

3. SKILLFUL NAVIGATION

Because of his prudence and astuteness, Atticus shaped his own fate.

CORNĒLIĪ NEPŌTIS ATTICUS, 11

Here you will read more about Atticus's behavior during the proscriptions of Antony. The author, Atticus's friend Cornelius Nepos, tries to explain how this man, coming from the class of Roman knights (who were not the highest Roman nobility), and even during a time of terrible political turmoil, managed to lead such an extraordinary existence of cultured leisure, to be incredibly successful in business, and to emerge from the most difficult circumstances unscathed and with friendships intact.

- 1 11.1. Quibus ex malīs ut sē ēmersit, nihil aliud ēgit, quam ut quam
plūrimīs, quibus rēbus posset, esset auxiliō . . . 3. Difficile est omnia
persequī et nōn necessārium. Illud ūnum intellegī volumus, illīus
liberālitātem neque temporāriam neque callidam fuisse. 4. Id ex ipsīs
5 rēbus ac temporibus iūdicārī potest, quod nōn flōrentibus sē vēnditāvit,
sed afflīctīs semper succurrit; quī quidem Servīliam, Brūtī mātrem,
nōn minus post mortem eius quam flōrentem coluerit. 5. Sic liberālitāte
ūtēns nullās inimicitias gessit, quod neque laedēbat quemquam neque,
sī quam iniūriam accēperat, nōn mālēbat obliviscī quam ulciscī. Īdem
10 immortalī memoriā percepta retinēbat beneficia; quae autem ipse
tribuerat, tamdiū meminerat, quoad ille grātus erat, quī accēperat. 6.
Itaque hic fēcit, ut vērē dictum videātur.
Suī cuique mōrēs fingunt fortūnam hominibus . . .

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VOCABULARY

- 1 **quibus = et his**
ēmergō, ere, ēmersī, ēmersum – to come out of the water, emerge
 ***quam** + *superlative degree* – as . . . as possible
- 2 **auxiliō** – a source of help
- 3 **persequor, persequi, persecūtus sum** – to follow persistently, to go over (cf. “persecution”)
 ***necessārius, a, um** – necessary
- 4 ***liberālītās, liberālītātis, f.** – generosity
 ***neque = nec; neque . . . neque . . .** – neither . . . nor . . .
temporārius, a, um – suited for the occasion, temporary
callidus, a, um – clever, cunning
- 5 **tempus** – circumstance, time
 ***flōreō, ēre, flōruī,** — – to blossom, flourish
vēnditō, āre, āvī, ātum – to try to sell, advertise
- 6 ***affligō, ere, afflixī, afflictum** – to strike, distress, afflict
succurrō, ere, succurrī, succursum – to hasten to help
- 8 **inimīcitiā, ae, f.** – hostility
quemquam (*accusative singular masculine*) – anybody
- 9 ***iniūria, ae, f.** – unjust treatment, injury
 ***oblīvīscor, oblīvīscī, oblītus sum** – to forget
ulcīscor, ulcīscī, ultus sum – to take revenge
- 10 ***immortālis, immortalē** – undying, immortal
 ***percipiō, ere, percēpī, perceptum** – to take, earn, acquire
retineō, ēre, retinūī, retentum – to retain
 ***beneficiū, ī, n.** – service, kindness, favor
- 11 ***tribuō, ere, tribuī, tribūtum** – to grant, bestow
tamdiū . . . quoad . . . – as long . . . as . . .
 ***meminī, meminisse** – to remember
- 12 **vērē** (*adv.*) – correctly

*Words marked with an asterisk will need to be memorized later in the chapter.

READING NOTES

- 1 *nihil aliud ēgit quam ut* The phrase *id agere* joined with *ut* and a purpose clause means “to aim at.” With *nihil aliud . . . quam ut*, the expression has the meaning “to aim at nothing other than . . .”
- 1–2 *quam plūrimīs . . . auxiliō esset* Understand *hominibus* with *plūrimīs*. The case of *plūrimīs* is dative of the person affected by the dative of purpose *auxiliō*. The phrase means “to be of help to as many people as possible.”
- 2 *quibus rēbus posset* Meaning “with what things (resources) he could,” here *rēs* refers to financial resources. The verb *posset* is subjunctive because it is considered part of the purpose clause that begins with *ut*.
- 3 *illius* Meaning “his,” this word refers to Atticus.
- 5 *nōn flōrentibus sē vēnditāvī* With *flōrentibus*, understand *hominibus*, i.e., “flourishing people.”
- 6–7 *quī quidem Servīliam, Brūtī mātrem, nōn minus post mortem eius quam flōrentem coluerit* The accusative case participle *flōrentem* refers to *Servīliam* with whom Atticus maintained his friendship no less after her son’s death than when she was “flourishing,” (i.e., when her son was alive). The verb *colō, ere, coluī, cultum*, when it refers to interactions between people, has the special meaning “cultivate” or “look after.”
- 8 *nūllās inimīcitiās gessit* The verb *gerere*, when it takes the accusative of a noun of enmity or friendship, means “foster” or “nurture.”
- 8–9 *neque laedēbat quemquam neque . . . nōn mālēbat oblīvīscī quam ulcīscī* Note the strongly positive force of the double negative: “he did not harm anyone, nor did he not prefer (i.e., he **always** preferred) to forget than to avenge.”
- 9 *sī quam* Remember that *quis* and *quī* after *sī* have the meaning “somebody,” “any.”
- 10 *quae* “the favors which . . .”
- 12 *itaque hic fēcīt* “And he so behaved . . .”
- 13 *sui cuique* Keep in mind that *sui* goes with *mōrēs*, and *cuique* is a dative singular of an indefinite pronoun. When the possessive and reflexive adjective of the third person is combined with an indefinite pronoun in another case (as here), the meaning is “one’s own.”

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in Latin using the text on p. 390. The Reading Vocabulary may be consulted.

1. Quid fēcit Atticus, postquam ab Antōniō est servātus?
2. Cūr Nepōs nōn vult numerāre omnēs hominēs quōs adiūvit Atticus?
3. Quālis fuit liberālitās Atticī?
4. Quālēs hominēs adiuvābat Atticus?
5. Quid fēcit Atticus Servīliae, Brūtī mātīrī?
6. Gerēbatne Atticus inimicitīās? Cūr?
7. Cūr Nepōs dicit Atticum fēcisse ut vērē dictum vidērētur “Suī cuique mōrēs fingunt fortūnam hominibus”?

VOCABULARY TO LEARN

NOUNS

beneficium, ī, n. – service, kindness, favor

iniūria, ae, f. – unjust treatment, injury

liberālitās, liberālitātis, f. – generosity

oblīviscor, oblīviscī, oblītus sum + genitive – to forget

percipiō, ere, percēpī, perceptum – to take, earn, acquire

tribuō, ere, tribuī, tribūtum – to grant, bestow

ADJECTIVES

immortālis, immortalē – undying, immortal

necessārius, a, um – necessary

ADVERBS

quam + superlative degree – as . . . as possible

CONJUNCTIONS

neque = nec; neque . . . neque . . . – neither . . . nor . . .

VERBS

affligō, ere, afflixī, afflictum – to strike, distress, afflict

flōreō, ēre, flōruī, — – to flourish, blossom

meminī, meminisse – to remember ‡

‡Additional information about the words marked with the double dagger will be in the **Take Note** section that follows the Vocabulary to Learn.



TAKE NOTE

meminī This verb is defective, i.e., it has only perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect tenses which are used with the meanings of the present, imperfect, and future tenses.

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The familiar image of the television journalist, microphone ever ready for the interviewee's responses.