Russell's Anthology of Latin Prose

Text 23: Caesar and Ariovistus (Caesar)

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a) Source:

De bello Gallico 1. 42-46.

b) Background (synopsis quoted from Russell's book):

"Caesar was an enthusiast for correct Latinity. Our first passage reports a meeting between Caesar and the German king Ariovistus in 59 BC. Ariovistus' people had settled about 71 BC in what is now Alsace, having been invited into Gaul by the Sequani as allies against the rival Aedui. The Aedui have now sought and obtained Caesar's help. Throughout the exchanges -here reported, as is usual in the Commentarii, in indirect speech, to give an impression of a faithful minute- Caesar represente himself as always willing to talk, and Ariovistus as hauhty and insulting."

c) Language comment:

This text is an exhibition of *oratio obliqua*; it is full of indirect questions and indirect orders, which are the points in which *oratio obliqua* differs most from the simple reported speech. The language itself does not offer any special difficulty apart from this characteristic, except some difficult sentences in lines 2-6.

At the end, a small resume of the main rules of transfer from *oratio recta* into *oratio obliqua* is offered.

d) Content:

Finally, Caesar persuades Ariovistus to have a meeting with him. As expected, both of them expose their reasons for being in that territory (one because he has been called

by its inhabitants, the other because his people had been here before, etc.). Ariovistus makes an offer, but Caesar rejects it. The conference is suddenly broken up because news arrives that, while they were talking, some of Ariovistus's soldiers have launched an attack against Caesar's soldiers.

e) Distribution of content:

(numbers refer to the lines in the printed edition)

1-8:	Circumstances are favourable for the meeting.
5-22:	Conditions requested by Ariovistus.
23-28:	They meet.
28-47:	Caesar's first speech.
48-88:	Ariovistus's reply.
89-99:	Caesar's second speech.
100-112:	Incident with the horsemen.

f) Notes for help:

2) "quod": relative with "id", later, as antecedent. So, the relative clause has been advanced, and it's a subordinate sentence in subjunctive because it's inside a reported speech.

3-4) nice combination of three consecutive infinitives. Translate them backwards.

5) "reverti": it's double deponent (it means it exists as active and as deponent).

5) historic "cum", with "polliceretur".

6) "ultro" = "by his own initiative".

6) "veniebat": the subject is Caesar.

6) "pro" = "at the sight of".

8) "uti" = "ut".

8) "fore ut" (futurum esse ut): typical construction instead of a future infinitive.

8) "desisto" rules ablative alone (here).

9-10) historic "cum", with "mitterentur".

10) "quem": instead of "aliquem" after "ne".

11) "vereri": deponent, and verb of fear.

14) "interposita causa": ablative absolute.

14) "tolli" = "to be cancelled".

15) the subject of "esse" is "imponere" further down.

16) ablative absolute.

17) "ut": purpose.
18) "quid" instead of "aliquid" after "si".
18) "opus esse" = "to be necessary".
18) "facto": dative of purpose.
19) "quod" is the subject.
20) subordinate sentence in subjunctive because it's inside a reported speech.
21) "pollicitum": it's deponent, so translate as active past participle.
22) "habiturum (esse)".
27) "ex equis" should have been after the "ut", it's a prolepsis.
28) the same happens with "se denos".
28) "denos": from "deni".
29) impersonal use of passive voice of intransitive verb.
30) "sua...beneficia".
30) "senatus": genitive, depends on "beneficia".
30) the three "quod" mean "the fact that", and all of them depend on the "docebat" further down.
32) "missa (essent)".
32) "contigisse": suddenly, Caesar changes from subjunctive to infinitive.
32) "et paucis" = "even to few ones".
32) "quam rem" is the explanation of the former sentence, and it's the subject of "consuesse".
33) "consuesse (consuevisse) tribui" = "used to be given".
35) "senatus": genitive, depends on "liberalitate".
35) "consecutum (esse)".
35) "quam": exclamative.
37) "quae...consulta": interrog. ind.
37) "senatus": genitive.
37) "quotiens" and "quam": exclamatives.
38) "honorifica": the "consulta".
38) "ut" = "how".
41) "ut": it explains the "consuetudinem", and its verb is "velit".
41-42) three iuxtaposed ablatives of respect.
42) "(id) quod".
43) "eripi": it's not deponent.
44) "mandatis" = "orders".
46) "at" = "at least".
46) "quos" instead of "aliquos" after "ne".
52) "ipsis/ipsorum": the own inhabitants of the Gaul.
56) "castra habere contra + Ac." = "to do a military campaign against".
56) "omnis" = "omnes".

58) "decertare": final infinitive, as if "ad decertandum".

58) "uti": infinitive.

59) "pependerint" < "pendo" = "to pay".

61) "pet(iv)isse".

62) "dediticii" = "the hostages".

63) "recusaturum (esse)".

64) "quod" = "the fact that", it explains the "id" further down.

66-7) the same "quod" use.

69) "egressum (esse)".

71) "ut": comparative.

71) "concedi": passive infinitive.

73) "quod": causal.

74) "quod": relative.

74) "appellatos (esse)".

76) "tulisse": the subject is "Aeduos".

78) "usos esse": the subject is "ipsos".

79) "simulata amicitia": ablative.

79) "quod" = "the fact that".

80) "qui": Caesar.

82) "habiturum (esse)": the subject is "sese", the object is "illum".

82) "quod": completive.

84) "ipsis": the Roman nobles, who are moreover the antecedent of the following relative.

85) "eius": of Caesar.

85) "quod si" = "but".

87) "remuneraturum (esse)".

88) "eius": of Caesar.

88) "confecturum (esse)".

91) "consuetudinem (esse) pati".

91) "uti" = "ut".

91) "merentis" = "merentes".

92) "esse" depends on "iudicare".

94) "ignosco" rules dative, which is "quibus".

96) "populi Romani" depends on "imperium".

97) "senatus": genitive.

99) "voluiset": the subject is the senate.

100) "nuntiatum est": the subject is the two infinitive sentences that follow.

103) "quod" instead of "aliquod" after "ne".

105) "proelium" is the subject of "fore".

106) "commitendum (esse)": passive infinitive impersonal, without subject in

accusative.

106) "ut": completive.

106) "dici": passive infinitive.

107) "circumventos (esse)".

108) "elatum est": the subject is the exclamative sentence that follows and the next one also.

108) "qua arrogantia": exclamative, in ablative, depending on "usus".

110) "ut": exclamative, "how".

110) "diremisset" < "dirimo" = "interrupt".

111) "iniectum est": it agrees with the last subject, which is neuter.

ORATIO OBLIQUA

Transfer of pronouns

ego > se/ipse
tu > ille
3rd > is

Transfer of structures

a) Statements
Just accusative and infinitive:
Tu heri venisti > Illum pridie venire.

b) Questions
In the 2nd person = subjunctive:
Cur non scribis nunc? > Cur non scriberet tunc?
In the 1st and 3rd persons = accusative and infinitive.
Ubi est tuus amicus? > Ubi illius amicum esse?

c) Commands
Imperfect subjunctive:
Veni mecum, noli dormire > Secum veniret, ne dormiret.

d) Use of ipse instead of se
For emphasis:
Ego hostes vici > Ipsum hostes vicisse.

e) Use of se
It may refer to the subject of its own clause, not only to the speaker:
Da mihi tuum librum > Sibi daret illius/suum librum.

f) Subordinate clauses
As they are sub-oblique, in subjunctive:
Hic est amicus quem heri vidisti.
Ibi esse amicum quem pridie vidisset.