

## ***ABLATIVE ABSOLUTE AND TRANSLATION AS A CONCESSIVE CLAUSE – GUIDE TO USAGE***

**Background to the Ablative Absolute.** The word **absolute** comes from the fourth principal part of the verb: **absolvo, absolvere, absolvi, absolutum**, 3<sup>rd</sup> declension with the sense either, **untie** or **loosen**

**The Ablative Absolute.** The ablative absolute construction is a **stand-alone clause** with no close syntactical connection with the remainder of the same sentence, the **main clause**, hence; it is **untied** or **loosened** from the main clause

The ablative absolute cites the ablative *not* the nominative case. The construction cites all participle tenses of **sum, being**. The subject of the absolute construction is different from the subject or object of the main clause. In summary, the absolute acts as an adverb stating the circumstance in which the action of the main clause occurs

**Balbo veniente, femina discedet**

**With Balbus coming, the woman will depart**

**When Balbus is coming (comes), the woman will depart**

**Since Balbus is coming (comes), the woman will depart**

**If Balbus is coming (comes), the woman will depart**

**Although Balbus is coming, the woman will depart**

**Nota bene:** When the present participle is cited in an ablative absolute, the **-e** ending for the ablative singular occurs rather than **-i**. (The present participle refers to an action which occurs at the same time as the main verb.)

The subject of the ablative absolute, **Balbo** is different from the subject of the main clause, **femina**. Therefore, **Balbo veniente** is a true absolute

The **perfect active participle** does not exist therefore; it is impossible to express an active idea in the absolute as having occurred prior to the time of the main verb without recasting it in the passive voice. An alternate to the cited example above, would have been, to have written: **si Balbus venit** or **postquam Balbus venit** or **quamquam Balbus venit** et cetera

Two nouns may be used, an *implied* participle connects them. The second noun is acting as a **predicate ablative**. Example:

**Balbo amicum vocante, nautae fugerunt**

**With Balbus calling his friend, the sailors fled**

**When Balbus was calling his friend, the sailors fled** (etc)

**Nota bene:** The participle, a verbal adjective, retains its verbal function. Therefore, it can control an object, **amicum**

**Clause.** A **clausal** construction is a group of words which contain a **subject** and a **verb** but, is in itself not a complete sentence being part of a complex or compound sentence. Types of clausal constructions. Example:

**Causal** Clause introduced by **since** or **because**

**Circumstantial** Clause introduced by **when** or **after** and cites the circumstance in which the action occurs

**Concessive** Clause introduced by **although, though, in spite of** or **granted that**

**Temporal** Clause indicates the time at which the action occurs, introduced by **when, after, before, as** or **while**

**The Concessive Clause and tamen.** A participle is translated as a concessive clause when **tamen, nevertheless** is present in the main clause. A concessive clause is introduced by a preposition or conjunction describing a circumstance which might be expected to preclude the action of the main clause but does not

**Lively Latin.** Paragraph 34, line 11: Concessive sentence with subordinate and main clauses citing **tamen**

**itaque Spatacus undique oppugnatus suos milites tamen fortissime eduxit** **Though, in this way, Spartacus attacked from all sides, nevertheless his soldiers have risen up very strong**

**The Ablative Absolute and tamen.** An ablative absolute should be translated as a concessive clause when **tamen, nevertheless** is present in the main clause. Example:

**Lively Latin.** Paragraph 41, line 3: Concessive sentence, two ablative absolute clauses and main clause citing **tamen**

**ipso legatio occiso, multis vulneratis, reliqui tamen fortissime Germanis resistebant** **In spite of the fallen legate himself (and) many wounded, nevertheless the remaining, very strong, Germans were hesitating**