

CHAPTER 22

Fifth Declension; Summary of Ablatives

THE FIFTH DECLENSION

After your considerable experience with the morphology of Latin nouns, the fifth declension is practically nothing but a review. There are no new concepts you have to juggle while you're working on memorizing another set of forms. This chapter, in fact, should give you a little breather.

The fifth declension is simple - probably the simplest declension in Latin:

- (1) it has no subcategories or deviant set of endings;
- (2) the nouns of the fifth declensions never have stems which are not the same as the nominative singular;
- (3) its thematic vowel "-e-" is transparent in all the case endings;
- (4) there are no adjectives which use the fifth declension endings;
- (5) there is only one nominative singular ending;
- (6) and the vast majority of fifth declension nouns are feminine.

Here are the endings. Take a close look at them.

FIFTH DECLENSION CASE ENDINGS

N/V. -es
Gen. -ei
Dat. -ei
Acc. -em
Abl. -e

N/V. -es
Gen. -erum
Dat. -ebus
Acc. -es
Abl. -ebus

The nominative singular is always "-es", which makes this declension much easier than the second and the third declensions, in which there are a variety of possible endings for the nominative singular.

Therefore, a fifth declension noun will always end in "-es" - and that is the first entry in the dictionary.

But be careful not to make an elementary error in logic.

All fifth declension nouns end in "-es" in the nominative singular, but not all nouns which end in "-es" in the nominative singular are fifth declension.

"*Nubes*", for example, ends in "-es", but its genitive is "*nubis*", clearly telling you that it's a third, not a fifth declension noun.

Be sure to check the nominative and the genitive forms for your nouns.

A fifth declension noun will look like this: "x"es, -ei (gender).

THE PROBLEM WITH *dies*, *diei* (m)

Wheelock shows you the noun "*dies*" separately, and it's possible to get the impression that it is a paradigm for a subdivision of the fifth declension. It is not.

Look at the endings carefully.

You'll see the case endings on "*dies*" don't differ from the endings of "*res*" in any significant way.

The only difference is in the quantity of the thematic vowel "-e-".

By nature, the thematic vowel of the fifth declension is long, and it "wants" to stay long.

Often, however, it becomes short when certain endings are attached.

For "*res*", the thematic vowel "-e-" becomes short when you add the genitive and dative singular ending long "-i" (and it also is short before the "-m" ending of the accusative singular).

But when the thematic vowel "-e-" is itself preceded by another vowel - as it is in "*dies*" - then it stays long before the genitive and dative ending long "-i".

So you get "*diei*" for the genitive singular, not "dii".

Since you're not overly concerned with getting all the long marks right at this point in your study, you might just as well cross out "*dies*" in Wheelock and forget about it. The stem of "*dies*" is "die-" to which you add the fifth declension case endings.

ABLATIVE OF MANNER WITH AND WITHOUT *cum*

Now you get a stylistic variation on the Ablative of Manner construction you've already learned. This really needs no amplification. It's a simple adjustment.

The Ablative of Manner, you may recall, is a way to use a noun as an adverb. You use the preposition "*cum*" with the noun in the ablative case: "*Id cum celeritate fecerunt* (They did it quickly)".

You can also modify the noun being used adverbially with an adjective.

Latin likes to turn the word order around some, but this is no great problem : "*Id magna cum celeritate fecerunt* (They did it with great speed)".

When the noun in this kind of construction is modified by an adjective, Latin has the option of dropping the preposition "*cum*". So this sentence could also be written: "*Id magna celeritate fecerunt*".

But if the noun governed by "*cum*" is not qualified by an adjective, the "*cum*" must be used.

This is incorrect : "*Id celeritate fecerunt*"; but this is not : "*Id cum celeritate fecit*"; neither is this : "*Id magna cum celeritate fecit*"; nor this : "*Id magna celeritate fecit*".

SUMMARY OF ABLATIVES

This is just a rehash of old material, but it's good to get all the facts laid out at one time.

The uses of the ablative case can be divided into two groups:

- (1) uses of the ablative with a preposition;
- (2) uses of the ablative without a preposition.

You really needn't memorize the different uses of the ablative with prepositions.

When you have a preposition governing an ablative case, you just translate the meaning of the preposition and then translate the meaning of the noun.

The fact that the noun is in the ablative case really doesn't contribute anything to the translation.

It's in the ablative case because the preposition requires it. That's all.

One preposition which takes the ablative case requires some special caution, however, and that's "*cum*".

Remember, "*cum*" means "with" in two different senses :

- (1) as accompaniment, and
 - (2) as manner.
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- (1) "*Id cum amico fecit*". (He did it with a friend.)
 - (2) "*Id cum cura fecit*". (He did it with care.)

It is important, however, that you know all the "prepositionless" uses of the ablative case.

Here the ablative case itself, without a preposition in Latin to govern it, takes on special meanings.

You simply must know them.

- (a) **Ablative of Means** shows the instrument with which the action of the verb was effected. Keep it distinct from the Ablative of Manner, which shows in what manner the action was carried out. Common translations of the Ablative of Means are : "with", "by means of", "through".
- (b) **Ablative of Time** is easy to spot. If you have a word of a unit of time in the ablative case without a preposition, it's expressing time. The problem is that Latin used this construction to indicate two different kinds of time which we keep separate in English. The Latin Ablative of Time can express either the Time When or Time Within Which of an action. (See Chapter 15.)

- (c) **Ablative of Separation** is a prepositionless use of the ablative case after verbs which strongly contain the idea of separation; so the normal prepositions "ex" or "ab" are dropped, and the ablative case alone is used.
- (d) **Ablative of Manner** can be written without a preposition if the noun used as an adverb is modified by an adjective - as you just saw above.

VOCABULARY PUZZLES:

res, rei (f)

Start by scratching off the first translation "thing".

"Res" doesn't mean "thing" in our common sense of "What's that thing on the table"? or "Bring me that thing".

It doesn't mean a nondescript object for which we can't quite come up with a name.

It means "thing" when we say something like "What's this thing about you're not wanting to learn Latin"? or "Things sometimes get out of control".

It means "matter", "affair", or "business" (non-commercial).

res publica (f)

First, this is the origin of our one word "republic", but in Latin it is two words - the noun "*res*" and the adjective "*publicus, -a, -um*" modifying it.

Therefore both "*res*" and "*publica*" decline :

rei publicae
 rei publicae
 rem publicam
 re publica
 etc.

Second, it obviously doesn't mean "public thing" as in "public object", but "public business or affair". Here you can see the real meaning of "*res*".

medius, -a, -um

It is an adjective, not a noun, so it can't be used the way our noun "middle" is used.

We say "the middle of the city", putting "city" into the genitive case.

Latin can't do this, because "*medius*" doesn't mean "middle", but "mid".

Hence they say "*medius urbs*"; or "*media nocte*" ("in the middle of the night").

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