Capitulum II - Familia Romana

Gender of Nouns

Latin nouns have gender, either masculine, feminine, or neuter. The gender may be *natural* or *grammatical*. The noun *puer* (boy) is masculine, *puella* (girl) is feminine, *oppidum* (town) is neuter.

The nouns of the first declension are mostly feminine, but some masculine nouns are found (mostly of natural gender such as *pirata, poeta, agricola* and others).

The nouns of the second declension ending in *-us* in the nominative singular are mostly masculine, but some feminine and neuter nouns are found. The nouns of the second declension ending in *-um* in the nominative singular are neuter.

Nouns (with rare exception) do not have more than one gender. That is, *puer* is always masculine, *puella* is always feminine, and *oppidum* is always neuter.

The Genitive Case

The genitive case is used to express a very close relationship between two nouns. In English this is usually accomplished by the preposition *of*. The relationship expressed, however, may have different meanings. Often, it is simply one of possession: *This is the house of John.* Sometimes, the relationship is one of characteristic: *She is a woman of virtue.* Sometimes the relationship is objective (i.e., expresses an understood direct object): *The Gauls' fear of the Romans cost them the battle.*

Because these relationships are identical to the English use of the genitive with *of*, there should be little difficulty in understanding the genitive case in Latin.

The endings of the genitive case the 1st and 2nd Declension nouns are as follow:

	1st Declension		Second Declension	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Gen:	*-ae*	*-ārum*	*-ī*	*-ōrum*

Possessive Adjectives

This chapter introduces the possessive adjectives of the first and second person (my, your): *meus, -a, -um* and *tuus, -a, -um*. As adjectives, they will agree in number, case and gender with the noun they modify: *servus meus* (my slave), *ancilla tua* (your maid-servant), *meum oppidum* (my town). They decline on the 1st and 2nd second pattern.

Interrogative Adjective/Pronoun

The interrogative adjective/pronoun (*who?* or *what?*) have a full declension in Latin, differing somewhat from the 1st and 2nd declension pattern. The nominative and genitive are introduced in this chapter:

	Singular	Plural
Nom.	*quis, quae*	*quī, quae*
Gen:	*cuius*	*quōrum, quārum, quōrum*

These interrogatives operate as they do in English: *Quis est Mārcus?* Who is Marcus? *Quae est mater Mārcī?* Who is the mother of Marcus? *Cuius servus est Dāvus?* Whose slave is Davus?

Vocabulary
   vir *m* man
   quot? how many?
   liberī *m pl* children
   -que, = and (before the word it is attached to)