XXV. Thēseus et Mīnōtaurus

Rēs Grammaticae Novae

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Greek Mythology: Theseus and the Minotaur

In this and the next chapter, we will leave the family and read some well-known Greek myths. These thrilling stories have fascinated not only the Romans, but also readers through the ages, and many poets and artists have drawn inspiration from the narrative art of the Greeks.

Lēctiō Prīma (Section I)

Adverbs of Place

In this chapter, we add to your store of adverbs signaling place that respond to the questions:

ubi?

hīc (Cap. III) *ibi*: *Ibi nāvis mea parāta est.* (l.93–94)
illīc (Cap. VII)

Notā Bene: The accent on *illīc* is on the ultima (*illíc*): see Cap. VII.

unde?

hinc (Cap. XXIII)
illinc (Cap. XXIII): *Nēmō quī tāle aedificium semel intrāvit rūrsus illinc exīre potest.* (ll.30–31)

quō?

hūc: *Auxiliō huius fīlī hūc ad mē redībis* (ll.73–74)
illūc: *hūc et illūc currēns* (l.110)

Notā Bene: Illinc and *illūc,* like *illīc,* are pronounced with the accent on the ultima.

Velle + Accusative and Infinitive

Like *iubēre,* the verb *velle* can take the accusative + infinitive construction:

Tē hīc manēre volō want you to... (ll.2–3)
Quam fābulam mē tibi nārrāre vīs? do you want me to... (ll.2–4)

Ablative of Respect (continued from Cap. XI)

You have learned (Caps. XI, XIX, XXII) that the ablative case is used to show the respect in which something is true:

Nec modo pede, sed etiam capite aeger est. (Cap. XI, l.55)
Tū sōlus amōre meō dignus erās. (Cap. XIX, l.111)
Vōx tua difficilis est audītū. (Cap. XXII, ll.45–46)

Similarly, a new name can be presented with the ablative *nōmine* ("by name," abl. of respect), e.g.:

mōnstrum terribile, nōmine Mīnōtaurus (ll.25–26)
parva īnsula nōmine Naxus

Lēctiō Altera (Section II)

Locative (continued)

Small islands:

You have learned (Caps. VI, XIX) that for the names of cities and towns, and the nouns *domus, rus,* and *humus,* place where, place to which, and place from

which are expressed by the plain ablative (*unde*, from where), accusative (*quō*, to where), and locative (*ubi*, where) without prepositions. This rule applies also to the names of small islands, of which Naxos (*Naxus*) is an example:

acc. *Naxum* = *ad īnsulam Naxum* (l.99)
abl. *Naxō* = *ab/ex īnsulā Naxō* (l.100)
loc. *Nāxī* = *in īnsulā Naxō* (l.132)

Large islands (like Crete), however, still require prepositions.

Naxō in Crētām
ē Crētā Athēnās

Plural nouns

In Cap. VI, you learned about constructions of place with the names of cities and towns. The place-names mentioned in the story can be found on the map of Greece.

Among the names of towns, note the plural forms *Athēnae* and *Delphī*:

nom. *Athēnae, Delphī*
acc. *Athēnās, Delphōs*
abl. *Athēnīs, Delphīs*

The accusative and ablative, as you know, serve to express motion to and from the town: *Athēnās*, "to Athens," *Athēnīs*, "from Athens."

But the **locative** of plural town names has the same form as the ablative, so that *Athēnīs* can also mean "from Athens" or "in Athens" (e.g., the equivalent of *in urbe Athēnīs*):

Thēseus Athēnīs vīvēbat. (ll.51–52)

Context will tell you when to interpret as locative (place where) or ablative (place from which).

Ablative of Manner (*Ablātīvus Modī*)

The ablative can express the way or manner in which an action is done, as you see in lines 142–143:

Quī multōs annōs Athēnās magnā cum glōriā rēxit. ("with great glory")

We saw this construction much earlier but without a preposition:

Vocābulum "īnsula" dēclinātur hōc modō. ("in this way") (Cap. IX, l.90)

Mārcus perterritus ad vīllam currit et magnā vōce clāmat. ("with a great voice," "loudly") (Cap. X, ll.111–112)

Notā Bene: The preposition *cum* in the *ablātīvus modī* is optional if the noun is modified by an adjective (*magnā cum glōriā, magnā vōce, hōc modō*). If there is no adjective, *cum* must be used (e.g., *cum glōriā*).

Objective/Subjective Genitive

Transitive verbs like *timēre* and *amāre* are generally used with an object in the accusative, e.g.:

mortem timēre
patriam amāre

Nouns and adjectives (including participles used as adjectives) that are derived from verbs, e.g., *timor* (from *timēre*) and *amor* (from *amāre*), can be combined with a **genitive** to denote what is the object of that verb (e.g., fear or love of something/someone).

timor mortis fear of death (l.77)
amor patriae love of country (l.86)

Such a genitive is called an **objective genitive**. Other examples are:

timor mōnstrōrum (ll.21–22): *timor < timēre*
expugnātiō urbis (ll.45–46): *expugnātiō < expugnāre*
cupiditās pecūniae (ll.122–123): *cupiditās < cupere*
cupidus aurī atque sanguinis (ll.44–47) = *quī cupit aurum atque sanguinem*
patriae amāns (l.51) = *quī patriam amat*

Iubēre + Accusative and Infinitive (continued)

You have seen several examples of the accusative and infinitive with the verb *iubēre.*

An active infinitive expresses what a person is to do:

Medicus Quīntum linguam ostendere iubet. (Cap. XI, ll.69–70)

A passive infinitive expresses what is to be done to a person, like *dūcī* in:

[*Rēx*] *eum* (*ā mīlitibus*) *in labyrinthum dūcī iussit*: "ordered him to be taken into the labyrinth" (l.59)

Perfect Participle of Deponents

You know (Cap. XIV) that present participles can have an object:

Dāvus cubiculum intrāns (l.25)
Mārcus oculōs aperiēns (ll.37–38)

In the same way, the perfect participle of deponent verbs (being active in meaning) can be used with the subject of the sentence to express what a person has/had done or did:

haec locūta Ariadna... ("having said/after saying this...") (l.74)
Thēseus fīlum Ariadnae secūtus... ("having followed...") (ll.84–85)
Aegeus arbitrātus... ("who believed...") (ll.137–138)

Compare

An ablative absolute with a perfect passive participle:

Hīs dictīs, Ariadna Thēseō fīlum longum dedit: (*literally*) "these things having been said, Ariadna..."

A nominative feminine singular perfect participle of a deponent verb, which is active in meaning:

haec locūta, Ariadna Thēseō fīlum longum dedit: "Ariadna, having spoken these things..."

Points of Style

Quī = et is

A relative pronoun at the beginning of a sentence functions as a demonstrative pronoun referring to a word in the preceding sentence. That is, the relative can be a transitional, connecting word, e.g.:

Thēseus Athēnīs vīvēbat. Quī (= "and he") *nūper Athēnās vēnerat.* (ll.51–52)
Labyrinthus ā Daedalō, virō Athēniēnsī, aedificātus erat. Quī iam antequam ex urbe Athēnīs in Crētam vēnit, complūrēs rēs mīrābilēs fēcerat. (l.34)
Mīnōs autem fīliam virginem habēbat, cui nōmen erat Ariadna. Quae ("and she") *cum prīmum Thēseum cōnspexit, eum amāre coepit cōnstituitque eum servāre.* (ll.60–62)
Thēseus rēx Athēniēnsium factus est. Quī multōs annōs Athēnās magnā cum glōriā rēxit. (ll.141–143)

Bene/male velle

The idiomatic expressions *bene velle* ("to wish someone well") and *male velle* ("to wish someone ill") take a dative of person. From the participle (*bene volēns* and *male volēns*) come the English words "benevolent" and "malevolent." Example:

Rēx enim Athēniēnsibus male volēbat. (ll.48–49)

Lēctiō Tertia (Section III)

Imperative of Deponent Verbs

The **imperative of deponent verbs** ends in:

- *-re* in the singular (cons.-stems *-ere*)
- *-minī* in the plural (cons.-stems *-iminī*)

Notā Bene:

- The plural imperative of deponents *looks identical* to the 2nd plural indicative: *sequiminī*
- The singular imperative of deponents *looks like* a present active infinitive: *sequere*

You have already seen examples of the singular imperative of deponents (ending in *-re*) in Cap. XXIV, e.g.:

Intuēre pedēs meōs, Syra! (ll.28–29)
loquere mēcum! (l.41)
immō laetāre. (l.44)

In this chapter, Theseus says to Ariadne (singular imperative):

Opperīre mē! (l.75) *Et tū sequere mē! Proficīscere mēcum Athēnās!* (ll.95–96)

To his countrymen, Theseus uses the plural imperative (ll.92–93):

Laetāminī, cīvēs meī!
Intuēminī gladium meum cruentum!
Sequiminī mē ad portum!

Oblīvīscī with Genitive/Accusative

The verb *oblīvīscī* can be completed both by an accusative direct object and by the genitive. *Oblīvīscī* can take an accusative when the object is a thing:

Quis tam facile prōmissum oblīvīscitur quam vir quī fēminam amāvit? (ll.119–120)
Redeō ad nārrātiōnem fābulae, quam prope oblīta sum. (ll.129–130)

When *oblīvīscī* means "disregard," "don't be mindful of," it takes a genitive:

oblīvīscere illīus virī! (l.126)
Nōn facile est amōris antīquī oblīvīscī. (l.128)

Nāvigandum, fugiendum

The forms *nāvigandum* and *fugiendum* (ll.94, 97) will be taken up in Cap. XXVI.

Recēnsiō: Adverbs of Place

ubi?	in what place?	*quō*?	to what place?
ibi	in that place, there	(*eō*: to that place: Cap. XXVIII)	
illīc	in that place	*illūc*	to that place[1]
hīc	in this place	*hūc*	to this place

unde?	from what place?
(*inde*: from that place: Cap. XXIX)	
illinc	from that place
hinc	from this place

hūc atque illūc	here and there (to this place and to that)
hīc atque illīc	here and there (on this side and that)

More adverbs

brevī (*brevī tempore*)	in a short time
quotannīs	every year
ūnā cum + abl.	together with

Studia Rōmāna

Syra alludes to several famous Greek myths before settling on the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Greek literature and stories became an integral part of Roman culture (as Horace wrote, "After Greece was captured, she captivated her uncultivated conqueror and brought culture to unsophisticated Latium"[2]). Greek exempla are often put in service of illustrating Roman moral precepts (although Syra uses the narrative of Theseus and Ariadne as a "misery loves company" solace for her own disappointment in love).

The boy who wanted to drive the chariot of the sun god (*an fābulam dē puerō quī cupīvit regere equōs quī currum Sōlis per caelum trahunt*? ll.6–7) was *Phaëthōn*, the son of Helios, the god who drove the chariot of the sun through the sky each day (about whom you will learn more in the next chapter). She next refers to Homer's *Iliad*, the story of the Trojan war and the most famous Greek epic in antiquity. (*An cupis audīre fābulam dē Achille, duce Graecōrum, quī Hectorem, ducem Trōiānum, interfēcit atque corpus eius mortuum post*

1. Like *illīc*, *illūc* is accented on the ultima (i.e., originally *illūce*).
2. *Epist.* 2.1.156: *Graecia capta ferum victōrem cēpit et artīs/intulit āgrestī Latiō.*

currum suum trāxit circum moenia urbis Trōiae? ll.8–11). "Achilles, the best of the Greeks, killed Hector, the best of the Trojans, and then dragged his body around the walls of Troy." Finally she asks Quintus if he wants to hear about Romulus, a story you read about in the notes to Cap. IX (*an fābulam dē Rōmulō, quī prīma moenia Rōmāna aedificāvit...* ll.11–13).

The two great heroes of the Greek mainland were Herakles (Latin: Hercules) in the south among the Dorians in the Peloponnese and Theseus among the Athenians in Attica. Inspired by the renown of Herakles's prowess, Theseus looked for his own adventures. Although the twelve labors of Herakles are more famous, Theseus also performed several labors—seven before the defeat of the Minotaur. Afterward, he continued his adventures, many of them with his best friend Pirithous. Their last undertaking together was a journey to the underworld to capture Persephone, where they were trapped. Herakles saved Theseus, but Pirithous remained in Hades. Near the end of the first century BC, the poet Horace used the image of Theseus's inability to free his friend from Hades as a marker of the finality of death (IV.7.27–28):

> *nec Lēthaea valet Thēseus abrumpere cārō*
> *vincula Pīrithoo.*[3]

The prolific Greek writer Plurarch (first–second century AD) wrote parallel biographies of famous Greeks and Romans. His life of Theseus, as founder of Athens, is paired with that of Romulus, as founder of Rome. The Greek playwright Euripides (fifth century BC) wrote a play about Theseus and his son Hippolytus, and Theseus makes frequent appearances in Greek vase painting. Ovid (43 BC–AD 17/18) includes Theseus in several poems (the *Hērōidēs*, the *Ars Amātōria*, the *Metamorphōsēs*).

There are always variations on myths. In one of the variations of the Theseus and Ariadna myth, Ariadna is rescued and marries Dionysius (Roman: Bacchus), the god of wine.

Vocābula Disposita/Ōrdināta

Nōmina

1st

fābula, -ae	story
glōria, -ae	glory
mora, -ae	delay

2nd

aedificium, -ī	building
agnus, -ī	lamb
auxilium, -ī	help, aid

3. *Lēthaeus, -a, -um*: belonging to Lēthē, the river from which the dead drink and thereby forget the past; *abrumpere* = *ab* + *rumpere* (Cap. XXII); *vinculum* = *catēnam* (Cap. XXII).

fīlum, -ī	thread
labyrinthus, -ī	labyrinth
mōnstrum, -ī	monster
saxum, -ī	rock
taurus, -ī	bull
3rd	
cīvis, cīvis (*m./f.*)	citizen
cupiditās, cupiditātis (*f.*)	desire
expugnātiō, expugnātiōnis (*f.*)	conquest
lītus, lītoris (*n.*)	shore
moenia, moenium (*n. pl.*)	walls
mors, mortis (*f.*)	death
nārrātiō, nārrātiōnis (*f.*)	story
nex, necis (*f.*)	death
rēx, rēgis (*m.*)	king
4th	
cōnspectus, -ūs (*m.*)	sight, view
currus, -ūs (*m.*)	chariot
exitus, -ūs (*m.*)	way out, end

Verba

Notā Bene: Not all verbs have all principal parts (e.g., *maerēre* and *patēre* exist only in the present system).

-āre (1)	
(aedificō) aedificāre, aedificāvisse, aedificātum	build
(necō) necāre, necāvisse, necātum	kill
(vorō) vorāre, vorāvisse, vorātum	devour
-ēre (2)	
(maereō) maerēre	grieve
(pateō) patēre (*intr.*)	lie open
(polliceor) pollicērī, pollicitum	promise
-ere (3)	
(cōnstituō) cōnstituere, cōnstituisse, cōnstitūtum	decide, fix
(dēscendō) dēscendere, dēscendisse, dēscēnsum	descend
(dēserō) dēserere, dēseruisse, dēsertum	leave, desert
(incipiō) incipere, coepisse, coeptum	begin
(interficiō) interficere, interfēcisse, interfectum	kill
(oblīviscor) oblīvīscī, oblītum	forget
(occīdō) occīdere, occīdisse, occīsum	kill

(prōspiciō) prōspicere, prōspexisse, prōspectum	look out, look ahead
(regō) regere, rēxisse, rēctum	rule
(trahō) trahere, trāxisse, tractum	drag

Adiectīva

1st/2nd (-us/er, -a, -um)

cupidus, -a, -um	desirous
parātus, -a, -um	ready
saevus, -a, -um	savage
timidus, -a, -um	timid

3rd

complūrēs, -e	very many
humilis, -e	low
mīrābilis, -e	wonderful, marvelous
terribilis, -e	terrible

Adverbia

brevī	in a short time
forte	by chance
hūc	to this place
ibi	there, in that place
illūc	to that place
ōlim	once, long ago
quotannīs	every year