

## TOWARDS A NEW DOCTRINE OF THE ARTICLE IN GREEK: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN PLATO

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THERE ARE FEW FEATURES of a language that cause more problems for non-native speakers than the use of the definite article. Those of us who are native speakers of English have perhaps all had the experience of correcting the usage of non-native speakers and then, when asked for an explanation, or a rule, being unable to produce anything more satisfactory than a statement to the effect that that is the way it is said. In the absence of any native speakers of ancient Greek, it is necessary for those who wish to make sense of the usage of classical Greek to devise rules based upon the usage found in the surviving written texts, and these are the rules that can be found in the standard grammars of ancient Greek. In what follows I should like to suggest that, while there is a great deal of value in these standard grammars, their treatment of the definite article cannot be regarded as complete or authoritative, and that it needs to be supplemented both by further work of a traditional nature and by the application of more recent linguistic methods. The present study is itself based upon only a small sample (see below) of evidence from a single author, and does not pretend to do anything more than raise some questions and suggest some directions in which future research might proceed.

Let us begin with a general observation regarding the way in which the material is presented in the standard grammars. The table of contents of Gildersleeve's *Syntax*<sup>1</sup> can be taken as representative of the organization to be found in grammars generally. There we find the various rubrics according to which the grammar is set out. For example, there are sections concerning the article with abstract nouns, the article in prepositional phrases, the article with predicate nouns. But, while each of these categories, when considered on its own as a description of a discrete phenomenon, is intelligible and satisfactory, it cannot be maintained that the totality of such categories, even if each category were to be investigated exhaustively, represents an adequate description of the use of the definite article. The

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1. B. L. Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 2 vols. (New York, 1900 and 1911). The second volume has the subtitle, "The Syntax of the Simple Sentence Continued, Embracing the Doctrine of the Article." For the importance of the sections on the article, see J. Vaio, "Gildersleeve the Syntactician," in *Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: An American Classicist*, eds., W. W. Briggs, Jr. and H. W. Benario (Baltimore, 1986), p. 36.

reason for this is that these categories are manifestly not *eiusdem generis*. A national appellative can be the object of a preposition; an abstract noun can appear in the predicate; the anaphoric article and the possessive article clearly do not stand on the same level as the article with names of countries. Clearly, then, there are going to be numerous instances in which there is a conflict between or among various of the supposed rules. If these rules are to be applied properly, there must exist some hierarchy of applications, and it would seem to be necessary for this hierarchy to be established and investigated before a comprehensive account can be given of the definite article in Greek. The establishment of this hierarchy must remain the ultimate goal of the grammarian, but we should recognize that it is a very distant goal indeed.

Nor will we come any closer to achieving that goal if we convince ourselves that it is unattainable. And yet the standard grammars sometimes give the impression that we can never know, in some instances, why the article is used or is not used. For example, Smyth says, "The generic article is frequently omitted, especially with abstracts . . . , without appreciable difference in meaning."<sup>2</sup> Now, it may be the case that there is no appreciable difference in meaning between, say, ἡ ἐλπὶς and ἐλπὶς but, in the first place, I am not sure that we are entitled to make that kind of statement without a fairly exhaustive study and, in the second place, to say that there is no appreciable difference in meaning is not the same as saying that the two can be used interchangeably. For there may be determinants other than "meaning" that affect the use of the article, and these determinants need to be investigated more thoroughly than has been done in the past. Statements like Smyth's can be found in Gildersleeve's *Syntax*, which may serve as a convenient point of departure for the observations that follow. In discussing the use of the article with abstract nouns Gildersleeve says (§566), "Everywhere . . . differences that have been set up by grammarians are often imaginary" and, further (§567), "That no vital difference was felt is shown by the easy passage from the articular to the non-articular (anarthrous) form, and by the occasional combination of the anarthrous abstract noun with the articular infinitive." The combination referred to here is exemplified by two quotations from Plato, οὐσίαν λέγεις καὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι καὶ ὁμοιότητα καὶ ἀνομοιότητα (*Tht.* 185C) and τὰς μεθ' ὑγιείας καὶ τοῦ σωφρονεῖν [sc. ἡδονάς] (*Phlb.* 63E). Again, these passages may, indeed, show that there is "no vital difference" between the arthrous and anarthrous expressions, but that is not to say that the article's omission with ὑγιείας and its presence with σωφρονεῖν are arbitrary. As Gildersleeve himself says, the article in the latter case is "simply serving to give the infinitive a case-prefix," something that is not needed with the inflected substantive.

A third Platonic passage is referred to by Gildersleeve in §567 to demonstrate "that no vital difference was felt" between abstract nouns with the article and abstract nouns without, namely *Meno* 99A–100B, where

2. H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by G. M. Messing (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), §1126.

the word ἀρετή is said to occur twice with the article and twice without. Now, it is not entirely clear whether this particular passage was singled out for quotation by Gildersleeve himself or was included on the responsibility of Charles William Emil Miller, with whose cooperation the *Syntax* was prepared and by whom, according to the title-page of Part II, the Doctrine of the Article was “elaborated.”<sup>3</sup> In any event, the selection of this passage would seem to be in close accord with the sentiments of Gildersleeve, who elsewhere says, “He who tries to distinguish between σοφία and ἡ σοφία, ἀρετή and ἡ ἀρετή everywhere in Plato is not wise. The differences that Plato himself makes, Plato himself unmakes.”<sup>4</sup> One hesitates to challenge an assertion of this nature made by a scholar whose knowledge of and sensitivity to the nuances of the Greek language are so amply documented. But it may be worth while to test the validity of Gildersleeve’s statement, particularly since it concerns the use of the article with abstract nouns and particularly since it concerns Plato. In the first place, abstract nouns offer a somewhat clearer vantage point because the number of possible reasons for the presence of the article is more limited in the case of abstract nouns than in that of most other classes of noun. One is less likely, for example, to have to deal with the anaphoric or the possessive article in the case of nouns like δικαιοσύνη or ἀλήθεια. In the second place, Plato’s practice is especially worthy of examination for a variety of reasons: he is a singularly careful and sensitive writer, and there is every reason to believe that he is sensitive and careful in his use of the article; his pages offer a profusion of just those abstract nouns that, as we have seen, are a particularly appropriate object of study; we do not delude ourselves too much, I think, in regarding the state of his text as better than that of most other Greek prose authors; and the nature of the dialectic in which he specializes allows frequent opportunities for the discovery of “minimal pairs,” which can be of great value for linguistic investigation.

Let us begin by examining the passage mentioned just above, *Meno* 99A–100B. As it turns out, this was a particularly unfortunate choice of passages to illustrate Plato’s indifference in the use of the article. In this

3. In the preface (*Syntax*, 2:iii), where Gildersleeve is careful to express himself with the utmost tact, he says, “whereas in the first part the contributions of Professor Miller were merely supplementary, in the second part, and especially in the treatment of the article, the collection and the sorting of the examples have been carried out with his characteristic fulness and accuracy, so that I desire that all credit be given to him for the value of this segment of the work as a repository of facts.” I take this to mean that the illustrative quotations (the “repository of facts”) were selected primarily by Miller, whereas the narrative, which bears the unmistakable imprint of Gildersleeve’s style, is by Gildersleeve, who says, furthermore, “the text is with some slight exceptions my own.” (In “Problems in Greek Syntax: II. The Article,” *AJP* 23 [1902]: 122, n. 1, Gildersleeve refers to a statement that appears in §514 of the *Syntax* as having been written in 1893, and in a letter written in 1904 he says, “I have said everything I want to say about Greek Syntax—and other men can collect examples as well as I can”: *The Letters of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve*, ed. W. W. Briggs, Jr. [Baltimore, 1987], p. 259.) For Gildersleeve’s dissatisfaction with Miller’s collaboration, see R. L. Fowler, “The Gildersleeve Archive,” in Briggs and Benario, *Gildersleeve*, p. 71, with p. 97, n. 55.

4. “The Article,” p. 122. Gildersleeve goes on to ask: “How can we distinguish between οὐσία and ἡ οὐσία when the introduction of an articular infinitive and an oblique case destroys the possibility of distinction?” This is obviously a reference to Pl. *Tht.* 185C (see above), which is quoted immediately after *Meno* 99A–100B in §567 of the *Syntax*.

passage the word ἀρετή occurs six times, twice with the article and four times without. The four occurrences of anarthrous ἀρετή occasion no surprise, as we are accustomed to seeing abstract nouns without the article. The two appearances of the article, however, deserve attention and are, indeed, singled out by Gildersleeve. What is unfortunate, though, is that both instances are uncertain on account of difficulties with the text. At 99A both Bluck and Sharples print οὐδ' ἐπιστήμη δὴ ἔτι γίνεται ἡ ἀρετή and, if this is what Plato in fact wrote, we do indeed need somehow to account for the presence of the article. But Burnet and Merkelbach print ἐπιστήμη and, if this is the correct text, the article is expected, even required, in order to distinguish the subject noun from the predicate noun.<sup>5</sup> The fact is that we cannot be certain what Plato intended here and, until we are certain, we are not justified in using this passage to illustrate statements concerning Plato's use of the article.<sup>6</sup> At 100B all recent editors print θεῖα μοῖρα ἡμῖν φαίνεται παραγίγνομένη ἡ ἀρετή . . . ὅτι τινι τρόπῳ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραγίνεται ἀρετή. If this is the genuine text, then it is difficult indeed to discern a distinction between ἡ ἀρετή and ἀρετή. But one manuscript (F) omits the article in the first instance, and we must ask ourselves whether or not this manuscript correctly represents Plato's intention. Neither palaeographical considerations nor the character of this particular manuscript gives a clear answer. For, in a case like this, both haplography and dittography are equally plausible explanations of corruption. Nor is the evidence of F automatically to be discarded in the face of the evidence of BTW (which manuscripts are representatives of a single family, so that their agreement is of no particular significance beyond its indication of the reading of their archetype). While it is true that "F is remarkable for its very frequent addition or omission of small words,"<sup>7</sup> it is also true that this manuscript "remains our sole or our principal authority for a large number of self-evidently sound readings."<sup>8</sup> So, for example, I note that at *Gorgias* 465E F has added the article in the phrase ἐν ψυχῇ, wrongly, as is shown by the parallel phrase ἐν σώματι. But, by the same token, on two other occasions in the *Gorgias* F differs from other manuscripts in including the article when it is not clear that F is mistaken. At 451A and 454A F reads ἡ ῥητορική while the other primary manuscripts read ῥητορική. On the former passage Dodds comments that the article "is often omitted with the names of τέχναι." But it is more often present, so that, for example, of the 86 occurrences of the noun ῥητορική in the text of the *Gorgias*, only 13 (leaving out of account the two in question)

5. In this case γίνεται = "is, as it turns out." Compare, e.g., *Ion* 532A οὐκοῦν ὁ αὐτὸς γίνεται δεινὸς περὶ ἀμφοτέρων, 535A οὐκοῦν ἐρμηνέων ἐρμηνῆς γίνεσθε, *Gorg.* 497A ὥστε ἕτερον γίνεται τὸ ἡδὺ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, *Euthd.* 298E ὥστε σὸς πατὴρ γίνεται ὁ κύων, *Resp.* 576B οὐκοῦν οὗτος γίνεται ὅς . . . , 597B οὐκοῦν τριτταὶ τινες κλῖναι αὐταὶ γίνονται.

6. It is interesting to note that the presence of the article with ἀρετή has not, as far as I am aware, entered into the discussion concerning the relative merits of ἐπιστήμη and ἐπιστήμη.

7. R. S. Bluck, ed., *Plato's "Meno"* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 139.

8. E. R. Dodds, ed., *Plato. "Gorgias"* (Oxford, 1959), p. 47. For a full description and characterization of F (= Vindobon. suppl. gr. 39), see G. Boter, *The Textual Tradition of Plato's "Republic,"* *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 107 (Leiden, 1989), pp. 99–110.

are anarthrous. Of these 13, seven are necessarily anarthrous as being predicate nouns (450B, 450E quater, 451A, 465C) and one (502D) is accompanied by indefinite τις.<sup>9</sup> Arguments, then, both for and against the readings of F, at *Gorgias* 451A and 454A, as well as at *Meno* 100B, are possible. Nor do I think we know enough at this time about Plato's practice in the use of the article to be confident in making a decision in these instances.

What we must do, then, is see what we can learn about Plato's practice in the use of the article. Fortunately, in most other instances there is much greater uniformity among the manuscripts than in the cases we have been considering. It should not, of course, be regarded as certain that where the manuscripts speak with one voice they are speaking the truth. But the manuscripts<sup>10</sup> are all we have, and where they are unanimous they must be presumed to be correct unless convincing reasons can be produced to show otherwise. Where they disagree we can be certain of only this, that some, at least, of them are incorrect. And, if we wish to make statements about Plato's practice, we must first of all avoid basing those statements on passages in which we know that some manuscripts are wrong, nor can we be sure which, if any, are right. The present study does not pretend to be anything more than a first beginning. Even to examine exhaustively the use of the article in a single author requires a study the length of a dissertation and, until several such studies have been adequately and accurately carried out, there can be no hope of giving a full account of the use of the definite article in ancient, or even classical, Greek. What I have done is to look at the way in which the article is used in the case of a few selected words or constructions in the whole of Plato or in a section of the corpus. I have also examined exhaustively the use of the article in the *Gorgias*, choosing that dialogue in particular because of the excellence of Dodds' text and the accuracy of his collations. It is hoped that the results of this study will prove to be representative of Plato's (and classical Greek) prose usage in general. But that cannot be known until a great deal of further work is done, work which, it is hoped, the present study will inspire.

We may begin by considering the behavior of the article with the word ἀρετή. According to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*<sup>11</sup> the word occurs 649 times in Burnet's Oxford text of Plato, but I have chosen to examine only the 194 occurrences in the OCT of *Protagoras* (57), *Gorgias* (17), and *Meno* (120).<sup>12</sup> In these three dialogues the word is arthrous 73 times (38 percent). The first thing to notice is the difference between ἀρετή and ῥητορικὴ: as we have seen, there is a strong tendency for the latter to be arthrous unless there are overriding contextual constraints, and it is

9. The remaining instances are 449C, 462E, 500C, 520B, 522D.

10. By "manuscripts" I mean, of course, in addition to the ancient and medieval manuscripts of Plato, the manuscripts that preserve the indirect tradition as well.

11. Searches were conducted on an Ibycus computer, using the CDU program.

12. For the reporting of manuscript readings I have relied on Dodds' text for *Gorgias*, on the texts of R. W. Sharples (Warminster, 1985) and Bluck for *Meno*, and on Burnet's OCT for *Protagoras* and the other works in the corpus.

arthrous, for example, in 83 percent of its occurrences in the *Gorgias*. This difference is instructive in two respects. In the first place, it reminds us that the category “abstract noun” is problematic and unsatisfactory.<sup>13</sup> In the second place, it shows us that in some instances historical considerations enter into the question of the use of the article. For ῥητορικὴ is, of course, originally an adjective,<sup>14</sup> and the presence of the article must be accounted for (at least in part) by the fact that ἡ ῥητορική was still felt to a certain extent to represent the expression ἡ ῥητορική τέχνη. The word and the profession were still relatively new in Plato’s day, in contrast to the venerable arts of, say, medicine and athletic training. And so we find that, of the 110 occurrences of the noun ἱατρική in the Oxford text of Plato, only 43 (or 39 percent) are arthrous; of the 85 occurrences of γυμναστική, only 15 (or 18 percent) are arthrous. In other words, Plato’s use of the article (at least in terms of mere numbers) with ἀρετή is comparable to his use with ἱατρική, but not to his use with ῥητορική. It is reasonable to assume, however, that, had Plato been born fifty years earlier, his usage in this regard would have been different.

The next thing to notice about Plato’s use of the article with ἀρετή is how easily many of the 73 occurrences of the article are accounted for by contextual constraints. For example, the article is regular when the noun is accompanied by a form of οὗτος<sup>15</sup> (7 times), by a form of ἄλλος in the sense “the rest” (6 times), by the genitive of a demonstrative, reflexive, or reciprocal pronoun (5 times), by a form of αὐτός in the sense “the same” (3 times), or when it is needed to distinguish the subject from the predicate (8 times). And in other instances the presence of the article occasions no surprise, as, for example, at *Meno* 72A ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐστίν, ὡσαύτως δέ . . . καὶ ἡ κακία, where the article is possessive,<sup>16</sup> and 72C οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν, where the article is anaphoric: “And the same is the case with the [various] excellences [that you mentioned in 72A].” In other words, in the great majority of instances (approximately 80 percent) the noun ἀρετή behaves pretty much in the same way other

13. Indeed, linguists today have generally abandoned this category. See, for example, J. Lyons (*Semantics*, vol. 2 [Cambridge, 1977], pp. 442–43), who uses the terms “first-order entities” (i.e., “physical objects”), “second-order entities” (i.e., “events, processes, states-of-affairs, etc., which are located in time and which, in English, are said to occur or take place, rather than to exist”), and “third-order entities” (i.e., “such abstract entities as propositions, which are outside space and time”). Lyons goes on to note (p. 444) that “second-order entities, though they may be denoted by what are traditionally called abstract nouns, are clearly not abstract in the sense that something that has no spatiotemporal location is abstract.” It should be further noted that the same noun can denote entities of various orders, e.g., in English, “The student handed in his *assignment* to the teacher” and “There was disagreement over the *assignment* of blame.” And we may even speak of different levels of abstraction in the relevant nouns of “Socrates was devoted to the *truth*” and “I question the *truth* of your assertion.”

14. For a full treatment of this class of adjectives, see A. Ammann, *-IKOΣ bei Platon* (diss. Bern, 1952).

15. For the exceptions, the majority of which fall into fairly well defined categories (with proper names, with definite numbers, with substantives followed by a relative clause), see J. E. Harry, “The Omission of the Article with Substantives after οὗτος, ὅδε, ἐκεῖνος in Prose,” *TAPA* 29 (1898): 48–64.

16. “Each of us has his excellence and his defect.” Compare *Phd.* 73A εἰ μὴ ἦν ποῦ ἡμῖν ἡ ψυχὴ, *Cra.* 395A τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ κατὰ φύσιν τὸ ὄνομα εἶναι, 395C ὁρθῶς αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα κεῖται (*et saepe*), *Dem.* 8.53 περιγίγνεται ὑμῖν μὲν ἡ σχολή . . . τούτοις δ’ αἱ χάριτες καὶ ὁ μισθὸς ὁ τούτων, *Xen. Cyr.* 8.2.7 δι-αμένει δ’ ἔτι καὶ νῦν τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἡ πολυδωρία. These examples show that H. Richards, *Platonica* (London, 1911), p. 44, was mistaken to delete the articles before ἀρετή and κακία.

nouns behave, that is, it is either anarthrous or, if it is accompanied by the article, the reasons for the presence of the article are fairly obvious. It is the remaining instances (approximately 20 percent) that we must now examine, to see whether the use of the article is arbitrary or conforms to some pattern or patterns.

Of the remaining instances ten share one obvious feature: they are instances in which the noun ἀρετή appears in the genitive case and is dependent upon another noun. In eight of the ten instances the noun on which the genitive depends is itself arthrous.<sup>17</sup> This does, indeed, correspond to a tendency that appears to hold true in Greek generally, namely that, when one noun in the genitive depends upon another noun, either both nouns are arthrous or both are anarthrous. The following pairs will illustrate the normal pattern:

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) τῶν ἄλλων μορίων τῆς ἀρετῆς | ( <i>Prt.</i> 359B) |
| ἄλλο τι μόνιον ἀρετῆς           | ( <i>Meno</i> 78E)  |
| (2) ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς πονηρία         | ( <i>Grg.</i> 477C) |
| σύμπασα ψυχῆς πονηρία           | ( <i>ibid.</i> )    |
| (3) τῆς τοῦ σώματος θεραπείας   | ( <i>Grg.</i> 464B) |
| ἐστὶν σώματος θεραπεία          | ( <i>Grg.</i> 517E) |

And this pattern holds in 30 of the 34 cases (88 percent) in *Protagoras*, *Meno*, and *Gorgias* where ἀρετῆς depends upon another noun.<sup>18</sup> In other words, with few exceptions, either both nouns have the article or both dispense with the article. And the same holds true in approximately 80 percent of the adnominal genitives of all nouns in the *Gorgias*. I doubt that all of the exceptions can be easily explained, but we should at least be aware that they are exceptions, for among them may lurk valuable clues to the understanding of Plato's style. For example, one of the exceptions is ὁ δήμου γὰρ ἔρω, ὃ Καλλίκλεις, ἐνὼν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ σῇ . . . (*Grg.* 513C). We would expect ὁ τοῦ δήμου ἔρω, but the disappointment of that expectation leads us to inquire into Plato's motivation, and that inquiry reveals an instance of Plato's exquisite humor. For the omission of the article here subtly reminds us of the joke that Socrates had earlier (481D) made, to the effect that Callicles is a lover τοῦ τε Ἀθηναίων δήμου καὶ τοῦ Πυριλάμπους, that is, of the Athenian *demos* and of Demos, the son of Pyrilampes.<sup>19</sup>

It may be possible to discover similar explanations for some or all of the other exceptions as well. At any rate, we seem to be dealing with a sort of

17. The two exceptions are *Prt.* 330A ἐστὶν γὰρ οὖν καὶ ταῦτα μέρη τῆς ἀρετῆς and 359A πέντε ὄντων μορίων τῆς ἀρετῆς. At *Prt.* 330E the main manuscripts read ἐδόξατέ μοι φάναι τῆς ἀρετῆς μέρη εἶναι οὕτως ἔχοντα, but (according to Burnet) Ven. 189 reads τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς, which must be correct, for the article "can hardly be dispensed with, since the assertion was made not of parts of virtue, but of *the*, i.e., all the parts" (J. and A. M. Adam, eds., *Platonis "Protagoras"* [Cambridge, 1893], ad loc.).

18. In addition to the two exceptions given in the previous note, only the following do not adhere to the pattern: *Meno* 93A διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγόνασιν τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρετῆς and 93C εἴπερ τις ἄλλος τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλος ἦν. Here the genitives must be arthrous, as they appear with a reflexive pronoun, while the nouns on which they depend must be anarthrous, as they are predicate nouns.

19. Compare, e.g., *Symp.* 182C ὁ γὰρ Ἀριστογείτονος ἔρω καὶ ἡ Ἀρμοδίου φιλία. In this instance the genitives are subjective, rather than objective, but that has no bearing on the treatment of the article.

“assimilation,” whereby one noun imposes upon another its own articular requirement. Gildersleeve perceptively noted the existence of a similar assimilation in the case of the names of gods,<sup>20</sup> but the present study seems to indicate that it is of wider application.<sup>21</sup> We have seen that assimilation takes place in the case of adnominal genitives; it also occurs in the case of attributive prepositional phrases. Consider the following instances:

- |     |                               |                     |
|-----|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| (4) | τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς            | ( <i>Prt.</i> 360E) |
|     | τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπόκρισιν | ( <i>Meno</i> 75A)  |
|     | τῇ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς σκέψει     | ( <i>Meno</i> 97B)  |

Here we have three instances of an abstract noun governed by a preposition. Since, according to Gildersleeve and other grammarians, abstract nouns as well as nouns governed by prepositions can dispense with the article, we should expect these nouns to be anarthrous. And, indeed, elsewhere in the three dialogues that we are considering, when ἀρετή is governed by a preposition it is anarthrous 18 out of 27 times.<sup>22</sup> On the occasions when it is arthrous, the presence of the article can generally be readily accounted for, either by “assimilation,” as in the cases in (4), or in other ways, as in ἐν τῇ ἄλλῃ πολιτικῇ ἀρετῇ (*Prt.* 323B) or περὶ ταύτης τῆς ἀρετῆς (323C). An apparent exception is *Meno* 75B ἐθελήσεις . . . εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς; but there the appearance of the article may be accounted for by its presence in 75A, quoted in (4), to which this passage seems to be referring.

The only other instance of arthrous ἀρετή governed by a preposition in these three dialogues that requires comment is the following:

- |     |                          |                     |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------|
| (5) | ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὅτι ἐστίν | ( <i>Prt.</i> 361C) |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------|

This is a particularly interesting and instructive case. There does not appear to be any obvious reason Plato should have chosen to express himself in this way rather than by saying ἐπὶ ἀρετὴν ὅτι ἐστίν. But I should like to suggest an explanation that may, in fact, enable us to account for several of the other cases of arthrous ἀρετή that we have not yet been able to explain using the concept of “assimilation” or the categories of traditional grammar. In (5) the noun governed by the preposition anticipates the subject of the following clause in a manner analogous to what we see in the phenomenon traditionally called “prolepsis.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, this phenomenon occurs twice in the

20. *Syntax*, §541: “When the name of a god in the genitive depends upon an articular substantive it is generally accompanied by the article, but if the governing substantive is without the article, the name of the god is anarthrous too.” Note also §543: “When an epithet is added to the name of a god, both take the article or neither.”

21. I am inclined to attribute to assimilation, for example, the behavior of the article at *Grg.* 477C–E, where the noun δίκαια occurs four times, with arthrous and anarthrous forms alternating. In the first instance (C2) the noun lacks the article because it is in partitive apposition to the anarthrous expression τριττάς πονηρίας; in the second (C3) it is arthrous under the influence of the preceding τούτων τῶν πονηριῶν; in the third (C9) it is anarthrous because it is parallel to σύμπασα ψυχῆς πονηρία; in the fourth (E5) the article appears because the noun is now parallel to ἡ ἄλλη ψυχῆς πονηρία.

22. I exclude *Prt.* 340D, which is a quotation from Hesiod.

23. See most recently S. R. Slings, “Written and Spoken Language: An Exercise in the Pragmatics of the Greek Sentence,” *CP* 87 (1992): 95–109, esp. 105–8. Slings (105) quotes the classic instance: καταμάθετε



sentence from which (5) is taken: βουλοίμην ἂν . . . ἡμᾶς ἐξελεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὅτι ἐστίν, καὶ πάλιν ἐπισκέψασθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ εἴτε διδασκὸν εἴτε μὴ διδασκόν. Now, the phenomenon of prolepsis has been the subject of a number of studies recently, and several examples of the phenomenon have been cited and discussed.<sup>24</sup> What is of interest, and what has not been noted by the authors of these various studies,<sup>25</sup> is that, when prolepsis causes the displacement of a noun, that noun is frequently arthrous. In Plato, for instance, we find (with abstract nouns):

- (6) τάχ' ἂν κατιδοίμεν τὴν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀδικίαν  
 ὅπῃ ποτὲ ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐμφύονται (Resp. 372E)  
 ὀψιμαθὴ γεγονότα τῆς ἀδικίας οἷόν ἐστιν (Resp. 409B)

And with these we may contrast some passages that are syntactically similar to (5), but with a more straightforward construction:

- (7) ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετῇ (Meno 86C)  
 ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετῇ (Meno 100B)  
 εἰδέναι ὅτι ποτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετῇ (Lach. 190B)

We may also compare the following:

- (8) ζητεῖν ἀρετῇ ὅτι ἐστίν (Meno 81E)  
 εἰπεῖν ἀνδρεία τί ποτ' ἐστίν (Lach. 190D)

In (8), as the nominative case indicates, we are not dealing with “prolepsis” but, as A.-M. Chanet says, with “une antéposition pure et simple.”<sup>26</sup>

In (5) and (6) we find the definite article; in (7) and (8) we do not. What is the difference? And what is the connection between “prolepsis” and the occurrence of the definite article? The recent studies that have been devoted to “prolepsis” and related phenomena have, appropriately, examined these phenomena from the point of view of that branch of linguistics known as pragmatics. Pragmatics may be defined as that “sector of the study of meaning [that] concerns itself with what utterances achieve in interactive communication; that is, with how speaker works on hearer in real exchanges.”<sup>27</sup> The most important concepts of pragmatics, namely “topic” and “focus,” are best introduced by the Dutch linguist Simon C. Dik:

By pragmatic functions . . . we understand functions which specify the informational status of the constituents, in relation to the wider communicative setting in which they are used. The main parameters along which . . . pragmatic functions can be distinguished are

τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς αὐξάνουσιν (Matt. 6:28). I am particularly indebted to Slings' article, which provided, if I may be forgiven the expression, a valuable focus for my understanding of the definite article.

24. See the references in Slings, “Written and Spoken Language,” p. 105, n. 46.

25. But note Slings' comment (“Written and Spoken Language,” p. 99), “Topics are typically expressed by means of nouns modified by a definite article.” For the terms “topic” and “focus,” see below.

26. A.-M. Chanet, “Objet propositionnel, prolepse et objet externe,” in *In the Footsteps of Raphael Kühner*, ed. A. Rijksbaron et al. (Amsterdam, 1988), p. 70. Chanet cites both examples in (8) and contrasts them with prolepsis, giving as an example of the latter a sentence of her own devising: ἐθέλω ζητεῖν ἀρετὴν ὅτι ἐστίν. But I wonder, given what we have seen, if τὴν ἀρετὴν might not have been more likely.

27. N. E. Collinge, “Thoughts on the Pragmatics of Ancient Greek,” *PCPS* 34 (1988): 1. An excellent introduction to the field can be found in S. C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge, 1983).

"topicality" (= characterizing "the things we talk about") and "focality" (= characterizing the most important or salient parts of what we say about the topical things).<sup>28</sup>

Pragmatic studies of "prolepsis" suggest that the phenomenon serves to clarify communication by articulating topic, which typically consists of given, or old, information, and focus, which is concerned to provide new information about the topic.<sup>29</sup> What is relevant to our own concern is that the definite article tends to be more at home with topic than with focus. In terms of the categories of traditional grammar, for example, it is clear that the anaphoric article will occur in conjunction with given, or old, information rather than with new information. Further, in a sentence that contains a subject noun and a predicate noun, it is very likely that the former will have topical status and the latter will have the status of focus. And, indeed, as grammarians have always recognized, the definite article serves, in Greek, to distinguish subject noun from predicate noun. In fact, in terms that provide a remarkable anticipation of pragmatic theory, Gildersleeve (*Syntax* §666) comments: "As the article serves to point out that which is supposed to be already present to the mind and the predicate generally introduces something new, the article is not much used with the predicate. . . ."<sup>30</sup>

What we see, then, in (5) is a topicalization of that which is denoted by the expression ἀρετήν. This topicalization is carried out not by word order alone, as the examples in (8) show, but by the presence of the definite article.<sup>31</sup> And this topicalizing function of the definite article can be seen in other instances as well. Consider, for example, the following pair:

- |                                            |             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| (9) τὴν ἀρετὴν φῆς διδασκὸν εἶναι          | (Prt. 329B) |
| διδασκὸν καὶ παρασκευαστὸν ἡγοῦνται ἀρετὴν | (Prt. 324C) |

It should not be thought that there is a necessary connection between word order and the presence or absence of the article. What is suggested here is that there are two means of topicalization in Greek, one involving

28. S. C. Dik, *The Theory of Functional Grammar*, vol. 1 (Dordrecht, 1989), p. 264.

29. See especially Slings, "Written and Spoken Language," pp. 105–7.

30. It is a matter of considerable interest that Gildersleeve was, from 1879 until 1884, a colleague at Johns Hopkins of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), this hemisphere's most profound and original philosopher. For Peirce is widely recognized as a thinker who anticipated pragmatic theory with his concept of "index" and with his definition of "the subject of the assertion" in terms similar to those used by modern linguists to define topic (see *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vol. 2, ed. C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss [Cambridge, Mass., 1960], pp. 191–93; for Peirce as a harbinger of modern pragmatics, see, e.g., Lyons, *Semantics*, 2:637; Levinson, *Pragmatics*, p. 57; L. R. Horn, "Pragmatic Theory," in *Linguistics: The Cambridge Survey*, vol. 1, ed. F. J. Newmeyer [Cambridge, 1988], p. 116). It would be well worth while to investigate the intellectual connections between these two great men, who had a cordial, but apparently not friendly, relationship: M. H. Fisch and J. I. Cope, "Peirce at the Johns Hopkins University," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. P. P. Wiener and F. H. Young (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 304. I note, for example, that there is a striking resemblance between what Peirce has to say about pronouns (*Collected Papers*, 2:163, n. 1) and what Gildersleeve wrote on the subject in his *Latin Grammar* (New York, 1872), §97.

31. Compare Slings, "Written and Spoken Language," p. 105, n. 45, who denies to instances like those in (8) the description "prolepsis" on the grounds that this "looks more like a Focus than a Theme construction" (Slings distinguishes, p. 106, between topic and "theme," a distinction that is irrelevant for our purposes; the definite article is characteristic more of topic and theme than of focus or rheme.) The absence of the article in (8) would seem to support Slings' suggestion.

word order<sup>32</sup> and one involving the use of the definite article. Often these two means will coincide and reinforce one another, as in (6) and the first example in (9). But the use of fronting to effect topicalization is characteristic especially of languages with relatively fixed word order, and the word order of ancient Greek is notoriously fluid.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, an alternative means of topicalization was available. (This means should not surprise us, given the history of the definite article in Greek, which is in origin a demonstrative pronoun, and given the association, noted above, of the article with subject nouns as opposed to predicate nouns.) An excellent example of this topicalizing capacity of the definite article is provided by the opening sentence of the *Meno*:

- (10)  $\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \mu\omicron\iota\ \epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\iota\nu,\ \acute{\omega}\ \Sigma\acute{\omega}\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\varsigma,\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha\ \delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta};$  (Meno 70A)

Since this is the beginning of a conversation the article obviously cannot be anaphoric. It is used with the noun because that which the noun denotes is the topic, not only of this sentence, but of the entire conversation that follows.<sup>34</sup> The reason the noun is not fronted is, I think, because the predicate ( $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ ) bears a degree of emphasis that Plato did not wish to diminish. The same explanation seems to cover the following instances as well, in most of which the emphasis on the predicate is made explicit by some specific lexical item:

- (11)  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi\epsilon\rho\ \eta\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\ \delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta};$  (Meno 93E)  
 $\epsilon\pi\iota\delta\epsilon\iota\zeta\alpha\iota\ \acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta},$  (Prt. 320B)  
 $\alpha\iota\sigma\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \mu\epsilon\nu\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu,\ \acute{\epsilon}\phi\eta,\ \epsilon\iota\eta\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\epsilon\iota\acute{\alpha}^{\circ}$  (Prt. 350B)  
 $\acute{\omega}\ \tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\pi\omega\ \mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\sigma\tau^{\circ}\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\ \delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \phi\alpha\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\eta\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta}.$  (Prt. 361B)  
 $\alpha\iota\sigma\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \delta\eta\ \phi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota\ \tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\lambda\alpha\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}\nu,$  (Grg. 492A)

This particular type of expression, in which we have a masculine or feminine subject and a neuter adjective as predicate, has proved most interesting to investigate. I have examined well over fifty instances in Plato. In nearly half the instances the subject noun is arthrous. In nearly all the instances in which the noun is arthrous, the noun occurs in either clause-initial or, as in (10) and (11), clause-final position.<sup>35</sup> This would seem to support the suggestion that the article in these instances serves as a means of topicalization. Not enough work has yet been done, either on Greek

32. "Fronting," or "left-dislocation," is a widely recognized means of topicalization in various languages. For Greek, see R. S. Cervin, *Word Order in Ancient Greek* (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1990), pp. 66–94.

33. I refer here to the order in which major constituents of a sentence (object, subject, verb) occur, an order that is by no means fixed (see Cervin, *Word Order*, pp. 1–33). There are, of course, numerous rules regarding the placement of certain types of words, such as enclitics and postpositives; see K. J. Dover, *Greek Word Order* (Cambridge, 1960) and, most recently, M. H. B. Marshall, *Verbs, Nouns, and Postpositives in Attic Prose* (Edinburgh, 1987).

34. Indeed, the title of the dialogue, according to our manuscripts, is  $\text{Μένων η περί ἀρετῆς}$ . Such thematic subtitles are appended to the titles of all the Platonic dialogues and may date from as early as 300 B.C.; see J. A. Philip, "The Platonic Corpus," *Phoenix* 24 (1970): 302.

35. In the few exceptions the article is easily accounted for on grounds other than topicalization: in *Grg.* 510E the article with  $\eta\ \text{παρασκευῆς}$  is possessive (see above, n. 13). In 460E and 462C the noun is  $\eta\ \text{ῥητορικῆ}$ , which, as we have seen, regularly takes the article. (In 460E the article is omitted by F, which I suspect has here transmitted the correct reading; see below.)

word order or on the pragmatics of ancient Greek, to be certain that clause-initial and clause-final position are the appropriate places for topical material, but it is reasonable to assume that this is the case. These are, for example, the two proper locations for topical material in modern Spanish.<sup>36</sup> Nor is it controversial to suggest that clause-initial position, at least, is appropriate for topical material in ancient Greek.<sup>37</sup> But a few examples may suffice to establish the possibility that topic may be found in final position as well:

- (12) σκέψασθαι . . . τί ποτ' ἐστὶν αὐτό, ἡ ἀρετή. (Prt. 360E)  
 ἀγαθὸν αὐτό φαμεν εἶναι, τὴν ἀρετήν, (Meno 87D)  
 ὄντινα δέοι καλεῖν τὸν Γοργίαν.<sup>38</sup> (Grg. 448E)

At the very least, I think we are justified in asserting that the article is more likely to appear with nouns in final position than with nouns occurring within clauses. The following pairs suggest that this is the case:

- (13) περὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, (Grg. 452A)  
 κρίνεις σὺ μέγιστον ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθὸν εἶναι πλοῦτον; (Grg. 452C)  
 (14) οὐ γὰρ ἅμα δῆπου ὕγιαίνει τε καὶ νοσεῖ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, (Grg. 495E)  
 ἅμα τε ἀπαλλάττεται ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἅμα ἔχει (Grg. 496C)  
 (15) ἐθελήσεις . . . εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς; (Meno 75B)  
 μυριάκις γε περὶ ἀρετῆς παμπόλλους λόγους εἶρηκα (Meno 80B)

There is another feature of these expressions, in which there are a masculine or feminine subject and a neuter adjective as predicate, that is of particular interest. And this feature also supports the hypothesis that the definite article can serve to identify topic. The feature that I am referring to is the avoidance of arthrous nouns in negative sentences. I have found only two instances of arthrous nouns in such sentences when they are negative and, interestingly, there is manuscript variation in both. At *Protagoras* 361A the first hand of T reads λέγων ὅτι οὐ διδακτόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετή, but Burnet follows B, W, and a later hand of T in omitting the article. At *Gorgias* 460E all manuscripts except F read οὐδέ ποτ' ἂν εἴη ἡ ῥητορικὴ ἄδικον πρᾶγμα. This is the reading adopted by Dodds, but I think the presence of the negative makes it likely that we should follow F in omitting the article. The following pairs will illustrate the pattern:

- (16) ἐπιδείξαι ὡς διδακτόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετή (Prt. 320B)  
 λέγων ὡς οὐ διδακτόν ἀρετή (Prt. 361A)  
 (17) τὴν ἀνδρείαν καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ταυτὸν εἶναι (Prt. 350D)  
οὐ ταυτὸν εἶναι θάρσος τε καὶ ἀνδρείαν (Prt. 351A)

36. H. Contreras, *A Theory of Word Order With Special Reference to Spanish* (Amsterdam, 1976), pp. 81–82, 99–101.

37. See Cervin, *Word Order*, p. 66.

38. Contrast 449A τίνα Γοργίαν καλεῖν χρὴ ἡμᾶς. When interlocutors in Plato's dialogues refer to one another, the names are usually anarthrous; see C. Schmidt, *De articulo in nominibus propriis apud Atticos scriptores pedestres* (diss. Kiel, 1890), pp. 43–46; J. I. Beare, "Waddell's *Parmenides*," *Hermathena* 9 (1896): 197–200.

- (18) ἡ δ' ὁσιότης οἷον μὴ δίκαιον (Prt. 331A)  
οὐκ ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁσιότης οἷον δίκαιον εἶναι πρᾶγμα (ibid.)
- (19) λυσιτελέστερον ἡ ἀδικία τῆς δικαιοσύνης (Resp. 354B)  
οὐδέποτε ἄρα . . . λυσιτελέστερον ἀδικία δικαιοσύνης (Resp. 354A)

The significance of this dissociation of article and negative lies in the fact that, in general, negatives are much more closely associated with focus (or rheme<sup>39</sup>) than with topic (or theme). There is an obvious common-sense explanation for this situation. Those things about which discourse takes place (topic or theme) have a strong tendency to be things that the speaker deems to exist (and that he expects the hearer to accept or recognize as existing).<sup>40</sup> Even in sentences that affirm the non-existence of an entity, the negative is part of focus rather than of topic, as we can see from the second sentence in each of the following pairs:

- (20) God doesn't exist.  
 God—he doesn't exist.
- (21) We have no bananas.  
 Bananas—we have none.

Furthermore, as (21) reminds us, there is a negative correlation between expressions like “no bananas” or “no hope” and the definite article. This dissociation of article and negative is not, of course, absolute. “Non-existence” can be a topic or a theme (and, in Greek, will even be arthrous: τὸ μὴ ὄν) and non-existent entities can be arthrous (e.g., “The unicorn does not exist”). But these are special cases, and it remains true that, for the most part, language users are not accustomed to using negatives and the definite article in conjunction. The sentences in (16)–(19) suggest that the presence of a negative can have an inhibiting effect on the use of the definite article in Greek.

We find the same effect on another level as well. Consider the following pairs:

- (22) μετὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ (Phd. 66A)  
 ἄνευ λογισμοῦ (Resp. 586D)
- (23) σὺν τοῖς νόμοις (Leg. 958D)  
 ἄνευ νόμων (Pol. 293E)
- (24) μετὰ τῆς ψυχῆς (Phd. 107C)  
 ἄνευ ψυχῆς (Phlb. 30C)

39. D. Panhuis, “Prolepsis in Greek as a Discourse Strategy,” *Glotta* 62 (1984): 35: “The negation is a strong rhematizer.” See also Panhuis, *The Communicative Perspective in the Sentence: A Study of Latin Word Order* (Amsterdam, 1982), p. 137; Contreras, *Theory of Word Order*, pp. 55–57.

40. Compare Lyons, *Semantics*, 2:655–56: “The definite article, when it is used deictically . . . , is to be understood as instructing, or inviting, the addressee to find the referent in the environment, without however directing his attention to any particular region of it. In so far as the very fact of pointing to something commits the person who is pointing to a belief in the existence of what he is pointing at, the use of a deictic pronoun carries with it the implication or presupposition of existence.”

In these instances we are not dealing, strictly speaking, with negation, but with inclusion and exclusion. The effect, however, on the use of the article is the same. I have examined Plato's use of ἄνευ governing a noun—proper names have been excluded—and have found that the noun is arthrous only 15 percent of the time. As we would expect, however, from (22) and (24), μετά + genitive is likely to be found somewhat more frequently with the article. And, indeed, in Plato, when μετά governs a noun in the genitive the noun is arthrous 27 percent of the time. Now, neither of these percentages is very high, and neither figure challenges the “rule” that a noun governed by a preposition may dispense with the article. But the fact is that there is a difference—genitive nouns governed by μετά in Plato are almost twice as likely to be arthrous as genitive nouns governed by ἄνευ—and, again, there is an obvious commonsense explanation for this difference: one is more likely to encounter the possessive or the anaphoric article with a noun governed by a preposition meaning “with” than with a noun governed by a preposition meaning “without.” But the effect of this on the mind of the user of the language is further to associate entities or concepts that have positive connotations with the use of the article, and to associate negative concepts with absence of the article. And this brings us to our final examples:

- |      |                                                                                                                              |                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| (25) | ὕπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας<br>ὕπὸ ψεύδους                                                                                              | ( <i>Ap.</i> 39B)<br>( <i>Grg.</i> 525A) |
| (26) | ὕμνοῦσιν ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἡ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη,<br>χαλεπὸν μέντοι καὶ ἐπίπονον, ἀκολασία δὲ καὶ ἀδικία ἡδὺ<br>μὲν . . . | ( <i>Resp.</i> 364A)                     |
| (27) | ἐπιδείξιν αὐτοῦ τούτου ποιῆσαι, τῆς βραχυλογίας, μακρολογίας<br>δὲ εἰς αὐθις                                                 | ( <i>Grg.</i> 449C)                      |

In (25) we see the same preposition used, once with a word meaning “truth” and once with a word meaning “falsehood.” The article with the former (but not with the latter) may be indicative of the difference in existential status between these two concepts in Plato's mind. A similar indication may be given in (26), where σωφροσύνη and δικαιοσύνη and their opposites, ἀκολασία and ἀδικία, are differently served by the article despite the parallel construction. Here the privative prefixes mark the second pair as negative counterparts of the first. But in (27) the positive and negative valuations are entirely personal—Socrates is speaking—and subjective. And yet, it is perhaps not an excess of subtlety to wish to see in the use of the article here a delicate hint on Plato's part of the intimate association between dialectic and the truth of reality on the one hand, and between loquacious rhetoric and the concealment of truth on the other.

We seem to have come rather far from the dry categories of strict grammar. But, as Gildersleeve himself recognized, the study of the article is as much a question of style as of grammar.<sup>41</sup> I do not know whether it will

41. See “On the Article with Proper Names,” *AJP* 11 (1890): 483–87 and “The Article,” pp. 122–23. We may note that, for example, the myth that Plato has put into Protagoras' mouth at *Prt.* 320C–28D is more sparing in the use of the article than the remainder of the dialogue.

prove possible to account exhaustively for the use of the definite article in Plato, much less in classical Greek as a whole, but neither do I think that it is a waste of time to attempt to do so. The reason it is so difficult to account for its use is that the article, small word though it is, attempts to do too much. This is true not only of Greek but of other languages that have a definite article. A good deal of study has been devoted to the definite article in English<sup>42</sup> and, while there does not seem to be general agreement among linguists, it does at least seem clear that study of the phenomenon requires the application of semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, psychological, and even historical categories. We should, I think, envision the range of opportunities for the use of the article in Greek as representing a vast continuum, at one end of which the article is obligatory, at the other end forbidden. The definite article is obligatory, at least in classical prose, in anaphora; it is forbidden with the vocative. This establishes the major axis along which the use of the article is to be plotted. In anaphora, which we may think of as the positive end of the scale, the article directs the attention of the hearer to something with which hearer and speaker are familiar; the vocative, at the negative end, is itself a gesture, whose purpose is to secure the hearer's attention.<sup>43</sup> Between these extremes are arrayed the myriad individual instances, some with and some without the article, depending upon the strength of the constraints acting upon them. The difficulty in the analysis lies not only with the fact that, in specific cases, the constraints may be acting to oppose one another, but with the fact that the constraints themselves are not *eiusdem generis*. For example, at the negative end of the scale the constraint is morphological and absolute—there *can* be no article with a noun in the vocative case because there *is* no vocative form of the article in Greek; at the positive end of the scale the article in anaphora is obligatory only in the sense that it is necessary in order to avoid ambiguity. Ideally, what is required is an examination of each case, to identify the constraints at work and to assess their relative strengths. In practical terms there is need, not for a bigger and better theory to account comprehensively for all the various cases, but for a more sensitive instrument to detect and measure the fine distinctions that the phenomena present.

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42. See especially J. A. Hawkins, *Definiteness and Indefiniteness* (London, 1978), with earlier bibliography, to which classicists may wish to add A. H. Sommerstein, "On the So-Called Definite Article in English," *Linguistic Inquiry* 3 (1972): 197–209.

43. It is interesting, however, that a noun in apposition to a vocative is regularly arthrous; see Gildersleeve, *Syntax*, §13 and add *Grg.* 459E σὺ ὁ τῆς ῥητορικῆς διδάσκαλος. The arthrous noun, necessarily in the nominative case, contributes an element of description, which has the effect of objectifying to a certain degree the individual addressed by the vocative, of applying to the addressee a label through which he may be identified by, and differentiated from, some third party. One of this journal's referees notes that, in addition to arthrous nominatives in apposition to vocatives, there are also instances where arthrous nominatives stand alone and take the place of vocatives. But in classical Greek this usage occurs only in cases where one addresses slaves and underlings or where the tone is peremptory (J. Wackernagel, *Über einige antike Anredeformen* [programm Göttingen, 1912], pp. 9–10), and the effect of the usage seems to accord with the objectifying tendency just mentioned; by using the nominative, with what appears to be a deictic article, one avoids actually addressing, or mitigates the act of addressing, an inferior. Of the wider extension of this usage in biblical Greek Wackernagel (p. 11) says, claiming it to be a Semiticism, "Man kann nicht anders als dies als einen krassen 'Sprachfehler' bezeichnen."