Gerund, Gerundive, Supine

Latin MILC – W2, HT 2013

January 22, 2013

1 Gerund

1.1 General Remarks

The gerund is the substantivised form of the verb; it occurs *only* in the singular, and is neuter in gender, wherefore it is declined as such. It may occur in all cases; the nominative, however, is represented by the infinitive. As far as meaning is concerned, for a verb meaning 'to x', the gerund is equivalent to e.g. 'x-ing', 'the action of x-ing' or simply 'to x'.

The gerund rarely occurs in the dative.In the genitive, it is most common in its objective function (e.g. *ars dicendi* 'the art of speaking'), next to adjectives governing the genitive (*cupidus dominandi* 'eager to rule'), and before *gratiā, causā*.

(1) *Caesari colloquendi causa visa non est.*
      Caesar did not see any reason for a consultation.

(2) Dumnorix, who was unused to sailing, feared the sea.
      Dumnorix insuetus navigandi mare timebat.

(3) Learned men cross the seas for learning's sake.
      Docti discendi causa maria tramittunt.

In the accusative, the gerund occurs almost exclusively with *ad*, and rarely with *in*.

(4) *Non solum ad discendum propensi sumus, verum etiam ad docendum.*
      We have a propensity not only for learning, but also for teaching.

(5) For living well a short time is long enough.
      Ad bene vivendum breve tempus satis est longum.

As for the ablative, the gerund will occur on its own, or with prepositions (commonly *de, in*).

(6) *Multi patrimonia effuderunt inconsulte largiendo.*
      Many have squandered their inheritance through inconsiderate gift-giving.

(7) Fear keeps me from writing.
      Me metus in litteras scribendo impedit.

Notice that the gerund retains its verbal character in still using adverbs and direct/indirect objects.

1.2 Attraction Phenomena

If a gerundive takes a direct object, but itself occurs in the genitive or dative, Latin prefers to attract the direct object into the case of the gerund, which in turns adopts the gender and number of the object. The attracted gerundive appears similar in form to a gerundive, but has no force of necessity.
Examples:
*consilium Italiam relinquendi => consilium relinquend**ae** Itali**ae*** 'the plan to abandon Italy';
*crimina inferendo delectari => crimin**ibus** inferend**is** delectari* 'to enjoy making accusations'.
Both constructions occur frequently, but the attracted version is preferred (and you should try to use it).

(8) The Germani weren't given any time to consult or to take up arms.
      Germais neque consilii habendi neque arma capiendi spatium datum est.

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2 Gerundive

The gerundive denotes necessity or obligation, and is frequently translated as 'ought' or 'should' in English; it occurs in all cases and genders, and is quasi-adjectival. The gerundive will agree with that which must be done, e.g. 'the praiseworthy student' *discipulus laudandus*. The agent of the action is expressed in the dative; as it is adjectival, the gerundive will often be part of the predicate, thus 'The teacher should praise the student' *Magistro laudandus est discipulus*.

(9) *Ceteris populi Romani auctoritati parendum est.*
    The others ought to obey to the authority of the Roman people.

(10) I give you a book for reading.
    Trado tibi librum legendum.

(11) I know that I ought to thank him.
    Ei a me gratiam referendam scio.

Note that intransitive verbs can form gerundives only as part of a predicate , in the neuter. E.g. 'I have to run' *mihi est currendum*.

3 Supine

3.1 Supine I

The supine I is identical in form to the neuter of the perfect passive participle, e.g. *venatum, salutatum, cubitum*. It most frequently occurs after verbs of motion, and then denotes purpose, e.g. *auxilium postulatim venire* 'to come to ask for help'. Use it with care!

(12) *Iste noctu domum vicini venit furatum.*
    That guy by night came to his neighbour's house to steal.

(13) The Haedui sent emissaries to Caesar to ask for help.
    Haedui legatos ad Caesarem mittunt rogatum auxilium.

The supine I is also used to form the infinitive future passive, which is composed of the supine I and the passive infinitive *iri*. E.g. *spero librum missurum iri* 'I hope the book will be sent'.

3.2 Supine II

The supine II is found exclusively (but frequently) after the following adjectives and expressions: *facilis, difficilis, mirabilis, incredibilis, optimus; (ne)fas est* 'it is (un)lawful'. It is rendered as an epexegetic infinitive in English.

(14) *Hoc facile est intellectu.*
    This is easy to understand / easily understood.

(15) The Britanni though it best practice to cut off the Romans from food and deliveries.
    Britanni optimum factu esse duxerunt frumento commeatuque Romanos prohibere.

4 Assignment

4.1 Translate into Latin

Please translate this as a piece of continuous prose.

> To say nothing of Philip, whom he rendered an enemy to the Romans, though at a distance from him, Antiochus was the most powerful of all kings at that period; and him he so inflamed with a desire for war, that he endeavoured to bring troops against Italy even from the Red Sea. As some ambassadors from Rome were sent to that prince, in order to gain information respecting his intentions, and to endeavour, by underhand contrivances, to render Hannibal an object of suspicion to the king (as if, being bribed by them, he entertained other sentiments than before); and as they were not unsuccessful in their attempts, and Hannibal became aware of that fact, and found himself excluded from the privy council, he went at a time appointed to the king himself, and, after having said much concerning his attachment to him and his hatred to the Romans, he added the following statement: "My father Hamilcar," said he, "when I was a very little boy, being not more than nine years old, offered sacrifices at Carthage, when he was going as commander into Spain, to Jupiter, the best and greatest of the gods."
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Please hand in your assignment by Friday 6pm, either by email to *robin.meyer@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk*, or by pigeon post to *Robin Meyer, Wolfson College, Linton Rd.*