

LESSON 26

Concessive Constructions

26.1. Introduction

Concession may be expressed by a Participial phrase or by a Subordinate clause. In both constructions ὅμως ('nevertheless') often appears in the leading clause (that is, the clause on which the Concessive clause or phrase depends).

26.2. Concessive Participial Phrases

When a Participial phrase expresses Concession, the Participle itself may carry the Concessive force; or the Participle may be reinforced by *καίπερ* or occasionally by *καί* or (mainly in Homer and tragedy) by *περ* alone. After *καίπερ*, the Participle of the verb 'to be' may be omitted with an adjective or noun. In Homer, *καί* and *περ* are almost always separated by the Participle or by another significant word. A Genitive absolute or an Accusative absolute may have Concessive force. See Lessons 4, 5 and 6 on Participles.

A negated Concessive Participial phrase ('not even if', 'not even though') has *οὐδέ* (regularly reinforced by *περ*) in place of *καίπερ*, when the phrase is subordinate to a verb which is (or could be) negated by *οὐ*, as with Indicative or potential Optative. In Homer, *περ* is regularly separated from *οὐδέ*.

εἶπον δὲ καὶ πρὶν, οὐκ ἄνευ δήμου τάδε
πράξαίμ' ἄν, **οὐδέ περ κρατῶν** ... (A. *Suppl.* 398–399.)

*And I said also previously: 'I would not do this
without <the consent of> the people, **not even though I am ruling ...**'*

οὐκ with potential Optative is followed by *οὐδέ περ*.

... οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμελλες,
οὐδ' ἐν σῆ **περ ἐὼν** γαίῃ, λήξειν ἀπατάων ...
 (Hom.Od. 13.293–294.)

... so you were not likely,
***not even when you were** in your own land, to cease from deceits ...*

οὐκ with Indicative is followed by οὐδ' ... περ.

μηδέ is used with a Participle subordinate to a verb which is (or could be) negated by μή, as with Imperative or Subjunctive.

μη γὰρ ἐγχάνη ποτὲ
μηδέ περ γέροντας **ὄντας** ἐκφυγῶν Ἀχαρνέας. (Ar.Ach. 221–222.)

*For he is not ever to taunt us
 with his having escaped the Acharnians, **not even if we are old.***

μή with Jussive Subjunctive is followed by μηδέ περ.

26.3. Concessive Clauses

26.3.1. The Usual Constructions

Greek Concessive clauses are, in form, a variety of Conditional clause. They are introduced by καὶ εἰ or καὶ ἐάν and by εἰ καὶ or ἐάν καί. A broad distinction can be made between καὶ εἰ (ἐάν) meaning 'even if' and εἰ (ἐάν) καί meaning 'although', 'even though'. The range of constructions corresponds to that of other Conditional sentences. The negative *within* a Concessive clause ('even if ... not', 'although ... not') is μή, as in a Conditional clause. (Contrast §26.3.5 below.)

κερδαλέος κ' εἴη καὶ ἐπίκλοπος, ὅς σε παρέλθοι
 ἐν πάντεσσι δόλοισι, **καὶ εἰ** θεὸς **ἀντιάσειε**. (Hom.Od. 13.291–
 292.)

*Crafty would he be and wily, who surpassed you
 in all tricks, **even if a god were to encounter** <you>.*

καὶ εἰ with Optative.

φήσουσι γὰρ δὴ με σοφὸν εἶναι, **εἰ καὶ μὴ εἰμι**, οἱ βουλόμενοι
ὑμῶν ὀνειδίξειν. (Pl.Ap. 38 C.)

*For indeed those, who want to censure you, will say that I am wise, **although I am not.***

εἰ καὶ with Indicative and negative μή.

26.3.2. Variations from the Usual Constructions

The senses ‘even if’ (καὶ εἰ) and ‘although’ (εἰ καὶ) not only overlap, but appear to be reversed in some Greek sentences. This is especially true in verse.

Moreover, not every sentence with καὶ εἰ or εἰ καὶ will have the Concessive meanings ‘even if’ or ‘although’. καὶ and εἰ, in either order, may function separately at the beginning of a Conditional clause. Thus, καὶ εἰ may mean ‘and if’. And εἰ καὶ may mean:

- a. ‘if indeed’, referring to the whole clause
- b. ‘if also/even/actually’, referring to a particular item following in the clause.

26.3.3. εἴπερ (εἴ περ, εἰάν περ)

εἴπερ may have the meaning ‘even if’. It is sometimes followed (immediately or later) by other particles such as καί, τε, γέ.

καὶ μὴν οὐδὲ τοῦτο εἰκὸς αὐτῷ πιστεύειν, **εἴπερ** ἀληθῆ λέγει
φάσκων ἀντειπεῖν, ὡς αὐτῷ προσετάχθη. (Lys. 12.27.)

*Moreover, **even if** he is telling the truth in saying that he spoke in opposition, <it is> not reasonable to believe him in this claim either, that instructions were given to him.*

οὐδέ = ‘not ... either’; τοῦτο anticipates the ὡς clause.

26.3.4. εἰ or εἰάν Alone

εἰ or εἰάν alone may have Concessive force.

εἰ γὰρ εἴρηται ἐν ταῖς σπονδαῖς ἐξεῖναι παρ' ὀποτέρους τις βούλεται τῶν ἀγράφων πόλεων ἐλθεῖν, οὐ τοῖς ἐπὶ βλάβῃ ἑτέρων ἰοῦσιν ἢ ξυνηθήκη ἐστίν ... (Th. 1.40.2.)

For <even> if it has been stated in the treaty that it is permissible for any one of the unregistered city-states to go to whichever of the two sides it wishes, the clause is not <intended> for those going to harm the others ...

26.3.5. Negated Concessive Clauses

For negated Concessive clauses ('not even if'), οὐδέ or μηδέ precedes the Conditional conjunctions εἰ or εἰάν. οὐδέ is used where the leading clause requires οὐ, as with Indicative or potential Optative. μηδέ is used where the leading clause requires μή, as with Imperative, Subjunctive, or Optative in Past sequence representing a Primary Subjunctive. (Cf. §26.2 above.) The negative is often repeated within the leading clause.

σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω
χωομένης, οὐδ' εἴ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ' ἵκηαι
γαίης καὶ πόντοιο ... (Hom. *Il.* 8.477–479.)

*But I am **not** worried about you
in your anger, **not even if** you go so far as the furthest limits
of earth and sea ...*

ἵκηαι is second person singular Aorist Middle Subjunctive.

οἱ δὲ Συρακόσιοι τὸν τε λιμένα εὐθὺς παρέπλεον ἀδεῶς καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ διεννοῦντο κλήσειν, ὅπως **μηκέτι μηδ' εἰ** βούλοιτο λάθοιεν αὐτούς οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐκπλεύσαντες. (Th. 7.56.1.)

*And the Syracusans immediately began to sail along the harbour without fear and were intending to block its mouth, so that the Athenians might **no longer** escape their notice in sailing out, **not even if** they wanted to.*

References

Denniston (1954), *The Greek particles*, pp. 299–305, 486–487.

Goodwin (1889), *Syntax of the moods and tenses of the Greek verb*, §§842, 859–861 (Participles only).

Smyth (1956), *Greek grammar*, §§2066, 2070.c, 2082–2083 (Participles); 2369–2382 (clauses).

EXERCISE 26

Translate the following passages.

1. ὀρῶ, Προμηθεῦ, καὶ παραινέσαι γέ σοι
θέλω τὰ λῶστα καίπερ ὄντι ποικίλῳ.

παραινεῖν	<i>to give advice</i> (Acc.) <i>to</i> (Dat.)
λῶστος, -η, -ον	<i>best</i>
ποικίλος, -η, -ον	<i>subtle, ingenious</i>

2. τὸ γὰρ ἐμόν ποτ' εὐγενὲς
οὐκ ἂν προδοίην, οὐδέ περ πράσσω κακῶς.

εὐγενής, -ές	<i>of noble birth</i> (here neut. of adj. for abstract noun)
προδιδόναι	<i>to betray</i>
πράσσειν	<i>to fare, to get on</i>

3. ... αὐτὴ ξίφος λαβοῦσα, κεῖ μέλλω θανεῖν,
κτενῶ σφε ...

σφε	<i>them</i> (Acc.)
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4. καὶ ταῦτ' Ἰάσων παῖδας ἐξανέξεται
πάσχοντας, εἰ καὶ μητρὶ διαφορὰν ἔχει;

ἐξανέχεσθαι (Mid.)	<i>to endure, to put up with</i> (+ Acc.)
διαφορὰ, -άς, ἡ	<i>difference, disagreement</i>

5. φίλους δὲ λέγεις εἶναι πότερον τοὺς δοκοῦντας ἐκάστῳ χρηστοὺς εἶναι, ἢ τοὺς ὄντας κἂν μὴ δοκῶσι;

δοκεῖν *to seem*

χρηστός, -ή, -όν *good*

This sentence is a direct Alternative Question.

6. ἐγὼ γὰρ δὴ σοι λέγω ..., ὅτι οὐ πείθομαι οὐδ' οἶμαι ἀδικίαν δικαιοσύνης κερδαλέωτερον εἶναι, οὐδ' ἔαν ἑὰ τις αὐτὴν ... πράττειν ἂ βούλεται·

κερδαλέος, -α, -ον *profitable*

7. For this city must realise fully, even if it is not willing [to], that it is uninitiated in my Bacchic rites ...

to realise fully ἐκμανθάνειν (+ Acc. and Partc.)

even if Use a clause.

uninitiated (in) ἀτέλεστος, -ον (+ Gen.)

8. But I think that, although concerning the other [matters] it is appropriate that the [men] of such an age should keep silent, at least concerning going to war or not, it is fitting that these especially should give advice ...

to think ἡγεῖσθαι (Mid.; + Infin.)

to be appropriate πρέπειν (+ Acc. and Infin.)

of such an age τηλικούτος, -αύτη, -οὔτον

concerning going to war preposition + articular Infin. πολεμεῖν

to be fitting προσήκειν (+ Acc. and Infin.)

especially μάλιστα

to give advice συμβουλεύειν

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