

**Beginning Latin**  
**with Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.1-33**

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MMXXI

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Unfortunately, this guide is accessible only to those who can read English. If you'd like to translate all or part into another language (especially non-Indoeuropean), you certainly have my permission in advance. I'd be grateful, however, if you'd credit my authorship.

— Bill Berg

## Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.1-33

Arma virumque canō, Trōiae quī prīmus ab ōrīs  
Ītaliā, fātō profugus, Lāvīniaque vēnit  
lītora, multum ille et terrīs iactātus et altō  
vī superum saevae memorem Iūnōnis ob īram;  
multa quoque et bellō passūs, dum conderet urbem, 5  
inferretque deōs Latiō, genus unde Latīnum,  
Albānīque patrēs, atque altae moenia Rōmae.

Mūsa, mihī causās memorā, quō nūmine laesō,  
quidve dolēns, rēgīna deum tot volvere cāsūs  
īnsīgnem pietāte virum, tot adīre labōrēs 10  
impulerit. Tantaene animīs caelestibus īrae?

Urbs antīqua fuit, Tyriī tenuēre colōnī,  
Karthāgō, Ītaliā contrā Tiberīnaque longē  
ōstia, dīves opum studiīsque asperrima bellī,  
quam Iūnō fertur terrīs magis omnibus ūnam 15  
posthabitā coluisse Samō; hīc illius arma,  
hīc currus fuit; hōc rēgnum dea gentibus esse,  
sī quā Fāta sinant, iam tum tenditque fovetque.  
Prōgeniem sed enim Trōiānō ā sanguine dūcī  
audierat, Tyriās olim quae verteret arcēs; 20  
hinc populum lātē regem bellōque superbum  
ventūrum excidiō Libyae: sīc volvere Parcās.  
Id metuēns, veterisque memor Sāturnia bellī,  
prīma quod ad Trōiā prō cārīs gesserat Argīs—  
necdum etiam causae īrārum saevīque dolōrēs 25  
exciderant animō: manet altā mente repostum  
iūdicium Paridis sprētaeque iniūria fōrmae,  
et genus invīsum, et raptī Ganymēdis honōrēs.  
Hīs accēnsa super, iactātōs aequore tōtō  
Trōas, rēliquiās Danaum atque immītis Achillī, 30  
arcēbat longē Latiō, multōsque per annōs  
errābant, āctī Fātīs, maria omnia circum.  
Tantae mōlis erat Rōmānam condere gentem!

## A Brief Introduction

The preceding are the most monumental verses in the Latin language — perhaps in any language.

*Aeneid* 1.1-33 introduce an epic poem the like of which had never been seen before, and probably will never be seen again. It is a furious, frantic, yet awestruck and reverent look at the heart of empire in its first stirrings. For in Virgil's time, it was the gods, and not humans, who determined the birth of nations, for better or for worse — and the gods (there were many of them) were likewise better or worse.

The *Aeneid*, through formal and thematic features, declares itself to be based on Homer, the Hellenic poet hailed even then as the father of all Western literature. The two halves of the *Aeneid* — the struggle to reach a new home, and the struggle to establish that home as a new nation — are modeled on the Homeric *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, respectively; and the verse form of the *Aeneid* (epic dactylic hexameter) is Homer's. But that's as far as Homer goes here, and that's where Virgil begins. The *Aeneid*, in its conception and its purpose, has nothing in common with Virgil's Hellenic model.

The *Aeneid* is meant as a justification and glorification of Rome's mastery over the world. That, at least, was Virgil's mission under the patronage of Augustus Caesar. How seriously he took the mission in the end, when the epic was almost finished and he lay on his deathbed, may be indicated by his order that the poem be burned upon his death. His attendants, who were ultimately in the employ of Augustus, did nothing of the sort — fortunately for us, who are left to appreciate the poet's majestic vision as well as the depths of his art. The beauty and economy of description, the unrivaled insights into character with sympathy for all, the perfection of structure, the brilliance of metaphor have never been equalled in modern poetry. Here you have the real and lasting legacies of a poet who claimed to spend a day apiece on each line he composed.

Virgil began his poetic career in the comparative safety and isolation of the poet's "garden" — a fantasy world inspired by the pastoral landscape of Theocritus' poetry. Virgil's earliest preserved epic, *The Gnat*, takes place in a pastoral setting, and ten later poems, a collection entitled

*Bucolica*, develop pastoral themes through a range of human emotions and dilemmas. The fourth poem of that collection in epic verse is an exception: it predicts the emergence of a hero from the pastoral landscape who will embody the virtues of Homeric heroes, and will go on to “rule a world at peace” by divine right. Even in this early phase, Virgil was contemplating a Roman epic to rival the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

What follows here is a grammatical and syntactical commentary on the first thirty-three lines of that epic, the verses of Virgil’s mature art that summarized the work and forecast the course and culmination of his story of Rome’s beginnings. The only details missing from those introductory verses are the names of the hero (Aeneas), of his mother (the goddess Aphrodite), of his father (Anchises, native of, and fellow escapee from, the burning city of Troy), and of his son (Ascanius-Iulus). Virgil delays naming the hero himself until the dramatic moment (1.92) when Aeneas appears for the first time as a storm rages over the sea, and the action begins.

In my antediluvian high school days, even the dullest student knew the meaning of terms like “predicate Nominative,” “gerund,” “participle,” “clause,” even “parts of speech.” Since then, English language teaching has undergone a series of well-meaning revolutions, all ending in train wrecks that have left teachers themselves unable even to diagram a sentence. With the advent of the Internet, the need to do justice to one’s thoughts has been thrown to the winds, and precision of expression — the whole point of grammar — is out the window.

Latin, with all its meaningful inflections, does not allow for such sloppiness, even in poetry. You’ll find the old grammatical terms resurrected here to explain Virgil’s syntax. As it turns out after decades of misguided experience, those terms are still the most useful keys — indeed, the most direct shortcuts — to understanding the logic of coherent speech.

Through a detailed but I hope understandable analysis of each word of Virgil’s first thirty-three verses, you will discover the fundamentals, and more, of the Latin language. I’ve structured the commentary to make it readable for those who, like so many in this latter day, are unschooled not only in English grammar, but in grammar generally, especially the grammar of an inflected language like Latin. It is my hope that, after

reading the following commentary, you will emerge with new insights, not only into the Latin language, but into your own language, and into language itself.

There are many, many translations of the *Aeneid* available for you to consult, on the Internet and in bookstores and libraries everywhere. But after working through the following commentary, you'll be able to see how each and every word fits with other words to make a coherent sentence, and you'll be able to compose your own translation. In the process of doing so, you may well find yourself memorizing these verses, perhaps the most significant in all of Western literature. You'll then hold a treasure that can't be lost.

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# Commentary to Virgil, Aeneid 1.1-33

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<i>First Verse</i>
<b>Arma</b>	“weapons”	<p><i>Arma</i> is called a <b>noun</b> because it names something (our word “noun” comes from a Latin word <i>nomen</i>, “name”). Nouns and verbs are essential components of a sentence; other words only modify them. The <b>verb</b> is the most important thing in a sentence: it gives “life” to the nouns, makes them act or receive action, or simply exist. <i>Arma</i> is the direct object of the action of the verb <i>canō</i>, “I sing”; like all direct objects, it is in the <b>Accusative</b> case (“cases” are different forms a noun can take to indicate its relationship to other words in a sentence). The last <i>a</i> in <i>arma</i> shows that it is in the Accusative case; that it is plural; and that it is <b>neuter</b>. A “neuter” noun has a set of inflections (endings) that are different from the Inflections of “masculine” and “feminine” Nouns. Nouns will often be “masculine,” “feminine,” or “neuter” regardless of the real gender of the things they name.</p>
<b>virumque</b>	“the man, too”	<p><i>Virum</i> is a noun; its ending <i>-um</i> indicates that it is masculine, singular, and, like <i>arma</i>, <b>Accusative</b>. It is therefore the other direct object of the verb <i>canō</i>. Note that there is no article, no “the” in Latin; we have to supply it when we translate. In that respect, Latin and Russian are similar. What are the</p>

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p>advantages and disadvantages, in terms of thought, expression, and the development of philosophical systems, of a language that cannot say the “the”?</p>
		<p><i>-que</i>, “too,” is always attached to the second noun in a series; it never stands alone. Another conjunction is <i>et</i>, “and.” Had Virgil written <i>arma et virum</i>, he would have meant the same thing as <i>arma virumque</i>.</p>
<b>canō</b>	“I sing”	<p>The <i>-ō</i> inflection indicates that the verb is an action of the <b>first person</b>, that it is singular (“I,” not “we”), and that the action takes place in present time. The Romans had no way of indicating progressive action (“I am singing,” “I keep singing,” etc.) or emphasis (“I do sing”) in present time; you may supply this in translation whenever you feel it appropriate.</p> <p>The Latin verb changes its inflection every time there is a change in person, number, tense, voice (active or passive, “I sing” or “I am sung”), or mood (Indicative or Subjunctive or Imperative, “I sing” or “I would sing” or “Sing!”). Among other things, this means that the Romans never had to express the personal pronoun (in this case, “I”) separately: it is already contained, so to speak, in the verb ending.</p>
<b>Troiae</b>	“of Troy”	<p>Because Latin nouns and verbs change their endings to indicate their relationship to each other in a sentence, you will always know the function of every word in</p>

Word

Meaning

Commentary

the sentence, *even when it is considered outside the sentence*. The English language has lost most of its inflections; English nouns and verbs must specify their function through **word order**. Consider the sentence, “The dog bit the man”: make “dog” and “man” switch places in the sentence, and you have an absurdity. Not so with Latin. The Latin word for “man” would have an Accusative inflection; it would always be recognized as the verb’s object no matter where it stood in the sentence. For purposes of rhythm and emphasis, Virgil has written *Troiae* long before *ōrīs* (“shores”), with which it properly belongs. (It was the “shores of Troy” that Aeneas left behind.)

The *-ae* of *Troiae* indicates that it is in the **Genitive** case, the case of possession. It also indicates that the noun is feminine and singular. In Latin, almost all singular nouns with *a* in their inflections are feminine. They belong to what is called the first **declension**, a set of case endings dominated by the feminine. *Virum* and *arma* belong, on the other hand, to the second declension, a set of case endings exhibited by masculine and neuter nouns.

**quī**

“he who”

This is the Latin **relative pronoun**: it introduces a “clause” (sub-sentence) dependent upon a noun (here *virum*) in the main sentence. The *-ī* of *quī* indicates that it is masculine and singular (because *virum* is its “antecedent”), and that it is in the **Nominative** case as the “subject” of its verb *venit* (“he who came”). The verb’s **subject**

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p>is the thing that <u>does</u> the action of the verb or is in the “state of being” expressed by the verb; it is always Nominative. <i>The Nominative case has no other use in Latin.</i> The Nominative feminine and neuter forms of <i>quī</i> are: <i>quae</i> (“she who”) and <i>quod</i> (“that which”).</p>
<b>prīmus</b>	“first”	<p><b>Adjectives</b> “modify” (describe or qualify) nouns and pronouns. In Latin, adjectives must exhibit inflections which indicate that they are in the same gender, number, and case as the word they modify. The <i>-us</i> of <i>prīmus</i> indicates that it “agrees” with <i>quī</i> in being masculine, singular, and Nominative. <i>Quae prīma</i> would mean “she who first,” and <i>quod prīmum</i> “that which first.”</p>
<b>ab</b>	“from”	<p><i>Ab</i> is a <b>preposition</b>, one of many short words used to mediate between the verb and nouns that are neither subjects nor objects. Here the verb is <i>vēnit</i>, “came,” which, unlike <i>canō</i>, is <b>intransitive</b> (cannot act directly upon an object). Since Aeneas “came <i>from</i> the shores of Troy,” <i>ab</i> indicates that the <u>coast</u> was the starting-point of his action. Often, before consonants, you will see <i>ab</i> as simply <i>ā</i>.</p>
<b>ōrīs</b>	“shores”	<p>The <i>-īs</i> indicates that <i>ōrīs</i> is plural and in the <b>Ablative</b> case. As its name indicates (<i>ablātum</i> means “taken away/from”), this is originally the case of <i>separation</i>. The Ablative is being used here, in fact, to indicate separation, and could have been used alone (<i>vēnit ōrīs</i>, “came from the coast”). But since there are two other main</p>

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p>uses for the Ablative case (instrumentality and locality), the preposition is often used to avoid confusion.</p> <p><i>Ab</i> is used with the Ablative case only. There are other prepositions that can be used with the Accusative, if so required by the verb whose action they are mediating.</p> <p><i>Second Verse</i></p>
<b>Ītaliām</b>	“to Italy”	<p>The <i>-am</i> indicates that this first-declension noun is feminine, singular, and Accusative. The Accusative case receives action and is the goal of motion. Here it is the goal of <i>venit</i>, “came.” Virgil could have used a preposition before <i>Ītaliām</i> (e.g., <i>ad</i>) to make it clear that Aeneas came <i>to</i> Italy, but that is clear enough with the Accusative alone.</p>
<b>fātō</b>	“by fate”	<p>The <i>-ō</i> indicates that this neuter noun of the second declension is singular and in the Ablative case. Here, the Ablative is being used to show that fate was the <i>instrument by which</i> Aeneas became an exile.</p>
<b>profugus</b>	“an exile”	<p>The <i>-us</i> indicates that this second-declension noun is masculine, singular, and Nominative. It must be identical with <i>quī</i>, the subject of <i>vēnit</i>: “he who came, an exile by fate ...”</p>
<b>Lāvīniaque lītora</b>	“and to Lavinian shores”	<p><i>Lāvīnius</i> is an adjective meaning “Lavinian.” Here its gender, number, and case have been made neuter, plural, and Accusative to modify <i>litora</i>, “shores.” Notice the freedom of word order that an inflected language allows. Virgil had three ideas: Lavinian, coming, and shores. Because his language</p>

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p>was inflected, he was able to arrange them in descending order of importance, with the idea <i>Lāvīnia</i> in the emphatic first position. (Lavinium was a city founded in Latium by Aeneas and named for his Latin bride, Lavinia.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Third Verse</i></p>
<b>vēnit</b>	“came”	<p>Nestled between the two words that represent the goal of its action, (<i>Lāvīnia ... lītora</i>), this verb tells us by the final <i>-it</i> that it is third person singular (with a “he,” a “she,” or an “it” as its subject); and that it is in either the present or the past (“perfect”) tense. Its subject, grammatically speaking, is <i>quī</i>, whom we have come to know as a <i>profugus</i>. <i>Quī</i>, in turn, refers to the <i>virum</i> who is the hero of the <i>Aeneid</i>.</p>
<b>multum</b>	“muchly”	<p><b>Adverbs</b> modify (describe or qualify) verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Here, <i>multum</i> modifies the verbal adjective <i>iactātus</i>. Strictly speaking, the form <i>multum</i> is itself an adjective (neuter, singular, Accusative) from <i>multus</i>, “much.” Adjectives in their neuter singular Accusative form are sometimes used as adverbs.</p>
<b>ille</b>	“that man”	<p>This is a <b>demonstrative pronoun</b> (masculine, singular, Nominative). Its other Nominative gender inflections produce <i>illa</i>, “that woman” and <i>illud</i>, “that thing.”</p>
<b>et ... et</b>	“both ... and”	<p><i>Et</i> means “and”; but when it occurs in company with another <i>et</i> (as it does in this line), they mean together “both ... and ...”</p>

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>terrīs</b>	“on lands”	<i>Terrīs</i> is feminine plural (first declension), Ablative. The Ablative case can specify locality.
<b>iactātus</b>	“tossed”	Like the English adjective “tossed,” <i>iactātus</i> is a <b>verbal adjective</b> . Grammatically, it is known as the <b>passive participle</b> of a verb. It represents the state of someone who has received the action of the verb “toss” ( <i>iactāre</i> ). However, like “tossed,” it behaves like an adjective, and agrees with the word it modifies ( <i>ille</i> ) in gender, number, and case (as we see in its <i>-us</i> ending)
<b>altō</b>	“on the deep”	<i>Altus</i> is an adjective meaning “deep.” Here, in its neuter singular Ablative form ( <i>-ō</i> ending), it takes the place of the word for “sea.”

#### *Fourth Verse*

<b>vī</b>	“by the power”	The <i>-ī</i> distinguishes this as a feminine singular Ablative (instrumentality) of <i>vis</i> , “force,” “power,” a noun of the <b>third declension</b> , which is a unique set of case inflections embracing all genders.
<b>superum</b>	“of those above”	The adjective <i>superus</i> , “above,” has the form <i>superōrum</i> in the Genitive plural masculine, but can be abbreviated (as here) to <i>super-um</i> . Notice how Latin adjectives can stand in for nouns, as can English adjectives (e.g. <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> ).
<b>saevae</b>	“of fierce”	Feminine singular Genitive (first declension): modifies <i>Iunōnis</i> .

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>memorem</b>	“mindful”	The <i>-em</i> distinguishes this as a feminine singular Accusative adjective of the third declension: modifies <i>iram</i> .
<b>Iunōnis</b>	“of Juno”	Significantly, the first character to be named in the <i>Aeneid</i> . <i>Iunō</i> is the Nominative form of this Genitive singular feminine noun of the third declension. It is Juno’s “mindful wrath” that is to blame for Aeneas’ wanderings.
<b>ob</b>	“on account of”	This preposition is used with the Accusative only.
<b>īram</b>	“wrath”	Notice the curious juxtapositions possible in poetry when strict rules of word order can be abandoned. Here we have the adjectives first, then their two nouns, rendering the series of impressions “cruel-mindful-Juno-wrath.”
<i>Fifth Verse</i>		
<b>multa</b>	“many things”	Another adjective (neuter plural Accusative) used like a noun, the direct object of <i>passus</i> .
<b>quoque</b>	“also”	
<b>et</b>	“and”	<i>Et</i> here joins <i>passus</i> to <i>iactātus</i> above. Even conjunctions in Latin poetry may be moved from their natural position. In prose, this <i>et</i> would normally be placed just before <i>multa</i> .
<b>bellō</b>	“in war”	Neuter singular Ablative, second declension.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>passus</b>	“having suffered”	This adjective is actually another participle, and like <i>iactātus</i> it is a passive participle. It is formed from <i>pati</i> , “to suffer.” This verb always has <b>passive</b> endings, but is always <b>translated actively</b> and can always take a direct object (as <i>multa</i> here). If this seems a paradox, reflect for a moment upon the English verb “suffer.” Is it really an “active” verb? What “activity” do you perform when you suffer? Note: <i>passus</i> , too, agrees with the word it modifies ( <i>ille</i> ) in gender, number, and case.
<b>dum</b>	“until”	This word introduces a clause predicting an action (the founding of Rome) that had not yet taken place when Aeneas was being “tossed on land and sea” while “suffering many things.” Because the action had <i>not yet</i> taken place, the word that follows <i>dum</i> is in the <b>Subjunctive</b> mood.
<b>conderet</b>	“he would found”	<i>Conderet</i> is the Subjunctive formed from the present infinitive <i>condere</i> , “to found.” To this infinitive are added the <b>personal endings</b> (active voice) <i>-m</i> (“I”), <i>-s</i> (“thou”), <i>-t</i> (“he,” “she,” “it”), <i>-mus</i> (“we”), <i>-tis</i> (“you all”), and <i>-nt</i> (“they”).
<b>urbem</b>	“city”	The <i>-em</i> distinguishes this noun as feminine singular Accusative (third declension); it is the direct object of <i>conderet</i> . It’s your option to translate “a city” or “the city.”

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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### *Sixth Verse*

<b>inferretque</b>	“and bring in”	Again, the Subjunctive is formed with the Infinitive <i>inferre</i> , “to bring in,” and the third-person ending <i>-t</i> .
<b>deōs</b>	“gods”	The <i>-ōs</i> distinguishes this noun as masculine plural Accusative (second declension), the direct object of <i>inferret</i> . Translate “gods,” “the gods,” or, if you wish, “his gods.”
<b>Latiō</b>	“for Latium”	The fated land of Aeneas’ destiny in Italy. The region of Latium included the future city of Rome. It was the home of a local Italic dialect that we know as the <b>Latin</b> language. Neuter singular <b>Dative</b> case (indirect object, for which/whom something is said, given, or done)
<b>genus</b>	“stock”	A neuter singular Nominative of the third declension. A few neuter nouns of this declension do show <i>-us</i> in the Nominative. Don’t confuse it with the <i>masculine</i> nominative of the <i>second</i> declension (e.g. <i>profugus</i> ).
<b>unde</b>	“from which,” “whence”	Though <i>unde</i> is the conjunction that introduces this clause, it has been dislodged from its initial position by <i>genus</i> (which Virgil chose to emphasize by writing it first): “Latium, whence [came our] Latin <u>stock</u> .”
<b>Latīnum</b>	“Latin”	The <i>-um</i> distinguishes this adjective as neuter singular Nominative; it must therefore modify <i>genus</i> . The masculine

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		form would be <i>Latīnus</i> , the feminine <i>Latīna</i> .

### *Seventh Verse*

<b>Albānīque</b>	“and the Alban..”	The <i>-i</i> of <i>Albānī</i> makes it an adjective of the second declension, masculine plural Nominative, modifying <i>patrēs</i> .
<b>patrēs</b>	“fathers”	The <i>-es</i> distinguishes it as a noun of the third declension, masculine plural Nominative. The singular form of “Alban fathers” would be <i>Albānus pater</i> .
<b>atque</b>	“as well as”	
<b>altae</b>	“of lofty”	The adjective <i>altus</i> means “high” in <u>both</u> directions, up and down. In the third verse it meant “deep.” Here it is feminine singular Genitive, modifying <i>Rōmae</i> .
<b>moenia</b>	“walls”	Neuter plural Nominative. Notice that all neuter nouns in Latin have identical forms in the Nominative and Accusative cases, both singular and plural: <i>bellum</i> is war, both Nominative and Accusative; <i>arma</i> is the Nominative and Accusative form for weapons. Neuter plurals (always in <i>-a</i> ) are not to be confused with the first declension feminine singular.
<b>Rōmae</b>	“of Rome”	The poet has so positioned his words that the idea of height is associated not only with Rome (grammatically) but also with its walls (by the proximity of <i>altae</i> to <i>moenia</i> ).

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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*Eighth Verse*

<b>Musa</b>	“O Muse”	Unlike Homer, whose <i>Iliad</i> and <i>Odyssey</i> both begin with an invocation of the Muse who inspires a poet’s work, Virgil postpones invoking his Muse until after the “programmatic” lines 1-6, in which “I sing” is asserted over the Homeric “Sing, Muse.” That delay helps to assert both the uniqueness of the <i>Aeneid</i> , and the individuality of the poet himself, within the epic tradition. <i>Musa</i> is feminine singular <b>Vocative</b> , the case of direct address. With most nouns, the Vocative is the same as the Nominative.
<b>mihī</b>	“for me”	This is the first person personal pronoun in the <b>Dative</b> case. The word <i>dativum</i> has to do with “giving”: it is the <b>case of the recipient</b> of an action, the case of that <i>to</i> or <i>for</i> which something is said, given, or done.
<b>causās</b>	“causes”	The <i>-ās</i> distinguishes this as a feminine plural Accusative noun of the first declension, the direct object of <i>memorā</i> .
<b>memorā</b>	“recount”	This verb is in the <b>Imperative</b> mood ( <i>imperāre</i> means “to command”). The command to “recount the causes” is addressed to Virgil’s Muse, so “you, O Muse” is the verb’s (understood) subject. Had he been addressing <i>several</i> Muses, the verb’s form would have changed to <i>memorā-te</i> to indicate the plural. The

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>quō</b>	“(with) what”	singular Imperative is the simplest form of the verb, requiring only the removal of the ending <i>-re</i> from the infinitive ( <i>memorāre</i> , “to recount”).
<b>nūmine</b>	“divinity”	Neuter, singular, Ablative, third Declension. It stands with <i>laesō</i> in the <b>Ablative Absolute</b> construction. That construction is exactly equivalent to what some grammarians of English would call our Nominative Absolute — the combination of a noun and a participle in a relationship that is grammatically independent (hence “Absolute”) of the sentence in which it stands. Examples: “We’ll get there, <i>God willing</i> ” (noun + active participle); “ <i>This having been done</i> (pronoun + passive participle), they awaited the outcome.” In these cases, it is clear that a subordinate clause could have been substituted for the Nominative Absolute constructions: “if God is willing,” “when/after this had been done,” etc. would have conveyed the same meaning. So it is in Latin: <i>quō numine laesō</i> , “with what divinity (having been) injured...?” could have been expressed in Latin as “because what divinity had been injured ...?” The Ablative Absolute can perhaps be seen as an extension of the instrumental use of the Ablative.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>laesō</b>	“injured”	Passive participle of <i>laedere</i> , “to injure.” It agrees with <i>nūmine</i> in gender, number, and case; participles, though formed from verbs, are really adjectives. Note that the endings of <i>nūmine</i> and <i>laesō</i> are dissimilar. This is only because they come from different declensions (the third and the second, respectively). Their agreement is not affected: They are <i>both</i> neuter, singular, and Ablative.

### *Ninth Verse*

<b>quidve</b>	“or what thing”	<i>Quid</i> is the <b>interrogative pronoun</b> in its neuter, singular, Accusative form. Its Nominative singular forms are: <i>quis</i> , “what person?” and again <i>quid</i> , “what thing?” The <i>-ve</i> functions like <i>-que</i> . It never stands alone, and is always attached to the second element in a series. It always means “or.”
<b>dolens</b>	“deploring”	This is an <b>active participle</b> , unlike <i>iactātus</i> and <i>laesō</i> , which were passive. Active participles are declined in the <b>third declension</b> , passive participles in the first and second. <i>Dolens</i> comes from <i>dolere</i> , “to deplore.” It is feminine, singular, and nominative to agree with its noun <i>rēgīna</i> . And it also takes a direct object, the preceding <i>quid</i> (participles, like verbs, can do that).
<b>rēgīna</b>	“queen”	Feminine singular Nominative (first declension), the subject of <i>impulerit</i> in verse 11.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>deum</b>	“of the gods”	Masculine plural Genitive (second declension). By rights, it should be <i>deōrum</i> , but, like <i>super(ōr)um</i> in verse 4 above, it has been contracted for poetic purposes.
<b>tot</b>	“so many”	Though this is an adjective, it is one of the very few in Latin that are not “declined” (given endings to match the gender, number, and case of their nouns). It modifies <i>cāsūs</i> .
<b>Volvere</b>	“to roll through”	<p>This verb belongs to the third conjugation. The following are the four Latin <b>conjugations</b>, i.e., the four sets of verbal forms derived by adding inflections to four different verb stems:</p> <p>First conjugation: verb stems ending in <i>-ā-</i>, as in <i>portāre</i>, “to carry.”</p> <p>Second conjugation: verb stems ending in long <i>-ē-</i>, as in <i>monēre</i>, “to warn.”</p> <p>Third conjugation: verb stems ending in short <i>-ĕ-</i>, as in <i>ducĕre</i>, “to lead.”</p> <p>Fourth conjugation: verb stems ending in <i>-ī-</i>, as in <i>audīre</i>, “to hear.”</p> <p><i>Volvere</i> is an <b>infinitive</b> in its present, active form. Though it is a form of the verb, it should be noted that the infinitive can also act like a noun: it can be a subject or an object. In a sense, <i>volvere</i> is an object of <i>impulerit</i>: “forced” what? — forced “to roll through.” Another object of <i>impulerit</i> is <i>virum</i> (“forced” whom?). One might say that the “direct object” of <i>impulerit</i> is a combination of both: <i>virum volvere</i>, “the man to roll through.”</p>

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>cāsūs</b>	“calamities”	This word is really ambiguous: it could mean anything from “events” to “failures.” The English derivatives “case” and “occasion” show its influence. Basically, <i>cāsus</i> means a “fall”: for example, nouns “fall” through their different “cases” from Nominative through Ablative. “Declension” (“slipping down”) preserves the metaphor. The noun <i>cāsūs</i> is masculine, plural, and Accusative, the direct object of <i>volvere</i> . It belongs to the <b>fourth declension</b> ( <i>u</i> -stem and predominantly masculine).

### *Tenth Verse*

<b>insignem</b>	“distinguished”	Masculine singular Accusative, a third-declension adjective modifying <i>virum</i> .
<b>pietāte</b>	“by commitment”	Commitment: devotion, faithfulness, loyalty to gods, family, nation, heritage. One of the cardinal Roman virtues, <i>pietas</i> (a feminine noun of the third declension) stands here in its Ablative singular form.
<b>adīre</b>	“to confront”	This infinitive, like <i>volvere</i> , follows <i>Impulerit</i> . Like <i>volvere</i> , it takes a direct object ( <i>tot labōrēs</i> ). The verb is <b>compound</b> : <i>īre</i> , “to go” prefixed by <i>ad</i> , “to.”
<b>labōrēs</b>	“labors”	Masculine plural accusative. Note that in the third declension, the Nominative and Accusative <u>plural</u> end identically.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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*Eleventh Verse*

<b>impulerit</b>	“(she) forced”	The verbal inflection <i>-erit</i> tells not only that the verb is third person singular active, but also that it is <b>past (perfect) Subjunctive</b> . There is no need here to translate the Subjunctive into English. It is there for this reason: when a dependent clause in Latin is a <b>question</b> , its verb becomes Subjunctive. <i>What did she deplore?</i> would be a direct question; the verb for <i>deplere</i> would be indicative. But <i>Recount to me <u>what she deplored</u></i> would make the question into a clause dependent upon <i>Recount</i> . <i>Deplored</i> would then be, in Latin, Subjunctive.
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<b>Tantaene</b>	“(are there) so great”	This sentence has no verb, but asks simply, “So great wraths to heavenly minds?” The suffix <i>-ne</i> signals the beginning of a question which can be answered “yes” or “no”. Like <i>-que</i> and <i>-ve</i> , it cannot stand alone. The <i>-ae</i> of <i>tantae</i> shows it to be a feminine plural adjective in the Nominative case (first declension). This adjective (masculine <i>tantus</i> , feminine <i>tanta</i> , neuter <i>tantum</i> ) always has a <i>quantitative</i> meaning ( <i>quantus</i> , “how great” is the correlative of <i>tantus</i> ). Distinguish it from <i>talis</i> , which is the adjective referring to <i>quality</i> ( <i>qualis</i> , “of what sort,” is the correlative of <i>talis</i> ).
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<b>animīs</b>	“to minds”	Second declension, masculine plural Dative. Distinguish the masculine <i>animus</i> , “mind,” from the feminine
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Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<i>anima</i> , “breath,” “spirit.”
<b>caelestibus</b>	“heavenly”	The <i>-ibus</i> distinguishes this noun as a masculine plural Dative adjective of the third declension.
<b>īrae</b>	“wraths”	Feminine plural Nominative noun of the first declension. This could well have been a real question in Virgil’s mind. The philosophical school that followed the doctrines of Epicurus insisted that deities must be perfect models of tranquility, undisturbed by anything. Moreover, Plato had criticized Homer for representing the gods as victims of human passion.

### *Twelfth Verse*

<b>Urbs</b>	“city”	Feminine singular Nominative, third declension.
<b>antīqua</b>	“ancient”	Adjective, agrees with <i>urbs</i> .
<b>fuit</b>	“was”	The <i>-it</i> shows this verb to be third person singular active. <i>Fuit</i> is in the <b>perfect</b> tense, formed from the perfect stem of <i>esse</i> , “to be.” The Latin perfect indicates a past action which is above all <i>finished</i> . Cicero used the perfect verb <i>vixērunt</i> (“they have lived” to indicate that he had just had a group of traitors executed. The poet speaks, then, of a place that once existed, but no more: “There was (once) an ancient city.” Carthage was destroyed by Rome in the Third Punic War, a century before Virgil’s time. The words

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p><i>urbs antiqua fuit</i> will be recalled later in the poem when Aeneas speaks of the destruction of his own city, Troy: <i>urbs antiqua ruit</i>, “there fell an ancient city.”</p> <p>The stem <i>fu-</i> shows up in other Indoeuropean languages: in Greek, for instance, as the stem <i>phu</i> (“grow”: cf. <i>physical</i>), in English as <i>be</i>, and in Sanskrit as <i>bhu</i> (“become”). The verb “to be” has three essential aspects in our Indoeuropean languages, exemplified in the following Sanskrit roots: <i>bhu</i> (existence viewed as a never-ending process of coming-to-be); <i>vas</i> (existence viewed as the taking-up of space by matter: this shows up in English <i>was</i> and <i>were</i>); and <i>ās</i> (existence viewed as a presence, an availability, a being-on-hand: cf. English <i>is</i>, Latin <i>est</i> and <i>esse</i>, etc.).</p>
<b>Tyrī</b>	“Tyrian”	The <i>-ī</i> inflection makes this adjective masculine plural Nominative in agreement with the noun <i>colōnī</i> .
<b>tenuēre</b>	“(they) held”	The <i>-ēre</i> (often written <i>-ērunt</i> ) shows this to be a verb in the <b>third person plural</b> , perfect tense, active; its subject is <i>colōnī</i> , its object is understood to be “the ancient city.”
<b>colōnī</b>	“settlers”	Second declension.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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*Thirteenth Verse*

<b>Karthāgō</b>	“Carthage”	Feminine singular Nominative, third declension. Different ancient peoples pronounced the city’s name differently. The Greeks, for instance, said “Karchedon.” Its real name, which is West Semitic (“Phoenician”), is “Kart-Hadasht” (“New City”), for it was founded as a colony from the “old city,” Tyre.
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<b>contrā</b>	“opposite”	This preposition takes the Accusative case only. Here it has two objects, <i>Ītaliā</i> and <i>ostia</i> . Ostensibly it is used here to indicate the position of Carthage on the map, “facing” Italy across the Mediterranean. But <i>contrā</i> also means “opposed to,” and there may be in this verse an allusion to future hostilities with Rome.
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<b>Tiberīna</b>	“of the Tiber”	Neuter plural Accusative adjective modifying <i>ostia</i> .
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<b>longē</b>	“at a distance”	Adverb modifying <i>contrā</i> .
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*Fourteenth Verse*

<b>ostia</b>	“mouth”	Neuter plural Accusative after <i>contrā</i> . In the singular, <i>ostium</i> means “door” or “opening.” Many other words that are singular in English retain their more natural plural in Latin, e.g. <i>castra</i> , “camp” (neuter plural, literally “fortifications”) and <i>crīnēs</i> , “hair” (feminine plural).
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<b>dīves</b>	“rich”	Feminine singular Nominative adjective of the third declension, modifying <i>Karthāgō</i> .
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Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>opum</b>	“of resources”	Feminine plural Genitive noun of the third declension. In English we would say “rich <i>in</i> resources,” not “rich <i>of</i> resources”; yet we do say “fair <i>of</i> face.”
<b>studiīs</b>	“through pursuits”	Neuter plural noun of the second declension, instrumental Ablative. Notice that <i>–que</i> here does not link the single word <i>studiīs</i> to anything; rather, it unites the whole phrase <i>studiīs asperrima bellī to dives opum</i> .
<b>asperrima</b>	“most hardened”	Feminine singular Nominative adjective modifying <i>Karthago</i> . This is the <b>superlative</b> degree of the adjective. Latin superlatives intensify an adjective without necessarily implying a comparison: <i>asperrima</i> could just as well be translated “very hardened.”
<b>bellī</b>	“of war”	Neuter singular Genitive noun, second declension. With <i>studiīs</i> .
<i>Fifteenth Verse</i>		
<b>quam</b>	“which”	Feminine singular Accusative relative pronoun, direct object of the infinitive <i>coluisse</i> . Its antecedent (i.e. the substantive to which it refers) is <i>Karthāgō</i> .
<b>Iunō</b>	“Juno”	Feminine singular Nominative. As the wife of Jupiter, king of the gods, she corresponds to Hera, queen of the Greek pantheon. Her Semitic counterpart in Carthage was the Phoenician Asherat (Ishtar, Astarte), goddess of love and fertility, under the local African name <b>Tanit</b> .

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>fertur</b>	“is reported”	Third person singular, present passive Indicative of <i>ferre</i> , “to bear,” “to carry.” To form the passive voice in Latin, add the following personal endings to verb stems: - <i>r</i> (“I”), - <i>ris</i> or - <i>re</i> (“thou”), - <i>tur</i> (“he,” “she,” “it), - <i>mur</i> (“we”), - <i>mini</i> (“you all”), and - <i>ntur</i> (“they”).
<b>terrīs</b>	“than lands”	Feminine plural Ablative noun of the first declension. The Ablative is used here to denote comparison.
<b>magis</b>	“more”	Adverb modifying the infinitive <i>coluisse</i> . This adverb in its positive, comparative, and superlative degrees: <i>magnōpere</i> “much(ly),” <i>magis</i> “more,” <i>maximē</i> “most(ly).” Notice how an inflected language allows Virgil to insert this comparative adverb into the midst of the thing compared: <i>terrīs magis omnibus</i> .
<b>omnibus</b>	“all”	Feminine plural Ablative adjective of the third declension, modifying <i>terrīs</i> .
<b>unam</b>	“one”	Feminine singular Accusative adjective modifying <i>quam</i> . It emphasizes the uniqueness of Carthage in winning the goddess’ favor even over Samos, where Hera was most venerated by the Greeks.

### *Sixteenth Verse*

<b>posthabitā</b>	“esteemed less”	Feminine singular Ablative participle (passive) of <i>posthabēre</i> , which means literally “to hold after.” <i>Habēre</i> (“to have”) often means “to hold,” in the sense
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Word

Meaning

Commentary

of “to consider.” *Posthabitā* makes an Ablative Absolute with *Samō* .

**coluisse** “to have cherished” Perfect active infinitive of *colēre*, “to dwell in,” “to cultivate,” “to venerate.” “To cherish” is a poor compromise among its meanings. Hera “cultivated” the city by *nurturing* its growth. At the same time, ancient deities were believed to frequent their favorite cities; when good fortune came to the city, the god was believed to have manifested his or her *physical presence*, to have become “manifest” (*epiphanēs*, to use the Greek word). The Romans called such beneficent gods *praesentes*, “present.” *Coluisse* goes with *fertur*: “which (*quam*, = Carthage) Juno is reported to have cherished more,” etc. This combination of an Accusative (*quam*) with an infinitive (*coluisse*) is a phenomenon you’ll often see described as “indirect discourse” or as “reported speech.” The most appropriate term for it is the Latin *ōrātio oblīqua*, which means “speaking alongside” the circumstances, i.e. reporting them at second hand. The author writes not as a witness to Juno’s affection, but to a *report* of it. *Ōrātio oblīqua* includes all clauses which English introduces with “that” following a verb of saying or thinking. Because Latin can only report speech through the **Accusative + infinitive**, you will often want to translate by changing the infinitive construction to a “that”-construction, e.g. “She says herself to be

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		sick” —> “She says <u>that</u> she is sick.”
<b>Samō</b>	“Samos”	Feminine singular Ablative Absolute: “with Samos esteemed less,” “Samos being in second place,” etc. <i>Samos</i> , like many Greek place-names, is <b>feminine in spite of its second-declension endings</b> , and so must take a feminine adjective ( <i>posthabitā</i> ). Samos is a large and prosperous island in the southeastern Aegean Sea, sacred to Hera, and famous for its wine.
<b>hīc</b>	“here”	I.e., “in Carthage.” Originally an old Locative form of <i>hic</i> , “this.” The verb <i>fuit</i> is modified by this adverb.
<b>illīus</b>	“of that (goddess)”	Genitive singular feminine of the demonstrative pronoun <i>ille</i> .

### *Verse Seventeen*

<b>currus</b>	“chariot”	Masculine singular Nominative noun of the <b>fourth declension</b> . Comparatively few nouns (but in all genders) belong to this declension or to the fifth (and last). The presence of the goddess’ instruments of war in Carthage is a facet of her relationship (the untranslatable <i>coluisse</i> ) with the city: she dwelt in Carthage and led it to victory.
<b>hōc</b>	“this”	Accusative singular of the demonstrative pronoun <i>hic</i> , <i>haec</i> , <i>hōc</i> , referring to Carthage but attracted into the neuter by the gender of <i>regnum</i> . Juno wanted “this

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		(Carthage)” to be a “rule” ( <i>regnum</i> ) for the nations.
<b>regnum</b>	“rule”	Neuter singular Accusative noun of the second declension. It means “rule” in the sense of “sovereignty.” “She grooms this (place) to be a rule for the nations” means “She grooms Carthage to rule the world.”
<b>dea</b>	“goddess”	Feminine singular Nominative noun of the first declension. The <i>de-</i> root shows up in the name of the Greek god <i>Zeus</i> (originally <i>Sdeus</i> ), father of the gods; in Latin <i>Iuppiter</i> (originally <i>Diupiter</i> , “sky-father”; in Sanskrit <i>devī</i> , “god(dess)”; and in English “day.” Unlike their Nordic counterparts, the chief Mediterranean and Hindu gods manifest themselves in the overpowering brightness of the day-sky; <i>deus</i> , <i>dea</i> , and some of their cognates in the Indoeuropean languages preserve this notion.
<b>gentibus</b>	“for the nations”	Feminine plural Dative of <i>gens</i> , a noun of the third declension. <i>Gens</i> can also mean “family.” With <i>gentibus</i> it means virtually <i>all</i> nations, i.e. “the world.” <i>Ubi gentium?</i> (literally “where of the nations?”) means “where in the world?”
<b>esse</b>	“to be”	Present infinitive.

### *Eighteenth Verse*

**si** “if”

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>quā</b>	“somehow”	Short for <i>aliquā</i> . Feminine singular Ablative of the indefinite adjective ( <i>ali</i> ) <i>quis</i> , “some.” Though <i>quā</i> always stands alone and functions like an Ablative of means, it may originally have been attached to a feminine Ablative noun in a combination like <i>quā viā</i> , “by some route.”
<b>fāta</b>	“the fates”	Neuter plural nominative of <i>fātum</i> . The plural usually personifies “the three Fates,” though, strictly speaking, the word should refer only to their pronouncements, since it is derived from <i>fāri</i> , “to speak.”
<b>sinant</b>	“may permit”	Third person plural present active Subjunctive of <i>sinere</i> (third conjugation), “to permit.” Juno is grooming Carthage <i>in hopes that</i> the Fates may permit it to rule the world. Their permission does not exist in reality, only in Juno’s expectations. Therefore, the verb is removed from reality (Indicative) into the Subjunctive mood. The verb <i>sinunt</i> (Indicative, “they permit”) changes its stem vowel to -a-, <i>sinant</i> (Subjunctive, “they <i>may</i> permit”).
<b>iam</b>	“already”	
<b>tum</b>	“then”	
<b>tendit</b>	“aims”	Third person singular present active Indicative of <i>tendere</i> , “to aim,” “to

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		extend.” Its subject is <i>dea</i> , its direct object <i>hōc</i> (Carthage). Notice that <i>–que</i> appears after both verbs to mean “both ... and” (like <i>et ... et</i> ): “both aims and fosters.”
<b>fovet</b>	“fosters”	Third person singular present active Indicative of <i>fovēre</i> . “The goddess already aims and fosters this to be a rule to the nations,” i.e. Juno, even when Carthage is young, guides ( <i>tendit</i> ) Carthage toward world dominion while making it grow ( <i>fovet</i> ) into that rôle. The verbs are present rather than past to create a cinematic effect.

#### *Nineteenth Verse*

<b>Prōgeniem</b>	“progeny”	Feminine singular Accusative noun of the <b>fifth declension</b> ; direct object of <i>audierat</i> and subject (indirect discourse) of the infinitive <i>dūcī</i> .
<b>sed enim</b>	“however”	In prose, these words would introduce the sentence; but in dactylic hexameter, <i>sed enim</i> can occur anywhere within the first three metrical feet, and <i>prōgeniem</i> can precede them for emphasis. Taken separately, <i>sed</i> means “but” and <i>enim</i> is an explanatory word, always postpositive (placed after the first word of a sentence) and often translated “for.” <i>Sed</i> here indicates that Juno was worried in spite of her plans, and <i>enim</i> introduces the source of her worry ( <i>audierat</i> ).

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>Trōiānō</b>	“Trojan”	Masculine singular Ablative adjective modifying <i>sanguine</i> .
<b>ā</b>	“from”	Alternate spelling of <i>ab</i> before consonants.
<b>sanguine</b>	“blood”	Masculine singular of <i>sanguis</i> , a noun of the third declension, Ablative after the preposition <i>ā</i> .
<b>dūcī</b>	“to be derived”	Present passive infinitive of the active infinitive <i>dūcere</i> , “to lead.” Juno had heard that the progeny (descendants) is sprung ( <i>dūcī</i> ) from the Trojans, whom she hated. This <i>prōgenies</i> is the Roman people, descended from Trojan Aeneas, who will destroy Carthage many centuries later.

### *Twentieth Verse*

<b>audierat</b>	“she had heard”	Third person singular <b>pluperfect</b> active indicative of <i>audire</i> (fourth conjugation), “to hear.” The Latin pluperfect tense has the same sense as the English “past perfect,” i.e. it describes action that took place <i>prior to</i> an action already past. <i>Audierat</i> is a contracted form of <i>audīverat</i> ; simple perfect would be <i>audīvit</i> or <i>audiit</i> .
<b>Tyriās</b>	“Tyrian”	Feminine plural Accusative adjective modifying <i>arcēs</i> . The fortresses are called “Tyrian” because the Carthaginians were emigrants from the Phoenician city of Tyre.
<b>ōlim</b>	“one day”	

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>Quae</b>	“which”	Feminine singular Nominative <b>relative pronoun</b> whose antecedent is <i>prōgeniem</i> and whose verb is <i>verteret</i> .
<b>verteret</b>	“would overturn”	<p>Third person singular <b>imperfect active Subjunctive</b> of <i>vertere</i>, “to turn.” The verb is Subjunctive because it stands in a <b>relative clause in <i>ōrātio oblīqua</i></b> (indirect discourse). The <i>direct</i> report to Juno was this: “A progeny <i>is being derived</i> from Trojan blood which <i>will</i> overturn Tyrian citadels.” Indirect report: “(She had heard) progeny <i>to be derived</i> from Trojan blood which <i>would</i> overturn Tyrian citadels.” Because the dependent clause beginning with the relative pronoun <i>quae</i> is no longer in the mouth of the original speaker, it is removed to the Subjunctive.</p> <p>The <b>tense of the Subjunctive</b> in dependent clauses is determined by the tense of the main verb of the sentence. Generally, if the main verb is present or future (e.g. <i>tenditque fovetque</i>), the Subjunctive verb is present (e.g. <i>sinant</i>) for present or future time, and perfect for past time; if the main verb is past (e.g. <i>audierat</i>), the Subjunctive verb is imperfect (e.g. <i>verteret</i>) for present or future time and pluperfect for past time.</p>
<b>arces</b>	“citadels”	Feminine plural Accusative of <i>arx</i> , a noun of the third declension.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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*Twenty-first Verse*

<b>hinc</b>	“from this source,” “hence”	Adverb modifying the future infinitive <i>venturum (esse)</i> .
<b>populum</b>	“a people”	Masculine singular Accusative noun of the second declension, subject (again, indirect discourse) of the infinitive <i>venturum (esse)</i> . The report continues to depend on <i>audierat</i> .
<b>lātē</b>	“far and wide”	Adverb indicating where the <i>populus</i> is <i>rex</i> .
<b>rēgem</b>	“ruler”	Masculine singular Accusative of <i>rex</i> , a noun of the third declension.
<b>bellō</b>	“by (in) war”	With <i>superbum</i> .
<b>superbum</b>	“excellent”	Masculine singular Accusative adjective modifying <i>populum</i> .

*Twenty-second Verse*

<b>ventūrum (esse)</b>	“to be going to come”	Future active infinitive of <i>venīre</i> , “to come.” As often, <i>esse</i> is dropped here since the construction is clear. We would say, “She had heard that they were going to come”; the Romans say, “She had heard them to be going to come.”
<b>excidiō</b>	“for the destruction”	Neuter singular Dative noun of the second declension. “Dative of purpose.”
<b>Libyae</b>	“of Libya”	Feminine singular Genitive, first declension. “Libya” designates all of northern Africa west of Egypt, and not

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		just one nation.
<b>sīc</b>	“thus”	
<b>volvere</b>	“to spin”	Present active infinitive of the verb meaning “roll ‘round.” Being part of the <i>ōrātio oblīqua</i> , it still depends upon <i>audierat</i> , and has <i>Parcās</i> for its “subject”: “So (she had heard) the Fates to be spinning.”
<b>Parcās</b>	“the Parcae”	Feminine plural Accusative, first declension. This is the Roman personal name for the three Fates: their names in Greek are <i>Klotho</i> , “Twister,” <i>Lachesis</i> , “Distributor,” and <i>Atropos</i> , “Inflexible” — together signifying their function as spinners of human destiny into the unchangeable web of Fate.

*Twenty-third Verse*

<b>id</b>	“this’	Neuter singular Accusative of the <b>demonstrative pronoun</b> <i>is</i> (masculine), <i>ea</i> (feminine), <i>id</i> (neuter); direct object of the participle <i>metuens</i> .
<b>metuens</b>	“fearing”	Feminine singular Nominative (modifying the subject <i>Saturnia</i> ) present <b>active</b> participle of the verb <i>metuēre</i> , “to fear.” Notice again that a participle behaves like an adjective (agrees in gender, number, and case with the noun it modifies), and <i>simultaneously</i> , like a verb, takes a direct object. Present active participles always belong to the

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<i>third</i> declension.
<b>veteris</b>	“former”	Neuter singular Genitive of <i>vetus</i> , an adjective of the third declension; modifies <i>bellī</i> .
<b>memor</b>	“mindful”	Feminine singular Nominative, adjective of the third declension.
<b>Saturnia</b>	“Saturn’s daughter”	Like all the deities of the youngest generation, <b>Hera</b> (Roman <b>Juno</b> ) had sprung from old Kronos (Roman Saturn). So she was not only the wife, but also the sister, of <b>Zeus</b> (Roman <b>Jupiter</b> ).
<b>bellī</b>	“of the war”	Genitive after <i>memor</i> .

*Twenty-fourth Verse*

<b>prīma</b>	“first”	Feminine singular Nominative adjective, modifies the subject of <i>gesserat</i> . <i>Prīma</i> indicates Juno’s leading rôle in the war against the Trojans.
<b>quod</b>	“which”	Neuter singular Accusative, relative pronoun, direct object of <i>gesserat</i> . Antecedent: <i>bellī</i> .
<b>ad</b>	“against”	This preposition is used with the Accusative case only; it always indicates action <i>toward</i> , and will always be found with a verb of motion (e.g. <i>gesserat</i> ). It is usually translated “to” or “toward.”
<b>prō</b>	“on behalf of”	This preposition is used with the Ablative case only. It can also mean

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		“instead of” and “in front of.”
<b>cārīs</b>	“dear”	Masculine plural Ablative adjective modifying <i>Argīs</i> .
<b>gesserat</b>	“she had waged”	Third person singular pluperfect active Indicative of gerere, “to bear,” “to conduct.” <i>Bellum gerere</i> always means “to wage war.”
<b>Argīs</b>	“Argives”	Masculine plural Ablative (after <i>prō</i> ) noun of the second declension. Argos was a center of Greek civilization in the Peloponnesus at the time of the Trojan war; Homer, like Virgil, often refers to the Greeks collectively as “Argives.” The reference to Argos is especially appropriate here, since it is the city on the Greek mainland most sacred to Hera (Juno).

*Twenty-fifth Verse*

<b>necdum</b>	“nor yet”	<i>Nec</i> (also spelled <i>neque</i> ) means “and not,” “nor.”
<b>etiam</b>	“even”	Or “also.”
<b>causae</b>	“causes”	Feminine plural Nominative.
<b>īrārūm</b>	“of fury”	Feminine plural Genitive noun of the first declension. The plural is “poetic”; Juno’s anger amounts to more than a single <i>īra</i> .
<b>saevī</b>	“fierce”	Masculine plural Nominative adjective modifying <i>dolōrēs</i> .

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>dolōrēs</b>	“indignations”	Masculine plural Nominative noun of the third declension.

*Twenty-sixth Verse*

<b>exciderant</b>	“had fallen away”	Third person plural pluperfect active indicative of <i>excidere</i> , “to fall away,” from <i>ex-</i> “out” + <i>cadere</i> “to fall.”
<b>animō</b>	“from (her) mind”	Masculine singular Ablative of separation. Virgil could have written <i>ex animo</i> , but this was superfluous in view of the <i>ex</i> in <i>exciderant</i> .
<b>manet</b>	“remains”	Third person singular present active Indicative of <i>manēre</i> (second conjugation), “to remain.”
<b>altā</b>	“deep”	Feminine singular Ablative adjective modifying <i>mente</i> .
<b>mente</b>	“in (her) mind”	Feminine singular noun of the third declension, Ablative denoting locality. Often <i>mens</i> refers to the mind as a center of emotional activity, as “disposition,” while <i>animus</i> denotes the rational soul, the “intellect.” The two words, however, are frequently interchangeable. Notice the expression “in her deep mind” for our “deep in her mind”; similarly, Latin will say “in the deep sea,” “in the high clouds,” “on the high mountain.”
<b>repostum</b>	“laid up”	Neuter singular Nominative participle (passive) of <i>re-ponere</i> , “to put back.” Modifies <i>iudicium</i> .

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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*Twenty-seventh Verse*

<b>iūdicium</b>	“judgment”	Neuter singular Nominative subject of <i>manet</i> .
<b>Paridis</b>	“of Paris”	Masculine singular Genitive, third declension, of <i>Paris</i> , the name of the Trojan hero who, unrecognized as the long-lost son of Priam, king of Troy, grew up among shepherds and flocks on Mount Ida. There he was approached by three goddesses — Hera (Juno), Athena (Minerva), and Aphrodite (Venus), each of whom offered him various bribes if he would judge her the most beautiful. He picked Aphrodite, who gave him in return the most beautiful of women, Helen. Unfortunately, Helen was already married to the Spartan king Menelaos, so Paris had to sail to Greece and abduct her, a prize that brought destruction upon himself and his people, including our hero Aeneas.
<b>spretae</b>	“rejected”	Feminine singular Genitive participle (passive) of <i>spernere</i> , “to spurn.” Modifies <i>formae</i> .
<b>iniūria</b>	“insult”	Feminine singular Nominative, another subject of <i>manet</i> .
<b>formae</b>	“of beauty”	Feminine singular Genitive noun of the first declension. Notice how economically Virgil’s Latin uses its participles: “The insulting of her

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		rejected beauty” = “Paris’s rejection and insulting of her beauty.”

*Twenty-eighth Verse*

<b>genus</b>	“tribe”	Neuter singular Nominative noun of the third declension, another subject of <i>manet</i> . <i>Genus</i> refers to the people of Troy. Its Genitive is <i>generis</i> .
<b>invīsum</b>	“hated”	Neuter singular Nominative participle (passive) of <i>invidēre</i> , “to look askance at,” “to hate.” Modifies <i>genus</i> . Again, the participle makes the expression more compact: “the hated tribe” = “her hatred of the tribe.”
<b>raptī</b>	“abducted”	Masculine plural Nominative participle (passive) of <i>rapere</i> , “to snatch”; modifies <i>honōrēs</i> .
<b>Ganymēdis</b>	“of Ganymede”	Masculine singular Genitive noun of the third declension. Ganymede, a son of Priam whose beauty prompted Jupiter to bring him to Olympus to be the gods’ cupbearer, is another instance of Jupiter’s unfair attention to the Trojans.
<b>honōrēs</b>	“offices”	Masculine plural Nominative of <i>honos</i> , a noun of the third declension. Though <i>manet</i> is singular and <i>honōrēs</i> , its last subject, is plural, the verb is too far away for any problem of agreement to arise. The “offices” refer to Ganymede’s function as cupbearer. If

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		<p><i>honōrēs</i> also means “honors” here (in the sense of favors or distinctions), <i>raptī</i> should perhaps be taken as a Genitive, with <i>Ganymēdis</i>: “the honors of abducted Ganymede” instead of “the abducted offices of Ganymede.” The phrase <i>raptī Ganymēdis honōrēs</i> should be enjoyed for both possibilities: it’s a poet’s privilege to have it both ways.</p>

*Twenty-ninth Verse*

<b>Hīs</b>	“these things”	Neuter plural demonstrative pronoun, Ablative. <i>Hīs</i> refers to Trojan offenses against Juno even prior to the war with the Greeks.
<b>accensa</b>	“inflamed”	Feminine singular Nominative participle (passive) of <i>accendere</i> ( <i>ad</i> “to” + <i>candere</i> “to apply fire”). Modifies the subject of <i>arcebat</i> (Juno).
<b>super</b>	“about,” “additionally,” “over”	Virgil, from his lofty perch on Mount Olympus (or from his comfortable quarters in Purgatory, as Dante would have it), must be greatly amused by the wrangling of scholars, during the past two millennia, over the interpretation of this verse. Some would take <i>super</i> as a postpositive preposition with the Ablative <i>hīs</i> , understanding Juno to be incensed “ <u>about</u> these things.” Others would take <i>super</i> as short for <i>insuper</i> , meaning “incensed by these things (understanding the instrumental Ablative alone to denote the earlier

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		reasons for her anger) <u>additionally</u> . Still others would see Virgil exercising his right, because of his inflected language, to connect <i>super</i> with the following Ablative <i>aequore</i> , meaning “ <u>over</u> the sea.” (in that case, the word <i>iactātōs</i> is fixed appropriately in the midst of that turbulent prepositional phrase.) Or could we have here a case of poetic license, of Virgil being content with this triple ambiguity?
<b>iactātōs</b>	“tossed”	Masculine plural Accusative participle (passive) of <i>iactāre</i> , “to toss.” Modifies <i>Trōas</i> .
<b>aequore</b>	“on the sea”	Neuter singular Ablative of <i>aequor</i> , “sea surface,” a noun of the third declension.
<b>tōtō</b>	“whole”	Neuter singular Ablative adjective modifying <i>aequore</i> .

### *Thirtieth Verse*

<b>Trōas</b>	“Trojans”	Masculine plural Accusative noun of a Greek declension (Τρῳάες), direct object of <i>arcēbat</i> . Greek forms appear now and then in Latin poetry, particularly in proper names, and betoken the intimate familiarity with Greek literature and culture we assume for both the poet and his readers. We can virtually prove that Virgil knew much of Homer’s <i>Iliad</i> and <i>Odyssey</i> by heart. They were his “models” for the <i>Aeneid</i> : Books I–VI tell the story of Aeneas’ travel from Troy to Italy, corresponding at least
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Word	Meaning	Commentary
		superficially to the Homeric wanderings of Ulysses. Books VII-XII are the “Roman <i>Iliad</i> ,” the story of Aeneas’ first wars of colonization. But Virgil transformed the Homeric epic into something quite different from the original. The <i>Aeneid</i> is a celebration of the achievements of Rome under Augustus, veiled in an account of the exploits of his mythical ancestor, Aeneas. Nevertheless, Virgil himself insisted that it was easier to steal Hercules’ club than to steal a verse from Homer.
<b>rēliquiās</b>	“leavings”	Feminine plural Accusative noun, refers to the Trojans. <i>Rēliquiae</i> is declined only in the plural.
<b>Danaum</b>	“of the Danaans”	Masculine plural Genitive noun of the second declension, contracted (like the nouns of verses 4 & 9) from <i>Dana[ōr]um</i> . Danaan,” like “Argive,” is another Homeric word for “Greek.” Danaos had been the mythical founder of Argos. His supposed Egyptian origins suggest links with the <i>Dan</i> -names (e.g. <i>Dan-el</i> or Daniel”) of other eastern Mediterranean heroes. “Danaos” may be a vestige (like Cadmus and his Phoenicians at Thebes) of West Semitic influence on Greece in the second millennium BCE.
<b>atque</b>	“as well as”	Also spelled <i>ac</i> .
<b>immītis</b>	“cruel”	(= <i>in-mītis</i> ) Masculine singular Genitive

Word	Meaning	Commentary
		adjective of the third declension modifying <i>Achillī</i> . The prefix <i>in-</i> serves to negate an adjective, like English <i>un-</i> : <i>mītis</i> means “soft.”
<b>Achillī</b>	“of Achilles”	The Trojans are called contemptible “leavings” of the Greek army and of its mighty and vengeful champion.

*Thirty-first Verse*

<b>arcēbat</b>	“she kept restraining”	Third person singular <b>imperfect</b> active Indicative of <i>arcēre</i> , “to hold back.” The imperfect tense, formed by inserting <i>-ba-</i> between the present stem and the personal endings, denotes an <i>incessant action in past time</i> .
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**longē** “far”

**Latiō** “from Latium” Ablative of separation.

**multōs** “many” In the singular, the adjective *multus* means “much.”

**per** “through” Preposition with Accusative only.

**annōs** “years”

*Thirty-second Verse*

**errābant** “they kept wandering” Third person plural imperfect active indicative of *errare*, “to wander.”

**actī** “driven” Masculine plural Nominative participle (passive) of *agere*, “to drive.” Modifies the subject of *errābant*.

Word	Meaning	Commentary
<b>fātīs</b>	“by the Fates”	Virgil echoes in these last five lines the themes with which he began the <i>Aeneid</i> .
<b>maria</b>	“seas”	Neuter plural Accusative of <i>mare</i> , a noun of the third declension. Accusative after <i>circum</i> .
<b>omnia</b>	“all”	Adjective of the third declension modifying <i>maria</i> . In the singular, <i>omnis</i> (neuter <i>omne</i> ) means “every.”
<b>circum</b>	“around”	The preposition is here postpositive, as often in poetry. Here it follows its noun ( <i>maria</i> ); in prose, it would always precede it.

*Thirty-third verse*

<b>tantae</b>	“so great”	Feminine singular Genitive adjective modifying <i>mōlis</i> .
<b>mōlis</b>	“difficulty”	Feminine singular Genitive of <i>mōlēs</i> , a noun of the third declension meaning, basically, “mass,” “load.” <i>Tantae mōlis</i> is a “Genitive of description”: founding the Roman nation was (a task) <i>of</i> great difficulty.
<b>erat</b>	“was”	Third person singular imperfect active Indicative of <i>esse</i> . The progressive sense of the imperfect is usually neutralized to a simple past meaning in the verb “to be,” though there may be some notion of unfinished business in this <i>erat</i> .
<b>condere</b>	“to found”	This infinitive, or rather the entire

Word	Meaning	Commentary
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phrase *Rōmānam condere gentem*, is the subject of *erat*.

<b>gentem</b>	“nation”
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Feminine singular Accusative of *gens*, a noun of the third declension with a wide range of meanings from “family” to “nation.” Direct object of *condere*.



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— Bill Berg

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