

As we all know, in Ancient Greek a modifier of a definite NP may, but need not be preceded by an article:

(1) **ὁ δὲ βασιλῆιος πῆχυς** τοῦ μετρίου ἐστὶ πῆχεος μέζων τρισὶ δακτύλοισι.

(The royal measure is greater by three fingers' breadth than the common measure. Hdt. 1.178.3)

(2) καὶ αἰρέουσι **ἔρημον τὸ ἄστυ** καὶ τινὰς ὀλίγους εὐρίσκουσι τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐν τῷ ἱρῷ ἐόντας, ...

(When they took the town it was deserted and in the sacred precinct they found a few Athenians. Hdt. 8.51.2)

All our grammars and schoolbooks argue that constituents placed in between the article and noun or after the noun with repetition of the article are attributive, i.e. describe a feature of the referent of the head of the NP (e.g. 'I like the black door'), whereas constituents placed outside the combination of noun plus article are predicative, i.e. are the predicate adjective after a copular verb (e.g. 'the door is black') or an adjunct of state that expresses a temporary state of the referent (e.g. 'I like the door black' = I like the door when black). True though this may be for adjectives (cf. example 1 and 2), the traditional rule seems not always valid for participles (cf. example 3, in which the participle is in predicative position, but has attributive value) and is absolutely useless for genitives, prepositional phrases and possessives, since in these cases the difference can impossibly be described in terms of an attributive or predicative value of the modifier (cf. example 4 and 5):

(3) τὸν μὲν δὴ εἰρύσαντα τῶν τόξων τὸ ἕτερον καὶ τὸν ζωστήρα προδέξαντα παραδοῦναι τὸ τόξον τε καὶ τὸν ζωστήρα **ἔχοντα ἐπ' ἄκρης τῆς συμβολῆς φιάλην χρυσέην** ... (So he drew one of his bows and showed her the belt, and gave her the bow and the belt, which had a golden vessel on the end of its clasp... (Hdt. 4.10.1)

(4) Βάδρης μὲν **ὁ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ στρατοῦ στρατηγός** ἐκέλευε αἰρέειν τὴν πόλιν, Ἀμασις δὲ **ὁ τοῦ πεζοῦ οὐκ ἔα**: (Badres the admiral of the fleet was for taking the city, but Amasis the general of the land army would not consent. Hdt. 4.203.2)

(5) ἔδειμαν πρώτα μὲν **τῆς τάφρου τὰ χεῖλα**, δεύτερα δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ τεῖχος τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον.

(They built first the border of the moat and then the wall itself in the same fashion. Hdt. 1.179.2)

After showing that other views (e.g. Himmelmann 1997, Rijkhoff 1992, Stavrou and Horrocks 1987) are equally unattractive, I will offer an alternative solution. On the basis of a sample from Herodotus, I will argue that the presence or absence of an article before a modifier is determined by the function of the modifier. Whereas modifiers that are not preceded by an article modify the referent, i.e. give descriptive information about a feature of the referent, modifiers with preceding article modify the reference, i.e. clarify which referent is referred to by describing a feature of the referent. The genitive in (4), for example, helps identify the referent by contrasting the intended στρατηγός with the general of the land army, while the genitive in (5) only provides information on a feature of the referent without the intention to distinguish the intended referent from other possible entities.

By discussing several more examples in their context, I hope to demonstrate that the distinction between referent and reference modification holds for all types of modifiers alike and is thus much better suited to explain the difference between modifiers with and without preceding article than the traditional view, which only holds for adjectives. If my hypothesis is correct, it has far-reaching consequences for the interpretation of what we traditionally call predicative modifiers.

References:

- HIMMELMANN, Nikolaus P. (1997), *Deiktikon, Artikel, Nominalphrase: zur Emergenz syntaktischer Struktur*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- RIJKHOFF, Jan (1992), *The noun phrase: a typological study of its form and structure*. Dissertation University of Amsterdam, p. 234ff.
- STAVROU, Melita and Geoffrey Horrocks (1987), 'Bounding theory and Greek syntax: evidence for wh-movement in the NP', *Journal of Linguistics* 23, 79-108.