

Quid est veritas? Est vir qui adest!

Second Declension Nouns



Last week we encountered the word *puer*. On the second half of page 55 of *Latin Without Tears* (see the *Mothers' Companion* Volume 6) you will find some more second declension nouns that follow the same pattern. There are only four of these nouns you need know for IGCSE Latin. Here they are for your indexed note book:

liber *book*

Bible example:

*Tunc Darius rex praecepit et recensuerunt in bibliotheca **librorum** qui erant repositi in Babylone.*
Ezra 6:1.

This verse tells what happened when the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple were challenged as to their right to be doing so. They claimed that the previous ruler Cyrus had instructed them to do this. Darius, having the means to check their claim, found it to be correct. Notice the use of the genitive plural *librorum*. *Tunc* is another of those little words you can put in your notebook. It means “then.” *Rex* you may remember from yesterday's lesson. You may get *repositi* if you drop the last three letters. *In* means “in” (or “on”) and *Babylone* is obvious. If you know any French you will get *bibliotheca* too.² In our Bible we have “house of the rolls” for *bibliotheca librorum* but presumably to Jerome a “roll” was a book!

magister *teacher, master*

Bible example:

*Et quum accessisset quidam scriba dixit ei, **Magister**, sequar te quocumque abieris.* Matthew 8:19.
(Beza's translation) What case is *Magister* here?³ You may be getting used to seeing *dixit* “(he/she/it) said.” It is related to the words, “diction,” “dictation,” and “dictionary.”

ager *field*

Bible example:

*considerate lilia **agri** quomodo crescunt non laborant nec nent dico autem vobis quoniam nec Salomon in omni gloria sua coopertus est sicut unum ex istis* Matthew 6:28b-29.

The example word is in the genitive singular. Some very easy words to guess here: *considerate*, *lilia*, *laborant*, *Salomon*. We noticed *dixit* in the previous example, *dico* is “I say.”

puer *boy*

Bible example:

*pro **puero** isto oravi et dedit Dominus mihi petitionem meam quam postulavi eum* 1 Samuel 1:27.

Hannah is speaking. The example word is dative singular. You know *Dominus*. You will guess *petitionem*.

1 The question was asked by Pontius Pilate. It is the Vulgate translation of his words in John 18:38 “What is truth?” The answer is an anagram of the letters in the question. It means “It is the man present [i.e. here, before you, in front of you].” Samuel Johnson cites this example of an anagram in his dictionary of 1755 but it seems to have been well known before his day.

2 Library.

3 Answer: vocative – Jesus is being addressed. Unlike second declension words whose nominative ends in *us* those ending, those whose nominative ends in *er* do not have a vocative form ending in *e*.