

LESSON 18

Reported Questions

18.1. Reported Ordinary Questions

The verbs in reported questions have the same usage of Mood and Tense as in reported statements with ὅτι or ὡς. See Lessons 13.2 and 13.3. Reported ordinary questions are regularly introduced by the conjunction εἰ in the sense ‘whether’. οὐ or μή may be retained from the presumed direct form of a reported question. The whole reported question is the direct Object of the leading verb.

ὄρα νυν **εἴ** σοι ταῦτ’ ἀρωγὰ **φαίνεται**. (A.Pr. 997.)
Come now, see whether this seems helpful to you.

Direct form: (ἀρά) σοι ταῦτα ἀρωγὰ φαίνεται; ‘Does this seem helpful to you?’ In Primary sequence, the Mood and Tense of the verb in the reported form are the same as in the direct form.

ταῦτα εἰπὼν **ἐπήρετο** τὸν Μηδοσάδην **εἰ** ἀληθῆ ταῦτα **εἶη**.
(X.An. 7.2.25.)

After saying this he asked Medosades in addition, whether this was true.

Direct form: (ἀρα) ἀληθῆ ταῦτά ἐστι; ‘Is this true?’ In Past sequence, the Indicative of the direct form becomes Optative in the reported form.

... καὶ **ἠρώτα εἰ οὐχ** ἰκανόν μοι **εἶη** αὐτῷ ἀπολυθῆναι τῆς ἐγγύης τῆς πρὸς τὴν τράπεζαν ... (D. 33.11.)

... and he asked whether it was not enough for me to be released myself from the security-paid to the bank ...

Direct form: (ἀρα) οὐχ ἰκανόν σοί ἐστιν αὐτῷ ἀπολυθῆναι ...; ‘Is it not enough for you yourself to be released ...?’ οὐχ of the direct form is retained in the reported form and implies the expectation of a positive answer.

ἔστι δ' ὁ νῦν ἄγων καὶ ἡ διαδικασία ... εἰ μὴ προσήκει
ἔξελαθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Ἀγνίου τοὺς οἰκείους τοὺς Ἀγνίου
... (D. 43.61.)

*And the **present lawsuit and dispute** are <about> ... **whether** it is **really** appropriate that the kinsmen of Hagnias should be driven out of the household of Hagnias ...*

Direct form: (ἄρα) μὴ προσήκει ...; 'Is it really appropriate ...?' μὴ of the direct form is retained in the reported form, and lends a more emotional tone to the question ('really'). μὴ does not in itself imply the expectation of a negative answer.

18.2. ἄρα in Reported Questions

Sometimes, ἄρα seems to be used to introduce a reported ordinary question. A noticeable proportion of the examples of this usage are exhortations to 'examine' whether something is the case, especially with forms of the verb σκέπτεσθαι. As in the following example, it is frequently ambiguous whether the question is reported or actually direct.

τοῦτο μὲν τοίνυν, εἶπον, ἐν ἡμῖν κείσθω· δεῦτερον δὲ τὸ ἐχόμενον
τούτου **σκεψώμεθα ἄρά** τι προσήκει ἡμῖν. (Pl.R. 526 C.)

Reported: '*Let this one point, therefore, I said, 'be assumed for us; and **let us consider** a second, following from this one, (as to) **whether** it is of any concern to us.*

Direct: '*and let us consider a second, following from this one. Is it of any concern to us?*'

18.3. Reported Alternative Questions

Reported alternative questions may be introduced by πότερον (-α)...ἢ, as with direct alternative questions, or by ὅπότερον (-α)...ἢ. Or they may be introduced by several other combinations of conjunctions, as in the following examples. Where the second alternative is negative, μὴ is sometimes used, rather than οὐ, without any obvious syntactical justification.

... ἢ που περί γε τοῦ μήθ' ἑαλωκότος μήτ' ἐγνωσμένου, **πότερον** δέδρακεν ἢ οὐ, καὶ **πότερ'** ἄκων ἢ ἐκῶν, πάνδεινον γράφειν ὡς ἐκδοτέον τοῖς ἐγκαλοῦσιν. (D. 23.79.)

... surely in the case of a man who has been neither convicted nor judged as to **whether** he has done <something> **or** not, and **whether** accidentally **or** deliberately, <it is> outrageous to draft <a law>, that it is necessary to hand <him> over to his accusers.

πότερον (-α) ... ἢ with two sets of alternatives. Negative οὐ with the second alternative of the first set.

εἰ μέντοι χρήμαθ' ἔξει τοσαῦτα ὅσα σὺ δίδως ἢ καὶ ἄλλα πολλαπλάσια τούτων, οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιμι εἰπεῖν. (X.Cyr. 5.2.12.)

But **whether** he will have so much money as you are offering **or** actually other <funds> many times more than this, I would not be able to say.

εἰ...ἢ gives preference to the second alternative, here reinforced by καί.

... καὶ δίδωμι ὑμῖν σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις Χαλδαίοις βουλευσασθαι **εἴτε** βούλεσθε πολεμεῖν ἡμῖν **εἴτε** φίλοι εἶναι. (X.Cyr. 3.2.13.)

... and I am allowing you to consult with the rest of the Chaldeans as to **whether** you want to go to war with us **or** to be friends.

εἴτε...εἴτε gives equal value to each alternative.

δρᾶσαι γάρ, ὥσπερ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἀρνούμεθα· ἄλλ' **εἰ** δικαίως **εἴτε** μὴ τῆ σῆ φρενὶ δοκεῖ, τόδ' αἶμα κρῖνον ... (A.Eu. 611–613.)

For, as it is, we do not deny that we did it. But judge this murder, as to **whether** to your mind it seems justly <done> **or** not ...

εἰ...εἴτε also gives equal value to each alternative. Negative μή is used with the second alternative.

18.4. Reported Questions with Interrogative Adjectives or Adverbs

Reported questions may be introduced by the indirect form of interrogative adjectives or adverbs. Corresponding to the direct forms τίς ('Who?'), πῶς ('How?') and so on, are the indirect forms ὅστις, ὅπως and so on. However, quite often the direct forms are also used to introduce reported questions. And sometimes the relative forms ὅς, ὡς and so on are used.

φέρε γὰρ
σήμαιν' ὅ τι χρή σοι συμπράσσειν· (A.Pr. 294–295.)

*So come,
indicate **what** <I> should do to help you.*

Indirect interrogative pronoun ὅ τι.

σήμενον ὅποι
γῆς ἡ μογερά πεπλάνημαι. (A.Pr. 564–565.)

*Indicate **to where**
on earth I poor girl have wandered.*

Indirect interrogative adverb ὅποι.

ὥστε οὐ ῥάδιον εὔρειν τί ἐν τῇ θήρᾳ ἄπεστι τῶν ἐν πολέμῳ
παρόντων. (X.Cyr. 1.2.10.)

*And so <it is> not easy to find out **which** of the <elements> present in war
is absent in hunting.*

Direct interrogative pronoun τί in reported question.

... κάκρινα πρῶτος ἐξ ὄνειράτων ἃ χρὴ
ὑπαρ γενέσθαι ... (A.Pr. 485–486.)

*... and I first discerned among dreams, **which ones** should
become reality ...*

Relative adjective ὅς in reported question.

... τὸ μέλλον ἧ κραινοίτο προυτεθεσπίκει,
ὡς οὐ κατ' ἰσχὺν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν
χρεΐη, δόλω δὲ τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας κρατεῖν. (A.Pr. 211–213.)

... (she) had foretold **in what way** the future **was being brought to pass**, **how** not by strength nor with force **should** the winners **prevail**, but by cunning.

Direct form: πῆ τὸ μέλλον κραίνεται; πῶς χρὴ τοὺς ὑπέρχοντας κρατεῖν; ‘In what way is the future being brought to pass? How should the winners prevail?’ Relative adverbs ἧ̇ and ὡς̇ in reported questions. κραίνουτο and χρεῖη̇ are Optative in Past sequence after προυτεθεσπίκει (Past Perf.).

18.5. Reported Deliberative Questions

Reported Deliberative questions follow a pattern of usage similar to that of other types of reported discourse.

οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως σε φῶ βεβουλεῦσθαι καλῶς. (S.OT 1367.)
*I do not know **how I am to say** that you have made a good decision.*

Direct form: πῶς φῶ ...; ‘How am I to say ...?’ In Primary sequence, the Mood and Aspect of the verb in the reported form is the same as in the direct form.

φοιτᾶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔγκος ἔξαιτῶν πορεῖν,
 γυναῖκά τ’ οὐ γυναῖκα, μητρῶαν δ’ ὅπου
κίχοι διπλῆν ἄρουραν οὐ τε καὶ τέκνων. (S.OT 1255–1257.)

*For he was wandering around, asking us to provide a sword, and **where he was to find** the wife that was no wife, and the double maternal field of himself and his children.*

Direct form: ποῦ κίχω ...; ‘Where am I to find ...?’ In Past sequence, the Subjunctive of the direct form becomes Optative in the same Aspect in the reported form.

ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔδει τῷ ὀρφανῷ τὰ χρήματα ἀποδιδόναι, ὁ δ’ οὐκ εἶχεν ὀπόθεν ἀποδῶ ..., τὸ χωρίον ἐπῶλει. (Is. 2.28.)

*For when it had become necessary to pay back the money to the orphan, and he did not know **from where he was to pay** <it> **back** ..., he was <in favour of> selling the property.*

Direct form: πόθεν ἀποδῶ; ‘From where am I to pay <it> back?’ In a Vivid construction in Past sequence, the Mood and Aspect of the direct form are retained in the reported form.

References

Goodwin (1889), *Syntax of the moods and tenses of the Greek verb*, §§665, 667, 669–672, 677–681.

Smyth (1956), *Greek grammar*, §§2663–2679.

EXERCISE 18

Translate the following passages. For the Exercise, εἰ should preferably be translated as ‘whether’.

1. ἐκ δὲ τούτου ἐπυνθάνετο ἤδη αὐτῶν καὶ ὀπόσῃν ὁδὸν διήλασαν καὶ εἰ οἰκοῖτο ἡ χώρα.

ἐκ	<i>after</i>
πυνθάνεσθαι	<i>to inquire (of someone) (+ Gen. and reported questions)</i>
καί ... καί ...	<i>also ... and ...</i>
διελαύνειν	<i>to ride over</i>

2. πέμπει οὖν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἐρωτᾷ πότερον βούλεται εἰρήνην ἢ πόλεμον ἔχειν.

πέμπει...ἐρωτᾷ ...	Hist. Pres.
βούλεται	Vivid construction

3. ... ἀκούσαντες σκοπεῖτ' εἴτ' ὀρθῶς λογίζομαι ταῦτ' εἴτε μή.

σκοπεῖτ(ε)	Impv.
λογίζεσθαι (Mid.)	<i>to assess</i>

4. ὃς μὲν νυν τῶν ὑπάρχων στρατὸν κάλλιστα ἐσταλμένον ἀγαγὼν τὰ προκείμενα παρὰ βασιλέος ἔλαβε δῶρα, οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.

μὲν νυν	<i>well now (transitional phrase)</i>
ὑπαρχος, -ου, ὁ	<i>commander</i>
στέλλειν	<i>to equip</i>
προκεῖσθαι	<i>to be proffered</i>
βασιλέος (Ionic Gen.)	βασιλέως (Attic)

5. οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ὑμῖν ἀπιστήσαί με χρή ...

ἀπιστεῖν	<i>to disobey</i> (+ Dat.)
----------	----------------------------

6. ὁ δ' ἔς τε Πυθῶ κατὰ Δωδώνης πυκνοῦς
θεοπρόπους ἴαλλεν, ὥς μάθοι τί χρή
δρῶντ' ἢ λέγοντα δαίμοσιν πρᾶσσειν φίλα.

ὁ δ(έ)	<i>and he</i>
Πυθῶ, -οῦς, ἡ	<i>Pytho</i> (region around Delphi)
ἐπί (+ Gen.)	<i>in the direction of, to</i>
πυκνός, -ή, -όν	<i>frequent</i>
θεοπρόπος, -ου, ὁ	<i>messenger</i> (adj. as noun)
ἴαλλειν	<i>to send</i>
φίλα (n. pl. Acc.)	<i>pleasing (to)</i> (+ Dat.)

7. And all the aliens who are residents will know whether unjustly they are excluding the thirty from the[ir] cities, or justly.

<i>all ... who</i>	ἄλλοι (+ Indic.)
<i>alien</i>	ξένος, -ου, ὁ
<i>to be a resident</i>	ἐπιδημεῖν
<i>to exclude</i> (by proclamation)	ἐκκηρύττειν
<i>thirty</i> (tyrants)	τριᾶκοντα (indeclinable), οἱ (installed in 404 BCE)

8. And on hearing this, Clearchus asked the messenger approximately how big the country between the Tigris and the canal was.

<i>Clearchus</i>	Κλέαρχος, -ου, ὁ
<i>approximately how big</i>	Use τις (enclitic) in agreement with (and after) the appropriate gender of (ὁ)πόσος.
<i>between</i>	ἐν μέσῳ (+ Gen.)
<i>Tigris</i>	Τίγρης, -ητος, ὁ
<i>canal</i>	διῶρυξ, -υχος, ἡ

This text is taken from *Intermediate Ancient Greek Language*,
by Darryl Palmer, published 2021 by ANU Press, The Australian
National University, Canberra, Australia.