

THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE IN GREEK A DIACHRONIC APPROACH*

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The so called indefinite article *enas, mia, ena* (ένας, μία/μια, ένα) of Greek is examined from both a synchronic and (mainly) a diachronic point of view, in an attempt to clarify its origin and its relation with the homonymic numeral and the indefinite pronoun *enas, mia, ena*. Taking into account the textual and grammatical evidence from the classical through the byzantine to the modern era, we argue that, according to Lehmann's criteria of grammaticalization and some of its basic mechanisms (divergence, unidirectionality etc.) described in Hopper & Traugott 1993, pronominal *enas* synchronically should be considered an indefinite marker rather than an article; diachronically it is only indirectly related with the numeral *enas*, since the first form derived from it through semantic divergence is the homonymic indefinite pronoun *enas*.

1. Introduction

It would hardly be an exaggeration to claim that the grammatical phenomenon examined in this paper is one of the most fascinating. Its special interest lies in the fact that although it does not necessarily appear in every language, nor indeed in every phase of a language's past, it nonetheless continues to belong to those discreet closed categories that have been discussed since the days of Dionysius Thrax's *Grammar*. At times it has been considered a noun determiner indicating, along with the ending of the noun in inflectional languages, grammatical gender¹, and at times an integral part of the

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1. See Mirambel 1959, 189, and Κοντός 1972-73, 744.

noun². Similarly, it has been considered a classifier (classificateur) of the noun category³, or as a basic constituent of the noun phrase. In early generative-transformational theory it was held to be a key element of various noun determiners⁴, and more recently as the head of the entire noun phrase⁵. Likewise, it is recognised that the article is involved in important semantic functions of language, such as deixis, reference, definiteness/ indefiniteness, specificity and genericness⁶.

Apart from a very few studies carried out in the past⁷, as well as discussions of the subject in older and new grammars of Modern Greek (MG)⁸, it is only in recent years that the article in MG, in particular its uses and problems associated with its syntactical or semantic function within the noun phrase, the sentence or discourse in general, has started to receive scholarly attention. In most cases investigations of the article (when not confined, for teaching purposes, merely to listing its uses⁹) are fragmentary or incorporated into other, wider research objectives: for example, the functional position of the article within the noun phrase and its relation to the noun and the other noun determiners¹⁰; or, again, its role in the referential, generic or predicative function of the noun phrase, together with other grammatical categories, in particular pronouns¹¹.

The principal object of this study is the so called indefinite article *enas, mia, ena* (ένας, μία/μια, ένα) examined diachronically. This grammatical unit pre-

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2. Viewed syntactically, according to an early transformational analysis the article belongs to the features of the noun, which explains why transformation was put forward as an explanation for its appearance. See Stockwell & Schachter & Partee 1973, 68, and Kramsky 1972, 63- 9. Semantically, it has been suggested that the article (as *the* and *a/ an* in English, for example), participates in the specific or generic use of the noun (see Kaluza 1981, 12).
 3. See Mirambel 1959, 191- 192, and Martinet 1985, 294 - 5.
 4. In Chomsky's *Aspects* the article holds a special position in the deep structure of the noun phrase. A general overview of the problem can be found in Stockwell, Schachter & Partee 1973, 67- 82.
 5. In recent analyses of the NP in MG the article is considered to head the entire phrase, since it is believed that it is the article that indicates the referential function of the noun, while its definite or indefinite character controls the appearance of other determiners (demonstratives, adjectives, etc.) in prenominal position. See Σταύρου & Horrocks 1990, 225 and the bibliography supplied at the end of their study.
 6. See Hawkins 1978, Heim 1982, Marmaridou 1984.
 7. See Αναγνωστόπουλος 1924, Mirambel 1939 and 1955, Κοντός 1973-74, Δέτσης 1981.
 8. Τζάρτζανος 1946², Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987, Mackridge 1990, Τσοπανάκης 1994, Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton 1997.
 9. See Θεοφανοπούλου - Κοντού et al. (eds.) 1998, 11- 29.
 10. Karanassios 1992, Σταύρου & Horrocks 1990, and Σταύρου 1996.
 11. Marmaridou 1984, Tsamadou- Jacobberger 1998 and Σετάτος 1995.

sents a wide variety of uses and gives rise to considerable problems of identification, since it is often confused with the homophone numeral *enas, mia, ena*, and the likewise homonymic indefinite pronoun *enas, mia, ena*. I shall here attempt to give answers to the following questions:

- (i) what is the origin of the MG indefinite article and
- (ii) what is the diachronic and synchronic relation of the indefinite article to the numeral and indefinite pronoun?

A diachronic analysis, on which I focus here, can help define the functional role of this grammatical form and contribute to a better understanding of its use from a synchronic point of view¹². To this aim the criteria of grammaticalization formulated by Christian Lehmann¹³ and the detailed analysis of grammaticalization (conditions, mechanisms and results) set out by Hopper & Traugott (1993) have been taken into account.

2. The indefinite article in MG

Before moving on to a diachronic investigation of the indefinite article, it is necessary to outline the following remarks from the recent bibliography:

From a morphological point of view, there is only the singular form of *enas-mia-ena*, which in declension is identical with the corresponding numeral, while the indefinite plural is expressed by the zero article¹⁴.

From a distributional point of view, the co-occurrences of the indefinite article with other constituents of the noun phrase (NP) are described as follows¹⁵:

ART + N(OUN) :	ένας φίλος (<i>a friend</i>)
ART + ADJ + N :	ένας παλιός φίλος (<i>an old friend</i>)
ART + QUANT + ADJ + N :	ένας πολύ καλός άνθρωπος (<i>a very good man</i>)
ART + PRON. ADJ + N :	ένα κάποιο χαμόγελο (<i>a sort of smile</i>)
	ένας οποιοσδήποτε υπάλληλος (<i>any employee</i>)
	μια τέτοια υπόθεση (<i>such an issue</i>)

12. The need to investigate the history and function of the Greek articles is pointed out in Σετάτος' 'anatomical' and 'inter-categorical' description (op. cit.).

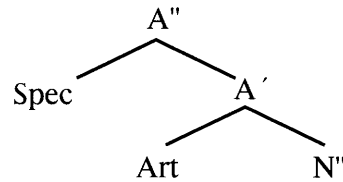
13. See Lehmann 1985 and 1995.

14. A zero article appears also in the singular, usually with non-countable or mass nouns, eg. αγοράσα ζάχαρη (*I bought some sugar*), θέλω νερό (*I want some water*). This usage could be viewed as a variant of the indefinite article, since basically it indicates indefinite reference. See Θεοφανοπούλου-Κοντού et al. (ds.) 1998, 23-29, Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton 1997, 282-285; For a similar assessment of the article in English see Putseys 1991, 75-76.

15. For more details on the co-occurrences of the indefinite article with other grammatical categories see Θεοφανοπούλου-Κοντού et al. (eds.), op. cit., and Σετάτος, op. cit..

ART + ADV + ADJ + N :	ένα απροσδόκητα φιλικό περιβάλλον (<i>a surprisingly friendly environment</i>)
ART + CLITIC + N :	ένας του λόγος (<i>a word / speech of his</i>)
ART + PRON :	ένας άλλος (<i>another</i>)

According to the generative analysis of the Greek NP the article acts as a noun determiner:



This schema does not provide for any structural differentiation between the definite and indefinite article. It has been suggested, however, that in each case the article has a different position chiefly on account of its different syntactical behaviour in relation to the clitics¹⁶.

With respect to the possible positions of the indefinite article within the NP, as the above distribution indicates, it remains consistently prenominal, with or without other determiners. Its restricted flexibility towards the left of the noun produces stylistic variations:

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|------|--|---------|--|
| 1a. | ένας | τέτοιος | ενθουσιασμός (δεν μπορεί να μη συγκινήσει) |
| | a | such | enthusiasm (cannot but move) |
| | "such an enthusiasm (cannot but move)" | | |
| 1b. | τέτοιος | ένας | ενθουσιασμός... |
| | such | an | enthusiasm... |
| -2a. | ένας | καλός | λόγος... |
| | a | good | word... |
| 2b. | καλός | ένας | λόγος... |
| | good | a | word... |
| | "a good word... " | | |

Besides producing a stylistic change, the movement of *enas* in example 2 to after the adjective seems also to create a semantic change, since it mainly

16. On the unified structural position of the definite and indefinite article in the NP in MG see Σταύρου & Horrocks 1990, 226; On the altered position see Karanassios 1992, 51-52 and Stavrou 1996, 94-99. I quote only some of the transformational analyses which focus on synchronic aspects of the article without elaborating on them, since I have adopted a different method for approaching the problem.

requires a context of negation and it is interpreted as a numeral (*not one*)¹⁷.

The indefinite article contrasts with the definite article in the following cases:

- (i) The indefinite article is not repeated in cases where the noun is preceded by an adjective:

3a.	*ένας	καλός	ένας	καπετάνιος...	
	*a	good	a	sea captain...	vs.
3b.	ο	καλός	ο	καπετάνιος...	
	*the	good	the	sea captain...	

- (ii) It is only the indefinite article that can be followed by a clitic:

4a.	μια	σου	ματιά
	*a	your	glance
	"a glance from you"		
4b.	*η	σου	ματιά
	*the	your	glance

- (iii) Unlike the definite article, the indefinite article cannot nominalize subordinate complement clauses¹⁸:

5a.	το	ότι	δεν	θέλει	να ξαναδώσει	εξετάσεις
	the	that	not	he-wants	to regive	exams
	(σημαίνει πολλά) (=means much)					
	"the fact that he doesn't want to resit his exams, suggests a lot" vs.					
5b.	*ένα	ότι	δεν	θέλει	να δώσει	εξετάσεις...
	a	that	not	he-wants	to give	exams...

From a semantic point of view the indefinite article is mainly used in the following cases¹⁹:

- (i) indefinite specific reference:

17. The use of unstressed *enas* in negative clauses is considered ambiguous (see Veloudis 1982, 227). However, the possibility in this case of paraphrasing with the words *ούτε ένας* (*not one*) indicates the numerical rather than the indefinite meaning.

18. See Mirambel 1959, 191-192. On the semantic interpretation of this difference see Mar-
maridou 1984, 264.

19. Θεοφανοπούλου-Κοντού et al. (eds.) 1998, 21-23, Tsamadou-Jacobberger 1998, 95-127, and Σετάτος 1995, 181-198.

6. το ρολόι που βλέπεις μου το χάρισε ένας φίλος
 the watch which you see me it he-gave a friend
 μου
 my
 "the watch you see was given to me by a friend of mine"

(ii) indefinite non-specific reference:

7. μου δίνεις ένα χαρτί να γράψω τη διεύθυνση;
 me you-give a paper to write the address?
 "Can you give me a piece of paper to write down the address?"

(iii) genericness:

8. μια κακή κουβέντα δεν ξεχνιέται εύκολα
 a bad word not is forgotten easily
 "a bad comment is not forgotten easily"

(iv) emphatic/interjective use:

9. κάνει ένα κρύο!
 it makes a cold
 "Goodness, it's cold!"

These functions operate in combination with other factors, such as aspect, the syntactic role of the NP (subject, object, predicate, or complement of another NP), the type of clause (positive, negative, interrogative) and intonation²⁰. It has been noted that in its various uses the indefinite article does not have a clearly discernible meaning, since in each case the numerical meaning is implied²¹.

It should also be pointed out that in a number of its occurrences the indefinite *enas mia ena* can be replaced (although not with exactly the same value²²)

20. On the rarely encountered function of a NP containing indefinite article in the position of predicate, instead of a NP with zero article that normally appears in this position, see Marmaridou 1984, 173f. For a discussion on the interdependence of the semantic roles and syntactical functions of NPs containing indefinite articles see Putseys 1991, 76 and 96 - 97.

21. See Mackridge 1990, 298.

22. There are cases, as in sentences 10 - 13 (submitted, among others, to a number of native speakers for testing the possible alternatives of *enas*), where *kapios* or *kanenas* is not interchangeable with the indefinite *enas*.

by the indefinite pronouns *kapios-a-o* and *kanenas*, *kamia*, *kanena* ("some, someone"):

- 10a. ήρθε μια κοπέλα και ζήτησε τον Γιώργο
 (she)came a girl and asked for the George
 "a girl came and asked for Jorgo"
- 10b. ήρθε κάποια/*καμιά κοπέλα και ζήτησε τον Γιώργο
 (she)came some girl and asked for the George
 "a girl came and asked for Jorgo"
- 10c. πες μου μια/καμιά/; κάποια καλή είδηση
 tell(imprt.) me a/some good piece of news
 "tell me some good news"
- 11a. υπάρχουν περιπτώσεις που δεν μπορεί να βρεθεί
 there are cases where not can be found
 λύση
 solution
 "there are cases where a solution cannot be found"
- 11b. υπάρχουν κάποιες/ μερικές περιπτώσεις
 there are some cases...
12. μου έριξε ένα/ *κάποιο/ *κανένα βλέμμα που πάγωσα ολόκληρος
 me he threw a /some glance that I froze complete
 "he gave me an ice-cold stare"
13. μια / *κάποια καθωσπρέπει κυρία δεν διακινδυνεύει
 a / *some dignified lady not (she)risks
 την υπόληψή της
 the standing her
 "a dignified lady does not risk her standing"

In example 10b the use of *kamia* is not acceptable to native speakers, as well as the emphatic readings (as the context requires) of *kapio* and *kanena* in 12. Equally rejectable is the substitution of *mia* in its generic use by the pronoun *kapia* in 13. The use of *enas* is generally more restricted in scope, more attached to the noun than in the case of the related indefinite pronouns. This issue has been the object of a certain amount of scholarly discussion, which has identified a number of differences between *enas* and *kanenas*, and between *enas* and *kapios*²³ but it has not by any means been thoroughly investigated²⁴.

23. According to Marmaridou (1984, 145-146) *enas* is both referential and predicative, while *kapios* is only referential. See also Veloudis 1982, 195 and 225-228 for some differences between *enas* and *kanenas*.

24. On the semantic value of *kapios* and *kanenas* in MG see Βελοΐδης 1996. A similar study on indefinite elements see in Hawkins 1978, 173 and 184-185.

3. The indefinite article viewed diachronically

Textual evidence as well as the remarks of earlier grammarians and scholars indicates that the indefinite article in the Greek language was a by-product of the numeral *heis, mia, hen*, (εἷς, μία, ἓν) appearing for the first time in post-classical times:

“In later times [ie., following the classical era] a new article form, the so-called indefinite article, appeared. The numeral *heis, mia, hen*, whose purely numerical function became weaker, served as the indicator of this new article”²⁵.

Prior to these times, indefinite reference was indicated in either of the following two ways: either the noun was not accompanied by an article, or the indefinite clitic pronoun *tis* (τις) was used (as a rule, after the noun). It should be pointed out, however, that there is some scattered textual evidence suggesting that *heis, mia, hen* were not used solely as numerals, but could, even in classical times, replace *tis* for the purpose of indicating indefinite reference.

14. Λακεδαιμονίων φρουρά *μία* τῶν περὶ τὴν χώραν...
"a guard of Spartans in those parts..." (Thuc. 4, 57. 2)
15. Παρελθὼν *τις* τῶν γερόντων οὓς ἐκείνοι καὶ αἰσχύνονται καὶ δεδίασιν... τούτων *εἷς* παρελθὼν...
"a man came forward from the Council of Elders -- a body of men whom they reverence and fear...one of these came forward and..." (Aeschin. 1, 180)²⁶.

In both examples there is a shared structure:

- 14' noun + *mia* + partitive
15' *tis* + partitive and partitive + *heis*

If in example 14 it may be legitimate to view *mia* as both a numeral and an indefinite element, in example 15 the alternation of *heis* and of *tis* in the same sentence and in the same structure clearly indicates the indefinite quality of *heis*. Jannaris attributes the eventual replacement of *tis* by *heis* to the fact that the indefinite pronoun *tis* can make no distinction between masculine and feminine gender, thus implying that, by analogy with the definite article, the language needed a corresponding indefinite form readily available in the numeral

25. Αναγνωστόπουλος 1922, 176-177. See also Jannaris 1968, §623.

26. Examples 14 and 15 are taken from Jannaris 1968, §623.

heis. He remarks (op. cit., §63) that *heis* even in the post-classical period already functioned as a proclitic, that is an element closely linked syntactically with the following word “spoken rapidly as part of this word”. He insists, however, on naming it the “indefinite numeral” without giving a clear account of its rapid co-articulation together with the noun. It may be the case that he is more influenced by the later use of *heis/henas* rather than by the actual textual evidence²⁷.

As regards the data provided by the sources on the use of *heis* and *henas* in the crucial Hellenistic and later (Byzantine and post-Byzantine) period, it is worth mentioning the following:

Apart from its primary function as a numeral, *heis*, *mia*, *hen* in the New Testament is also used to a limited extent alongside *tis* as an indefinite pronoun or an indefinite pronominal adjective:

a) *indefinite pronoun*

16. εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με
"one of you will betray me" (Mat. 26, 21)
17. ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων... "in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren..." (Mat. 25, 40)
18. καὶ εἰάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ τι
"And if any man say ought unto you..." (Mat. 21, 3)
19. ἄνθρωπος δέ τις ἦν πλούσιος
"There was a certain rich man" (Luke 16, 19)

b) *indefinite pronominal adjective*

20. καὶ προσελθὼν εἷς γραμματεὺς...
"And a certain scribe having come..." (Mat. 8, 19)
21. ἐπερωτήσω ὑμᾶς ἓνα λόγον
"I will ask of you one question" (Mark 11, 29)²⁸

In all these cases *heis* is possible to be interpreted as a numeral, since the nouns with which it is either directly or indirectly associated are countable. And yet its indefinite quality in these contexts is also apparent. The consider-

27. According to Αναγνωστόπουλος (op. cit., p.177) the tendency towards more analytical expression in Greek helped to consolidate the use of the article.

28. Examples 20 and 21 are discussed in Blass & Debrunner's Grammar of the New Testament (1976, section 247, 2 and note 5) as comprising cases in which *heis* is used instead of *tis*, which is considered as holding the position of an indefinite article.

able development that had already taken place in the distinction between *tis* and *heis*, and the variations in their usage in the NT period, may be illustrated by the following co-occurrences²⁹:

22. εἷς τις ἐξ αὐτῶν
"one of them..." (Mark 14, 47)
23. εἷς δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν Καϊάφας...
"And one of them, named Caiaphas..." (John 11, 49)

In my view, the coexistence of the two items is neither fortuitous nor redundant. By the use of *heis*, the author refers exclusively to a single member of a set (which is indicated by the adjacent partitive), while by the use of *tis* the reference is made indefinite (specific or non-specific). The addition of *tis* suggests that most probably in this period *heis* was not perceived by speakers as indicating clearly indefinite reference.

In both the earlier and later Byzantine periods the situation had changed somewhat. The more scholarly and formal the style of the text, especially in the early Byzantine period, the rarer was the use of the indefinite *heis / henas*. In its place we see either the indefinite pronoun *tis* or the zero-article structure of the classical NP. Even in those texts that reflect a less archaizing and more simple style (such as the sixth-century *Chronicle* of Malalas) *heis / henas* is rarely used. It is mostly encountered in contexts that may be considered ambiguous:

24. δεόμενος ἓνα των μεγιστάνων αὐτοῦ ὀνόματι Σουρῥαινᾶν...
"Fearing one of his lords called Sourrhaeinan..." (Malalas 335, 6-8)

In the ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes *heis* can be detected on a small number of occasions with an indefinite meaning:

25. προσέταξεν εἰς ἓνα πύργον σὺν γυναῖξί καὶ τέκνοις...
"They locked them in a tower with the women and children ..."
(Theoph. 124-125)

Its use is also rare or ambiguous in vernacular, non-classicizing, poetry of the

29. See Blass & Debrunner (op. cit.), who provide examples that date the first co-occurrences of these two items to the classical period.

eleventh, twelfth, and fourteenth centuries³⁰. It is notable that the twelfth-century poet Ptochoprodromos virtually never used indefinite *henas*. Instead *tis* and *okapoios* (*hokapoios*) are the only usages in indefinite noun phrases:

26. καίπερ δὴ κέκτημαι τινα μικρὰν παρηγορίαν...
"Though I have gained some small consolation..." (Ptochoprod. IV 163)
27. ...ὀκάποιας κὰν γειτόνισσας ροῦχον νά ἐπαρελύθην....
"a garment of some woman neighbour at least might have come apart..." (Ptochoprod. III 162)

The same pattern can be seen in the fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Morea*, where in the place of the indefinite *henas*, we find *okapoios*, *tinis* and *kanenas*:

28. ἀλλά τινὰς οὐκ ἔφτασεν ποτέ του εἰς τόσῃν δόξαν...
"but none has ever achieved such glory" (Chron. Morea, 952)
29. ἀφῶν ἐπλήρωσε ὁ καιρὸς, κανένας μῆνας, δύο
"after time had passed, a month or two" (Chron. Morea, 615)

The view that *enas-mia-ena* does not function as an article at any time during the Byzantine period of Greek literature derives support from the fact that it is absent from Byzantine grammars and lexica. Neither Psaltes' grammar (1913) of the Byzantine chronographers nor Kriaras' more recent *Lexikon of Medieval Vernacular Literature* (1969-) include *heis/henas* as an indefinite article. Psaltes mentions only that the numeral *heis-mia-hen* is used by chronographers in the place of the indefinite pronoun *tis*, *ti*³¹. Kriaras approaches the matter in the same way, giving a separate entry to the numeral *henas/heis*, and classifying it according to a number of meanings (besides the numeral) traced in the texts: emphatic, negative, exclusive, as *kapoios*, and so on³².

In the sixteenth-century Grammar of Nikolaos Sophianos there is similarly no evidence for the existence of an indefinite article in Greek. Unlike the defi-

30. This confirms the observation by Jannaris (op. cit., §1195 and 1196) that the article is generally used more in prose than in poetry. According to Jannaris this applies both in classical and later texts. The phenomenon, which will not be analysed here, could be interpreted in the light of an investigation into the technical, structural and aesthetic aspects of poetical texts. An exception is the 11th-century Digenis Akritas, in which *enas, mia, ena* appears (although somewhat ambiguously: *spathian mian me edoken eis to cheroskoutarin* (Dig. Escorial 1248).

31. See Psaltes 1913, 191.

32. See Κριαράς 1969 ff., the entry for (*h*)*eis*.

nite article, *enas*, *mia*, *ena* used as the indefinite pronoun or indefinite article is not mentioned. However, it is certain that indefinite *enas* was used in that period as evidenced by Nikolaos Sophianos' text that was published alongside his grammar³³ as well as other vernacular prose and poetical works from the same period:

30. Θυσία θέ νά κάμομε κι ἔναι μακρά δαμάκι εἰς ἕναν τόπον
ἄμορφο, εἰσέ ψηλό βουνάκι
"We shall make a sacrifice a little way off from here in a pretty
place, on a high hill" (The Sacrifice of Abraham, 519-520)
31. καί ἦλθεν εἰς τήν Ἰταλίαν... εἰς μίαν ἐπαρχίαν, ὀνόματι
Τοσκάνα
"And he went to Italy... to a region called Tuscany..." (Ioannikios
Kartanos, Old and New Testament, p. 201)
32. καί ἐκεῖ ἕνας ἔκοπτε ξύλα καί ἔπεσέ του τό τσεκούρι
"There someone was cutting wood, and he dropped his axe"
(Ioannikios Kartanos, Old and New Testament, p. 216)
33. ὅτι αὐτός ἔναι ἕνας ὑποῦλος καί θέλει σέ γελάσει
"For he is a cunning one and seeks to deceive you" (Ioannikios
Kartanos, Old and New Testament, p. 229)
34. διότις ἡ νεφέλη εἶναι ἕναν αναθυμίαμα τῆς γῆς
"For a cloud is a [kind of] vapour from the earth" (Ioann.
Morezenos, Encomium to the Virgin Mary, p. 405)

Besides illustrating the morphophonological development of the indefinite *enas* (from the ancient Greek 3rd declension *heis*), examples 30-34 provide evidence for its indefinite pronominal use (32), as well as more specific syntactical and semantic uses that may be encountered in MG: pronominal, specific uses with a parallel appearance of an adjective after the noun (30); predicative use that indicates a pejorative or unfavourable attitude of the speaker (33); and, above all, predicative use with a non-countable or a mass noun (34). The latter may be considered a safe formal criterion for viewing *enas* as functioning purely as a marker of indefiniteness³⁴. Both its position and its co-occurrence with other demonstrative or quantifying markers within the NP can also be verified in texts of the eighteenth century:

33. N. Σοφιανός, *Γραμματική της κοινῆς των Ελλήνων γλώσσης* (Grammar of the common speech of the Greeks). See Παπαδόπουλος 1977.

34. On the relationship of the countability, or lack of it, of the Modern Greek noun and the presence, along with other quantifiers, of the indefinite *enas* see Σκοπετέας 1996.

35. καί οἱ Γαλαξειδιῶτες βλέποντας ἕνα τέτοιο μεγάλο θαῦμα...
 "and the Galaxidiots, on seeing such a wonder..."(Chronicle of Galaxidi, §113)
36. ἔστειλασι ἕνα Γαλαξειδιώτη...πού ἦτανε ἕνας πολύ προκομμένος ἄνθρωπος
 "they sent a Galaxidiot... who was a very fine person" (Chronicle of Galaxidi, §71)

The general picture to emerge from the sources, therefore, may be summed up as follows:

- (i) The indefinite pronoun *tis*, already in classical times, but especially in the Hellenistic period and later, came to be interchangeable with *heis*, *mia*, *hen* / *enas*, *mia*, *ena* as yet another marker of indefiniteness in Greek while also preserving its function as a numeral.
- (ii) This alternation in usage appeared initially in the postnominal position of *tis* (example 14), but soon both moved in front of the noun (examples 15, 18, 20 and 21).
- (iii) In contrast with *heis/enas*, unstressed *tis* in prenominal position does not appear in the first position of the NP.
- (iv) During a period which probably needs to be viewed as transitional the two forms co-occur (examples 22 and 23).
- (v) In the Byzantine period *tis* is also used in a morphophonologically modified form, *tinas*, while at the same time other indefinite markers are also used: *(o/ho)kaposios*, *kanenas*.
- (vi) The use of *heis/enas* as an indefinite marker is difficult to trace in consciously archaising texts.
- (vii) Grammarians and lexicographers of Byzantine vernacular literature have not detected an article function in *enas-mia-ena*, and classify it only as a numeral.

4. The development of the indefinite *enas* viewed as a process of grammaticalization

In this section we shall attempt to answer questions (i) and (ii) posed at the beginning of this paper by interpreting the appearance and development of the indefinite marker *enas-mia-ena* as a case of grammaticalization. The borderline –more or less well-defined– between the various grammatical categories is a problem that has generally been ignored in the search for the origin and syn-

chronic identity of the indefinite *enas- mia- ena*; it also happens to be one of the basic issues to concern grammaticalization as a special way of approaching language in recent years³⁵.

With regard to the first question, I would suggest that the so called (in traditional grammar) indefinite article *enas- mia- ena* should only be considered as derived indirectly – and not directly as claimed by most linguists – from the numeral *heis*. I believe that in its first stage the numeral *heis*, *mia*, *hen* functions in a particular context as an indefinite marker (a pronoun or pronominal adjective) and can alternate with, or replace, the corresponding indefinite marker *tis*, even in its postnominal position (see example 14). My view is based on the fact that the evidence in the Greek language appears to conform with the general trends or principles attested in the process of grammaticalization, particularly in the case of the development of grammatical units: there is a gradual transition from grammatical categories slightly attached to or relatively independent from lexical items, to grammatical categories fully attached to lexical units in accordance with the principle of unidirectionality.

Unidirectionality, which mainly characterizes grammaticalization in its prototypic meaning, ie. as a change from a lexical to a grammatical unit, applies also in the case of further grammaticalization of units which have got already a grammatical content³⁶. It refers to the transition from *intermediate* grammatical categories (including adjectives and adverbs) to *small* or *closed* categories (including prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and markers), and not the reverse. The degree of grammaticality can be tested with the syntagmatic and paradigmatic criteria codified by Christian Lehmann (1985 and 1995). Despite the fact that pronouns are in general classed by Hopper & Traugott as belonging to *closed* categories, some Greek pronouns, in pronominal use, share characteristics of 'intermediate' grammatical units; they present a looser attachment to the noun (e.g. they can easily move from one position to another) than a closed grammatical category. This is a suggestion of only preliminary character, since the degree of grammaticality of the Greek pronouns, both synchronically and diachronically, is a very wide issue and requires much more extensive investigation.

The derivation of the pronoun *heis/enas* from the numeral *heis* can also be supported typologically. Haspelmath, in his work on the typology of indefinite pronouns, considers their source to be, besides the interrogative pronouns and nouns of a generic-ontological content, the numeral *enas* 'one'³⁷. Thus, I would

35. See Hopper & Traugott 1993, 1-2.

36. See Hopper & Traugott op. cit., 103 and 113.

37. See Haspelmath 1997, 29 and 183-184. (I would like to thank Yannis Veloudis for drawing my attention to Haspelmath's research).

suggest that the numeral *heis/enas* diverges initially into two grammatical units, so that alongside its numerical function it is also used as an indefinite pronoun or an indefinite pronominal adjective³⁸. This divergence called *polygrammaticalization* is held to be one of the basic evolutionary mechanisms in the theory of grammaticalization, since its systematic intervention in the evolution of various phenomena can be seen to operate interlinguistically³⁹. In English, for instance, the indefinite article *a / an* has undergone a similar development to the numeral *one*, which in Old English took the form *an*. It is from this latter form that divergence and various morphophonological changes gave rise, on the one hand, to the modern form of the numeral *one* and the corresponding indefinite pronoun *one*, and, on the other, the indefinite article with its allomorphic *a / an*⁴⁰.

Following the split of the numeral, the indefinite pronoun *énas* is used alongside with the inherited indefinite pronoun *tis* and for a long time they were interchangeable, according to the type and stylistic level of the text. Indeed, as I have already noted, *tis* existed, though transformed to *tinas*, up to a certain period, while at the same time other indefinite pronouns, *(o)kapoios* and *kanenas*, appeared. The paradigm pattern of this category, therefore, underwent considerable renewal. It should be stressed, however, that the indefinite *enas* does not seem in this phase to have developed morphophonologically or to be closely attached to the noun. In my opinion this is the reason why it is not referred to in the Byzantine or post-Byzantine sources as an article. Its use in pronominal position must have begun to become current much later, probably over the course of the past two centuries. Closer contact of the Greek language with other languages, in particular French and English, where the role of the indefinite article is more clear, may largely explain the strengthening of its use. For all these reasons I believe that, according to the unidirectional process of grammaticalization, the indefinite *enas*, via the pronominal adjective (i.e. an intermediate degree of grammaticality), has come to show a closer relation to the noun or a higher degree of grammaticalization that extends right down to present day usage in Greek. It is possible, however, to demonstrate, using Lehmann's grammaticalization criteria, that this process has not yet reached completion. In other words, on the basis of the data for MG (see above, pp. 113-118), and in contrast with the definite and indefinite article of other lan-

38. This view is supported historically by the grammarians of the New Testament, who aware of the alternation or substitution of *tis* by *(h)eis*, point out that the development from numeral to indefinite has parallels in German and the Romance languages (Blass & Debrunner, repr. 1976, section 274, 2 note 4).

39. See Hopper & Traugott, op. cit., p. 116f.

40. See Givón 1981, Hopper & Martin 1987, p. 297, and Hopper & Traugott op. cit., p. 117.

guages, the following should be noticed⁴¹:

(i) The indefinite article *enas* has not yet basically undergone any morpho-phonological differentiation from its homophonic numeral *enas* and the pronominal adjective *enas*.

(ii) It has not fixed its position with regard to the noun, as may be seen in the following examples:

- 37a. *μια* *πολύ* *καλή* *πρόταση*
a very good proposal
- 37b. *πολύ* *καλή* *μια* *παράσταση* *δεν* *έχει* *δώσει*
very good a performance not has-he given
"he hasn't given a very good performance"

(iii) as an indefinite marker it may often function in the place of other indefinite markers (*kapoios*, *kanenas*, etc.).

Nevertheless, as evidence of a trend towards further grammaticalization of the indefinite *enas*, I should add that phonologically it has gradually developed into a (virtually) unstressed element, appearing more frequently than other indefinite pronominal adjectives such as *kapoios* etc. in pronominal use. There is also a clear trend towards stabilisation of its position before the noun. As mentioned before, in the post-nominal position (usually within a negative or interrogative clause) the indefinite article is understood by most speakers as being equivalent to *ute enas/ kanenas* (no one):

38. *άνθρωπος* *ένας* (=ούτε ένας / κανένας *άνθρωπος*) *δεν*
man one (=no one/ no man) not
βρέθηκε *να* *του* *συμπαρασταθεί*
(he) be found in order to him console
"No one could be found to console him"
39. *Ξέρεις* *άνθρωπο* *έναν* (=δεν *υπάρχει*
know-you man one (=not there is
ούτε ένας / κανένας *άνθρωπος*) *που* *δεν* *έχει* *κλάψει*;
neither one/ no man) who not he-has cried
"Do you know anyone who hasn't cried?"

41. On the closer attachment to the noun developed by the definite article, which in its fullest form of grammaticalization appears as a suffix on the noun (as in the case of the Latin demonstrative pronoun *ille* in the Romanian definitive suffix *-ul*) see Greenberg 1991, 301-314 and Hopper & Traugott 1993, 8. Greenberg remarks (p. 313, note 5) that the definite article is also used with indefinite meaning in some languages, as the result of a kind of hierarchy of definiteness according to which the definite article may develop into an indefinite, but never the reverse.

In recent years it has been asserted that the definite article and the indefinite *enas*, from both a syntactical and a semantic point of view, are not fully equivalent or interchangeable categories in MG. Karanasios and Stavrou consider the indefinite article, together with other indefinite determiners, as occupying a different position in the structure of the NP to that of the definite article: the former is considered to hold the position of a simple determiner, while the latter that of a marker of definiteness⁴². It has also been shown that, semantically, the indefinite *enas* has not been neutralised so that it can belong to the category of article: "The fact that the same word functions as an article, indefinite pronoun and indefinite determiner of nouns compels us to view it as being even more marked, and consequently as unable to be used as a semantically neutral morpheme", notes Marmaridou⁴³. My suggestion for the transitional status of MG indefinite *enas* may explain the uncertainty with which the indefinite *enas* is treated in recent Greek grammars⁴⁴.

There is another factor which in my opinion may affect its use: the metrical rhythm of the phrase and the clause. This has not as yet been taken into account for the appearance and role of the Greek article in general. This issue, however, needs to be investigated both phonologically and stylistically.

To conclude, I consider that in the case of indefinite article in MG there are indications to support that the process of grammaticalization has not yet been completed, since the indefinite compared with the definite article has still a looser attachment to the noun. Thus, we may view it simply as a marker of indefiniteness. Viewed diachronically, it is directly related to the indefinite pronominal adjective *enas*, as well as to the other related forms *kapoios*, *kane-nas*, *kati*, *tinis*, *[o]kapoios*, *tis*, while it draws only indirectly its descent from the numeral *enas*, from which both the numeral and the indefinite pronoun *enas* are derived through semantic divergence. It is the latter that, in a pronominal position by a further process of grammaticalization, has tended to play the role of the indefinite article⁴⁵.

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42. See above, note 16.

43. Marmaridou 1984, 220.

44. See Τσοπανιάκης 1994, 308: "Indefinite pronouns are *enas*, *mia*, *ena*, which we have also listed as indefinite articles", and later (p. 309), "The pronoun *enas*, *mia*, *ena* has the meaning of *kapoios*, much like the 'indefinite' article".

45. My research for this paper was already complete when Stavros Skopeteas brought to my notice the work by Christian Lehmann, *Thoughts on Grammaticalization* (1995). With somewhat mixed feelings I realized that the author, one of the major proponents of the theory of grammaticalization, had formulated a similar view on the gradual develop-

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ment of the indefinite article from the numeral via the indefinite pronoun. I was cheered to see my suggestions for the development of the indefinite article in Greek as having a theoretical base, but also sorry to see that I cannot claim to be the first to advance this working hypothesis. However, it is important that the historical investigation of the subject in the case of the Greek language can provide evidence in support of the theory.

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