

Chapter II

Present Active Indicative, Verbs of the First Conjugation

Apposition

Personal Subject Pronouns

Present Active Indicative

As was said in the last chapter, Latin verbs tell us five things about the action of the sentence, viz.:

1. Who performed the action
2. How many performed the action
3. When the action was performed
4. Whether it was performed by or on something
5. Whether the action really happened

We call these five traits:

1. Person
2. Number
3. Tense (or Tense-Aspect)
4. Voice
5. Mood

We have seen person, number, and tense already. For voice, we can have Active or Passive. When the subject performs the action (e.g., “I sang a song.”), the verb is in the active voice. When the subject has an action performed on it (e.g., “A song was sung by me.”), the verb is in the passive voice. The active voice is used for reflexives, that is, when the subject performs an action on himself (e.g., “The dog scratched itself.”). Mood relates the sentence to reality. If the action really happened, or really will happen, the Indicative mood is normally used. When the action is merely hoped for or demanded, the Subjunctive is used. We will revisit voice and mood later, when we learn about the Passive and Subjunctive. For right now you can mostly assume a verb should be Active Indicative.

The present (i.e., present imperfective) is used for actions true and ongoing at the time of speaking. An action can be ongoing because it occurs continuously from the past into the future (called the progressive; e.g., “I am singing.”), or because it occurs repeatedly from the past to the future (called the repetitive; e.g., “I (do) sing.”). Also the present is used for single acts occurring at the time of speaking (called the present aorist; “I am singing (right now).”), although this use is rare in Latin and English, and in the present scarcely different from the progressive.

Latin verbs are quoted in the first person singular present active indicative (just as in English we use the infinitive). This form normally ends in -o. To find the imperfective stem, however, one must look at the imperfective active infinitive, which is given second in a dictionary. The infinitive marks only Aspect and Voice, however, its use will

be discussed later. For the first declension the infinitive ends in *-āre* (for which reason this is sometimes called the *-a-* conjugation), and the stem is found by removing this ending. To this stem are added endings marking tense, person, and number. This process is called conjugation (from the Latin *conjugo* ‘to bind together’, i.e., the stem and the ending).

The good news is, verbs of the first conjugation are almost all perfectly regular, that is, all the stems are the same. We will see that this is not true for all verbs. However, in the imperfective system there are only a few verbs whose forms cannot be determined from the infinitive.

Verbs of the first conjugation take the following endings:

Endings:	Example: amo, amāre												
<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>-o</td><td>-āmus</td></tr> <tr><td>-as</td><td>-ātis</td></tr> <tr><td>-at</td><td>-ant</td></tr> </table>	-o	-āmus	-as	-ātis	-at	-ant	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>amo</td><td>amāmus</td></tr> <tr><td>amas</td><td>amātis</td></tr> <tr><td>amat</td><td>amant</td></tr> </table>	amo	amāmus	amas	amātis	amat	amant
-o	-āmus												
-as	-ātis												
-at	-ant												
amo	amāmus												
amas	amātis												
amat	amant												

N. B. If the infinitive of the verb has only two syllables, it does not require any accent in the infinitive or the present imperfective.

A problem arises with verbal stress. In the present imperfective indicative active, the second and third person singular forms have unpredictable stress. For this reason verbs with stems of two or more syllables will have the length of the final stem vowel marked on the infinitive, either long (e.g., *appār-*) or short (e.g., *invēni-*)¹. Once the length of the final stem vowel is known, one of three things will occur:

1. If the ending has a stress mark, it is stressed as usual (e.g., *apparēmus*)
2. If the ending has no stress mark, but has two syllables, the final stem vowel will be stressed (e.g., *invēnio*)
3. With endings of only one syllable, if the final stem vowel is long it will take the stress (e.g., *appāret*), but if the final stem vowel is short the syllable before it will be stressed (e.g., *ínvenit*).

If you are unsure of the length of the final stem vowel you may look it up in a dictionary. Also note that if the stem ends in more than one consonant, the final stem vowel will always be long (e.g., *obsēcr-*). Also, stress is only unpredictable in the present imperfective indicative active, and the imperatives and present participle. All other verbal forms have endings of two or more syllables, so that if there is a stress mark on the ending this is followed, otherwise the final stem vowel is stressed.

Apposition

Similar to predication, a noun can modify another noun without *sum*, and indeed, even when the modified noun is the subject or object of another verb. This is called apposition, and works just as in English, by putting two nouns next to each other (the

¹ When a short vowel is stressed, for typographical reasons, a candrabindu (e.g., *ǎ*) is used in place of the breve and accent.

modifier is normally second). E.g., *Jézebel, regína Ísraël, mórtua est.* 'Jezebel, the queen of Israel, is dead.'

Personal Subject Pronouns

When the subject of a sentence is not a noun, but a person or thing which is known from context a pronoun may be used. Latin routinely omits pronouns, but they can be used for clarity or emphasis. The following are Latin subject pronouns:

ego	nos
tu	vos
is or ille (m)	ei or illi (m)
ea or illa (f)	eæ or illæ (f)
id or illud (n)	ea or illa (n)

Is, ea, id was more common in Classical Latin, but by the time of the Vulgate *ille, illa, illud* had nearly taken over as the 3rd person pronoun. Both are truly demonstrative adjectives (meaning roughly 'that'), but served as pronouns when necessary.

Vocabulary

Nouns

fília (f)- daughter
Juda (m)- Judah, Jude
Levíta (m)- Levite
prophéta (f)- prophet
vita (f)- life

Verbs

do, dare- to give
regno, regnáre- to reign
voco, vocáre- to call
obsécro, obsēcráre- to beg, to pray

Adverb

nunc- now
sic- thus

Conjunction

autem [postpositive²]- however
quia- because

² The term postpositive is used for a group of adverbs which normally stand as the second word in a sentence.

Exercises

I. Conjugate the verbs *do* and *regno* in the present imperfective.

II. Translate the following into English:

- i. Obsécrat fília.
- ii. Levíta vocat.
- iii. Tu das.
- iv. Ádvenæ obsecrátis.
- v. Nunc vocant prophétæ.

III. Translate the following into Latin:

- i. Thus does life give.
- ii. Juda, however, reigns.
- iii. O Mary, because you reign, we pray to you (here: *te*).
- iv. Now, however, I am giving.
- v. We sailors are praying.