

Examples of the potential optative

οὐ γάρ οἱ πάρα νῆες ἐπήρετμοι καὶ ἑταῖροι,
οἳ κέν μιν πέμποιεν ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης.

He has no ships, oarsmen or companions who could bring him back to his fatherland over the broad back of the sea.

Homer Odyssey 4.559-60

καίτοι τίς ἂν αἰσχίων εἴη ταύτης δόξα ἢ δοκεῖν χρήματα περὶ πλείονος ποιεῖσθαι ἢ φίλους;

And yet what could be more shameful than to be thought to value money more than one's friends?

Plato Crito 44b

ἡρώτων ἐκεῖνοι εἰ δοῖεν ἂν τούτων τὰ πιστά. οἳ δ' ἔφασαν καὶ δοῦναι καὶ λαβεῖν ἐθέλειν.

They asked if they would give oaths on this. They answered that they wanted to both give and take them.

Xenophon Anabasis 4.8

εἴποι δέ τις ἂν ὅτι ἰσχύς ἐστὶν αὕτη Ἀθηναίων, ἐὰν οἱ σύμμαχοι δυνατοὶ ᾧσι χρήματα εἰσφέρειν.

You could say that the strength of the Athenians depends on their allies being able to pay tribute.

Xenophon Constitution of the Athenians 1.16

Μήδεια: μηδεῖς με φαύλην κάσθενῃ νομιζέτω
μηδ' ἡσυχαίαν, ἀλλὰ θατέρου τρόπου,
βαρεῖαν ἐχθροῖς καὶ φίλοιςιν εὐμενῇ·

Medea: Let no-one think me worthless, weak and meek, but rather the other type: a burden to enemies and a boon to friends.

Euripides Medea 807-9

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μήτε ταῦτα φοβούμενος ἀποκάμης σαυτὸν σῶσαι, μήτε, ὃ ἔλεγες ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ,
δυσχερές σοι γενέσθω ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἔχοις ἐξελθὼν ὅτι χρῶο σαυτῷ·

Do not give up saving yourself through fear of this. And do not be troubled by what you said in the court, that if you went away you would not know what to do with yourself.

Plato Crito 45c

τοιαῦτα σπεύδεις περὶ σαυτὸν γενέσθαι ἅπερ ἂν καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ σου σπεύσαιέν τε καὶ
ἔσπευσαν σὲ διαφθεῖραι βουλόμενοι.

And you are eager to bring upon yourself just what your enemies would wish and just what those were eager for who wished to destroy you.

Plato Crito 45c

χρή δέ, ἅπερ ἂν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀνδρεῖος ἔλοιτο, ταῦτα αἰρεῖσθαι,

you ought to choose as a good and brave man would choose

Plato Crito 45e

Σωκράτης: “ἀλλὰ μὲν δή,” φαίη γ’ ἂν τις, “οἷοί τέ εἰσιν ἡμᾶς οἱ πολλοὶ ἀποκτεινύναι.”

Socrates: Someone might say that the multitude can put us to death.

Plato Crito 48b

πράττεις ἅπερ ἂν δοῦλος ὁ φαυλότατος πράξειεν, ἀποδιδράσκειν ἐπιχειρῶν παρὰ τὰς συνθήκας τε καὶ τὰς ὁμολογίας καθ’ ἃς ἡμῖν συνέθου πολιτεύεσθαι.

You are doing what the meanest slave would do, since you are trying to run away contrary to the compacts and agreements you made with us that you would live in accordance with us

Plato Crito 52d

ὥς τρις ἂν παρ’ ἀσπίδα στῆναι θέλοιμ’ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἅπαξ.

I would prefer to enter battle by my shield three times than give birth once.

Euripides Medea 250-251

ὕμεῖς δὲ σκέψασθε ὅσον ἂν καὶ τοῦτο ἀμαρτάνοιτε Κλέωνι πειθόμενοι.

Only consider what a blunder you would commit in doing as Cleon recommends.

Thucydides The Peloponnesian War 3.47

Χορός: ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι;

Μήδεια: οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα δηχθεῖη πόσις.

Chorus: Will you dare to kill your children, my lady?

Medea: That's how to punish my husband the most.

Euripides Medea 816-7