

THE MANY USES OF QUAM

LATIN 215: The Crisis of the Roman Republic



I. *Quam* can be employed as the feminine, singular, accusative form of the **RELATIVE PRONOUN** (Qui, Quae, Quod):

Librum illi, quam amas, dedit: “He gave the book to that woman whom you love.”

N.B. You should also be on the lookout for *quam* in compounds formed from the relative pronoun (e.g. *Quidam*)

II. *Quam* can be employed as a **COORDINATING CONJUNCTION** with comparative adjectives:

Hic puer est maior quam ille: “This boy is taller than that (boy),”

N.B. Because *quam* functions as a coordinating conjunction, both words linked by *quam* will be in the same case. Note also that this construction is rare with the nominative and accusative cases, with which the ablative of comparison is preferred.

III. *Quam* can be employed as an **ADVERB** used to intensify adjectives:

1) *Quam* + an adjective in the **POSTIVE** degree: “how”

E.g. *Quam beatus est vir magnae sapientiae:* “How blessed is the man of great wisdom.”

N.B. This “how” does not introduce a question but intensifies the force of the adjective. Therefore, the above example essentially means: “The man of great wisdom is truly or very blessed”; this construction is **NOT** identical to the superlative or comparative degree of adjectives but is similar in meaning.

2) *Quam* + an adjective in the **SUPERLATIVE** degree: “as x as possible”, where x = the adjective

E.g. *Quam beatissimus est vir magnae sapientiae:* “the man of great wisdom is as blessed as possible.”

N.B. This construction indicates that the subject of the adjective possesses the absolute greatest possible amount of the quality indicated by the adjective.

N.B. “quam” also appears in several conjunctions and adverbs, such as *quamvis*, “however much” and *quamquam*, “although”