Abstract

This paper discusses the development of the article-system in Greek: an overview of its main syntactic functions is proposed, with a particular emphasis on the properties of the so-called definite article, which will be observed from a diachronic perspective. Various typologies of nominal structures are considered and commented, with the support of data coming from three ancient varieties – Homeric Greek, Classical Attic, New Testament koinè – and Standard Modern Greek. The analysis grounds on theoretical tools provided by formal theories of syntactic variation.

1. Introduction

Principles and Parameters models (P&P) were developed within the biolinguistic program as cognitive theories of syntactic diversity, in order to explain synchronic variation across grammars.\(^1\) Recently, parametric approaches have been proved successful for a diachronic analysis as well (Longobardi 2003; Roberts & Roussou 2003; Roberts 2007; Longobardi & Guardiano 2009; Longobardi, Guardiano, Silvestri, Ceolin & Boattini forthcoming, among many others).

Parametric theories of diachronic variation pursue two main directions:

[1] a. the description of syntactic patterns in ancient varieties: the methodological tools prompted by formal approaches are implemented on languages where no grammaticality judgments from native speakers are available;
   b. the explanation of diachronic variation, i.e. the development of a theory of syntactic change.

Drawing inspiration from such approaches, this paper proposes a description of the diachronic variability observed across Greek in the use of the definite article, i.e. in the representation of two formal features associated to the head of nominal structures (D): definiteness (Lyons 1999) and person (Longobardi 1994; 2005; 2008). It will also provide indirect evidence that:

[2] a. closed-corpora languages can be described by means of the same tools exploited

\(^1\) Under P&P (Chomsky 1981), Universal Grammar is conceived of as provided with: (a) an universal set of invariant instructions (principles), which define the general properties of possible human grammars; (b) an universal set of open choices (parameters), closed by the speakers on the basis of environmental evidence, and responsible for variation across actual languages. The amount of language events available to the acquirers contains the triggers (cues) for selecting the appropriate value of each single parameter. The whole set of universal principles and parameters (together with an appropriate list of triggers/cues) describes in fact every possible human language.
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for the analysis of actual speakers’ individual grammars; thus, diachronic comparison becomes possible on the basis of uniform syntactic comparanda;

b. ancient varieties obey the same syntactic constraints as contemporary ones (Uniformitarian Hypothesis; Roberts 2007);

c. diachronic change can be traced back as a succession of discrete steps sharply definable within an internally coherent system.

2. Theoretical Background

According to the DP-Hypothesis,2 every nominal group, in order to be used as an argument, needs to be headed by a functional element D (hence Determiner Phrase, DP), responsible for its reading and interpretation even when phonetically empty. Variation across languages with respect to the lexicalization of D depends on the encoding of a set of quantificational and denotational properties associated to this syntactic position. A visible item (i.e. a determiner) is required in D in order for the DP to get the reading associated to a particular feature if such a feature is grammaticalized. For instance, the item that normally fills D when definiteness is grammaticalized (the definite article) is systematically required in D whenever a(n argument) nominal expression is to be read as definite. The definite reading is associated in the literature (Kramsky 1972; Lyons 1999; among others) to the marking of the referent of a nominal expression as known or identifiable by the hearer, on the basis of information available in the text or in the extralinguistic context, or presupposed after shared or general knowledge. The contexts normally associated to definite readings are:3

[3] a. a noun is repeated after first mention: anaphoric reading;

b. the referent is visible in the extralinguistic context: deixis;

c. the referent can be identified on the basis of discourse information:

i. it was mentioned in the discourse (textual anaphora);

ii. relevant information for its identification comes immediately after its mention (i.e., the noun is followed by an adjectival modifier, a relative clause, a genitival modifier, another complement);

iii. relevant information for its identification comes from general knowledge;

iv. it plays a relevant role in the shared knowledge of speaker and hearer (topicality);

v. it is unique.

If definiteness is grammaticalized, all such contexts require a visible item in D: its absence makes the definite reading unavailable;4 thus, articles play the syntactic function of filling D when a DP is definite. In other words, the distinction between a definite determiner and any other definite item is that determiners obey syntactic rules (i.e., constraints acting on the lexicalization of D), while definite items not as-
associated to D have a purely semantic function. When definiteness is not grammaticalized, no item is required in D with definite readings. When anaphoric definiteness only is grammaticalized, it is only nominals repeated after first mention that require a visible D. It is never the case that a language grammaticalizes all definite readings but the anaphoric one. Finally, in certain languages, the topical reading [3.c.iv] is systematically associated to a distinct item in D, usually a deictically neutral demonstrative (Guardiano 2012), rather than to a definite article. For instance, in Salentino, the demonstrative *ddu/dda* is regularly used for topical readings, while the definite article *lu/la* is used in all other definite contexts (and is ungrammatical with topical DPs). If definiteness but not topicality is grammaticalized, either the definite article or a (distal or deictically unmarked) demonstrative are equally used for topical readings.

**[4]**

a. *Aggju vistu ddu kane*  
   ‘I saw the dog’ (*we were talking about*, topical)

b. *Aggju vistu lu kane*  
   ‘I saw the dog’ (definite but not topical)

c. *Nnu kane e nna mussa s-annu kkjati a-mmjendzu la strata: lu kane a-bbajjatu alla mussa*  
   ‘A dog and a cat met on the street: the dog barked at the cat’ (anaphoric)

**[5]**

a. I saw the dog (*we were talking about*)

b. I saw that dog (*we were talking about*)

Thus, the difference between Salentino and English is that the former grammaticalizes topichood and definiteness, while the latter only grammaticalizes definiteness. In principle, one could foresee the existence of languages where topichood is grammaticalized while definiteness is not; this seems to be the case of the so-called ‘intermediate stages’ in the process of creation of a definite article from a distal/deictically unmarked demonstrative (see Trovesi 2004, on spoken Slavic varieties; Laurry 1997, on spoken Finnish; among others). Yet, no conclusive evidence in favor of the existence of such languages has been prompted so far.

When definiteness is grammaticalized, the absence of the determiner in D is expected to trigger the non-definite reading by default, as it happens in Hebrew: nouns mentioned for the first time (indefinite), and whose referents are not assumed to be known or identifiable, occur bare.

**[6]**

a. *Kelev ve-xatul nifgeshu ba-rexov. ha-kelev navax al ha-xatul*  
   ‘A dog and a cat met on the street: the dog barked at the cat’

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5 It has been shown (Trovesi 2004; Guardiano 2012) that at least three definite contexts (i.e., anaphora, deixis and topicality) are associated to demonstrative items as well: syntactically, the difference between demonstratives and definite determiners is that the former are not in D; for, they do not obey, in principle, the constraints acting on the D position (i.e., they are not compulsorily required in order to select any definite reading).

6 A Romance variety spoken in Salento (Southern Italy).

7 The data from languages other than Greek come from Longobardi and Guardiano’s DP database (last update 2012).
b. Raiti et ha-kelev
   ‘I saw the dog’

In fact, the so-called *indefinite* article, rather than being a marker of *indefiniteness*, seems to behave as a filler of D with singular count nouns (Crisma 1997). Languages where singular count nouns are never bare (i.e., where empty Ds are licensed only with mass and plural nouns) are called *strong article languages* (English, [7]), as opposed to *weak article* (Crisma 2011) ones (Hebrew, [8]), where all (argument) nouns can occur bare.

[7]  
  a. i. I saw a dog
     ii. *I saw dog
  b. I ate meat

[8]  
  a. raiti kelev
     ‘I saw a dog’
  b. axalti basar
     ‘I ate meat’

The behavior of *kind-* and *object*-referential nominal expressions (i.e., *kind* names and *proper* names, respectively) is one of the most noticeable consequences of the formal encoding of person in D (Longobardi 1994; 2005; 2008). In particular, *strong* D languages require a visible D when a nominal expression is associated to a *kind*/*object* reading, while *weak* D languages do not (Guardiano & Longobardi 2005); the filler of D in such cases is normally the *definite* article, that acts as an *expletive* element rather than as a proper definiteness marker. Proper names can raise to D, if the constraints on noun movement are satisfied.

[9]  
  a. I dinosauri si sono estinti
     ‘Dinosaurs have become extinct’
  b. *Dinosauri sono estinti

[10]  
  a. *The dinosaurs have become extinct
  b. Dinosaurs have become extinct

[11]  
  a. i. L’antica città è stata distrutta dai Goti
      ‘The ancient city was destroyed by the Goths’
     ii. *Città antica è stata distrutta dai Goti
  b. i. L’antica Roma è stata distrutta dai Goti
     ‘The ancient Rome was destroyed by the Goths’
     ii. Roma antica è stata distrutta dai Goti
     iii. *Antica Roma è stata distrutta dai Goti

[12]  
  a. i. The ancient city was destroyed by the Goths
     ii. *Ancient city was destroyed by the Goths

8 The asymmetry between singulars and plurals in *indefinite* environments, i.e. the fact that plural nouns can occur determinerless (under specific syntactic conditions; Longobardi 1994; 2005; 2008) while count singulars never do so, depends on the possibility of extracting number information from the noun morphology (Delfitto & Schrooten 1991).
9 This holds with plurals and mass nouns; singular count nouns require anyway a visible D if count and definiteness are grammaticalized.
b. i. *The ancient Rome was destroyed by the Goths
   ii. *Rome ancient was destroyed by the Goths
   iii. Ancient Rome was destroyed by the Goths

To sum up, two main classes of definite articles are available universally (cross-linguistic variation depends on whether and how many of these articles are available, and on how they are lexicalized):

a. true definite article, which in turn falls into two subtypes:
   i. anaphoric
   ii. ‘fully’ definite
b. expletive article, that in turn falls into two subtypes:
   i. semi-expletive (kind names: it discriminates between kind and generic interpretation)
   ii. true expletive (proper names, never interpretable as non-referential)

3. Data and Analysis

3.1 Ancient Varieties

The development of the article-system in Greek is usually described as a progressive spread of two items: the definite article, that developed between Homer and the Classical era, and the indefinite article, that developed starting from the first centuries AD. A huge literature is available on these topics. Yet, much less work has been done under formal approaches: most of the analyses of the Greek DP are based on modern varieties. As for Ancient Greek, the systematic scan of a representative subset of integral texts proposed in Guardiano (2003) was the first attempt of building a relatively uniform database, where one single author at a time was considered: previous works (Manolessou 2000) were based on random data from different texts of many authors. The literature is now richer, so that the initial database can be enriched with further data. Here, the following evidence will be considered:

a. Homeric Greek: Iliad, Odyssey.
   b. Classical Attic: Plato’s Apology, Cratylus and Symposium (Guardiano 2003); Demosthenes (6), Isocrates (2) and Lysias (2) speeches (Bernasconi 2011); further evidence from Manolessou (2000); Bakker (2009).

11 Homeric texts are the most problematic for various reasons: sociolinguistic (they are a composed mix of different varieties, both diatopically and diachronically, rather than the product of a single “grammar”), philological and stylistic. Yet, they are of crucial relevance, because they testify the first steps in the development of D-determiners. Further general cautions concern the written nature of all the texts examined. First, none represents in fact a single grammar of a single speaker (in Chomsky’s 1965 sense), as they result from rhetorical elaboration and frequently from the intervention of multiple hands. Second, they are not sociolinguistically uniform, because they come from different contexts and linguistic backgrounds, with different levels of multilingualism and mixing of varieties, and they were elaborated for different purposes. All such limits have been taken into account, and isolated, when possible, in the analysis.
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All DPs in argument position were isolated and classified in subsets, according to criteria suggested by the parametric representation of the properties sketched above. Then, the relevant parameters were set in each diachronic stage,\(^{12}\) so that each stage turned out to be associated to a string of values (Longobardi & Guardiano 2009). The strings were collated and compared in order for correspondences and differences in the values to be identified, and ultimately to detect the resettings in the parameter values responsible for the actual empirical changes.

3.2 Status quaestionis

ὁ, ἡ, τὸ was the sole article available in Greek until the 1st c. AD, when the predecessor of the indefinite article (ἐἷς, in turn originated from the numeral ‘one’) began to be attested. Its etymological source is an Indo-European demonstrative (Chantraine 1961) *so, *sa, *tod, already attested in Homer in the form ὁ, ἡ, τὸ. Thus, Greek does not differ from the rest of Indo-European, where the definite article emerges from deictically neutral demonstratives (Lyons 1999; Trovesi 2004; among others).

In the literature on Ancient Greek (see Bakker 2009; Napoli 2009, for a summary), the item is associated to several functions, all related to definite contexts, but is never described as compulsory. Such an alleged freedom is often justified as the product of transition stages, where the definite article is not yet required in order for definite readings to be obtained.

\[\text{[15] a. Anaphoric. Either definite articles or demonstratives are used in this function.} \]
\[\text{Different types of anaphora: direct, semantic, pragmatic, endophoric.} \]

\[\text{b. Pragmatic. It retopicalizes a constituent or facilitates the tracking of a referent. It points to a key discourse participant, brought back into the foreground.} \]

\[\text{c. Syntactic/informational. It selects a subset of relevant referents, when followed by a relative clause, complements, adjectives.} \]

The data in our corpus reveal that this item obeys the same constraints acting on contemporary languages; thus, each variety represents a stable rather than a transitional state, where the contexts calling for a definite item in D are sharply definable and never ambiguous.

3.3 Homeric Varieties\(^{13}\)

Apparently no proper article is available, i.e., none of the readings mentioned in Section 2 requires visible items in D. Bare nouns are both definite and indefinite, anaphoric and non-anaphoric, count and mass, kind and existential, proper names and common nouns.

\(^{12}\) When no sufficient amount of data was available in the dataset, further support from the literature or other texts was added.

C. GUARDIANO

[16] a. First mention (indefinite)
i. στησαμένη μέγαν ἱστόν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι ὑφαινε (Od. 2, 94)
‘she set up in her halls a great web, and fell to weaving’
ii. οἴσετε ἄρν’, ἔτερον λευκόν, ἔτερην δὲ μέλαιναν (Il. 3, 103)
‘bring two lambs, a white ram and a black ewe’
b. Already mentioned noun/referent (anaphoric)
i. οἴσετε καὶ ἥματι μὲν ὑφαίνεσκεν μέγαν ἱστόν (Od. 2, 104)
‘then day by day she would weave at the great web’
ii. καρπαλίμως ἄρνας τε φέρειν Πρίαμόν τε καλέσσαι (Il. 3, 117)
‘quickly to fetch the lambs and to summon Priam’
c. Contextually identifiable referent:
i. νοῦσον ἀνὰ στρατὸν ὦρσε κακήν, ὀλέκοντο δὲ λαοί (Il. 1, 10)
‘roused throughout the army an evil pestilence, and the men were perishing’
ii. τῷ ὀμμαν ἄρνων ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτην:
ἐκλαγξαν δ’ ὀιστοὶ ὀιστοὶ ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτην (II. 1, 45–46)
‘with his bow and covered quiver on his shoulders. The arrows rattled on the shoulders of the angry god’
iii. ἔνθα καὶ ἠματίη μὲν ὑφαίνεσκεν μέγαν ἱστόν (Od. 2, 104)
‘then day by day she would weave at the great web’
iv. μηρούς τ’ ἐξέταμον (Il. 1, 460)
‘(they) cut out the thigh pieces’ (of the ἐκατόμβη: 309, 431, 438)
d. Unique referent
εἴ κεν θάνατόν γε φύγοιμεν (Il. 1, 60)
‘if we would escape death’

[17] Mass and abstract nouns
a. τοῖσι δὲ κήρυκες μὲν ὕδωρ ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἔχευαν
σῖτον δὲ δμῳαὶ παρενήνεον ἐν κανέοισιν (Od. 1, 146–47)
‘heralds poured water over their hands
and maidservants heaped by them bread in baskets’
b. πρίν μιν καὶ γῆρας ἔπεισιν (Il. 1, 29)
‘before that, old age will come to her’

[18] Generic readings (kind)
a. ὡ πόποι, οἷον δὴ νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόων (Od. 1, 32)
‘how ready mortals are to blame the gods’
b. ποιμέσιν οὔ τι φίλην, κλέπτῃ δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω (Il. 3, 11)
‘that the shepherd loves not, but that to the robber is better than night’
c. αἰδὼς δ’ αὐ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέεσθαι (Od. 3, 24)
‘and moreover a young man has shame to question an elder’

Proper names, with few exceptions, occur bare.

[19] a. Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνῄσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ (Il. 2, 106)
‘and Atreus at his death left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks’
b. ὁδικοκα τὸν Ἰρώσην ἡτύμασεν ἀρητῆρα // Ἀτρείδης (Il. 1, 11–12)
‘because to Chryses his priest the son of Atreus has done dishonor’
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The presence of ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is not predictable in these cases: alternation with determinerless nouns seems to be free.

[20] a. ἡ μὲν ἔβη πρὸς δῶμα Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων (Od. 5, 242)
   ‘Calypto, the beautiful goddess, returned homeward’

b. τόφρα δὲ φάρε’ ἔνεικε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων (Od. 5, 258)
   ‘meanwhile Calypso, the beautiful goddess, brought him cloth’

ὁ, ἡ, τὸ mainly behaves as a regular pronoun (as could be also the case of [20a]). Its pronominal occurrences are notably higher in frequency than adnominal ones. This is a first significant difference with respect to the succeeding varieties, where pronominal uses are significantly reduced in frequency and tend to progressively disappear.

When functioning as a pronominal element, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ tends to be used anaphorically, with topical referents (i.e., those signaled as the most relevant in a specific portion of text), or cataphorically (after a relative clause). 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronominal</td>
<td>4,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnominal</td>
<td>1,343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Occurrences of ὁ, ἡ, τὸ in Homer.

[21] a. i. Λητοῦς καὶ Διὸς υἱός. ὁ γὰρ βασιλῆϊ χολωθεὶς (Il. 1, 9)
   ‘son of Leto and Zeus; for, he angered at the king’

ii. ἐς δ’ ἦλθον μνηστῆρες ἀγήνορες. Οἱ μὲν ἔπειτα (Od. 1, 144)
   ‘then in came the proud suitors, and thereafter they […]’

iii. σοὶ δ’ αὖ ἐγὼ βοῦν ἦνιν εὐρυμέτωπον ἀδμήτην, ἡν ὕπῳ ἠν ρέξων ἦν οὔ πω ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἠγαγεν ἀνήρ:
   τήν τοι ῥέξω χρυσὸν κέρασιν περιχεύας (Od. 3, 382–84)
   ‘and to you in return will I sacrifice a yearling heifer, broad of brow, unbroken, which no man has yet let beneath the yoke. Her will I sacrifice, and I will overlay her horns with gold’

b. i. τῶν μὲν πεντήκοντα νέες κίον (Il. 2, 509)
   ‘of these there came fifty ships’ (it refers to the description of the Beotians, vv. 494–508)

14 For a typology of relative clauses in Ancient Greek, see Perna (in this volume).
ii. τὰ φρονέων (Od. 1, 118)
   ‘as he thought of these things’ [it refers to vv. 115–17]

[22] a. τὴν δ’ ἐγὼ οὐ λύσω (II. 1, 29)
   ‘her I will not see free’ (the referent is Chriseis, who is the topic of this portion of discourse, even if her name has never been mentioned previously)

b. τὴν δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς (Od. 1, 63)
   ‘then Zeus, the cloud-gatherer, answered her and said’ (typic formulaic expression that introduces direct discourse in dialogues. The pronoun refers to the previous speaker)

[23] λεύσσετε γὰρ τό γε πάντες, ὅ μοι γέρας ἔρχεται ἄλλῃ (II. 1, 120)
   ‘for you all see this, that my prize goes from me elsewhere’

ὁ, ἡ, τὸ also occurs followed by an adverb or a prepositional complement. This use is still attested in the Classical period, begins to disappear in the New Testament, and is no more productive in Modern Greek.

[24] οἱ δ’ ἀμφὶ Πρίαμον καὶ Πάνθοον ἠδὲ Θυμοίτην (II. 3, 146)
   ‘and they who were about Priam and Panthous and Thymoetes’

   In its adnominal uses, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is often anaphoric (i.e., it occurs after second mention); yet, the anaphoric reading is not systematically associated with its occurrence: nouns repeated after a first mention can be determinerless. Anaphoric definiteness is not grammaticalized.

[25] a. τὰ δ’ ἄποινα δέχεσθαι (II. 1, 20)
   ‘and accept the ransom’ (the noun ἄποινα was mentioned on v. 13)

b. δὴ τότε τὸν μὲν ἀοιδὸν ἀγων ἐς νῆσον ἐρήμην (Od. 3, 270)
   ‘then indeed (Aegisthus) took the ministrel to a desert isle’ (the noun ἀοιδὸν was mentioned on v. 267)

   In the other definite contexts, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is sometimes but not systematically visible: it occurs in the same (definite) contexts as a demonstrative (anaphora, cataphora, topical reading) and, like demonstratives, it is never compulsory. In this sense, it is not yet a true D-element. This is typical of many other Indo-European languages; for instance, both the spoken Slavic varieties observed by Trovesi (2004) and spoken Finnish (as described by Laury 1997) make systematic use of a phonologically reduced form of a distal demonstrative in typically definite contexts: such an item occurs with a frequency higher than that of a ‘regular’ demonstrative, but still is never obligatory. Rather, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is systematically attested with substantivized adjectives (and participles): every time an adjective is used as the head of a “nominal” structure in argument position in a definite context, then ὁ, ἡ, τὸ appears. In such cases it seems to play a properly syntactic function, signaling that a non-nominal expression is functioning as an argument DP.

15 For a summary of the relevant literature: Parenti (1997). For more recent works about Homer: Lombardi Vallauri (2002); Basset (2006); Manolessou & Horrocks (2007); Briulotta (2008); Napoli (2009); a.o.
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[26] a. ἐννῆμαρ μὲν ἀνὰ στρατὸν ὄχετο κῆλα θεοῖο, // τῇ δεκάτῃ (Il. 1, 53–54)
   ‘for nine days the missiles of the god ranged through the army, but on the tenth’

b. τῶ δὲ κε νικήσαντι γυνῆ καὶ κτήμαθ’ ἔποιο (Il. 3, 255)
   ‘and whichever of the two shall win, him woman and treasure will follow’

ὁ, ἡ, τὸ also regularly appears when the noun refers to an entity that plays a relevant role in a specific discursive context/portion of text (topical reading).

[27] ἔδδεισεν δ’ ὁ γέρων καὶ ἐπείθετο μύθῳ (Il. 1, 33)
   ‘and the old man was seized with fear and obeyed his words’

In this example, the DP refers to Chryses, mentioned on v. 11 (τὸν Χρύσην). In the rest of the book, every time a nominal expression is used to refer to Chryses, it co-occurs with ὁ, ἡ, τὸ: Il. 1, 35 (ὁ γέρων); Il. 1, 380 (ὁ γέρων); Il. 1, 462 (ὁ γέρων).16 The item plays a similar function, i.e., selecting a single relevant referent (or subset of referents) out of a bigger set of potential ones, when it occurs with superlative adjectives (often followed by a partitive complement), possessive adjectives and other expressions of possession.

[28] a. Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι (Od. 1, 211)
   ‘the bravest of the Argives’

b. μίμνετ’ ἐπειγόμενοι τὸν ἐμὸν γάμον (Od. 2, 97)
   ‘be patient, though eager for my marriage’

c. τὰ σ’ αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε (Od. 1, 356)
   ‘busy yourself with your own tasks’

The item also occurs when the DP contains a relative clause, in definite environments. The possibility of selecting the neutral demonstrative in (definite) DPs containing a relative clause is available in all languages, independently on whether or not definiteness is grammaticalized.

[29] τὴν ὁδὸν ᾗ δὴ μέλλειν ἐμοὶ κακὰ κήδε’ ἔσεσθαι (Od. 6, 165)
   ‘that journey on which evil woes were to be my portion’

These data suggest that ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is a demonstrative rather than a proper definite article. Furthermore, in Homer it never co-occurs with another demonstrative, while in other diachronic stages not only can it co-occur with demonstrative items (apart from ὁδε), but the co-occurrence becomes progressively obligatory17. For, starting from a certain stage, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ and demonstratives began to fill two distinct syntactic positions, ceased to belong to one and the same class, and ὁ, ἡ, τὸ became a D-element. Actually, it seems that ὁ, ἡ, τὸ plays a D-role already in Homer, that is when it is used with substantivized adjectives or participles, or when it selects topical referents. Yet, no decisive manifestation indicates that in such cases it is indeed in D.18

16 Similar cases in: Il. 3, 4 and Od. 3, 4 (γέρων); Il. 2, 4 and Od. 5 (μῦθος); Il. 4 (γέρας); Od. 7, 8 (ξένος), a.o.
17 Co-occurrence is systematic in Modern Greek, while in ancient varieties empty Ds are licensed with demonstratives by the null article (Guardiano 2012).
18 According to recent literature (Guardiano 2012, for a summary), demonstrative items are not in
3.4 Classical Attic and New Testament Greek

The two varieties are identical in the behavior of the *definite* article and in the absence of a *strong* article. In both, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is systematically visible on definite DPs; singular count nouns can be bare, and bare nouns are never definite, with two exceptions: nouns with a unique referent (Ebert 1970) and abstract nouns (presumably treated as proper names and mass nouns, respectively).

[30] Anaphora

a. μέλλω γὰρ ύμᾶς διδάξειν ὅθεν μοι ἡ διαβολὴ γέγονεν (Ap. 21b:1–2) ‘for I am going to tell you whence the prejudice against me has arisen’

b. καὶ ἔρχονται φέροντες πρὸς αὐτὸν παραλυτικῶν αἵρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων [...] καὶ ἴδον ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ (Mark 2:3–5) ‘and they came carrying to him a paralytic hanged by four men [...] Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic’

[31] Referent accessible on the basis of contextual/textual evidence

a. καὶ θεοὺς οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα (Ap. 24b:9–c:1) ‘and (he) does not believe in the gods the state believes in’

b. μὴ δύνανταί οἱ οἱ τοῦ νυμφώνους ἐν ὧ ὁ νυμφίος μετ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐστιν νηστεύειν; (Mark 2:19) ‘can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them?’

c. καὶ ἐπιχειρητέον ὑμᾶς ἐξέλεσθαι τὴν διαβολὴν ἣν ἡμεῖς ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ ἔσχετε (Ap. 18c:4–19a:2) ‘and must try in so short a time to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring’

d. ἐφώνησαν οὖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ δευτέρου ὃς ἦν τυφλός (John 9:24) ‘so they called the man who was blind a second time’

[32] Unique referent

a. οὐδὲ ἥλιον οὐδὲ σελήνην ἄρα νομίζω θεοὺς εἶναι (Ap. 26d:1–2) ‘Do I not even believe that the sun or yet the moon are gods [...]?’

b. ἐπεὶ τὸν μὲν ἥλιον λίθον φησὶν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ σελήνην γῆν (Ap. 26d:4–5) ‘since he says that the sun is a stone and the moon earth’

[33] First mention, indefinite

a. ἔτυχον γὰρ προσελθὼν ἄνδρι ὃς [...] (Ap. 20a:4) ‘for I happened to meet a man who [...]’

The data in the examples, along with the English translation, come from the following sources:


20 There is evidence in New Testament Greek that indefinite specific readings need something (εἷς or τίς) in D: this might signal that strong article is starting loosing its strength; such data, still controversial, will not be discussed here.

21 The noun διαβολή was mentioned on Ap (19a:1).
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b. ἔνδοθεν ἀγάλματα ἐχόντες θεῶν (Symp. 215b, 3)
   ‘they are found to contain images of gods’

c. καὶ ἔρχονται φέροντες πρὸς αὐτὸν παραλυτικὸν ἑώρομενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων (Mark 2:3–4)
   ‘and they came carrying to him a paralytic hanged by four men’

d. ἤλθεν γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον (Mark 14:3)
   ‘a woman came carrying an alabaster jar’

[34] Mass nouns
   a. ὁ ὀἶνος γὰρ οὔπω ἦν (Symp. 203b, 6)
      ‘indeed there was no more wine’
   b. ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς μηδὲ ἄρτον φαγεῖν (Mark 3:20)
      ‘so that they could not so much as eat bread’

An expletive article is systematically visible with kind names, while proper names are either bare or preceded by the article. As mentioned, proper names, in strong D languages, move to D. Therefore, one could assume that Ancient Greek is strong D (as independently proved by the systematic occurrence of the expletive with kind names), and that proper names either raise to D, thus surfacing without any visible article, or they do not, thus surfacing with a visible expletive. Yet, this cannot be the case of Greek. Indeed, as shown in Guardiano (2003; 2006; 2011a; 2011b), movement of proper names to D is unavailable in Ancient (as well as in Modern) Greek: the position of nouns with respect to structured adjectives and genitives shows that no noun is able to move across the DP, suggesting that “N-movement is absolutely bounded within a low projection” (Guardiano 2011a, 195). As such, N-to-D is blocked as well. Thus, assuming that Greek is strong D, all proper names are expected to occur with an expletive. This is in fact precisely what happens in Modern Greek, as it will be seen below. In Ancient Greek, alternations like those in [36a–b] are between a null and a visible expletive (Guardiano 2011a, 195–97), an option only available in null-article (i.e. weak article) languages, where null Ds can be licensed when the noun or another element in the DP incorporates the features usually associated to D, e.g. object-reference for proper names or definiteness for demonstratives, as tentatively suggested in Guardiano (2012).

[35] Generic reading (kind-referential)22
   a. i. ἐπίσκεψαι ποί βλέπων ὁ νομοθέτης τὰ ὀνόματα τίθεται (Crat. 389a, 5–6)
      ‘see now what the lawgiver has in view in giving names’
   ii. *ἐπίσκεψαι ποί βλέπων ὁ νομοθέτης ὀνόματα τίθεται
   b. i. τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι; (Mark 8:27)
      ‘who do men say that I am?’23
   ii. *τίνα με λέγουσιν ἄνθρωποι εἶναι;

[36] Object referential expressions (proper names)
   a. i. ἐπὶ τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῇ Ἀγάθωνος (Symp. 174d, 7 – e, 1)
      ‘to Agathon’s house’

22 Existential (indefinite) reading: Crat. 393 e 2: ὀνόματα ποιοῦντες ‘making (some) names’.
23 Existential (indefinite) reading: John 8, 59: ἤραν γὰρ λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπὶ αὐτὸν ‘therefore/for they took up stones to throw at him’. 
ii. καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης (John 1:32)
‘and John testified’

b. i. φάναι τὸν Ἀγάθωνα (Symp. 175a, 3)
‘said Agathon’

ii. ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων (John 1:28)
‘where John was baptizing’

3.5 Standard Modern Greek

In Standard Modern Greek a visible D is required in order for DPs to get both the anaphoric and the definite reading, i.e., a determiner regularly occurs in D in all definite contexts.

[37] a. i. Ένας σκύλος και μία γάτα συναντήθηκαν στον δρόμο. O σκύλος γάβγιζε της γάτας
‘A dog and a cat met on the street. The dog barked at the cat’

ii. *Σκύλος γάβγιζε γάτας

b. i. Πήρα ένα λεωφορείο. Ο οδηγός μού ζήτησε το εισιτήριο
‘I took a bus. The driver asked me for the ticket’

ii. *Οδηγός μού ζήτησε το εισιτήριο

c. i. Παρατήρησα το φεγγάρι
‘I observed the moon’

ii. *Παρατήρησα φεγγάρι

Bare singulars are always ungrammatical in subject position, usually ungrammatical as objects too, with the exception of mass nouns (and certain cases involving a verb of creation and a bare singular object). Count nouns can be bare only if plural; in the singular they always need a visible determiner in D, i.e., either the definite article or a peculiar determiner that marks singularity24 (strong article).

[38] a. i. Ένας σκύλος και μία γάτα συναντήθηκαν στον δρόμο
‘A dog and a cat met on the street’

ii. *Σκύλος και γάτα συναντήθηκαν στον δρόμο

b. i. Συνάντησα έναν άνθρωπο
‘I met a man’

ii. *Συνάντησα άνθρωπο

c. Συνάντησα ανθρώπους
‘I met men’

d. *Έφαγα κρέας
‘I ate meat’

A visible determiner in D is also required when a nominal expression is interpreted as a kind name, and with proper names. Bare nouns never have referential interpretation.

[39] a. Οι γάτες έχουν πολύ μεγάλη ιδέα για τον εαυτό τους
“Cats think very highly of themselves”25

b. *Γάτες έχουν πολύ μεγάλη ιδέα για τον εαυτό τους

24 As remarked above, the so-called indefinite article is in fact derived from the numeral one.
25 Existential reading: νομίζω ότι χτες τον σκύλο μου τον κυνηγούσαν γάτες ‘I think that (some) cats were chasing my dog yesterday’
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40. a. Ἡ αρχαία Ρώμη λεηλατήθηκε από τοὺς Γότθους
   ‘Ancient Rome was ravaged by Goths’

   b. *Ἀρχαία Ρώμη λεηλατήθηκε από τοὺς Γότθους

   c. *Ῥώμη αρχαία λεηλατήθηκε από τοὺς Γότθους

   d. *Ἡ Ρώμη αρχαία λεηλατήθηκε από τοὺς Γότθους

As remarked above, strong D attracts proper names to D, if the conditions for movement are met. When nouns are blocked in a low area of the DP, movement to D is unavailable (Guardiano & Longobardi 2005). As further pointed out above, in Greek the noun is constrained in a low projection of the DP, since N-movement to the D-area is unavailable; for this reason, proper names must systematically occur with visible expletives. The null-expletive option, available in Ancient Greek (Guardiano 2011a), is not available in Modern Greek because of the strong article that does not allow any null Ds (Guardiano 2003; 2006; 2011a).

4. Summary and Conclusions

Greek is a strong D language, with a peculiarity: the raising of the noun to D is blocked; the consequence is that proper names never move, and systematically co-occur with an expletive article. The apparently free alternation between full and empty Ds in Ancient Greek is due to further properties associated to the licensing of empty Ds (i.e. to weak article).

Diachronic variation manifests itself in the lexicalization of definiteness in D and in the properties associated to strong/weak article. In Homer, all types of nouns can be bare: this suggests that definiteness is not grammaticalized, and that Homeric varieties have a weak article. Here, ὁ, ἡ, τὸ is systematically selected only when a non-nominal expression needs to function as a DP, and presumably also with topical referents; yet, no evidence proves that it is indeed a D-element. In Classical and New Testament Greek ὁ, ἡ, τὸ encodes definite readings (grammaticalized definiteness), like in Modern Greek, where, in addition, a further determiner ἕνας, μια, ἕνα is required with singular count nouns (strong article), which instead can be bare in the other varieties (weak article).

To sum up, the development of the article-system in Greek presents itself as a process of progressive filling of the D position, that is of loss of features on empty Ds. This has been attained through successive steps, summarized in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homer</th>
<th>Classical + New Test. Greek</th>
<th>Modern Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>± gram. topicality</td>
<td>+ (?)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>± gram. partial (anaphoric) def.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>± gram. definiteness</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>± strong article</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>± strong D</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Parameter settings
References

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Perna, E. In this volume. “Typology of Relative Clauses in Ancient Greek”.

