Ancient Languages First Aid
CONJUNCTIONS, PHRASES, CLAUSES, AND SENTENCES

Tele's Angels

SECTION 9. CONJUNCTIONS

A *conjunction* is a word which **joins sense units together**. A sense unit is a group of words. Without conjunctions, complex sentences would be very stilted and disconnected since conjunctions link phrases and clauses together. Even though a single clause can in itself be a sentence, without a conjunction linking it to another clause it is not a complex sentence.

An example of a complex sentence is:

Prometheus stole fire *and* Zeus was not impressed.
> Here, 'and' is the conjunction and the two sense units are the clauses 'Prometheus stole fire' and 'Zeus was not impressed'. Through the use of the conjunction 'and,' these two clauses are linked and the whole group becomes one sentence.

In ancient languages which do not employ punctuation, conjunctions are extremely important when analysing syntax.

SECTION 9.0.1. CO-ORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

Co-ordinate conjunctions are words that **form a link between sense units**, both phrases and clauses. The words they link together are usually the same or similar part of speech. The most common co-ordinate conjunctions are **and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet**.

Some examples are:

Athene embodied intellect *and* martial prowess.
The Pharaoh is divine *yet* mortal.
Herakles was tired *but* triumphant.
Is war *or* peace better?

Co-ordinate conjunctions can also link groups of words to one another.

For example:

The Romans were influenced by the religious practices of the Egyptians *and* the iconography of the Greeks.

Correlative conjunctions are conjunctions that **exist in pairs**. Some common correlative conjunctions are as follows:

both...and	either...or	neither...nor
whether...or	not...but	not only...but also
as...as		

Some examples are:

Seth *not only* killed Osiris *but also* cut his body into pieces;
Neither Athena *nor* Aphrodite have mothers;

SECTION 9.0.3. SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

Subordinate conjunctions join main clauses to subordinate clauses. There are a range of subordinate clauses which take on such conjunctions to express their meaning. The most common subordinate conjunctions are:

while	after	when	before
wherever	although	until	once
where	as	unless	since
whenever	because	though	than

An example would be:

I will join in the festivities *when* I reach Eleusis.

In the above example, 'I will join in the festivities' is the main clause, and 'when I reach Eleusis' is a subordinate clause – specifically, a temporal clause, or clause of time.

SECTION 9.1. PHRASES

A *phrase* is a sense unit without a finite verb. A phrase is not a complete message in and of itself; it is a group of words that has no finite verb. In ancient languages, when a verb is understood the sense unit is not a phrase, because the verb, even if it is not written out, is playing its grammatical role.

There are different types of phrases which can do the job of different parts of speech: **adjectival phrases, adverbial phrases, and noun phrases**.

Phrases may also be described by the part of speech they begin with, rather than the job they do in a sentence. According to this approach, there are **prepositional phrases**, beginning with a preposition, and **verbal phrases**, which begin with a non-finite form of the verb. Verbal phrases may be further subdivided into **participial**, beginning with a participle; **gerund**, beginning with a gerund; and **infinitive phrases**, beginning with an infinitive verb.

SECTION 9.1.1. ADJECTIVAL PHRASES

Adjectival phrases are phrases that perform the task of adjectives: they add meaning to, describe, or modify nouns and pronouns.

An example is:

On top of Mount Olympus, Zeus is the god.
> This phrase can be understood as 'Zeus is the god *who is* on top of Mount Olympus.' The phrase 'on top of Mount Olympus' describes the noun 'god'. Therefore, it is an adjectival phrase.

SECTION 9.1.1.1. ADJECTIVAL PHRASES WITH A PREPOSITION

Adjectival phrases may begin with a preposition.

For example:

On top of Mount Olympus, Zeus is the god.

In the above example, the adjectival phrase "on top of Mount Olympus" begins with the preposition "on", which describes "Mount Olympus".

SECTION 9.1.1.2. ADJECTIVAL PHRASES WITH A PRESENT PARTICIPLE

Adjectival phrases may begin with a present participle.

For example:

The hoplite, *carrying his spear and shield*, walked towards the tent.

In the above example, the adjectival phrase 'carrying his sword and shield' begins with the present participle 'carrying', which modifies the noun 'hoplite'.

SECTION 9.1.1.3. ADJECTIVAL PHRASES WITH A PAST PARTICIPLE

Adjectival phrases may begin with a past participle.

For example:

The hoplite, *having been wounded*, was carried away.

In the above example, the adjectival phrase 'having been wounded' is a past participle which describes the noun 'hoplite'.

SECTION 9.1.1.4. ADJECTIVAL PHRASES WITH AN INFINITIVE

Adjectival phrases may begin with an *infinitive verb.*

For example:

To be a great pharaoh, you need great skills.

In the above example, the adjectival phrase 'to be a great pharaoh' begins with the infinitive 'to be' and relates to the noun 'skills'.

SECTION 9.1.2. ADVERBIAL PHRASES

Adverbial phrases are phrases that perform the task of adverbs: they add meaning to or modify the action of verbs, telling us *how*, *when*, *where* or *why* the action takes place. Furthermore, adverbial phrases may also modify adjectives and other adverbs. They may begin with a preposition or an infinitive.

For example:

With a wave of his hand, Zeus destroyed the city.

In the above sentence, the phrase 'with a wave of his hand' modifies the verb 'destroyed', telling us how the city was destroyed. Therefore, it is an adverbial phrase.

There are four kinds of adverbial phrases in English: of **manner; time; place; and reason**. The adverbial phrase of reason can be expressed by other clause types in ancient languages.

SECTION 9.1.2.1. ADVERBIAL PHRASES OF MANNER

Adverbial phrases of manner tell us *how* something happens.

For example:

In a swift motion, Demeter embraced Persephone.

In the above example, the adverbial phrase of manner is 'in a swift motion'. It provides the *how* about the verb 'embraced'.

SECTION 9.1.2.2. ADVERBIAL PHRASES OF TIME

Adverbial phrases of time tell us *when* something happens.

For example:

During Pentecost, the apostles all gathered together.

In the above example, the adverbial phrase of time is 'During Pentecost'. It provides the *when* about the verb 'gathered'.

SECTION 9.1.2.3. ADVERBIAL PHRASES OF PLACE

Adverbial phrases of place tell us *where* something happens.

For example:

The funerary procession paused *at the valley temple*.

In the above example, the adverbial phrase of place is 'at the valley temple'. It provides the *where* about the verb 'paused'.

SECTION 9.1.3. ABSOLUTES

In ancient languages, there is a type of phrase which does not agree with anything else in the sentence. This is called the absolute. A noun or pronoun is coupled with a circumstantial participle in a case which makes no sense grammatically; thus the phrase is grammatically isolated. Each ancient language will have specific cases for its absolutes; for example, Latin uses the ablative or the accusative, while ancient Greek uses the genitive or the accusative. Depending on the situation, absolutes can be translated in a very wide variety of ways. Although many of these meanings are covered in the above mentioned adverbial phrases, it is common for ancient languages to use an absolute instead of an adverbial phrase where practicable.

SECTION 9.1.4. NOUN PHRASES

Noun phrases are phrases that perform the task of nouns. These can be regular nouns or abstract verbal nouns. It is a group of words which effectively substitutes for a noun. Noun phrases usually begin with a gerund.

For example:

Annoying the gods is risky.

In the above example, the phrase 'annoying the gods' takes the place of a noun. Therefore, it is a noun phrase: specifically, a gerund phrase.

SECTION 9.1.4.1. NOUN PHRASES AS SUBJECT

Noun phrases can act as the subject of a sentence.

For example:

Pleasing the gods is beneficial.

In the above example, the noun phrase is 'Pleasing the gods'. This phrase acts like a noun, is the subject of the sentence and begins with the gerund 'pleasing'.

SECTION 9.1.4.2. NOUN PHRASES AS OBJECT

Noun phrases can act as the object of a sentence.

For example:

The gods love *judging humans*.

In the above example, the noun phrase is 'judging humans'. This phrase acts like a noun, is the object of the sentence and begins with the gerund 'judging.'

SECTION 9.2. CLAUSES

A *clause* is a sense unit which contains a finite verb. A clause will always have a subject, even if the subject is understood or part of the verb. Clauses can be divided into two main categories: main or independent clauses; and subordinate or dependent clauses. Main clauses can function standing on their own, whereas subordinate clauses must have a main clause to depend on for them to make sense. There is a wide range of both main and subordinate clauses in ancient languages with many different ways to express them.

SECTION 9.2.1. MAIN OR INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

A *main clause* or *independent clause* is **a sense unit with a finite verb** which can make sense when read by itself. "Soldiers march" is a main clause, as is "Soldiers march through the streets". These clauses can stand alone.

Since main clauses make sense when they stand alone, they are also simple sentences. "Soldiers march." is a sentence. So, too, is "Soldiers march through the streets." Main clauses can contain all tenses and moods of the verb so long as there is a finite verb. Examples of main clauses are direct statements, direct questions, direct commands/prohibitions, wishes, exhortations, deliberative questions, and potential statements.

SECTION 9.2.2. SUBORDINATE OR DEPENDANT CLAUSES

A *subordinate clause* **cannot stand alone and make sense**. Subordinate clauses are dependent on a main clause to make them understandable. They add meaning to a main clause. There are three main categories of subordinate clauses: adjectival, adverbial, and noun object clauses. Under these categories are a wide range of clause types which you will come across in ancient languages. A main clause coupled with a subordinate clause is one form of a sentence. In ancient and modern languages, subordinate clauses can come anywhere in the sentence; grammar, rather than word or sentence order. will distinguish them from main clauses.

SECTION 9.2.3. ADJECTIVAL CLAUSE

In ancient languages, there is one form of adjectival clause known as the relative clause. It is named an adjectival clause because it performs the task of an adjective in that it adds meaning to, describes, or modifies a noun or pronoun. The relative clause will always contain a relative pronoun.

For example:

Andromeda was rescued by Perseus, *who turned her uncle Phineus into stone.*
The Acropolis, *whose temples include the Parthenon*, was rebuilt by Pericles.

SECTION 9.2.4. ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

Adverbial clauses share the function of adverbs: they add meaning to or modify the action of verbs, telling us *how*, *when*, *where* or *why* the action takes place. Like adverbs, there are adverbial clauses of *manner*, *time*, *place* and *reason*.

Adverbial Clause of Manner	Icarus flew *as high as the sun.*
Adverbial Clause of Time	The crops are sewn *when the rains finish*.
Adverbial Clause of Place	Herakles travelled *through the underworld*.
Adverbial Clause of Reason	It must be time for battle *since the trumpets sounded*.

There are other types of adverbial clauses, too.

Comparative Clause	Narcissus is not as handsome *as they say*.
Concessive Clause	He went to war, *although her knew the risks*.
Conditional Clause	You may enter Elysium *if you are righteous.*
Purpose/Final Clause	They went to the city *in order to free their son*.
Consecutive/Result Clause	It was *so* loud *that no one could hear.*

SECTION 9.2.5. NOUN OBJECT CLAUSES

Noun object clauses are clauses which, as a whole, act as a noun. They are treated as the object or indirect object of the finite verb in the main clause.

An example illustrating this is:

We heard *he had died.*
> Here, 'he had died' is the object of the main verb 'heard'. It could be understood as an accusative object and could therefore be replaced by an accusative pronoun: 'We heard *that*.'

In ancient languages, noun object clauses are often clauses in which the main noun is in the accusative or dative case. If the noun is in a main clause, it is the subject and is therefore nominative or vocative.

Since ancient languages typically have no punctuation, it is necessary to differentiate a direct statement from a reported/indirect statement; a direct

question from a reported/indirect question; and a direct command from a reported/indirect command. The difference is shown below:

Direct Discourse		Indirect Discourse	
I am consul	'I' is nominative and the subject of 'am'	I state <u>that I am consul</u> (I state <u>myself to be consul</u>)	'myself' is accusative and the object of 'state' in the main clause
What is his name?	'what' is nominative and is the subject of 'is'	She asked <u>what his name is</u>	'what' is accusative here and the object of 'asked' in the main clause
Do the work, slave!	'slave!' is vocative here as the slave is being addressed in a direct command	The king told <u>the slave to do the work</u> (the king told <u>to the slave to do work</u>)	'slave', in an ancient language, would likely be dative and the indirect object of 'told' in the main clause

The underlined sections are subordinate clauses acting as the object of the main verb. To differentiate direct discourse from indirect, the former subjects have been changed into cases indicative of objects and indirect objects. The verb is changed to its infinitive form unless the introducing verb takes a *graphic construction*. The graphic construction keeps the same tense and mood of the original statement and would appear in English translation as a direct quotation.

SECTION 9.3.0. SENTENCES

A *sentence* is a group of one or more sense units which contains at least one finite verb. Sense units like phrases and clauses can be linked together by co-ordinate conjunctions to form a sentence.

The following are examples of sentences:

Statement: Tutankhamun's tomb contained an enormous quantity of artefacts.

Questions: How did they build the pyramids?
              (Some Ancient Languages, like Ancient Greek, actually have a question mark; others, like Latin, use particles which signal a question.)

Command: Take this prisoner to the guard.

Exclamation: Life, prosperity, health to the king!

SECTION 9.3.1. THE PREDICATE IN SENTENCES

Every sentence has at least one finite verb (a verb with a subject) and a *predicate*. The predicate consists of all of the words governed by the verb, and often expresses the action performed by or the state attributed to the subject of the sentence.

For example:

The Spartans defeated the Persians at Plataea.

In the above example, the verb is 'defeated'. It is a finite verb because it has a subject: 'the Spartans'. The predicate is the remainder of the sentence, 'the Persians at Plataea'.

SECTION 9.3.2. UNDERSTOOD SUBJECTS IN SENTENCES

You may notice that some sentences don't seem to have a subject, like 'Take him away!'

This is a command sentence. The verb is "take". If we consider who or what is performing the action, there does not appear to be a candidate. In this case, when we give a command, such as "Take him away,"we are actually referring to "you", even though the word does not appear in the sentence. In such cases, we say that the subject "you" is "understood":

> "(You) take him away!"
> (You = second person singular pronoun, subject of the finite verb "take")

SECTION 9.3.4. SIMPLE, COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

There are different kinds of sentences: *simple*, *compound* and *complex*.

SECTION 9.3.4.1. SIMPLE SENTENCES

A simple sentence consists of a sense unit with a subject and a finite verb.

For example:

Caesar listened.
> Subject: 'Caesar'; finite verb: 'listened'

Cleopatra whispered softly in his ear.
> Subject: Cleopatra; finite verb: whispered; predicate: softly in his ear.

The above examples are simple sentences, each having one main clause.

SECTION 9.3.4.2. COMPOUND SENTENCES

Compound sentences are formed when two or more sense units are joined by a co-ordinate conjunction.

For example:

Caesar listened and Cleopatra whispered softly in his ear.
> "Main clause 1" - subject: Caesar; finite verb: listened
> Co-ordinate conjunction: and
> "Main clause 2" - subject: Cleopatra; verb: whispered; predicate: softly in his ear.

N.B. The terms "main clause 1/2" indicate that the sentences are balanced by the co-ordinate conjunction: both clauses have equal weighting, with neither depending on the other.

SECTION 9.3.4.3. COMPLEX SENTENCES

Complex sentences contain a main clause with a subordinate clause depending on it.

For example:

Caesar listened while Cleopatra whispered softly in his ear.
> Main clause - subject: Caesar; finite verb: listened
> Co-ordinate conjunction: while
> Subordinate clause - subject: Cleopatra; verb: whispered; predicate: softly in his ear.