

LESSON 29

Expressions of Hindering, Forbidding, Denying and Failing

29.1. Introduction

Verbs (and other expressions) of hindering take a direct Object in the Accusative Case. The Object may be a person or a thing. Occasionally, both person and thing occur in the same expression with a double Accusative construction: ‘to hinder someone <from> something’. More often the thing, from which someone is hindered, is expressed by a Genitive of Separation with or without a preposition (ἀπό, ἐκ). When a thing is the direct Object of such a verb, it is most often expressed by an Infinitive without, or less often with, the definite article. And the most common construction for expressing ‘to hinder someone from doing something’ is technically a double Accusative of person and thing (Infin.): lit. ‘to hinder someone to do something’.

In positive and negative expressions of hindering, a redundant negative μή may occur with the Infinitive. And in negative (or interrogative) expressions of hindering, a double redundant negative μή οὐ may occur with the Infinitive.

Occasionally, an Accusative and Participle (instead of Infinitive) construction is used (cf. Lesson 4.3.3, Supplementary Participle). More rarely, constructions of Result, Effort and Condition are used with the function of a hindering expression; cf. Lessons 22, 24 and 19 respectively. In Passive expressions, the personal Object of the usual construction becomes the Subject and the Infinitive is retained: ‘they are hindered from doing something’ (lit. ‘they are hindered to do something’). In the Passive form of an Accusative and Participle construction, both the Accusative noun or pronoun and the Participle become Nominative.

29.2. Direct Object

29.2.1. Person

ταῦτα δὲ βουλομένους ποιεῖν ἄνεμος καὶ χειμῶν **διεκώλυσεν αὐτοὺς** μέγας γενόμενος· (X.HG 1.6.35.)

But although they were wanting to do this, a great wind and storm arose and prevented them.

29.2.2. Thing

ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀστρολόγος, ἔφη, βούλη γενέσθαι; ὡς δὲ καὶ **τοῦτο ἦρνεῖτο**, ἀλλὰ μὴ ῥαψωδός; ἔφη· (X.Mem. 4.2.10.)

‘Well, do you want’, he said, ‘to become an astronomer?’ And since he was denying this also, ‘Well’, he said, ‘a reciter?’

29.2.3. Person and Thing

τί φῆς; τίς ἔσται **μ’ οὐπικωλύσων τάδε**; (S.Ph. 1242.)

What do you mean? Who will there be who will debar me from this?

29.3. Genitive of Separation

29.3.1. Simple Genitive

... οὗτοι ἂν σοι, εἴ τιτι ἐντυγχάνοιεν τῶν Ἀρμενίων, τοὺς μὲν ἂν συλλαμβάνοντες αὐτῶν **κωλύοιεν τῶν ἐξαγγελιῶν** ... (X.Cyr. 2.4.23.)

... these men, if they encountered any one of the Armenians, would seize some of them for you and would prevent <them> from <making> reports ...

29.3.2. Preposition with Genitive

... ὁ δῆμος ... τούτῳ προσεῖχεν ... ὅπως ... τοὺς τε τοιούτους ἅπαντας **ἀπείργειν ἀπὸ τοῦ συμβουλευεῖν** ἕκαστος οἰήσεται δεῖν ... (Isoc. 12.139–141.)

... *the people ... attended to this ... that each should think that it was necessary to **debar** all such <men> **from giving advice** ...*

(τε anticipates a following τε.)

29.4. Infinitive after a Positive Expression

29.4.1. Infinitive Only

... τάδε καὶ θρηνῶ κάπιθεάζω,
μαρτυρόμενος δαίμονας ὡς μοι
τέκνα κτείνας' **ἀποκωλύεις**
ψαῦσαί τε χεροῖν **θάψαι** τε νεκρούς ... (E.Med. 1409–1412.)

... *I both make this lament and invoke the gods,
calling the deities to witness that, having
killed my children, **you are preventing**
both **the touching** with one's hands and **the burying** of their bodies ...*

29.4.2. Accusative and Infinitive

εἰ δ' ὑμῖν γνώμη ἐστὶ **κωλύειν** τε **ἡμᾶς** ἐπὶ Κέρκυραν ἢ ἄλλοσε
εἴ ποί βουλόμεθα **πλεῖν** καὶ τὰς σπονδὰς λύετε, ἡμᾶς τούσδε
πρώτους λαβόντας χρήσασθε ὡς πολεμίους. (Th. 1.53.2.)

*But if you have the intention **of preventing us from sailing** to Corcyra or to
anywhere else that we want to, and (if) you are breaking the treaty, seize us
here first and treat <us> as enemies.*

29.4.3. Infinitive with Redundant μή

κομίζετ' αὐτόν, ὡς ἰδὼν ἐν ὄμμασιν
τὸν τᾶμ' **ἀπαρνηθέντα μὴ χρᾶναι** λέχη
λόγοις τ' ἐλέγξω δαιμόνων τε συμφοραῖς. (E.Hipp. 1265–1267.)

*Bring him, so that I may see with my eyes
the one who **denied that he polluted** my bed
and (so that I) may make a refutation with words and with the disaster from
the gods.*

29.4.4. Accusative and Articular Infinitive

ἔστιν τις ἔστιν ὅς σε κωλύσει τὸ δρᾶν. (S.Ph. 1241.)
There is, there is someone who will prevent you from acting.

29.4.5. Accusative and Articular Infinitive with Redundant μή

τὸ δὲ μὴ λεηλατῆσαι ἐλόντας σφέας τὴν πόλιν ἔσχε τόδε.
 (Hdt. 5.101.1.)

And this kept them from plundering the city when they captured it.

29.4.6. Accusative and Genitive Articular Infinitive

τούτους αὐ̄ τοιαῦτα λέγων ἔσχε τοῦ ἐκπεπληχθαι. (X.HG 4.8.5.)

Moreover, by making such statements he kept these men from being [OR: having become] panic-stricken.

29.4.7. Accusative and Genitive Articular Infinitive with Redundant μή

ὁ δὲ συννήσας πυρὴν μεγάλην ἀνεβίβασε ἐπ' αὐτὴν τὸν Κροῖσον... βουλόμενος εἰδέναι εἴ τις μιν δαιμόνων ῥύσεται τοῦ μὴ ζῶντα κατακαυθῆναι. (Hdt. 1.86.2.)

And he, having built a big pyre, made Croesus go up on to it ... wanting to know whether any one of the deities would rescue him from being burned alive.

29.5. ἔμποδών

The adverb ἔμποδών introduces a variety of constructions which express hindering. The basic idea is 'getting in the way', 'blocking'. The grammatical constructions include Infinitive with or without definite article. The definite article may be in the Accusative or the Genitive Case. The Infinitive may have an explicit or implicit Accusative Subject; the implicit Subject may be indicated by an Accusative Participle. Redundant negatives may be used with the Infinitive, with or without the definite article.

ὧν τίς ἄλλος φανήσεται προνοηθείς, ἢ τίς **ἐμποδῶν** καταστάς τοῦ μηδὲν ἔτι γενέσθαι τοιοῦτον ... (Isoc. 12.80.)

For who else among them will appear as taking precautions, or who as getting in the way of any such thing happening again ...?

Genitive articular Infinitive with Accusative Subject.

ὥστε τὸ αὐτὸ πάντες **ἐμποδῶν** εἰσιν, **ἐάν** τι δι' ἄλλων ἀγαθὸν ὑμῖν φαίνηται. (Lys. 25.33.)

And so all together they are in the way for any good to appear for you through other <people>.

ἐάν + Subjunctive: 'in the way if any good should appear'. Conditional construction as in §29.8 below.

29.6. Infinitive after a Negative Expression

29.6.1. Infinitive Only

ἀκοῦσαι μέντοι γε οὐδὲν κωλύει. (X.Cyr. 5.5.24.)

*But at any rate **nothing prevents listening**.*

29.6.2. Accusative and Infinitive

... οὐ μέντοι ἰκανόν γε ἔσται ἐπιτειχίζειν τε κωλύειν ἡμᾶς πλεύσαντας ἐς τὴν ἐκείνων καί, ἥπερ ἰσχύομεν, ταῖς ναυσὶν ἀμύνεσθαι. (Th. 1.142.4.)

*... however, it will **not** be sufficient **to prevent us from building-a-fort** after sailing to their <territory> and, where our strength lies, **defending ourselves** with our ships.*

29.6.3. Infinitive with Redundant μή

... καὶ μόλις φθάνει
θρόνοισιν ἐμπεσοῦσα **μή** χαμαὶ πεσεῖν. (E.Med. 1169–1170.)

*... and, by falling on to her chair,
she scarcely avoided falling to the ground.*

μόλις ('scarcely') is a virtual negative. φθάνει is Historic Present.

29.6.4. Articular Infinitive Only

μαθὼν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν. (S.Ph. 118.)
For, if I learned <this>, I would not refuse to act.

29.6.5. Articular Infinitive with Redundant μή

... οὐκ ἂν ἐσχόμην
 τὸ μὴ ἀποκλῆσαι τοῦμόν ἄθλιον δέμας,
 ἵν' ἦ τυφλὸς τε καὶ κλύων μηδέν. (S.OT 1387–1389.)

... *I would not have kept myself
 from shutting up my wretched body,
 so that I might be blind and hearing nothing.*

ἦ is Past Indicative in a Purpose clause dependent on the Main clause of an Unfulfilled Conditional sentence (Smyth, 1956, §2185.c.).

29.6.6. Accusative and Infinitive with Redundant μὴ οὐ

τοὺς οὕτε νιφετός, οὐκ ὄμβρος, οὐ καῦμα, οὐ νύξ ἔργει μὴ
 οὐ κατανῦσαι τὸν προκείμενον αὐτῷ δρόμον τὴν ταχίστην.
 (Hdt. 8.98.1.)

*Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor night hinder them from covering in
 the quickest way the course appointed by him.*

29.6.7. Accusative and Articular Infinitive with Redundant μὴ οὐ

... καὶ τοσόνδ' ἐκόμπασεν,
 μηδ' ἂν τὸ σεμνὸν πῦρ νιν εἰργάθειν Διὸς
 τὸ μὴ οὐ κατ' ἄκρων περγάμων ἐλεῖν πόλιν. (E.Ph. 1174–1176.)

... *and he made his great boast,
 that not even the sacred fire of Zeus would prevent him
 from capturing the city down from its highest citadel.*

29.6.8. Genitive Articular Infinitive

... Εὐθύδημος οὕτως ἐν ἡλικίᾳ γενόμενος, τῆς πόλεως λόγον περὶ τίνος προτιθείσης, **οὐκ ἀφέξεται τοῦ συμβουλευεῖν** ... (X.Mem. 4.2.3.)

... *Euthydemus here, when he comes of age, <and>when the city is proposing a discussion about something, **will not restrain himself from giving advice.***

29.6.9. Genitive Articular Infinitive with Redundant μή

... ἐνούσης δ' **οὐδεμίᾳς** ἔτ' ἀποστροφῆς **τοῦ μή** τὰ χρήματ' ἔχειν ὑμᾶς, Τιμοκράτης οὕτως τοσοῦθ' ὑπερέϊδεν ἅπαντα τὰ πράγματα ὥστε τίθησι τουτοῦ τὸν νόμον ... (D. 24.9.)

... *and when there was **no longer any means-of-preventing** your **having** the money, Timocrates here overlooked all the issues to so great an extent that he is proposing this law ...*

29.7. Result Construction

29.7.1. ὥστε with Simple Infinitive

ὥστε γὰρ τὴν σύντομον πρὸς τοὺς Πελληνέας **ἀφικέσθαι** ἢ πρὸ τοῦ τείχους φάραγξ **εἶργε**. (X.HG 7.2.13.)

*For the ravine in front of the wall **was preventing** <them> **from reaching** the Pellenians along the short <route>.*

29.7.2. ὥστε and Infinitive with Redundant μή

ἡμεῖς οὖν εἰ μέλλοιμεν **τούτους εἶργειν ὥστε μή δύνασθαι** βλάπτειν ἡμᾶς πορευομένους, σφενδοντῶν τὴν ταχίστην δεῖ καὶ ἵππέων. (X.An. 3.3.16.)

*Therefore, if we were going **to prevent these <men> from being able** to harm us as we proceeded, there would be need of slingers very quickly and horsemen.*

δεῖ, as a modal verb ('need', 'must', 'ought', etc.), is used in the Indicative in Greek, where English uses a potential idiom.

29.8. Effort Construction

... κωλύόντων κοινή βασιλεὺς καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι, ὅπως μήτε χρήματα λαμβάνωσιν Ἀθηναῖοι μήτ' ἄλλο μηδέν. (Th. 8.18.1.)

... *let the king and the Spartans and their allies in common prevent the Athenians from receiving either the money or anything else.*

κωλύόντων (3rd pers. pl. Imperf. Impv.) with ὅπως + Subjunctive and negative μή compounds.

29.9. Conditional Construction

οἶμαι τοίνυν ἐγὼ ταῦτα λέγειν ἔχειν, μὴ κωλύων εἴ τις ἄλλος ἐπαγγέλλεταιί τι. (D. 4.15.)

So I think that I can say this without preventing anyone else from making any promise.

κωλύων with εἴ + Present Indicative: 'not preventing that anyone else should be making any promise'. εἴ introduces a noun clause (cf. Lesson 34).

29.10. Participial Construction

καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις ... πλέοντας ὑμᾶς ... κωλύσει. (Th. 2.62.2.)
And there is no one who ... will prevent ... you from sailing.

This construction is parallel to the Accusative and Participle with παύειν: 'to stop someone from doing something'.

29.11. Passive Constructions

29.11.1. Passive Verb Only

μέγιστον δέ, τῇ τῶν χρημάτων σπάνει κωλύσονται, ὅταν σχολῇ αὐτὰ ποριζόμενοι διαμέλλωσιν. (Th.1.142.1.)

And most important, they will be hindered by lack of funds, when by procrastinating they delay in acquiring them.

29.11.2. Passive Verb with Infinitive

ἐδεήθησαν δὲ καὶ τῶν Μεγαρέων ναυσὶ σφᾶς συμπροπέμψαι, εἰ ἄρα **κωλύοιντο** ὑπὸ Κορκυραίων **πλεῖν**. (Th. 1.27.2.)

And they asked the Megarians also to join in escorting them with ships, in case they were prevented by the Corcyreans from sailing.

29.11.3. Passive Verb with Participle

ἐπορεύθησαν δὲ πεζῇ ἐς Ἀπολλωνίαν, Κορινθίων οὐσαν ἀποικίαν, δέει τῶν Κορκυραίων μὴ **κωλύονται** ὑπ' αὐτῶν κατὰ θάλασσαν **περαιούμενοι**. (Th. 1.26.2.)

And they travelled by land to Apollonia, since it was a colony of the Corinthians, out of fear of the Corcyreans, in case they were prevented by them from crossing by sea.

References

Goodwin (1889), *Syntax of the moods and tenses of the Greek verb*, §§807–820.

Smyth (1956), *Greek grammar*, §§2739–2749.

EXERCISE 29

Translate the following passages.

1. πεφύκασί τε ἅπαντες καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἄμαρτάνειν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι νόμος ὅστις ἀπείξει τούτου ...

πεφυκέναι	<i>to be inclined(to)</i> (+ Infin.; Perf. with Imperf. meaning)
τε	<i>and</i> (Joins whole sentence to preceding.)
τούτου	Refers to ἄμαρτάνειν.

2. βεβοηθηκότες γὰρ ἦσαν τοῖς Βιθυνοῖς, βουλόμενοι σὺν τοῖς Βιθυνοῖς, εἰ δύναιντο, ἀποκωλύσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας μὴ ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὴν Φρυγίαν.

3. τῶν γὰρ ἄλλων μόνους ἂν ὑμᾶς οἴονται ἐμποδῶν γενέσθαι τοῦ ἄρξαι αὐτοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων.

ἄρχειν	<i>to rule</i>
--------	----------------

4. οὐ μὴν κωλύει γ' οὐδὲν κάμῃ διὰ βραχέων ἐπιμνησθῆναι τῶν πεπραγμένων αὐτῷ.

μὴν	<i>however</i>
οὐδέν	Nom.

5. λείπει μὲν οὐδ' ἂ πρόσθεν ἦδεμεν τὸ μὴ οὐ βαρύστον· εἶναι·

λείπειν	<i>to fall short of</i> (+ Infin., here articular)
ἦδεμεν	More often ἦσμεν (Infin. εἰδέναι).

6. κάκεινου τὸ μὲν παρ' ἐμοῦ κοιμισθὲν ἀργύριον οὐκ ἐθελήσαντος ἀπολαβεῖν, ... οὐκ ἐκωλύομην συνθάπτειν ἀλλὰ πάντα συνεποίουν·

παρά (+ Gen.)	<i>by</i>
συνθάπτειν	<i>to join in the burial</i>

7. And these [men] were staying behind and preventing the Athenians from carrying stones and from dispersing further away.

<i>to stay behind</i>	ὑπομένειν
<i>to carry stones</i>	λιθοφορεῖν
<i>to disperse</i> (Intr.)	ἀποσκίδνασθαι (Pass.; a stem)
<i>further away</i>	μακροτέραν (adverbial Acc.)

8. For if I had not been caught off my guard with oaths to the gods, I would not ever have kept from declaring this to my father.

<i>to catch</i>	αἰρεῖν
<i>off guard</i>	ἄφαρκτος, -ον
<i>oath</i> (to)	ὄρκος, -ου, ὄ (+ Gen.)
<i>to keep</i> (Intr.) (from)	ἔχειν, (Aor.) σχεῖν (+ Infin. with redundant negatives μὴ οὐ)

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