

Oratio Obliqua

Latin MILC – W7, HT 2013

March 26, 2013

1 Overview

Particularly in historical authors, *oratio recta*, or direct speech, as any person present at an event would have heard it, is reported in dependence on a verb of saying or perception, whether expressed or implied. This so called *oratio obliqua*, or dependent, indirect speech, shows a few features that set it apart from other constructions.

1.1 Pronouns etc.

For the pronouns referring to the speaking subject, the reflexives *se, sibi, suus* are used; *ipse* may also be used to refer to the superordinate subject, esp. in contrast to other persons.

All other individuals are referred to as *is, ille*, unless particularly strong contrasts are made.

Also note that *nunc* and other expressions of ‘now’ are transformed into *tum, tunc, eo tempore, etc.*

- (1) *Diviciacus locutus est: “Romam ad senatum veni auxilium postulatum.”*
Diviciacus locutus est: se Romam ad senatum venisse auxilium postulatum.
Diviciacus said that he had gone to the senate in Rome to ask for help.

1.2 Tenses

The tenses employed within *oratio obliqua* are dependent on the sequence of tenses; where an author attempts to render a passage particularly expressive or close to the present, a primary tense may follow even in historic sequence (but don’t imitate this).

- (2) *Divico respondit: “Helvetii a maioribus nostris ita sunt instituti uti obsides accipere, non dare consuerint.”*
Divico respondit: ita Helvetios a maioribus suis institutos esse uti obsides accipere, non dare consuerint.
Divico answered that the Helvetii had been instructed by their forefathers that they had been used to accept, not give hostages.

1.3 Moods

All subordinate clauses within *oratio obliqua* take the subjunctive, with the exception of added authorial comments, which may take the indicative. For this purpose, sentences with connective relatives may be counted as main clauses.

- (3) *Nuntiatur Sulmonenses, quod oppidum a Corfinio VII milium intervallo abest, cupere ea facere.*
It was reported that the inhabitants of Sulmo - a city which lies seven miles from Corfinium - were willing to do this.

All main clauses appear in accusative and infinitive construction.

- (4) *Diviciacus locutus est: “Galliae totius factiones sunt duae.”*
Diviciacus locutus: est Galliae totius factiones esse duas.
Diviciacus said that all of Gaul had two parties.

Commands and exhortations, whether in the imperative or subjunctive originally, are expressed as subjunctives.

- (5) *Pompeius Domitio scripserat: "Si qua oblata erit facultas, ad me venito/venias."*
Pompeius Domitio scripserat: si qua oblata esset facultas, ad se venire.
 Pompey wrote to Domitius that, if he had the opportunity, he should come to him.

Rhetorical questions, like main clauses, take the accusative and infinitive construction; proper questions will be transformed into indirect ones, and thus take the subjunctive.

- (6) *Caesar Pompeio scripserat: "Quonam haec omnia nisi ad meam perniciem pertinent?"*
Caesar Pompeio scripserat: quonam haec omnia nisi ad suam perniciem pertinere?
 Caesar wrote to Pompey (and asked) what was the aim of all this, if not his ruin?
- (7) *Caesar milites incusavit: "Cur de vestra virtute aut de mea diligentia desperatis?"*
Caesar milites incusavit: cur de sua virtuate aut de ipsius diligentia desperarent?
 Caesar made accusations against the soldiers (asking) why they had no trust in their own prowess or his diligence?

2 Conditional Clauses in *Oratio Obliqua* (historic sequence)

Remember that these are tendencies and guidelines; you may encounter ... oddities in original texts.

2.1 Realis & Potentialis

In indirect speech, the cases of indefinite and potential conditional clauses cannot be distinguished any more, since in both cases, the protasis is transformed into the appropriate subjunctive, while the apodosis is expressed as an accusative with infinitive construction.

	<i>oratio recta</i>	<i>oratio obliqua</i>
Indef. (Prs)	Si hoc dicis, erras.	Dixit te, si hoc diceres, errare.
Indef. (Pst)	Si hoc dixisti, erravisti.	Dixit te, si hoc dixisses, erravisse.
Indef. (Fut)	Si hoc dices, errabis.	Dixit te, si hoc diceres, erraturum esse.
"Fut.-more-vivid"	Si hoc dixeris, te vituperabo.	Dixit me, si hoc dixisses, te vituperaturum esse.
Potential/"Fut.-less-vivid"	Si hoc dicas, erres.	Dixit te, si hoc diceres, errare.

Thus, in the protasis, all present and future forms turn into imperfect subjunctives, all perfects and future perfects into pluperfect subjunctives (if the initiating verb is in historic sequence).

In the apodosis, the verb forms turn into infinitives of the appropriate tense form, i.e. future > future participle + *esse*, present > present infinitive, perfect > perfect infinitive.

2.2 Irrealis

For the irreal cases (present and past contrary to fact), the protasis always remains unchanged; the apodosis will usually appear as the future participle + *esse* as part of the accusative with infinitive construction.

Verbs that cannot form the future participle and passives are avoided; there are, however, a few ways around this: turn the phrase into an active, use forms of *posse*, the supine I + *iri* (best avoided), or a clause ...*futurum fuisse, ut...*

	<i>oratio recta</i>	<i>oratio obliqua</i>
Irreal (Prs.)	Si hoc faceretis, me adiuvaretis.	Putabam vos, si hoc faceretis, me adiuturos fuisse.
Irreal (Pst.)	Si hoc fecissetis, me adiuvissetis.	Putabam vos, si hoc fecissetis, me adiuturos fuisse.
Irreal (Pst.) in passive	Si hoc fecissetis, vituperati essetis.	Putabam, si hoc fecissetis omnes vos vituperaturos fuisse. ... omnes vos vituperare potuisse. ... vos vituperari potuisse. ... vos vituperatum iri. ... futurum esse ut vituperaremini.

For other dependencies, refer back to the handout from week 5.

3 Exercises

Please transform the following into oratio obliqua, and translate:

- (8) *Ariovistus Caesari respondit: "Si quid mihi a Caesare opus esset, ad eum venirem; si quid ille me volet, eum ad me venire oportet."*
A. C. r.: Si quid ipsi opus esset, sese ad eum venturum fuisse; si quid ille se velit [expect: vellet], illum ad se venire oportere.
Ariovistus answered Caesar if he wanted something from Caesar, he would come to him; if he (C.), however, wanted something of his (A.), he ought to come to him (A.).
- (9) *Caesar ab Ariovisto postulavit: "Ne quam multitudinem hominum amplius trans Rhenum in Galliam traduxeris neve Haeduis bellum intuleris."*
C. ab A. p.: ne quam multitudinem hominum trans Rhenum traduceret neve Haeduis bellum inferret.
Caesar demanded from Ariovistus that he bring no further crowds across the Rhine, and not make war against the Haedui.
- (10) *Caesar Helvetiis respondit: "Si veteris contumeliae oblivisci volo, num etiam recentium iniuriarum memoriam deponere possum?"*
C. H. r.: Si veteris contumeliae oblivisci vellet, num etiam recentium iniuriarum memoriam deponere se posse?
Caesar answered to the Haedui that if he wanted to forget the old abuse, could he then also eliminate the memory of recent injustice?
- (11) *Caesar in senatu dixit: "Hoc si Pompeius probavit, cur me uti populi beneficio prohibuit?"*
C i. s. d.: hoc si Pompeius proba(vi)sset, cur se uti populi beneficio prohibuisset?
Caesar asked in the senate why Pompey, if he was agreed in this matter, had kept him from accepting the award of the people?

4 Assignment

4.1 Translate into Latin

Please translate this as a piece of continuous prose and in *oratio obliqua*. Make sure to think twice about who is who, and thus which pronouns to use!

To these words Caesar thus replied:

that on that very account he felt less hesitation, because he kept in remembrance those circumstances which the Helvetian ambassadors had mentioned, and that he felt the more indignant at them, in proportion as they had happened undeservedly to the Roman people; for if they had been conscious of having done any wrong, it would not have been difficult to be on their guard, but for that very reason had they been deceived, because neither were they aware that any offense had been given by them, on account of which they should be afraid, nor did they think that they ought to be afraid without cause. [...]

That as to their so insolently boasting of their victory, and as to their being astonished that they had so long committed their outrages with impunity, both these things tended to the same point.

For the immortal gods are wont to allow those persons whom they wish to punish for their guilt sometimes a greater prosperity and longer impunity, in order that they may suffer the more severely from a reverse of circumstances.

Although these things are so, yet, if hostages were to be given him by them in order that he may be assured these will do what they promise, and provided they will give satisfaction to the Haedui for the outrages which they had committed against them and their allies, and likewise to the Allobroges, he, Caesar, will make peace with them.

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Please hand in your assignment by Friday 6pm, either by email to robin.meyer@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk, or by pigeon post to *Robin Meyer, Wolfson College, Linton Rd.*