

LESSON 23

Causal Constructions

23.1. Adverbial Clauses of Cause

Adverbial clauses of Cause are introduced by several subordinating conjunctions: ὅτι, διότι, ἐπεί, ἐπειδή, ὡς and in poetry οὐνεκα (= οὐ ἔνεκα) and ὁθούνεκα (= ὅτου ἔνεκα). ἐπεί is more frequent than ἐπειδή in a Causal sense in early prose. The Indicative Mood is normally used. The negative is οὐ, which is also used in virtual Causal clauses introduced by εἰ (with Indic.) or by εἴαν or ἤν (with Subj.).

23.1.1. Indicative

ἄρα τὸ ὅσιον, **ὅτι** ὅσιόν ἐστι, φιλεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν, ἢ, **ὅτι** φιλεῖται, ὅσιόν ἐστι; (Pl.*Euthphr.* 10 A.)

*Is holiness loved by the gods **because** it is holy, or is it holy **because** it is loved <by the gods>?*

τίθημι γάρ σε ὁμολογοῦντα, **ἐπειδή** οὐκ ἀποκρίνη. (Pl.*Ap.* 27 C.)
*For I regard you as agreeing, **since** you do not reply.*

Negative οὐ.

ἂν δὲ σιωπᾶν [sc. φῆ], πῶς οὐκ ἀδικεῖ, **εἰ**, παρὸν ἐξαμαρτάνειν μέλλοντας ἀποτρέπειν, τοῦτο μὲν **οὐκ** ἐποίει ... (D. 22.41.)

*But if <he says> that he kept quiet, how is he not acting unjustly, **since** [lit. 'if'], although it was possible to turn <them> aside when they were intending to do wrong, he was **not** doing this...?*

Virtual Causal clause introduced by εἰ with negative οὐ.
(Cf. Lesson 19.5, last dot point)

23.1.2. Potential Indicative or Optative

Potential Indicative or potential Optative with ἄν may also appear in a Causal clause.

κακῶς ὄλοισθ'· ὀλεῖσθε δ' ἡδίκηκότες
τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε, θεοῖσιν εἰ δίκης μέλει.
ἔξοιδα δ' ὡς μέλει γ' **ἐπεὶ** οὐποτ' **ἄν** στόλον
ἐπλεύσατ' ἄν τόνδ' οὐνεκ' ἀνδρὸς ἀθλίου,
εἰ μή τι κέντρον θεῶν ἦγ' ὑμᾶς ἐμοῦ. (S.Ph. 1035–1039.)

May you perish miserably; and you will perish for having wronged this man, if the gods are concerned about justice.

*And I am sure that they are concerned, **since** never **would you have sailed** on this voyage on account of a wretched man, if some divine incentive to get me had not been driving you on.*

ἐπεὶ with potential Indicative ἐπλεύσατ(ε) and ἄν (repeated).

οὐ γὰρ ἡλικίαν ἔχει
παρὰ σοὶ καθεύδειν τηλικούτος ὢν, **ἐπεὶ**
μήτηρ **ἄν** αὐτῷ μάλλον **εἴη**ς ἢ γυνή. (Ar.Ec. 1038–1040.)

*For he is not of an age to sleep with you, being of such a <young> age, **since you would be** a mother for him rather than a wife!*

ἐπεὶ with potential Optative and ἄν.

23.1.3. Optative of Alleged Reason

In Past sequence, the Optative (without ἄν) is used in a Causal clause to denote an alleged reason. In the following sentence, ὡς with Optative ἀποχωρήσειαν expresses the reason of the Athenians in the city, not that of the writer Thucydides.

ἐλθόντας δὲ τοὺς στρατηγοὺς οἱ ἐν τῇ πόλει Ἀθηναῖοι τοὺς μὲν φυγῇ ἐζημίωσαν, Πυθόδωρον καὶ Σοφόκλεα, τὸν δὲ τρίτον Εὐρυμέδοντα χρήματα ἐπράξαντο, **ὡς** ἐξὸν αὐτοῖς τὰ ἐν Σικελίᾳ καταστρέψασθαι δώροις πεισθέντες **ἀποχωρήσειαν**. (Th. 4.65.3.)

*But when the commanders came, the Athenians in the city punished the <first two>, Pythodorus and Sophocles, with exile and exacted money from the third, Eurymedon, **on the grounds that**, although it had been possible for them to gain control of affairs in Sicily, **they** had been bribed by gifts and **had departed**.*

23.1.4. ὄΤΕ with a Causal Meaning

ὄΤΕ sometimes has a virtual Causal force, already in Homer, and extending to the classical period. (The practice of distinguishing ὄΤΕ [Temporal] from ὄ ΤΕ [Causal] in print dates only from the nineteenth century.)

Ζεῦ πάτερ, οὐκέτ' ἐγὼ γε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
τιμῆεις ἔσομαι, **ὄΤΕ** με βροτοὶ οὐ τι τίουσιν ...
(Hom. *Od.* 13.128–129.)

*Father Zeus, no longer shall I for my part be honoured among
the immortal gods, **since** mortals do not honour me at all ...*

Here, ὄΤΕ does not denote a particular time (or particular times) ‘when’ mortals do not honour Poseidon. Rather, it gives the reason why gods will not honour him, ‘since’ mortals do not honour him ‘at all’. The argument proceeds *a minore ad maius* (from the lesser to the greater).

ὄΤΕ δὴ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, τόδε μοι ἀποκρίνασθε, φήσω.
(Pl. *Prt.* 356 C.)

‘Since indeed this is so, answer this for me’, I shall say.

Both ὄΤΙ and ὄΤΕ seem to be derived from the neuter singular relative pronoun ὄ. ὄΤΙ is the indefinite form of this pronoun. ὄΤΕ is simple ὄ followed by generalising enclitic ΤΕ, primarily an Epic usage (Liddell & Scott, 1996: ΤΕ B.). The basic early meaning of either form could be expressed as: ‘with respect to which’, or ‘with regard to the fact that’.

Many examples, from Homer and Hesiod onwards, are ambiguous because of elision: ὄΤ(ι) or ὄΤ(ε). The usual view is that only ὄΤ(ε) allows elision. But two notable Hesiod scholars doubt this.

τῆς ὄτε δὴ Περσεὺς κεφαλὴν ἀπεδειροτόμησεν,
ἔξέθορε Χρυσάωρ τε μέγας καὶ Πήγασος ἵππος·
τῷ μὲν ἐπώνυμον ἦν **ὄΤ'** ἄρ' Ὀκεανοῦ παρὰ πηγὰς
γένθ'... (Hes. *Th.* 280–283.)

*Just when Perseus cut off her head,
there leapt out great Chrysaor and Pegasus the horse;
the latter had a significant name, **because** of course he was born beside
the waters of Ocean ...*

γένθ' = ἐγένετο

Acknowledging the usual view, West (1966, p. 247) has commented on this passage: 'But if we ask which word we should see if it were not before a vowel, the answer is certainly that we should see ὅτι ...'. More succinctly, Paley (1883, p. 204) has commented on the same passage: 'ὄτ' for ὅτι, not ὄτε'. If elision of the final iota of ὅτι is allowed in general, there will be far fewer instances of ὄτ(ε) with a Causal meaning.

23.2. Adjectival Clauses of Cause

Cause may be expressed in adjectival clauses. The definite relative adjective ὅς is more common than the indefinite ὅστις. The Mood is generally Indicative and the negative is οὐ. (Similar clauses with μή are probably better classified as Conditional adjectival clauses.)

ταῦτα λέγων τῷ Κροίσῳ οὐ κως οὔτε ἐχαρίζετο, οὔτε λόγου μιν ποιησάμενος οὐδενὸς ἀποπέμπεται, κάρτα δόξας ἀμαθέα εἶναι, ὅς τὰ παρόντα ἀγαθὰ μετεῖς τὴν τελευτὴν παντὸς χρήματος ὁρᾶν ἐκέλευε. (Hdt. 1.33.)

*In saying this he was not at all pleasing to Croesus, and <the latter> considering him of no importance sent him away, thinking him to be very ignorant, **since**, setting aside present benefits, **he was telling** him to look at the outcome of every matter.*

ἀποπέμπεται is Historic Present.

23.3. Causal Participles

Participles may express Cause. See Lesson 4 on Participles, Lesson 5 on Genitive absolute and Lesson 6 on Accusative absolute. Such Participles may be reinforced by certain adverbs. ὡς before a Causal Participle indicates that the Cause is expressed on the authority of the main Subject or of another person prominent in the sentence. ἄτε, οἶα and οἶον indicate that the Cause is expressed on the authority of the writer (or of the person delivering a speech). Herodotus also uses ὥστε in a similar way.

... καὶ τὸν μὲν Περικλέα ἐν αἰτία εἶχον **ὥς πείσαντα** σφᾶς πολεμεῖν ... (Th. 2.59.2.)

... and they held Pericles to blame **on the grounds that he had persuaded them to go to war** ...

The reason introduced by ὥς is attributed to the Athenians, who are the Subject of εἶχον.

... **ἄτε** τὸν χρυσὸν **ἔχων** πάντα τὸν ἐκ τῶν Σαρδίων, ἐπικούρους τε ἐμισθοῦτο καὶ τοὺς ἐπιθαλασσίους ἀνθρώπους ἔπειθε σὺν ἑωυτῷ στρατεῦεσθαι. (Hdt. 1.154.)

... **inasmuch as he held** all the gold from Sardis, he was hiring mercenaries and was persuading the men of the coast to go on campaign with him.

The reason introduced by ἄτε is that of the author Herodotus.

ὥστε δὲ περὶ πολλοῦ **ποιεόμενος** αὐτούς, παῖδάς σφι παρέδωκε τὴν γλῶσσάν τε ἐκμαθεῖν καὶ τὴν τέχνην τῶν τόξων. (Hdt. 1.73.3.)

And **inasmuch as he regarded** them highly, he committed boys to them to learn their language and the technique of the bow.

23.4. Coordinating Use of ἐπεὶ and ὥς

Editors sometimes treat ἐπεὶ and ὥς as introducing a Main clause at the beginning of a sentence, and thus as being equivalent to γάρ. It might be argued that this is a subordinating use in some long sentences. But that argument is less convincing where the clause introduced by ἐπεὶ or ὥς constitutes a question, wish or command rather than a statement.

ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ πολλάκις θέλω τεθνάναι, εἰ ταῦτ' ἔστιν ἀληθῆ· **ἐπεὶ** ἔμοιγε καὶ αὐτῷ θαυμαστὴ ἂν εἴη ἡ διατριβὴ αὐτόθι, ὅποτε ἐντύχοιμι Παλαμῆδει καὶ Αἴαντι τῷ Τελαμῶνος καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τῶν παλαιῶν διὰ κρίσιν ἄδικον τέθνηκεν ... (Pl.Ap. 41 A–B.)

For I am willing to die many times, if this is true. **For** to me myself at least the lifestyle would be wonderful there, when I met up with Palamedes and Ajax son of Telamon and anyone else among early figures who has died because of an unjust judgment ...

References

Goodwin (1889), *Syntax of the moods and tenses of the Greek verb*, §§580–581, 712–719, 862–865.

Smyth (1956), *Greek grammar*, §§2085–2086, 2240–2248, 2555.

Paley (Ed.) (1883), *The Epics of Hesiod*, p. 204.

West (Ed.) (1966), *Hesiod: Theogony*, p. 247.

EXERCISE 23

Translate the following passages.

1. ἐπεὶ σε μανθάνω
θνητὴν φρονοῦσαν θνητὰ κοῦκ ἀγνώμονα,
πάν σοι φράσω τ' ἀληθές, οὐδὲ κρύψομαι.

ἀγνώμων, -ον	<i>senseless</i> (here Acc. neut. pl., as is θνητά)
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2. ἐπεὶ σὺ φέγγος, Τειρεσία, τόδ' οὐχ ὄρας,
ἐγὼ προφήτης σοι λόγων γενήσομαι.

φέγγος, -εος, τό	<i>light (of day)</i>
Τειρεσίας, -ου, ὁ	<i>Tiresias</i>
λόγων	<i>(with)in my words</i> (Gen. of Limits)

3. ἀλλὰ νιν περιπτυχεῖ
φάρει καλύψω τῶδε παμπήδην, ἐπεὶ
οὐδεὶς ἄν, ὅστις καὶ φίλος, τλαίη βλέπειν ...

νιν (enclitic)	<i>him</i>
περιπτυχής, -ές	<i>enfolding, wrapped around</i>
φᾶρος, -εος, τό	<i>cloak</i>
παμπήδην (adv.)	<i>completely</i>
τλήναι (2nd Aor.)	<i>to endure, to bear</i>

4. ... Κῦρος ... τῷ Κλεάρχῳ ἐβόα ἄγειν τὸ στράτευμα κατὰ μέσου
τὸ τῶν πολεμίων, ὅτι ἐκεῖ βασιλεὺς εἶη·

κατά	<i>at</i>
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5. ... ἐβουλεύοντο ἰθυμαχίην μὲν μηδεμίαν ποιέεσθαι ἐκ τοῦ
ἐμφανέος, ὅτε δὴ σφι οὗτοί γε σύμμαχοι οὐ προσεγίνοντο ...

ἰθυμαχία, -ας, ἡ (Attic)	<i>direct attack</i>
ἐμφανής, ἐς (Attic)	<i>open (ground) (neut. adj. as noun)</i>
προσγίγνεσθαι (Attic)	<i>to be added (to) (+ Dat.)</i>

6. τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ βουλόμενος Ἄνδοκίδης ἀγῶνα τοσοῦτον
ὑπομείνειν, ᾧ ἕξεσσι μὲν ἀπελθόντι ἐντεῦθεν ἔχειν πάντα τὰ
ἐπιτήδεια ...;

ἀγών, -ῶνος, ὁ	<i>trial</i>
ὑπομείνειν	<i>to submit to (+ Acc.)</i>
ἐντεῦθεν (adv.)	<i>from here</i>
ἐπιτήδειος, -α, -ον	<i>necessary, requisite</i>

7. ... the Sicilian Greeks themselves provided a greater number
[of troops] in all categories, inasmuch as they inhabited large cities.

<i>Sicilian Greek</i>	Σικελιώτης, -ου, ὁ
<i>number</i>	πλήθος, -ους, τό
<i>in all categories</i>	κατὰ πάντα
<i>inasmuch as</i>	ἅτε (+ Partc.)

8. And you [pl.] think that the affairs of the Thebans are in a bad state
because they are mistreating their neighbours ...

<i>to be in a (certain) state</i>	ἔχειν (+ adv.)
<i>to mistreat</i>	ἀδικεῖν (+ Acc.)
<i>neighbour</i>	περίοικος, -ου, ὁ (adj. as noun)

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