The great Alexander always kept with him many scribes of his deeds. In fact, he once stood before the tomb of Achilles and said these words: "You were fortunate, O young man, because you found Homer the eulogist of your virtue." And truly! For, without the Iliad, the same tomb and his body and name could be buried. Nothing can preserve the human body; but great literature can often preserve a great man's name.

THE AUTHORITY OF A TEACHER'S OPINION

Good teachers should not always say their own opinions to their students. The students of Pythagoras in debate often used to say: "He himself has spoken!" Pythagoras, their teacher of philosophy, was the "himself": his opinions were strong even without reason. But in philosophy, reason alone, not opinion, should be strong.

