ILZE RŪMNIECE

University of Latvia, Latvia

GENDER INDICATION OF THE LEXEME *ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ* IN ANCIENT GREEK TEXTS

Brief summary

The Greek lexeme ἄνθρωπος (man, human being, person) is most often used with either the masculine article or without an article. The comparatively rare and often contextually specified case is the use of the feminine article, since there are concrete lexemes to denote a woman and a man (ἡ γυνή, ὁ ἀνήρ). The article discusses various (different in time and genre) contexts, highlighting some examples from Modern Greek language use. The aim is to identify the possible contextual reasons for use of the form ἡ ἄνθρωπος.

The feminine article with the lexeme ἄνθρωπος is a gradually dying-out phenomenon. The lexeme ἄνθρωπος with the masculine article gradually assumes the function of generalization (for males and females); the meaning, which includes both sexes, is conveyed by the lexeme without an article.

Keywords: lexeme, feminine/masculine article, human being, genre and context situation.

Phenomena of any language continues to be interesting and valuable to be explored in the older layers of the language, during their early formation stages. The Greek language as the oldest of the European languages fixed in writing yields a plenty of such opportunities.

However – before going into the historical evidence of the key lexeme ἄνθρωπος – the author would like to begin with the facts from Modern Greek. The most comprehensive modern Greek explanatory dictionary (author George Babiniotis) provides the following information about the lexeme ἄνθρωπος:

> *a living being, belongs to the highest mammals, its differentiating quality is the ability to produce articulated speech and abstract thinking, awareness of one's strength, self-consciousness and capacity for ethical evaluation (good / bad).*

Modern Greek just adds the masculine article to the lexeme ἄνθρωπος and, in the concluding part of the dictionary entry, we find the diminutives of the noun (το ανθρωπάκι, το ανθρωπάριο) with a pejorative meaning (nonentity / nobody), with the neuter article.

In the arsenal of Ancient Greek, there is a neuter noun form τὸ ἀνθρώπιον, and a masculine form ὁ ἀνθρωπίσκος – both with derogatory semantics (man-back number, man-nobody).

Already the ancient Greek grammarians (starting from Dionysius of Thrace) have pointed out that in the names of living beings the article will only indicate that either male or female creature is meant (unless the morphological form in itself is not indicative of the difference). For example, the grammarian Theodosius writes:

> *στι γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἀρσενικὸν καὶ ἄνθρωπος θηλυκόν·ἐὰν δὲ προσθήσω καὶ τὸ ἄρθρον τὸ ὁ καὶ εἴπω·ἦλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος·ἰδοὺ διὰ τοῦ ἄρθρου τὸ γένος ἐδήλωσα, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀρσενικόν ἢ ἐὰν εἴπω πάλιν ἡ ἄνθρωπος ἐδήλωσα τὸ γένος, ὅ ἐστι θηλυκόν. ὅσα ἀρσενικῶς καὶ θηλυκῶς δύνανται λέγεσθαι, οἷον ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡ ἄνθρωπος, ὁ ἵππος καὶ ἡ ἵππος, ὁ κύων καὶ ἡ κύων·*

> (Theodosius Gramm., *Περὶ γραμματικῆς*, 2020.003 TLG)

> *[The word] ἄνθρωπος – man is of masculine and feminine [gender]; if I add the article ὁ and say "ὁ ἄνθρωπος came», then with the help of the article I have indicated the gender as masculine; if in turn I say ἡ ἄνθρωπος, I present the gender as feminine. Theodosius further informs that there are other words with a single form to be used both as masculine and feminine by using an appropriate article, such as: horse and horse (mare), the dog and the dog (she-dog / bitch) – (ὁ ἵππος / ἡ ἵππος, ὁ κύων / ἡ κύων).*

Sophist Epiphanius of Salamina (the 4th century) expresses a similar idea: "one word ἄνθρωπος is used to call both a man and a woman» – ὁμωνυμικῶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καλεῖται. (Epiphanius Scr. Eccl., *Panarion (Adversus haereses)*. 2021.002, TLG).

However, the ancient Greek texts show that the form with the feminine article ἡ ἄνθρωπος is used relatively rarely, because talking of a wife / a woman, the lexeme ἡ γυνή is mostly involved, respectively, speaking of a husband / man – ὁ ἀνήρ.

The author has tried to assess in which texts and in what contextual situations the lexeme ἄνθρωπος is found with the feminine article and

whether its choice instead of the lexeme γυνή (wife/woman) is deter-mined by the content and semantics.

Without claiming to come out with exhaustive conclusions in this article, it seems to be possible to proceed with the main research find-ings and some of the relevant examples. Comparison and possible conclusions are based on both literary and theoretical ancient Greek texts of broad chronological range, using the resources of the Digital Library of Greek Literature (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae – TLG).

To start with, it is worth mentioning the details of the etymology of the Greek lexeme ἄνθρωπος, which is considered to be vague, but the potentially acceptable facts that linguists have produced are interesting in the context of this topic:

ἄνθρωπος < ανδρ-ωπος < ανήρ, genitive form ανδρός + -ωπός – the one with the appearance of a man (the second part of the compositum – ὤψ, genitive form ὠπός 'eyes, frown, face').

Thus, originally human appearance is just the appearance of a man/male, as evidenced by the oldest Greek readable theogonies and gene-alogies. Thus, in texts by Hesiod (the 8th century BC) the appearance of women in the world of people is related to the well-known Pandora's myth of a woman who is like a common 'project' of gods, to afflict the mankind with numerous calamities and bad qualities. It may be under-stood from Hesiod's texts that the male gender had already existed in the world at that time.

Here it is worth mentioning a mysogynistic (women hating) entry in the Suda lexicon (the 10th century), where we read the explanation of the adjective ἀκόλαστον 'untamable, unpunished' (ἀκρατῆ, θρασύν): *one who is uncontrollable, quick-tempered (often meant about horses).*

But further down in the lexicon lemma another expression is men-tioned by an unknown author: "Going unpunished and reckless is a female human" – Ἀκόλαστον καὶ ὑβριστὸν πρᾶγμα ἡ ἄνθρωπος·(Ἀκόλαστον, 914/915, TLG).

The explanation clearly shows, that the negations of human char-acter mentioned refer directly to the female, signified by the use of the feminine article. The female character is deemed weaker, inferior also by Aristotle, when discussing the features of tragedy. He expresses the thought that a character depicted in a tragedy will be decent, if its actions are decent. Any man (ἕκαστον γένος) can be decent, but there are various degrees of decent: even a woman is good so too is a slave,

although possibly the first one is an inferior thing and the last one – beneath consideration (ἔστιν δὲ ἐν ἑκάστῳ γένει: καὶ γὰρ γυνή ἐστιν χρηστὴ καὶ δοῦλος, καίτοι γε ἴσως τούτων τὸ μὲν χεῖρον, τὸ δὲ ὅλως φαῦλόν ἐστιν (Aristot. Poet. 1454a).

Now follows an insight into Greek texts of various genres, selecting contexts with the lexeme ἄνθρωπος – both with the feminine article, as well as evaluating the cases with no article.

Texts pertaining to medicine, natural sciences and court rhetoric comparatively often use precisely the lexeme ἡ ἄνθρωπος, which could be interpreted as a 'female person'.

For example, the famous ancient medical specialist Galen (the 2ⁿᵈ century AD) writes about a clinical case of a woman:
λέγεται γὰρ ἄπνους τε καὶ ἄσφυκτος ἐκείνη ἡ ἄνθρωπος γεγονέναι (Galenus Med., *De locis affectis libri vi.* 8, 415,1, TLG) – "..it was said that this female person was left breathless and became stiff".

In a prosecution speech the brilliant classical Greek orator Demosthenes mentions the fact that while trying to catch some escaped slaves, a woman (γυναῖκα) had been beaten up and she (this female person – ἡ ἄνθρωπος) died from the blows:
.. πατάξειε γυναῖκα καὶ ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τελευτήσειεν ἡ ἄνθρωπος (Demosth. Orat. 59,9)

In this and similar contexts it is quite safe to say that the use of the lexeme ἡ ἄνθρωπος in comparison with the word 'woman' (γυνή) can be explained by the desire to emphasize the fact that a person (a human !) has died – and this is a murder case.

Unlike the natural sciences and the judiciary texts, ancient Greek poetry and philosophical or theoretical texts often use the lexeme ἄνθρωπος without an article.

Such contexts usually refer to a generalization that includes both genders – male and female, for example, in Aristotle's "Rhetoric":
... συμβαίνει .. ἐπαινεῖν πολλάκις οὐ μόνον ἄνθρωπον ἢ θεὸν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄψυχα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων τὸ τυχόνAristot. Rhet. 1) 366a) – "... it often happens .. that not only a man or a god is praised but inanimate objects and any random one of the other animals" (translation from Kennedy, 2007).

Similarly, the meaning of generalization is also clearly reflected in this passage:

πάντα τὰ συγγενῆ καὶ ὅμοια ἡδέα ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἵππος ἵππῳ καὶ νέος . ..– "all things that are related and similar are for the most part, a source of pleasure; for example, human being to human being, horse to horse, and youth to youth" (translation from Kennedy, 2007).

As a telling example could serve the juxtaposing – a human as a living being to anything else, like in the dialogue by Lucian: ... ὦ τῆς ἀγριότητος, τὸ μηδὲ ἐπικλασθῆναι δακρυούσης: λίθος, οὐκ ἄνθρωπός ἐστι (Lucian, Dialogi meretricii 12, 2): "..oh, what heartless-ness – not to show compassion, as she is crying – stone, not a man!" And it is clear that this heartlessness could be displayed by either a man, or a woman.

Or another example from Plato's dialogue "Protagoras" (in terms of time, at least five centuries older texts than just the above-mentioned Lucian). It explores the human nature: οὐδ' [358d] ἔστι τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐν ἀνθρώπου φύσει, ἐπὶ ἃ οἴεται κακὰ εἶναι ἐθέλειν ἱέναι ἀντὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν – "it is not in human nature, apparently, to wish to go after what is considered to be bad in preference to the good".

A similar generalization can be found in the poet Pindar's (the 5th century BC) text, pondering on the ephemeral nature of man: "what one is, what one is not – a shadow of a dream is a man" – ἐπάμεροι τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὔ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος... (Pyth. 8, 95–96).

Here, the lexeme ἄνθρωπος is without the article. Additionally, al-though Pindar's poetry sings praise of male victories in athletic contests (in which women did not participate), the given example lends an idea of a broader generalization about human nature (thinking about its ephem-erality in general).

Accordingly, interest-provoking is also the text by Joannes Chrysostomus (the 4th century AD) which treats on the idea that we tend to speak about people both well and badly.

> *Thus, we are accustomed in our conversations to speak of both the noble and the low about man. For, when we say that man is futility, dirt man, ashes man, we express the worst. But when we say that an immortal creature [is] man, a thinking creature man, related to those in the heights – then we express the honourable.*

> *Οὕτω γοῦν καὶ ἡμῖν ἔθος περὶ ἀνθρώπου διαλεγομένοις, καὶ ὑψηλὰ καὶ ταπεινὰ φθέγγεσθαι. Ὅταν μὲν γὰρ λέγωμεν, Οὐδὲν ἄνθρωπος,*

γῆ ἄνθρωπος, σποδὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ τοῦ χείρονος τὸ πᾶν καλοῦμεν· ὅταν δὲ λέγωμεν, Ἀθάνατον ζῷον ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ λογικὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὅτι τῶν ἄνω συγγενής, ἀπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος τὸ πᾶν πάλιν καλοῦμεν.

(Joannes Chrysostomus Scr. Eccl.,
*In epistulam ad Hebraeos (homiliae 1–34)*2062.168, TLG)

Summarizing, it can be concluded that in the Greek language scene the feminine article with the lexeme ἄνθρωπος – is a gradually dying-out phenomenon.

The lexeme γυνή turned out to be more competitive to denote a woman.

The lexeme ἄνθρωπος with the masculine article gradually assumes the function of generalization (for males and females); the meaning, which includes both sexes, is conveyed by the lexeme without an article.

To conclude, two quotes could be chosen (outlining some other interesting aspects for future research) – one from Aristotle and the other– an example of a modern Greek text.

In Aristotle's text (Politics, 1253a) the question of a person as a social or civic being is considered:

... is clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and that man (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) is by nature a political animal. And why man is a political animal (πολιτικὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον) in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone (μόνον ἄνθρωπος) of the animals possesses speech (λόγον).

... φανερὸν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστί, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον .. διότι δὲ πολιτικὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον πάσης μελίττης καὶ παντὸς ἀγελαίου ζῷου μᾶλλον, δῆλον. οὐθὲν γάρ, ὡς φαμέν, μάτην ἡ φύσις ποιεῖ· λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζῴων·

(Aristot. Polit.1253a)

The famous sentence "man by nature is a social/political animal" – taking into account the historical context – definitely implies men/males who in Aristotle's times in Athens enjoyed full civil rights (while women where not). When looking at the thought at the end of the fragment "man alone of the animals possesses speech", the non-article use of the lexeme ἄνθρωπος shows a clear generalization: unlike other living entities a human being possesses the ability to speak.

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The other context comes from a poem by Modern Greek poetess Zoi Karelli **with the exciting title "Η άνθρωπος" (Ζωή Καρέλλη, Τα Ποιήματα, II, 123–24) – "A Female Human"(?). The first lines of the poem –** Εγώ γυναίκα, η άνθρωπος, / ζητούσα το πρόσωπό Σου πάντοτε, / ήταν ως τώρα του ανδρός / και δεν μπορώ αλλιώς να το γνωρίσω **– introduce the reader to a poet's conversation with the Creator (a capital letter in the word "your" –** Σου): "I, a female human, have always asked for Your face, so far it was a man's face and I can not otherwise get it."

Modern Greek definitely no longer actively uses the lexeme ἄνθρωπος with the feminine article. Would this special poetical expression bring us back to the above-mentioned etymology of the Greek lexeme ἄνθρωπος (the one with the appearance of a man)? Given the feminine article, it is clear that such a use of ή ἄνθρωπος highlights the woman›s text and attitude towards the traditional "man's voice" in the literary expression of the world perception.

The quite extended text of the poem ends with the lines: εγώ πια δεν του ανήκω / και πρέπει μονάχη να είμαι, / εγώ, η άνθρωπος **– "I no longer belong to him / and I must be alone, / I, the woman (female human)."**

The study of the contextual role of the lexeme ό/ή ἄνθρωπος could be expanded in the area of Byzantine texts, looking further at the change of the use of a particular article in the Greek of newer times.

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LEKSĒMAS *ἄνθρωπος* DZIMTES NORĀDE SENGRIEĶU TEKSTOS

KOPSAVILKUMS

Leksēma *ἄνθρωπος* (cilvēks) sengrieķu tekstos visbiežāk redzama ar vīriešu dzimtes artikulu (*ó*) vai arī bez tā. Tādēļ jo interesantāk pievērsties salīdzinoši retajiem kontekstiem, kuros vārds *cilvēks* ieraugāms ar sieviešu dzimtes artikulu (*ή*) – kas arī ir šī raksta mērķis. Minēto *ή ἄνθρωπος* lietojumu tekstos jāsastata arī ar faktu, ka grieķu valodas arsenālā ir atsevišķas leksēmas sievietes (*ή γυνή*) un vīrieša (*ó ἀνήρ*) apzīmēšanai. Rakstā iztirzātas dažādu laikmetu un žanru tekstvietas, kurās parādās leksēma *ή ἄνθρωπος* ar sieviešu dzimtes artikulu, vērtējot tās lietojuma potenciālos iemeslus. Salīdzinoši tiek skatīti arī gadījumi, kad artikuls netiek lietots. Tādos vērojama vispārinājuma nozīme: cilvēks kā tāds (gan vīrieši, gan sievietes), cilvēks pretstatā citām dzīvām būtnēm vai nedzīvām. Vispārinājumu izsaka arī *ó ἄνθρωπος* konteksti, to saglabā arī mūsdienu grieķu valodas ūzuss, lai gan ir arī gadījumi ar īpašu lomu leksēmai *ή ἄνθρωπος*.