CHAPTER 24

Ablative Absolute; Passive Periphrastic;
The Dative of Agent

Once again, this is a chapter which only expands on principles you've already been working with.
The two constructions explained in this chapter all called "idioms" of the language.
To put it briefly, an idiom is a construction whose meaning is more than the sum of its parts.
That is, you can't simply look at the constituent parts of the construction and deduce the full meaning.
For some reason, the language gives these construction special, additional meanings which is not present in its parts.

Just to give one example of an idiomatic construction from English, consider this : We form the present progressive tense in the active voice by using the verb "to be" as an auxiliary verb and the present participial stem of the verb.
Like this : "The ants are crawling along the ground".
Obviously the ants are the active subject of the verb "are crawling" - they are the agents performing the action.
Now look at this very idiomatic use of the present progressive tense in the active voice : "The tables are crawling with ants".
Just like the "ants" in the first sentence, "tables" is the subject of the verb "is crawling", but this time the subject cannot be the active subject of the verb. The tables are not crawling, but the ants are crawling all over the tables.
Even though the verb form is the same in both sentence - "are crawling" - the grammatical function of the subjects are entirely different.
The "ants" are the active agent; the "tables" are passive recipients of the action performed by the ants, expressed in the prepositional phrase beginning with "with".
The second construction is an example of an idiom, since the active form of the verb - "are crawling" - is over-ridden. The final meaning of the construction cannot be deduced simply by adding up the meaning of its parts. That's an idiom.

REVIEW OF PARTICIPLES

As you learned in the last chapter, a participle is a verbal adjective.
The formation of participles from the different verbal stems obeys a few, very regular rules.
Let's run through them again.
Write out the formulae for forming the different participles:

FUTURE ACTIVE PARTICIPLE : _____

FUTURE PASSIVE PARTICIPLE (GERUNDIVE) :

        _____

PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE : _____

PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE : _____

As you can see, all the participles except the present active use the *"-us, -a, -um"* adjectival endings, and so present no problem in their declensions.

The present active participle, however, declines in the third declension, and behaves like a third declension adjective of one termination of the *"-ns, -ntis"* type, with the exception of the short "*-e-*" in place of the "*-i-*" in the ablative singular .
Decline a couple of present active participles just to refresh your memory.

PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLES DECLINED

laudo (1)

Masc/Fem.	Neuter
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

moneo (2)

Masc/Fem.	Neuter
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

duco (3)

Masc/Fem.	Neuter
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

capio (3-i)

Masc/Fem.	Neuter
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

THE ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE : CONSTRUCTION AND SYNTAX

You remember from Chapter 23 that Latin isn't so fussy as English is about spelling out the exact temporal or logical relationship between a subordinate and main clause. In English, we have a bumper crop of subordinating conjunctions for this purpose : "since, because, although, if, even if, if and only if, being as how, seeing as how, before, after, during, while, inasmuch as, who", and on and on.
Latin has many of these conjunctions, too, but, always aiming at compression, Latin likes to reduce subordinate thoughts to participles.
A very popular way of linking two separate ideas without spelling out the exact relationship they have to each other is the "Ablative Absolute" construction.
Let's look at both parts of the description "ablative" and "absolute".

We call a subordinate clause "absolute" when it stands entirely outside of the grammar of the main clause and contains no finite verb.
We have a common "absolute" construction in English, which we call the "nominative absolute".
Watch :
> "The door being open, everyone could see inside".
> "The key having been lost, I couldn't get in".
> "That said, I now move to my next point.
> "All other things being equal, the procedures are identical".

The first clause in each of these sentences are simply stating a fact that is given as a circumstance under which the action of the main clause takes place. And none of the absolute constructions has a finite verb.
Now, obviously there is a logical or temporal relationship between the absolute clauses and the main clauses in each of these sentences, and you could easily recast the sentences to make them explicit.
For example :
> "Because the door was open..".
> "Because the key was lost..".
> "Now that that has been said..".
> "If all other things are equal..".

But the speaker has chosen to keep the relationship unstated or implicit.
For that reason, the verb is left as a participle and - this is important - the participle is not attached to anything in main clause.
For example, let's rewrite the original absolute construction in "The key having been lost, I couldn't get in" to "Having lost my key, I couldn't get it". Now the participle agrees with something in the main clause - "I" and the act of losing the key is specifically attributed to "I" and not left ambiguous.
In the original sentence, the speaker may or may not have been the one who lost the key. It may have been lost by someone else. But in the rewritten version, the guilty party is fingered : "I" lost the key.
An absolute construction doesn't do that.

So here are two things to remember about clauses which are absolute : the verb is a participle, and it agrees with something in the absolute clause, not in the main clause of the sentence.

Now for the "ablative" part of the construction called the "Ablative Absolute".
Just as the word "ablative" tells you, in Latin the participle and the noun it agrees with are both in the ablative case.
For example :
> *"Hac fama narrata, dux urbem sine mora reliquit".*

In this sentence, the main clause is *"dux...reliquit"*.
The Ablative Absolute clause is *"hac fama narrata"*.

The verb of the clause is the participle *"narrata"*, which in turn agrees with the ablative *"hac fama"*.
So how do we translate the Ablative Absolute clause it into English?
As always, let's start with the roughest, but most accurate, way. The quickest way to translate an Ablative Absolute clause is to use the preposition "with", followed by the noun, and then the participle in it correct tense and voice: "with this story having been told".
So this sentence would come out :

<p style="text-align:center">"With this story having been told, the leader left the city without delay".</p>

1. *Cane currente, equus magno cum timore campum reliquit.*
   "With the dog running, the horse left the field with great fear".

2. *Equo cursuro, canis magno cum timore campum reliquit.*
   "With the horse about to run, the dog left the field with great fear".

As you can see, the relationship between the clauses of these sentences is clear enough, even though it's unstated.
In the first sentence, perhaps we could say, "Because the dog was running, the horse left the field".
That is, the horse has some fear of running dogs.
In the second, the dog doesn't like running horses, so when it realized that the horse was going to run, it ran away: "Because the horse was going to run, the dog left the field".

One last item about the Ablative Absolute clause is that when the participle is in the active voice, it can be followed by objects of its own which are not in the ablative case.
That is to say, not every word in the Ablative Absolute clause has to be in the ablative case.
Only the noun and the participle agreeing with it are necessarily ablative; the rest of the Ablative Absolute clause will follow the normal rules of Latin grammar.
For example:
<p style="margin-left:2em">*"Rege haec dicente, omnes cives terrebantur".*
(With the king saying these things, all the citizens were terrified.)</p>

The Ablative Absolute clause in this sentence is "*rege haec dicente*", as you can see by looking at the case of "*rege*" and "*dicente*" and by recognizing that the verb of the clause is in the participial mood.
These are the two parts of an Ablative Absolute clause : noun and participle in the ablative case.
But what about "*haec*"? Why is it in the accusative case if it's in an Ablative Absolute clause?
The answer is that "*haec*" is the direct object of the action of the participle "*dicente*", and direct objects are always in the accusative case, regardless of the mood or construction of the verb.
Remember, once you have a noun - "*rege*" - and a participle - "*dicente*" - in the ablative case, you have an Ablative Absolute construction.
Everything else in the clause is simply additional material which follows the predictable rules of Latin grammar.
Let's look at a few more examples.
1. *"Bonis viris imperium tenentibus, res publica valebit".*
   (With good men holding power, the republic will be strong.)
2. *"Civibus patriam amantibus, possumus magnam spem habere".*
   (With the citizens loving the fatherland, we are able to have great hope.)
3. *"His rebus gravibus ab oratore dictis, omnis cupiditas pecuniae expulsa est"*
   (With these serious matters having been said by the orator, all longing for money was driven out.)

THE ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE WITH "BEING"

The Ablative Absolute construction, as you now know, is made up of a noun and a participle agreeing with it in the ablative case.

This brings up an interesting problem with the verb "sum", which has no present participle.
How would you say, for example, "The king being good, the people were happy"?
The clause you would turn into the Ablative Absolute contains the present participle "being", but Latin has no translation for it.
In occasions like this, Latin simply leaves the participle out and uses the noun in the ablative case with the adjective agreeing with it : *"Rege bono, populus beatus erat"*.
So if you see a clause set off with commas containing a noun and adjective in the ablative case without a participle, just plug in our participle "being".

ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE: TRANSLATIONS

The literal translation of Ablative Absolutes - "having..", "with..., etc. - makes for some hellish English.
A translation is not complete until we've rendered a thought in one language into a the target language in a smooth, fluent expression that wouldn't surprise a native speaker.
We have to massage Ablative Absolutes a little to get them into English.

Because the Ablative Absolute is essentially a participial construction, the same rules that applied to translating participles will apply to the translating the Ablative Absolute.
That is,
 (1)   the Ablative Absolute shows time relative to the time of the verb of the main clause - future participles show time subsequent, present participles show time contemporaneous, perfect participles show time prior;
 (2)   the exact logical relationship between the main clause and the Ablative Absolute has to be reconstructed from the context and expressed by one of our subordinating conjunctions: because, since, after, although, if, inasmuch as, and so on.

So recognizing that an Ablative Absolute clause in a Latin sentence and plugging in the "with" to bring it into English is only the first step in translation.
Next you must "promote" the participial clause into a subordinate clause with a finite verb (a verb with person) and decide on the most likely subordinating conjunction.
Obviously, this is going to involve some judgment on your part, since the possible subordinating conjunction have very different meanings.
For example, here are two possible translations of this Latin sentence :
                 "Civibus patriam amantibus,possumus magnam spem habere".
         (a)   Because the citizens love the fatherland, we are able to have great hope.
         (b)   Although the citizens love the fatherland, we are able to have great hope.

The meaning of (a) and (b) are flatly contradictory; (a) is saying that it's a good thing for citizens to love the fatherland, but (b) says that it's not. But both are possible translations of the Latin sentence.
You must first examine the general intention of the author as it appears in the context of his writing before you can translate this sentence into meaningful English. It'll take some practice and patience.

The relationship of tenses should present you little difficulty - your natural instincts will serve you well.
But one item should be mentioned.
As you know, a perfect participle shows time prior to the time of the verb in the main clause.
If therefore, the participle in the Ablative Absolute is perfect, and if the tense of the main verb is one of the past tenses - imperfect, perfect, or pluperfect - then how should you translate the participle when you promote it to a finite verb?
Think about it a moment.
If the perfect participle is showing time prior to another past event, then what finite tense should you use?
The tense which shows time prior to another past event is the pluperfect tense, so you should choose the pluperfect tense to represent the perfect participle of the Ablative Absolute clause.

Like this :   *"Omnibus bonis civibus ex urbe expulsis, tryannus imperium accepit".*
              (When all the good citizens had been expelled from the city, the tyrant took power.)

Take a moment now do these sentences from Wheelock's Self-Help Tutorial. First analyze the sentence literally, then smooth it over into English you'd expect to hear in civil conversation.

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

12. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

22. _____

25. _____

THE PASSIVE PERIPHRASTIC WITH THE DATIVE OF AGENT

Look at these English sentences :   "This button is not to be pushed".
                                      "You are to remain right here until we get back".
                                      "This door is to be left open".
                                      "You are to do all your homework".
                                      "This lesson is to be done by tomorrow".

In each of these the subject of the sentence is linked to an infinitive in the predicate by a form of the verb "to be", and they show a sense of duty, necessity, or obligation. This is an idiomatic construction in English. A conjugated form of the verb "to be" plus an infinitive - either passive or active - show obligation or necessity. Each of these sentences could have been written in several different ways.
We could just as easily say   "This button   should be pushed".
                                              must
                                              ought to
                                              has to

As I warned you in the last chapter, Latin has an idiomatic use of the future passive participle.
If the future passive participle is linked to the subject with a form of the verb "sum", it takes on a sense of obligation or necessity. When it is used this way, we call the future active participle a "gerundive".
Do you remember the future passive participle? Let's review its formation for a moment.
You form the future passive participle this way :   1st principal part + *nd* + *-us, -a, -um*

Since there is no way to translate this construction directly over into English - that is, you can't simply translate each word and come up with a true representation of the original intention - you have to

periphrase it. You have to "talk around" (peri) it to translate it. For this reason, the construction "sum + gerundive" is called a "periphrastic" construction, because you must periphrase it to translate it. Let's note three more things about this construction before we look at some examples.

(1)   The construction links a participle with the subject through a form of the verb *"sum"*.
Since participles are verbal adjectives the participle - the gerundive - will agree in number, gender and case with the subject to which it is linked.
That is, the gerundive modifies the subject of the verb *"sum"*.

(2)   Because the gerundive is the future passive participle, this construction will always be in the passive voice.
That is, the construction will always be saying what should be done.

(3)   When the passive periphrastic construction expresses the person agent who should be performing the action, the agent is put into the dative case; the agent is not, as is normal for the passive voice, shown by *"ab"* + ablative.

Now let's look at a couple of simple examples of the passive periphrastic.

"Carthago delenda est".

"Carthago" (Carthago, -inis (f) "Carthage") is the subject and is feminine; so the gerundive, *"delenda"* (from *"deleo"* "to destroy") agrees with it.
A literal translation, therefore, would be "Carthage is to be destroyed".
Some acceptable variations may be : "Carthage ought to be destroyed", "Carthage should be destroyed", "Carthage has to be destroyed", "Carthage must be destroyed". Each of these translations has a different flavor in English, but they are all legitimate renderings of the Latin *"Carthago delenda est".*

"Carthago nobis delenda est".

What about the *"nobis"*? It is in the dative case, so it is expressing the agent of the passive construction. So we should add to our translation "by us". "Carthage is to be (should be, ought to be, has to be, must be) destroyed by us".
Written English tries to be parsimonious of the passive voice, so a final translation of the passive periphrastic might be a conversion to the active voice: "We are to (must, ought to, should, have to) destroy Carthage".

"Haec puella meo filio amanda est".
"This girl is to be (ought to be, should be, must be, has to be) loved by my son".
Or, in the active voice "My son is to (must, ought to, should, has to) love this girl".

"Haec omnibus agenda sunt".
"These things are to be (must be, ought to be, should be, have to be) done by everyone".
Or "Everyone is to (must, ought to, should, has to) do these things".

Finally, the conjugated form of *"sum"* can be in any of the tenses - naturally - so the translation has to reflect the different tenses.
Watch :   *"Haec omnibus agenda erunt".* (Everyone will have to do these things.)
                     "Haec omnibus agenda erant". (Everyone had to do these things.)

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

quisque, quidque   The inflected part of the word comes before the suffix "*-que"*.
                     This is the interrogative "*quis, quid*" + the suffix, so you already know how it is declined. It means "each one", so obviously should have no plural forms - and it doesn't until after Classical Latin. And that's not your concern for now.

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