Saying "by" in Latin:
Ablative of Personal Agent *vs.* Ablative of Means/Instrument

When using the passive voice, it will often be necessary to say the word "by."

	by a thing	by a person
In Latin:	ablative case with no preposition	preposition *ā/ab* + ablative case
Grammatical Term:	ablative of means/instrument	ablative of personal agent

Study the following examples:

1. Davus is annoyed by the shouts. *Dāvus clāmōribus vexātur.*
2. Davus is annoyed by the boys. *Dāvus ā puerīs vexātur.*

Shouts are things, so to say "by the shouts" in Latin, use the ablative with no preposition.
The boys are people, so to say "by the boys" in Latin, use *ā/ab* followed by the ablative.

Dāvus clāmōribus vexātur. This is the ablative of means/instrument.

Dāvus ā puerīs vexātur. This is the ablative of personal agent.

NB: To say "by" an animal, you may use either the ablative of means/instrument or the ablative of personal agent, e.g.:

"The children are frightened by the dog." *Līberī cane terrentur.* (no preposition)
or
Līberī ā cane terrentur. (*ā/ab*)