

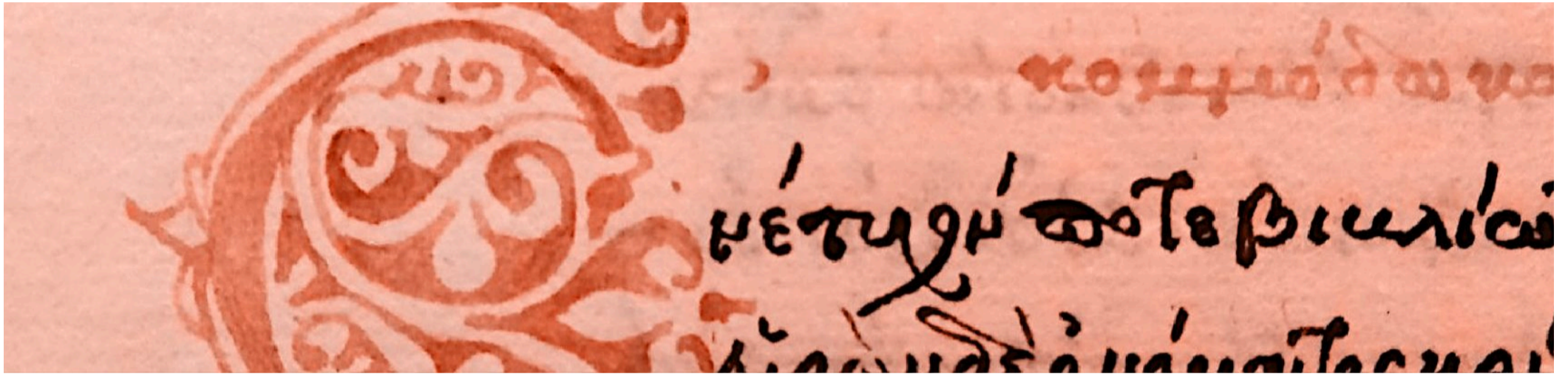


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How to cite this resource

O. Tribulato (ed.), *Digital Encyclopedia of Atticism*. With the assistance of E. N. Merisio. Venice, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022-. e-ISSN 2974-8240.

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This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 865817)

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PURA. *Purism In Antiquity: Theories Of Language in Greek Atticist Lexica and their Legacy*

Lexicographic entries

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οὐδ' ὅσον, ὅσον ὅσον

(Phryn. *PS* 3.3–4)

A. Main sources

(1) Phryn. *PS* 3.3–4: ἀργύριον ἔχω οὐδ' ὅσον· οἶον οὐδὲ τὸ βραχύτατον. πανταχοῦ χρῶ.

I do not even have a little money: Like 'not even the smallest amount'. Use it in every situation.

B. Other erudite sources

(1) Hsch. ο 1415: *ὅσον· ὀλίγον (AS). ὅσον ὅσον δὲ ὀλίγον ὀλίγον (ASvg).

ὅσον: A little. ὅσον ὅσον [like] ὀλίγον ὀλίγον (LXX *Is.* 26.20 = [C.14](#)).

(2) [Zonar.] 1475.8: ὅσον ὅσον. ταχὺ, μετ' ὀλίγον.

ὅσον ὅσον: Quickly, after a little [time].

C. *Loci classici*, other relevant texts

(1) Ar. *V.* 213:

τί οὐκ ἀπεκοιμήθημεν ὅσον ὅσον στίλην;

Why do we not take a nap, only as much as a drop?

(2) Philem. fr. 100.3–4:

σιτάρια μικρὰ προσφέρων οἴνου θ' ὅσον
ὁσμὴν.

Bringing a little bit of food and of wine [only] as much as the scent.

(3) Call. *Epigr.* 46.9–10 Pfeiffer:

κείρευ τὰ πτερά, παιδάριον,
οὐδ' ὅσον ἀττάραγόν τυ δεδοίκαμες.

Have your wings cut, little boy, we are not afraid of you, not as much as a bit.

(4) Leon. *AP* 7.472.3–4:

τίς μοῖρα ζωῆς ὑπολείπεται, ἢ ὅσον ὅσον
στιγμὴ [...];

What destiny of life remains, but [only] as much as a point of time [...]?

(5) Thuc. 8.92.9: καὶ ὁ μὲν Θηραμένης [...] ὅσον καὶ ἀπὸ βοῆς ἔνεκα, ὠργίζετο τοῖς ὀπλίταις.

Theramenes [...] only as far as the shouting, was angry with the hoplites.

(6) Thuc. 3.104.1: ἐκάθηρε μὲν γὰρ καὶ Πεισίστρατος ὁ τύραννος πρότερον αὐτήν, οὐχ ἅπασαν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
ἔφεωράτο τῆς νήσου.

For the tyrant Pisistratus purified it (i.e. Delos) before, not the whole island, but only as much [part of] the island as was visible from the temple.

(7) Pl. *Grg.* 485a.4–5: φιλοσοφίας μὲν ὅσον παιδείας χάριν καλὸν μετέχειν.

It is good to partake of philosophy only as much as for educational purposes.

(8) Diph. fr. 42.13–4:

οὐδὲν ἠδέως
ποιεῖ γὰρ οὗτος, ἀλλ' ὅσον νόμου χάριν.

For this man does not do anything for pleasure, but only for the sake of law.

(9) Philet. fr. 4.2 Sbardella:

θυμέ, γαληναίη δ' ἐπιμίσγει οὐδ' ὅσον ὅσον.

My heart, you do not enjoy rest, not even a little.

(10) *Call. Ap.* 36–7:

οὐποτε Φοίβου

θηλείαις οὐδ' ὅσον ἐπὶ χνόος ἦλθε παρειαίς.

Never did the first down, not even a little, appear on Phoebus' cheeks.

(11) *Apoll.Rh.* 1.290–1:

τὸ μὲν οὐδ' ὅσον οὐδ' ἐν ὄνειρῳ

ᾠσάμην.

I never thought of this, not even a little, not even in my dreams.

(12) *Apoll.Rh.* 1.482–3:

υἱας Ἀλωιάδας, οἷς οὐδ' ὅσον ἰσοφαρίζεις

ἠνορέην.

The children of Aloeus, to whom not even a little you are equal in might.

(13) *Apoll.Rh.* 2.189–90:

ἐλείπετο δ' ἄλλοτε φορβῆς

οὐδ' ὅσον.

At one time, not even a little food was left (i.e. by the harpies).

(14) *LXX Is.* 26.20: ἀποκρύβηθι μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου.

Hide yourself only a little while until the Lord's anger passes away.

(15) *NT Ep.Hebr.* 10.37: ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἤξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει.

Yet after only a little while he who comes will come and will not delay.

(16) *Luc. Peregr.* 25: εἴτ' ἐπιβάντες κατὰ σχῆμα καίονται, οὐδ' ὅσον ὀλίγον ἐντρέψαντες τῆς κατακλίσεως.

Then mounting on it (i.e. the pyre) they are burned though keeping a dignified figure, without changing not even a little the way they lie.

(17) *Basil. Ep.* 238.30–2 Courtonne: ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ἤξει πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ ἀντιλαμβανόμενος ὑμῶν καὶ οὐ χρονιεῖ.

Only a little while yet, he who assists you will come to you and will not delay.

(18) *Vita Pachomii* 32.9–10 Halkin: καὶ οὕτως ἐγένετο μοναστήριον γυναικῶν ἐν τῇ κώμῃ μακρὰν ὀλίγον τῶν ἀδελφῶν. καὶ ὅσον ὅσον πληθυνομένων, μήτηρ αὐτῶν ἦν.

And so a female monastery was founded in the village, at a little distance from the brothers. And as their number grew little by little, she (i.e. Pachomius' sister) became their mother.

(19) *Vita Pachomii* 131.9–11 Halkin: ὡσπερ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος, ἐν ψύχει καὶ παγέτῳ μεγάλῳ ὑπάρχων, ὅσον ὅσον τρέχει ἔσω εἰς τὴν θέρμην τοῦ πυρός, τέρπεται καὶ ἀναζῆ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς.

For like a man, who stays in the cold and great frost, as soon as he runs inside to the heat of the fire, delights himself and returns to life, so it is with us too.

(20) Rom.Mel. 46.14.7: ἀπόκρυψον οὖν, δέομαι, ἑαυτὸν ὅσον ὅσον.

Hide yourself, I pray, only for a little while.

(21) Theodorus Studites *Epistulae* 124.14–6 Fatouros: κακοπάθησον ὅσον ὅσον ὡς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ, τὰ ἄνω ὁρῶν, τὰ μέλλοντα σκοπῶν· τὰ γὰρ παρόντα ὡς ὄνειρα ἀφίπταται.

Suffer only for a little while as a soldier of Christ, looking at the things above, looking at the things that are the future, for those which are present fly away like dreams.

(22) Theodorus Studites *Parva catechesis* 15 (57.68–9) Auvray: αἰδεσθήσονται καὶ οἱ ἐναντίοι ὅσον ὅσον πρὸς ἐπιστροφὴν.

And the enemies of the faith too will be ashamed very soon, so that they will convert.

D. General commentary

Phrynichus ([A.1](#)) discusses the idiom οὐδ' ὅσον 'not the least'. This is one of those typical *PS* glosses in which, rather than prescribing an Attic usage or proscribing its unapproved equivalent, he singles out and discusses idioms and syntagms he finds worthy of imitation. In this case, Phrynichus says that οὐδ' ὅσον can be used in every situation, that is, in any kind of spoken and written Greek (πανταχοῦ). The development process that includes οὐδ' ὅσον 'not even a little' is very rich. It can be schematically reconstructed as follows.

Adverbial ὅσον 'so far as' and 'so much as' (LSJ s.v. ὅσος IV.1) took on a more markedly limitative function rather quickly, with the meaning 'only so far as' and 'only just' (LSJ s.v. ὅσος IV.2). This is especially clear in cases where ὅσον is followed by words or expressions indicating a small quantity or the context of the limitation. There are two possibilities. One is ὅσον '(only) as much as' + words conveying the notion of a small quantity (a drop, a bit, etc.) (see [C.1](#), [C.2](#), [C.3](#), [C.4](#)). An exact parallel for [C.2](#), in which μόνον is substituted for ὅσον, is Alex. fr. 24.3–4 ἅπαντες ὀρχοῦντ' εὐθύς, ἂν οἴνου μόνον | ὀσμὴν ἴδωσιν ('They all dance right away, when they see only the smell of wine'; see LSJ s.v. ὅσος IV.2 for the contextual use of μόνον and ὅσον). The second possibility is ὅσον '(only) as much as' + expressions indicating a limitation (see [C.5](#), [C.6](#), [C.7](#), [C.8](#), [C.9](#)). This use of ὅσον has an informal and colloquial ring to it, which we can surmise on the basis of three observations: the comparison with words indicating small amounts (Aristophanic parallels in Willi 2003, 181), the reduplication of ὅσον ([C.1](#), [C.4](#); tragic and comic parallels in Stevens 1976, 17; on reduplication in Greek and its pragmatic functions see μάλλον μάλλον), and the redundancy in one of Thucydides' formulations ([C.5](#); see further Gomme, Andrewes, Dover 1981, 313).

From this limitative use ('only as much as'), ὅσον became part of the idiomatic expression with a negative force, οὐδ' ὅσον 'not even a little' ([C.9](#), [C.10](#), [C.11](#), [C.12](#), [C.13](#), [C.16](#); for further examples see Headlam, Knox, 1922, 338), which is used elliptically (i.e. without the second element of comparison, 'not as much as' [i.e. something little or having little importance]). Phrynichus' gloss ([A.1](#)) falls within this typology. Other examples of οὐδ' ὅσον 'not a little' in imperial prose are Luc. *Merc.Cond.* 30 ὡς δὲ καὶ ἀχάριστός εἰμι καὶ ἥκιστα συμποτικός, οὐδ' ὅσον γέλωτα ποιῆσαι δυνάμενος ('Thus I am also unpleasant and least fitting in a symposium, being unable to raise even a little laughter'), [Phalar.] *Ep.* 82.1 νῦν δ' εἰς τὰλλα μὲν οὐδ' ὅσον ἡμᾶς ἐλύπησας ('Now, regarding the other things you have not hurt me even a little'), and [Phalar.] *Ep.* 95.1) ἔπεμψά σοι τὸ ἀργύριον οὐδ' ὅσον ἐπαναβαλόμενος μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὰ γράμματα ('I sent you the money without even a little delay after receiving your letter'). This idiom, οὐδ' ὅσον 'not even a little', is likely to be somewhat emphatic. Notice that οὐδ' ὅσον may be used in a slightly hyperbolic fashion, as in the case of Apollonius' οὐδ' ὅσον οὐδ' ἐν ὀνείρω ([C.11](#)). Additionally, οὐδ' ὅσον too (like simple ὅσον, see [C.1](#) and [C.4](#)) may be reduplicated, and this may well suggest a colloquial tone ([C.9](#); see Sbardella 2000, 211, who rightly stresses this component, which is part of an intimist address to the θυμός). A somewhat similar case is the variant reading ὅσον ὅσον in NT *Ev.Luc.* 5.3) ἐμβὰς δὲ εἰς ἓν τῶν πλοίων, ὃ ἦν Σίμωνος, ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐπαναγαγεῖν ὀλίγον (ὀλίγον : ὅσον ὅσον D), καθίσας δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου ἐδίδασκεν τοὺς ὄχλους ('Once he got in one of the boats, the one which belonged to Simon, he asked him to pull out a little away from the land, and sitting down he taught the people from the boat'). Although more recent scholarship considers ὀλίγον to be the correct reading (see Schürmann 1969, 268 n. 35: 'ὀλίγον erinnert an Mk. 1, 19, wird darum ὅσον ὅσον (D) vorzuziehen sein', who challenges Wellhausen 1904, 15: 'Gegen das volkstümliche ὅσον ὅσον in D kommt ὀλίγον nicht auf'), the variant reading ὅσον ὅσον 'only a little' testifies to the same idiomatic use we have seen in the passages above.

As a further development, two passages in the Septuagint and the New Testament provide evidence for the idiom μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον (literally, 'a little as much as'), a construction with a distinct temporal value: while in Isaiah it means 'for only a little while' ([C.14](#)), in Paul it rather has the meaning of 'in only a little while' ([C.15](#); the occurrence in Paul is likely to be an echo of the one in Isaiah, but the fact that the reference is now to Christ's second coming explains the semantic shift; see further Attridge 1989, 301 and Koester 2001, 467). These passages, especially Isaiah, are normally assumed to be the *loci classici* of the Cyrillian gloss in Hesychius that discusses ὅσον ([B.1](#)). This temporal use of ὅσον ὅσον is quite strongly reminiscent of the limitative use of adverbial ὅσον in the idioms ὅσον (οὐκ) ἤδη '(a little soon >) very soon, almost' and ὅσον οὐπω '(a little not yet >) very soon, almost' (see LSJ s.v. IV.5), which are first attested in classical authors and are widely paralleled in Hellenistic and Imperial Greek as well.

To sum up, the whole process can be laid out as follows: (1) ὅσον '(only) as much as' (followed by something indicating a small amount or a limitation); (2) οὐδ' ὅσον 'not even this much', 'not even a little'; (3) ὅσον 'a little'. Wackernagel (1913, 244–5 = Wackernagel 1953–1979 vol. 2, 1201–2) considers ὅσον 'a little' a colloquialism and the outcome of aposiopesis of the second element of the comparison ('as much as this' > 'this much' > 'a little'); he also argues that expressions of this kind may have originally been associated with a hand gesture, much like our common gesture of indicating a small amount with the thumb and the index finger.

E. Byzantine and Modern Greek commentary

The scriptural passages using the idiom μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον ([C.14](#), [C.15](#)) have exercised a lasting influence on Byzantine authors, who not only quote these passages very frequently, but also rephrase or allude to them overtly (to mention just two examples, see [C.17](#) and [C.20](#)). In light of this, it is not impossible that Byzantine readers of Phrynichus may have been interested in the gloss on οὐδ' ὅσον ([A.1](#)) because it reminded them of the biblical idiom, providing some sort of Atticist approval of it (for this kind of sensibility among Byzantine readers, see Tribulato 2019).

A special chapter in the history of adverbial ὅσον are the three occurrences in the *Life of Pachomius* (in the first redaction, which dates to around 390 CE; see Harmless 2004, 117). In these passages, ὅσον ὅσον carries the meaning of ‘as soon as’ and ‘very soon’ (C.19, in relation to which one may also compare B.2; I am unconvinced by the translation by Veilleux 1980, 391: ‘A man who finds himself in the cold and deep frost runs somehow until he reaches the heat of the fire’) and also ‘little by little’ (C.18; see also *Vita Pachomii* 118.16–7 Halkin οὕτω καὶ ψυχῆς ἀμελούσης, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ὅσον ὅσον ἀπ’ αὐτῆς ἀναχωρεῖ ἕως τέλεον ἀποσβεσθῆ τῆς θερμῆς αὐτοῦ ‘Likewise, also when the soul is careless, the Holy Spirit little by little withdraws from it until it is totally quenched of its heat’).

An interesting case in the Byzantine reception of biblical μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον is Theodore the Studite’s special liking for this idiom, which he uses multiple times (with or without μικρὸν) when talking about the brevity of human life and its toil before eternal life (C.21; see further: *Epistulae* 124.14, 227.23, 506.58 Fatouros; *Μεγάλη κατήχησις* 45 [330.3], 46 [334.13–4], 47 [344.11–2], 58 [415.4–5], 69 [484.19], 104 [764.2], 119 [890.6] Papadopoulos–Kerameus; *Sermones Catecheseos Magnae* 29 [83.1], 79 [11.5], 81 [22.29], 86 [41.20] Cozza–Luzi). Even though Theodore does not allude to the biblical passages in any of these sections, if we compare the context in which he uses μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, a likely conclusion is that it is a more or less conscious reminiscence of the passage in Paul’s *Letter to the Hebrews* (C.15). Theodore is not an isolated case. A few centuries later, religious writers like Philip Monotropus and John Apocaucus will also go on to use ὅσον ὅσον (‘in only a little while’, ‘very soon’) when talking about the end of earthly life (see, respectively, *Dioptra* 2.10.891 and *Epistulae* 17.25 and 65.31 Bees). Something of an exception, however, is Theodore’s use of μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον to indicate that the conversion of the enemies of the true faith will come soon (C.22). In these cases, then, μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον is not connected to an eschatological context, even though the subject is still religious. Further, in two of his letters, John Mauropus also uses μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, both times in contexts that are totally devoid of any biblical or religious connotation (in *Epistulae* 6.29 Karpozilos it is just part of a limitative statement, ‘I only promise this much’; in *Epistulae* 64.42 Karpozilos it refers to the person whom John will very soon dispatch to deliver the letter). Finally, Maximus Planudes will similarly use ὅσον ὅσον to translate Latin *iam iamque* in a passage of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (1.665–7 Papathomopoulos–Tsavare, which corresponds to Ov. *Met.* 1.535–6).

F. Commentary on individual texts and occurrences

N/A

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CITE THIS

Federico Favi, 'οὐδ' ὅσον, ὅσον ὅσον (Phryn. PS 3.3–4)', in Olga Tribulato (ed.), *Digital Encyclopedia of Atticism*. With the assistance of E. N. Merisio.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30687/DEA/2021/01/042>

ABSTRACT

This article provides a philological and linguistic commentary on the expressions οὐδ' ὅσον and ὅσον ὅσον discussed in the Atticist lexicon Phryn. PS 3.3–4.

KEYWORDS

Ellipsis

Intensification

Reduplication

FIRST PUBLISHED ON

01/10/2022

LAST UPDATE

16/01/2024



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Ca' Foscari

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 865817)

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