

PAPIRIUS PRAETEXTATUS

Objective

- to consolidate understanding of impersonal verbs

The Story

1. The reading passage is essentially Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* I.23, with some changes and omissions to reduce the amount of new vocabulary and to make the various constructions clearer. Even so, some of the sentences are quite difficult for this stage of the course, and it is suggested that the teacher should be more willing than usual to help students over the difficulties rather than allow them to become frustrated through lack of success.

The passage is given in its entirety, unadapted, with additional vocabulary and notes, as a translation exercise in the language activity book. After reading the adapted version in the student's book, students should be able to tackle the original text with confidence.

- Have students deduce: **praetextātus** (1), **introīre** (1), **mātrōna** (9), and **prūdētia** (16).
- The passage provides good practice in several constructions:
 - indirect command: 2–3, 10–11, and 14–15 (note the introductory verbs: **placuit**, 3, and **cōsultum fēcit**, 14)
 - indirect question; 3–4, 7–8, 11–12, and 13–14
 - indirect statement: 4 and 7–8
 - result: 5–6
 - ablative absolute: 7

4. In this passage, the indirect commands are of a more difficult variety in which no specific person is given the instruction:

Placuit nē quis.... (2) *It was decided that no one should....*

ōrāvērunt ut ūna uxor.... (11) *they begged that one wife should....*

cōsultum fēcit nē... puerī.... (14–15) *(The senate) passed a decree that boys should not....*

5. The two indirect statements are of an impersonal variety in which no accusative subject is expressed:

...respondit nōn licēre.... (4) *(The boy) replied that it was not allowed....*

Dixit āctum esse.... (7) *He said that it had been debated....* In these examples, however, the insertion of *that* should carry the students over the difficulty.

The second indirect statement introduces an indirect question: "He said it had been debated *whether* (7–8). The sense of the passage should lead to the translation *whether one man should have... or whether....* This is the first example in the course of an alternative question with **utrum... an**.

6. **maior** (2): Here in the sense *rather important*. Note also the comparative adverb **vehementius** in line 5.

7. **Māter Papīrii, puerī quī....** (3): Teachers should guide students toward *the mother of Papirius* (rather than *Papirius' mother*) to enable them to deal with **puerī** as genitive in apposition to **Papīrii**.

8. **Prūdēns** (7): Technically, this adjective could agree with either **puer** or **cōsiliūm**. Students should be asked to consider which fits the context better. Such a discussion will provide an opportunity to remind students that adjectives like **prūdēns** have the same form in the nominative singular of all three genders (cf. **ingēns, ēlēgāns**, and all present participles like **sequēns**).

9. In line 12, **vellent** means *meant*.

10. **Tantam** (16): An example of **tantus** not followed by a result clause.

Lectiō:

Mōs antea senātoribus Rōmae fuit in Cūriam cum praetextātis

filiis introīre. Ōlim in senātū rēs maior agēbātur et in diem

posterum prōlāta est. Placuit nē quis eam rem enūntiāret. Mater

Papīrii, puerī quī cum parente suō in Cūriā fuerat, rogāvit

filium quid in senātū patrēs ēgissent. Puer tamen respondit nōn licēre eam rem ēnūntiāre. Eō magis mulier audire cupiēbat; silentium puerī animum eius adeō incitāvit ut vehementius quaereret.

Tum puer, mātrem urgente, prūdēns cōnsilium cēpit. Dixit āctum esse in senātū utrum ūnus vir duās uxōrēs habēret an ūna uxor [habēret] duōs virōs. Hoc ubi illa audīvit, domō trepidāns ēgressa est. Ad cēterās mātṛonās rem pertulit.

Vēnit ad senātum postrīdiē mātṛonarum caterva. Lacrimantēs atque obsecrantēs ōrāvērunt ut ūna uxor duōs virōs habēret potius quam ut ūnus vir [habēret] duās uxōrēs. Senātōrēs ingredientēs in Cūriam mirābantur quid mātṛonae vellent.

Puer Papirius in medium prōgressus nārrāvit quid mātrem audire cupīvisset et quid ipse mātṛi dīxisset. Senātus fidem atque ingenium puerī laudāvit ac cōsultum fēcit nē postea puerī cum patribus in Cūriam introīrent praeter illum ūnum Papīrium.

Puerō posteā cognōnem honōris causā Praetextātus datum est quod
tantam pr̄udentiam praebuerat.

Vocabulary List 52A

1. mōs, mōris M. custom; (pl.) character (moral)
2. posterus, a, um next, following (posterity)
3. placuit it was decided (impersonal use)
4. nē quis that no one, lest anyone
N. B. After sī, nisi, num, and nē,
all the "ali's" fall away! cf. aliquis vs. sī quis, nē quis, sī quid
5. enūntiō, -are, -avī, -ātus to reveal, divulge (enunciate)
6. patrēs, patrum m. pl. senators (in a sense like George Washington being the
father of our country) syn: senātōrēs
7. eō magis Adv. all the more
8. agō, agere, ēgī, āctus to do, drive, discuss, live, spend
debate
9. prōferō, proferre, prōtulī, prōlātus to carry forward, continue
10. urgeō, urgēre, ursī, _____ to press, insist

Vocabulary List 52B

1. dixit āctum esse he said that there had been a debate
(lit. he said that whether.....it had been discussed)
2. utrum....an whether...or
N. B. aut = the "exclusive" or
Estne nōmen tibi est Ricardus aut Donaldus?
vel = the or of choice
Māvīsne ova vel carnem hōc vesperī?
an = or used in double indirect questions
3. trepidāns, trepidantis in a panic (intrepid, trepidation)
4. caterva, ae F. crowd syn. turba
5. potius quam rather than
6. fidēs, fideī F. good faith, reliability cf. bona fide
7. mōs maiōrum "the custom of ancestors," inherited custom, tradition
8. mōre suō in one's own way
9. Ō tempora! Ō mōrēs! How times and customs have changed! (Cicero, Oration I.2
against Catiline)

Vocabulary List 52C

1. ingenium, iī N. intelligence, ingenuity (ingenious)
2. cōsultum, ī N. decree
3. cognōmen, cognōminis N. surname, family name
4. honōris causā for the sake of an honor
5. causā + genitive for the sake of postpositive preposition
6. praebeō, -ēre, -uī, -itus to display, show, OFFER
7. prudentia, ae F. good sense, prudence
8. nullō mōre without precedent, unparalleled
9. $\overline{\text{Moribus}} \overline{\text{antiquis}} // \overline{\text{res}} / \overline{\text{stat}} \overline{\text{Romana}} \overline{\text{virisque}}$.
 On customs and men of olden times the Roman state stands firm.
 (Lit. The Roman state stands on customs and heroes of antiquity)
 Ennius (239 - 169 B. C. from Rudia in Calabria)

10. Ennius father of Roman literature

Since Ennius was from Calabria, he spoke Oscan, Greek, and Latin. It was from Ennius that the Roman schoolboy got his ideas of the old heroes. Cicero admired and quoted Ennius. His poetry exists only in fragments quoted by other famous authors of antiquity. His poetry is marked by beautiful sonority and patriotism.

Grammatica Latīna**Sententiae** p. 118**BUILDING THE MEANING**

Some students will want to know the exact meanings of the more idiomatic impersonal verbs:

- a. There is a subtle distinction between **oportet** and **decet**, as is shown by the following translations as given in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*:

decet = **decōrum est**, *it is becoming, i.e. it is in accord with approved standards of taste or behavior, it is right, proper, fitting.*

oportet, *it is demanded by some principle or standard, it is proper, right requisite.*

- b. **Taedet** is a transitive verb meaning *it makes or there is a making* someone (accusative case, direct object) *tired, weary, or sick of something* (genitive case, expressing cause).

These **sententiae** provide an opportunity to discuss the importance of custom and tradition in Roman life (see *The Romans*, "The Old Ways," pp. 14-26).

Roman religion: 119-122

Vocabulary List 52D

1. Vesta goddess of the hearth
2. Ceres goddess of the harvest
3. augury taking the omens
4. Lares et Penates household gods
5. suovetaurilia sacrifice of a pig, sheep, or a bull or all three
6. haruspex priest who took the omens by examining the vital organs of sacrificial animals
7. auspicium taking of the omens by examing signs in nature such as the flight of birds
8. auspex priest who took the omens by "auspicia"

ROMAN LIFE XXXIII: ROMAN RELIGION

This is a very complex and fascinating topic and the essay in the student's book is intended only as the most modest of treatments appropriate to a language text.

p. 119

The remarks here on the taking of the omens are important for an understanding of the religious aspects of the three types of ceremony that we deal with in the last five chapters of this student's book. For further information on augury, see *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, "Augures," p. 147, "Auspicium," p. 154, "Divination," pp. 356-357, and "Haruspices," p. 489. The main ancient source of information is Cicero's *De divinatione*. For further information on Roman religion in general, see *Roman Religion and Roman Life*, "Roman Religion," pp. 340-353.

Illustration p. 119

Students may be surprised to learn that in the sphere of religion women of antiquity held very significant roles both as goddesses who were worshipped and as priestesses. Among the Romans that heritage derived from earlier cultures of the ancient world; outstanding among these were the Greek and Egyptian. (See the essay on "The Multicultural Tradition" in the Epilogue at the end of the student's book.) Worship of the Mother of the Gods came to Rome through Eastern cults and religious traditions, especially via Greece and Egypt.

Plutarch treats this in some detail in his work *On Isis and Osiris*. Another quite interesting source of information on this same topic is Apuleius' comic novel, *The Metamorphoses*, better known as *The Golden Ass*, (see "The Isis Book" of *The Metamorphoses*, Book VI.5). The central figure defines herself to the hero as follows:

...The Phrygians, earliest of all races, call me Pessinuntia, mother of all gods... The Athenians...call me Minerva while the Cyprians call me Paphian

Venus; to the ...Cretans I am Diana...and among the trilingual Sicilians I am Propserpine; to the Eleusinians I am Ceres, the ancient goddess, to others Juno, to others Bellona and Hecate and Rhamnusia. But the Ethiopians, on whom the first rays of the sun-god shine as he is born every morning, together with the Africans and the Egyptians, who hold the original doctrine, I am honored with my distinctive rites and my true name of Queen Isis.

—tr. J. G. Griffiths

Illustration p. 120

There is a great amount of subtext in this scene and, if class time permits, it is worthwhile exploring some of it with the students. For example, point out the scale of man within nature in this scene. Remind students that the illustration on the book page is a detail of a much larger scene, in which landscape overwhelmingly dominates. Have them think about the message that this kind of scale implies. Also, discuss Psyche, her name, its legacy today, her province of "the soul" in connection with this scene and the topic of religion in general. Encourage an interested student to analyze the "meaning" of any aspect of this painting or this topic, including reporting on the myths involving Psyche and Apollo.

Illustration p. 122

Tarquinius, an early king of Rome, was an historical figure of Etruscan origin surrounded by many legends and credited with bringing Etruscan customs, cults, and crafts to Rome. See *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 880). He founded the Capitoline Temple in the heart of Rome.

The Romans borrowed greatly from the culture of the Etruscans, not only in areas of religious belief and practice — especially augury and divination — but also in modes of secular behavior and even laws (see the essay entitled "The Multicultural Tradition" in the Epilogue of the student's book).

ATTIC NIGHTS OF AULUS GELLIUS

BOOK I. XXII. 19-XXIII. 5

XXIII

Quis fuerit Papirius Praetextatus; quae istius causa cognomen sit; historiaeque ista omnis super eodem Papirio cognita iucunda.

- 1 HISTORIA de Papirio Praetextato dicta scriptaque est a M. Catone in oratione qua usus est *Ad Milites contra Galbam*, cum multa quidem venustate atque
2 luce atque munditia verborum. Ea Catonis verba huic prorsus commentario indididisse, si libri copia
3 fuisset id temporis, cum haec dictavi. Quod si non virtutes dignitatesque verborum, sed rem ipsam
4 scire quaeris, res ferme ad hunc modum est: Mos antea senatoribus Romae fuit in curiam cum prae-
5 textatis filiis introire. Tum, cum in senatu res

¹ omnis, ω.

¹ *Ad Fam.* x. 33.5. It should be Gaius Asinius Pollio.
² v. 16. ³ xxxix, Jordan.

- maior quaequam consultata eaque in diem posterum prolata est placuitque ut eam rem super qua tractavissent ne quis enuntiaret priusquam decreta esset, mater Papirii pueri, qui cum parente suo in curia fuerat, percontata est filium quidnam in senatu
6 patres egissent. Puer respondit tacendum esse neque id dici licere. Mulier fit audiendi cupidior; secretum rei et silentium pueri animum eius ad inquirendum everberat; quaerit igitur compressius
8 violentiusque. Tum puer, matre urgente, lepidi atque festivi mendacii consilium capit. Actum in senatu dixit, utrum videretur utilius exque republica esse unusne ut duas uxores haberet, an ut una apud
9 duos nupta esset. Hoc illa ubi audivit, animus compavescit, domo trepidans egreditur, ad ceteras matronas perfert. Venit¹ ad senatum postridie matrum familias caterva. Lacrimantes atque obsecrantes orant una potius ut duobus nupta fieret
11 quam ut uni duae. Senatores, ingredientes in curiam, quae illa mulierum intemperies et quid sibi
12 postulatio istaec vellet, mirabantur. Puer Papirius in medium curiae progressus, quid mater audire institisset, quid ipse matri dixisset, rem, sicut fuerat,
13 denarrat. Senatus fidem atque ingenium pueri exosculatur, consultum facit uti posthac pueri cum patribus in curiam ne introeant, praeter ille unus Papirius, atque puero postea cognomentum honoris

¹ perfert. Venit, *Klotz*; pervenit, ω; pervenit. It, *Mommsen*.

gratia inditum "Praetextatus" ob tacendi loquendique in aetate praetextae prudentiam.

XXIII

Who Papirius Praetextatus was; the reason for that surname; and the whole of the entertaining story about that same Papirius.

THE story of Papirius Praetextatus was told and committed to writing in the speech which Marcus Cato made *To the soldiers against Galba*,³ with great charm, brilliance and elegance of diction. I should have included Cato's own words in this very commentary, if I had had access to the book at the time when I dictated this extract. But if you would like to hear the bare tale, without the noble and dignified language, the incident was about as follows: It was formerly the custom at Rome for senators to enter the House with their sons under age.⁴ In those days, when a matter of considerable importance

⁴ The *toga praetexta*, with a purple border, was worn by senators and also by boys of free birth until they assumed the *toga virilis*.

had been discussed and was postponed to the following day, it was voted that no one should mention the subject of the debate until the matter was decided. The mother of the young Papirius, who had been in the House with his father, asked her son what the Fathers had taken up in the senate. The boy replied that it was a secret and that he could not tell. The woman became all the more eager to hear about it; the secrecy of the matter and the boy's silence piqued her curiosity; she therefore questioned him more pressingly and urgently. Then the boy, because of his mother's insistence, resorted to a witty and amusing falsehood. He said that the senate had discussed the question whether it seemed more expedient, and to the advantage of the State, for one man to have two wives or one woman to have two husbands. On hearing this, she is panic-stricken, rushes excitedly from the house, and carries the news to the other matrons. Next day a crowd of matrons came to the senate, imploring with tears and entreaties that one woman might have two husbands rather than one man two wives. The senators, as they entered the House, were wondering at this strange madness of the women and the meaning of such a demand, when young Papirius, stepping forward to the middle of the House, told in detail what his mother had insisted on hearing, what he himself had said to her, in fact, the whole story exactly as it had happened. The senate paid homage to the boy's cleverness and loyalty, but voted that thereafter boys should not enter the House with their fathers, save only this Papirius; and the boy was henceforth honoured with the

surname Praetextatus, because of his discretion in keeping silent and in speaking, while he was still young enough to wear the purple-bordered gown.

Language Activity Book

1. Activity 52a: See The Story, note 1. The following are sample translations of the Latin.

Previously it was the custom for Roman senators to enter the Senate House with their sons (who were still) wearing the *toga praetexta*. At a time when a certain rather important matter had been discussed and delayed until the next day and when it was decided that no one should announce the matter about which they were carrying on a discussion before it had been settled, the mother of Papirius, a boy who had been in the Senate House with his father, asked her son what the senators had debated in the senate.

The boy replied that he had to be silent and that it was not permitted that it (the matter) be told. The woman becomes more desirous of hearing; the secret of the matter and the silence of the boy stir up her mind to asking; she therefore asks more urgently and violently. Then the boy, since his mother was urging, forms a plan (consisting) of a clever and witty lie.

He said it was debated in the senate whether it seemed more useful and in the interests of the state that one man should have two wives or that one (wife) should be married with two (men). When she heard this, her mind became fearful; in a panic she goes out of the house, she reports (it) to other matrons.

On the next day a crowd of matrons came to the senate. Weeping and beseeching, they beg that one (woman) should rather be married to two (men) than that two (women) to one (man). The senators, coming into the Senate House, were wondering what that outrageous behavior of the women and what that demand meant.

The boy Papirius, having come forward into the middle of the Senate House, told the matter just as it had been—what his mother had insisted on hearing (and) what he himself had said to his mother. The senate expressed great admiration for the loyalty and ingenuity of the boy; it made a decree that henceforth boys not enter the Senate House with

their fathers except that one Papirius, and that afterwards the boy be given the nickname "Praetextatus" as an honor on account of his wisdom of keeping quiet and speaking at his youthful age.

2. Activity 52b: Some hints for answers:

no.1: The answer should emphasize the mother's curiosity and vehemence.

no. 2: The answer should include reference to how the narrator makes the boy's lie seem a clever and playful way out of the bind he is put in by his mother's insistence that he tell the secret.

no.3: **animus compavēscit, trepidāns, lacrimantēs, obsecrantēs.** The word **intemperīēs** best characterizes their behavior and suggests an anti-feminine bias.

no. 4: **exōsculātur.**

no. 5: **fidem, ingenium, and prūdentiam.**

nos. 6 and 7: These questions should spark lively discussion and debate with no need to arrive at final answers.

no. 8: In answering this question, students might consider the moral, familial, and societal questions involved in the situation in which Papirius is put in the bind of being able to keep the secret and maintain his loyalty to his father (the pillar of the family) and to the senate (Roman society in microcosm) only by lying and deceiving his mother. Which is shown to be more important, obedience to his mother or loyalty to his father and (through his father) to the senators? Why? What are the respective roles and positions of the father and mother within the family and within the larger community? To what extent can the episode be seen as a conflict between society (organized along strictly patriarchal lines) and what a Roman male would consider a prying busybody (or busybodies, if the other *matronae* are included)?

Verba Impers̄on̄alia

In Latin impersonal verbs exist only in the third person singular and the subject is it.

Impersonal verbs from pp. 116-117

1. necesse est + DATIVE + infinitive

2. licet, lic̄ere, licuit + DATIVE + infinitive

it is allowed (or MAY for formulas of politeness)

e. g. Licetne mihi ad latr̄inam ire. May I go to the bathroom?

3. placeō, plac̄ere, placuī + DATIVE

This verb may be used impersonally, but is especially used

impersonally in the perfect tense with the form placuit to mean it was decided

4. decet, dec̄ere, decuit + ACCUSATIVE + infinitive

it is becoming, fitting; should

The person or thing fitted or suited is accusative; rarely dative as in 52b no. 4 p. 11

5. oportet, oport̄ere, oportuit + ACCUSATIVE + infinitive

it is fitting; ought

6. taedet, taedere, taesum est + ACCUSATIVE OF THE PERSON WHO FEELS
+ GENITIVE OF THE EXCITING CAUSE

it bores, makes one (acc.) tired of something (gen.)

e. g. M̄e taedet s̄olit̄udinis.

↓
ACC.

↓
GENITIVE