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'L'homme n'égale pas l'Homme': A Convergence in Romance Languages

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Abstract

In this paper I explore the reasons why the words for 'man' in the Romance, or Latin-derived, languages (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian) carry the double meaning of 'man as opposed to woman' and 'man as opposed to beast'. In Classical Latin, the root word *homo* conveys only the second, not the first, sense (the first sense being conveyed by *vir*). The origin of this common evolution lies in the translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek and Latin at different historical stages, with the result that *homo* (in Greek, ἄνθρωπος) came over time to mean both man=human and man=male. This double sense owes itself to the way in which the creationist theology of the Book of Genesis was translated from the Hebrew first into Greek, and later into Latin, in a clumsy and possibly mishandled way, where the Hebrew original made the nuances of definition much clearer and more precise. This common point in the development and evolution of Romance from Latin into its derivative languages illustrates how changes in language can sometimes originate from unexpected and unpredicted causes, such as a religious, ideological, political, scientific, or technological shift, which results in words acquiring new senses.

Towards the end of Autumn Term of 2020, a mysterious slogan, in beautiful handwriting, was left on the board in the Quiet Common Room which read 'homme ≠ Homme'. That evening, I received an email from Mr Melvyn Bardou, Head of French, asking if I was the culprit and, if so, what my intentions had been in writing it. I was not, in fact, the author. Somewhat flustered that I had been unfairly labelled as the likely source of an in-house joke which neither I nor Mr Bardou understood, I wrote back to confess ignorance of its meaning and provenance. Since then, some further thoughts have occurred to me. In the years which followed the end of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly issued a document upholding universal human rights, which in French reads *La Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme*, or in English, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In the English-speaking world, it has become less

fashionable in recent decades to use 'man' as a non-gender-specific designation for 'human', but, until quite recently, it was conventional in English, as in French, to use 'man' ('homme') to mean 'human being' (as opposed to beast), in a wider reaching sense than 'male human' (as opposed to 'female human', or 'woman'). One of the foundational Enlightenment treatises in the English language appeared in 1791, composed by Thomas Paine and entitled *The Rights of Man*, which advocated an end to hereditary government and the establishment of social welfare. For centuries, 'man' in English meant 'human being' as well as 'adult male human', just as 'l'homme', in French, can carry either sense. The seminal treatise of Charles Darwin of 1871, *The Ascent of Man*, argued for the ancestry of humans in lesser mammals, and this was echoed in 1973 with the release of a thirteen-part BBC television documentary series, developed by David Attenborough, of the same title. 'Man', thus understood, means 'homo sapiens'.

As with the French 'homme', our English word 'man' can also mean 'man as opposed to woman', and some would now argue that this should be its sole meaning. Language is in a constant state of evolution, and, not infrequently, semantic shifts take place for ideological and political reasons. Feminism understandably dislikes the use of 'man' to mean 'human', because of the old-fashioned connotation that male is normal and that to be female is, in the unscientific sense, to be an altered or adjusted male. Scientifically, we know that the reverse is true, that the one half of the species which possesses a Y chromosome is, biologically, a mutation of the other half, which holds two X chromosomes. Far from being a male derivative, as 'woman' implies ('man' with a prefix 'wo-'), the male gender is a biological modification of the female gender, as our understanding of the different stages of gestation clarifies. But embedded in English language is the normative, and wholly unscientific, concept of male precedence. This is true also of French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian, where the words for 'man' (respectively, *homme*, *hombre*, *uomo*, *homem*, *om*) can carry the senses of 'man as opposed to woman' and 'man as opposed to beast'. All the aforementioned, commonly termed 'Romance languages', are direct offshoots of Latin, the common language of the Roman Empire in the West, and the Esperanto of Western Europe down until the close of the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern period. This dual meaning is less obvious in the Germanic languages, where a sharper semantic distinction is held between 'man' (as a hominid species) and 'man' (as a male gender within that hominid species). In German, the former is conveyed by *Mensch* and the latter by *Mann*, and the distinction exists in Dutch (*mens/man*), in Danish (*meneske/mand*), Norwegian (*menneske/mann*), Swedish (*människa/man*), and Icelandic (*mannvera/maður*), though in the last the latter can have the all-embracing sense of 'human'. The Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croat) all have distinct words for 'man=male' and 'man=human', though the semantic range of the first may, in some cases, be fluid. The Celtic languages (Welsh, Gaelic, Breton) draw a clean distinction, where Welsh distinguishes 'man-male' (*dyn*) from 'man-human' (*bod dynol*), as does Gaelic (*fear/duine*). Similar distinctions exist in the Sanskrit-derived languages of northern and central India (Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali), though in the Indic languages the overlaps are often much more complex and subtle in their possible range of nuances. Only in the Latin-derived branch of the Indo-European family does this distinction obtain not to the same degree. In those languages, the nuances of *homme*, *hombre*, *uomo*, *homem*, and *om* can vary, but noteworthy is that these

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words carry two different senses, either 'man=human' or 'man=male'. Our word 'human' itself cognate with the adjectival possessive form *humanus*, and the same derivation obtains in the Latin-derived (Romance) languages, where 'human' and 'of man' are applied interchangeably. For this reason, the document issued in1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, quoted above, translates into Spanish, *Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos*; into Italian, *Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti dell'Uomo*; into Portuguese, *Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos*; into Romanian, *Declarația Universală a Drepturilor Omului*.

The Latin word from which the Romance derivatives draw their words *homme*, *hombre*, *uomo*, *homem*, and *om* is *homo* (genitive singular, *hominis*), which, in scientific taxonomy, is the genus component of *homo sapiens* (literally, 'wise man'). When used in scientific contexts, the Latin *homo* conveys the sense of 'man=human' and never 'man=male'. This is because the word, in Classical Latin, meant the former and not the latter. Scholars in the field of linguistics have traced the origins of *homo* back to *humus* (in Greek, χαμαί), meaning 'earth', because of the ancient pagan understanding that humanity was earth-born, as distinct from the gods of Olympus, who in ancient theogony were thought to have been born from the sky. The term 'autochthonous', from the Greek αὐτόχθων ('of the earth itself'), means something analogous in English to 'earth-sprung'. In Classical Greek, αὐτόχθων was the word used to mean 'native': Thus, in his discussion of the peoples who dwelt on the continent of Africa, the fifth-century BC writer Herodotus distinguishes between 'Libyans' (meaning Africans) living in the north and the Ethiopians living in the south from the Greek and Phoenician settlers, the first two of which four nations he terms αὐτόχθονα (Hdt. 4.197). Most famously, the Athenians held the same belief about themselves, that they were sprung from the soil of Attica, to distinguish them from settlers and immigrants who had entered the city from elsewhere (E. *Ion* 29; *Fr* 360.8; Ar. *V.* 1076; Isoc. 4.24; 12.124). The psychological connection with the earth reveals itself in parallel Indo-European cultures: The Greek adverb χαμαί ('on the ground'), transliterated as *chamai*, is cognate with the suffix *-gam* in German, from the Old High German *gomo* (in Gothic *guma*, and in Anglo-Saxon *goom*, from which we derive our modern word 'groom'), whence modern German constructs words like *Bräutigam* ('bridegroom'). In many ancient European cultures, the belief was that the human race had originated in the belly of the earth, which helps to explain why, in settled as distinct from nomadic cultures, the spiritual attachment to the land ran deep in the collective mindset of the peoples who dwelt in those places. In most of those languages and cultures, the earth has a feminine gender, whereas the sky has a male gender (thus, *die Erde* (f.), *der Himmel* (m.); cp. γῆ/γαία (f.), οὐρανός (m.)). The belief in earth as mother is crucial, because it implies that children of both sexes are born from it, thus eroding a gender distinction. On grounds of linguistics alone, it is therefore unsurprising that *homo*, in Latin, applies to a human of either sex or, in normal application, means 'man=human'.

In attested Latin, the phrase *genus hominum* (literally, 'race of men'), always means the 'human race', never 'the male sex'. The former is the only sense attested in the writings of the first-century BC orator and philosopher Cicero (*Rep.* 3.12; 2.26; *Or.* 1.9.36; *Off.* 1.4.12; 1.7.22; 2.5.17; *Lael.* 6.20; *Leg.* 1.7.33; *Fam.* 12.1.1) and in the Roman comedians (Plaut. 2.1.26; Poen. 5.5.2; *Pers.* 2.2.29; *Ps.* 4.7.29; Ter. *Eun.* 5.1.17; *Heaut.* 5.3.1; *Ad.* 1.2.31; *Phorm* 5.8.52). Mostly, the term is neutral descriptive, but there are times when it can convey a moral sense

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also, either in a positive way to mean a reasoning and moral being (cf. Plaut. *Rep*. 3.4.57; Cic. *Att*. 2.2.2; *de Or*. 2.10.40; 13.52.2; *Fam*. 7.29.1; *Tusc*. 3.32.77), or in a pejorative way to mean a weak or fallible creature (Quint. 10.1.25; Cat. *R.R.* 57.2; Cat. 10.16). In some military slang, it is known to have referred to the infantry, as distinct from the cavalry (Caes. *B.C.* 2.39.5). The sense of *homo* as 'man' as opposed to 'woman' is not unknown in Latin but, used in that way it is exceedingly rare. The one and only time it is ever witnessed in that sense before the post-Classical age is in the playwright Plautus (*Cist*. 4.2.27): 'mi homo et mi mulier, vos saluto' ('My dear man and my dear woman, I salute you'). In post-Classical Latin, *homo* appears in a gender-specific sense in two attested instances only, in the late third-/early fourth-century AD Christian author, Lactantius, political and spiritual advisor to Emperor Constantine, (*Inst*. 2.12) and in the Digest (48.19.38). In these extremely rare instances, there is no question that *homo* means 'man' as opposed to 'woman', but they stand over and against a vast range of literary attestations from the pre-Classical, Classical, and post-Classical ages where this is not the case. That is not to deny that, in colloquial speech, *homo* can convey the sense of 'chap' or 'chum', as is seen from time to time in early comedy (Plaut. *Ps*. 4.7.65; Ter. *Eun*. 2.2.30), and there is also evidence in the *Satires* of Horace that it can be taken to mean 'this man = I myself' (Hor. *S*. 9.47): 'hunc hominem velles si tradere' ('If you wanted to hand over this man (= me)'), a sense attested in the rustic comedies of Plautus and Terence (Plaut. *Curc*. 2.1.33; Ter. *Heaut*. 2.2.114). But these are secondary applied meanings, which deviate from the overriding sense of the word *homo* in Latin, which nearly always means simply 'man=human'.

Why, then, did the meaning of *homo* change, so that in the languages descended directly from Latin (*viz*. French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian) the derivatives *homme*, *hombre*, *uomo*, *homem*, and *om* mean both 'man=human' and 'man=adult male human'? The most likely answer lies in a crucial semantic development which took place in late antiquity in the western half of the Roman Empire, with Jerome's translation of the Greek Bible into the Latin Vulgate, in the year AD 405, for the benefit of the western half of Christendom, which spoke only Latin and no Greek. Greek editions of the Bible had been available since the early part of the third century BC, in Ptolemaic Egypt, when under Ptolemy II the Jewish émigrés of Alexandria translated the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek *koine*, in an edition commonly known as the Septuagint, also containing scriptures which do not appear in the Hebrew Bible, termed 'the Jewish Apocrypha'. At Genesis 2.7, we read that God formed Adam, here meaning a single human male, out of the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. The exact derivation of אָדָם (*adam*), which in Hebrew means simply 'person', is debatable, though some have argued that it is related to the much older Akkadian root *adamu* meaning 'to make'. The idea that the first man (*viz*. Adam) was fashioned from the earth is also brought out by the word play on the Hebrew אֲדָמָה (adamah), meaning 'earth'. Here, there is perhaps a superficial resemblance to the pre-historic European idea that humans are earth-sprung, but there is also a vital difference to observe, in that in the Hebrew understanding, the earth is the substance from which man is created by an external agency; unlike the pagan conception, in the Biblical conception the earth does not of its own volition beget, or give birth to, humankind. A little later in Genesis (2.22), we read that woman was created from one of man's ribs by God, to be a companion. The man, upon waking, is represented to have said 'This one at last is bone from

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my bones, flesh from my flesh! She shall be called woman, for from man was she taken.' On this occasion, the word for 'man' is different, because of the gender distinction that has now been established between man=male (אִישׁ, transliterated '*ish*') and 'woman' (אִשָּׁה, transliterated '*ishah*', meaning 'out of man'). In the original Hebrew Bible, there was a clearly stated distinction between man=human (*adam*) and man=male (*ish*).

It is now interesting to observe how the Septuagint (Greek) edition of Genesis expresses this. For the sake of completeness, it is worth quoting extensively from Genesis 2.4-2.25, with my own interlinear translation which may differ from the standard English translations. I have gone for accuracy at the considerable cost of elegance. The key words and phrases are set out in bold for reference, along with some *ad hoc* linguistic comments:

4Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὅτε ἐγένετο, ᾗ ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν,

[This is the book of the birth of the heaven and the earth, when it was born, on the day on which God made the heaven and the earth,]

5καὶ πᾶν χλωρὸν ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντα χόρτον ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ ἀνατεῖλαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔβρεξεν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ **ἄνθρωπος** οὐκ ἦν ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν.

[and the whole greenery of the field before the birth (was) in the earth, and every plant of the field before its growth; for God did not rain down upon the earth, and there was no **man** to work the earth.]

6πηγὴ δὲ ἀνέβαινεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπότιζεν πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς.

[The spring rose out of the earth and watered the whole face of the earth.]

7καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς **τὸν ἄνθρωπον** χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο **ὁ ἄνθρωπος** εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

[And God moulded **the man** from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into his face, and **the man** was born into a living soul.]

8Καὶ ἐφύτευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ **τὸν ἄνθρωπον**, ὃν ἔπλασεν.

[And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the East and placed there **the man** whom he moulded.]

9καὶ ἐξανέτειλεν ὁ θεὸς ἔτι ἐκ τῆς γῆς πᾶν ξύλον ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν καὶ καλὸν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς ἐν μέσῳ τῷ παραδείσῳ καὶ τὸ ξύλον τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ.

[And God raised up yet out of the earth all wood fitting to the sight and good for food and wood (or tree) of life in the middle of the garden and the wood (or tree) of knowing what to be distinguished of good and evil.]

10ποταμὸς δὲ ἐκπορεύεται ἐξ Εδεμ ποτίζειν τὸν παράδεισον· ἐκεῖθεν ἀφορίζεται εἰς τέσσαρας ἀρχάς.

[A river flows out of Eden to water the garden; from thence it divides into four branches.]

11ὄνομα τῷ ἑνὶ Φισων· οὗτος ὁ κυκλῶν πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν Ευιλατ, ἐκεῖ οὗ ἐστιν τὸ χρυσίον·

[The name of one (was) Phison; this (is) that which encircles the whole land of Euilat, there where there is gold.]

12τὸ δὲ χρυσίον τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης καλόν· καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθραξ καὶ ὁ λίθος ὁ πράσινος.

[The gold of that land (is) good; and there is bdellium and the onyx stone.]

13καὶ ὄνομα τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ Γηων· οὗτος ὁ κυκλῶν πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν Αἰθιοπίας.

[The name of the second river (is) Geon; this (is) the one encircling all the land of Ethiopia.]

14καὶ ὁ ποταμὸς ὁ τρίτος Τίγρις· οὗτος ὁ πορευόμενος κατέναντι Ἀσσυρίων. ὁ δὲ ποταμὸς ὁ τέταρτος, οὗτος Εὐφράτης.

[And the third river (is) the Tigris; this (is) the one journeying to the East of the Assyrians. The fourth river, this (is) Euphrates.]

15Καὶ ἔλαβεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς **τὸν ἄνθρωπον**, ὃν ἔπλασεν, καὶ ἔθετο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν.

[And the Lord God took **the man**, whom he moulded, and placed him in the garden to work and guard it.']

16καὶ ἐνετείλατο κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῷ Αδαμ λέγων Ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου τοῦ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ βρώσει φάγῃ,

[And the Lord God enjoined Adam saying, 'From every wood which (is) in the garden, you may eat as food]

17ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν, **οὐ φάγεσθε** ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ· ᾗ δ᾽ **ἂν** ἡμέρᾳ **φάγητε** ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ, θανάτῳ **ἀποθανεῖσθε**.

[but from the wood of knowing good and evil, **do not eat** (note the plural imperative) from it; on the day in which **you would eat** from it, **you shall die** by death.' (note the second person plural with both main verbs).]

18Καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεός Οὐ καλὸν εἶναι **τὸν ἄνθρωπον** μόνον· ποιήσωμεν **αὐτῷ** βοηθὸν **κατ᾽ αὐτόν**.

[And The Lord God said, '(It is) not right that **the man** should be alone; we will make **for him** (note the masculine) a helper **from him** (note the masculine pronoun).]

19καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς ἔτι ἐκ τῆς γῆς πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ καὶ πάντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἤγαγεν αὐτὰ πρὸς **τὸν Αδαμ** ἰδεῖν, τί καλέσει αὐτά, καὶ πᾶν, ὃ ἐὰν ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸ **Αδαμ** ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, τοῦτο ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

[And God moulded yet from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the sky and led them **to Adam** to see, what he should call them, and whatever **Adam** called a living soul, this (was) its name.

20Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Αδαμ ὀνόματα πᾶσιν τοῖς κτήνεσιν καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς θηρίοις τοῦ ἀγροῦ, **τῷ** δὲ **Αδαμ** οὐχ εὑρέθη βοηθὸς ὅμοιος αὐτῷ.—

[And Adam called the names to all the herds and to all the birds of the sky and to all the beasts of the field, and for **Adam** was not found a helper like him.]

21καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς ἔκστασιν **ἐπὶ τὸν Αδαμ**, καὶ ὕπνωσεν· καὶ ἔλαβεν μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν **αὐτοῦ** καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσεν σάρκα ἀντ᾽ αὐτῆς.

[And God cast an ecstasy **upon Adam** and made him sleep; and he took one of **his** ribs and covered flesh around it.

22καὶ ῷκοδόμησεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὴν πλευράν, ἣν ἔλαβεν **ἀπὸ τοῦ Αδαμ**, εἰς **γυναῖκα** καὶ ἤγαγεν **αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Αδαμ.**

[And the Lord God built the rib, which he took **from Adam,** into **woman** and led her **to Adam.**

23καὶ εἶπεν **Αδαμ Τοῦτο** νῦν ὀστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων μου καὶ σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκός μου· **αὕτη** κληθήσεται γυνή, ὅτι **ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς** ἐλήμφθη **αὕτη**.

[And **Adam** said, 'This (note the neuter pronoun) now (is) bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh; **she** will be called **woman,** because **she** was taken **of her from the man** (note that a different word for 'man' is used, *aner* which is always gender-specific, not *anthropos*.)]

24ἕνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει **ἄνθρωπος** τὸν πατέρα **αὐτοῦ** καὶ τὴν μητέρα **αὐτοῦ** καὶ προσκολληθήσεται **πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ**, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

[For this reason, **man** (back to *anthropos*) shall leave **his** mother and **his** father and shall cling **to his woman** (or wife), and the two shall be one flesh.]

A brief glance at the Greek shows that three words for 'man' are used in this passage, the noun *anthropos* of common gender, but always given a masculine gender here by application of the masculine definite article, the noun *aner* only once, at verse 23, which in Greek is always male, to throw into relief the gender distinction between 'man' and 'woman' who become one flesh again in the act of sexual union, and the word 'Adam' which is transliterated directly from the Hebrew, but most curiously without any diacritical markings, possibly to indicate that the word was untranslatable. Within the logic of the Greek edition, the 'man' whom God fashions from the dust of the earth always has a male property, though it should be noted that when God gives the command not to eat of the tree of knowledge, the plural imperative is used, as if to prefigure the command He gives by implication to the woman also whom He has not yet created but who when created will live under the same injunction, which both eventually will break. It is perhaps unremarkable that a readership trained only to read Greek, and not the original Hebrew, would not have been aware of any of the nuanced distinctions which appeared in the Hebrew Bible.

Theology and language are inextricably intertwined, and many of the theological rows between different religious faiths, and among different sects within them, boil down to matters of hermeneutical technicality. In the case of Genesis, we can see how the Septuagint edition understood God as having created 'man' (as opposed to 'woman') first, and then woman from the rib of man. This developed sense of *anthropos*, as understood in the context of the theology of Genesis, is not however in evidence in other Classical Greek usage. In its earliest attestations in Greek, *anthropos* means 'man' in the non-gender-specified sense, as opposed to beast and god. Its earliest attestation is in Homer's *Iliad*, where the race of 'men' (*genos anthropon*) is differentiated from that of the immortal gods, and subsequently in the *Odyssey*, it refers to 'men' (meaning 'peoples') of the East and the West (*Il.* 5.442; *Od.* 8.29). In Homeric Greek, the earliest dialect of Greek on written record, if one can exclude Linear B (as spoken in the Mycenaean palace civilisations of the Late Bronze Age), the use of the definite article was not yet fully developed, and it was thus possible to represent *anthropos* in a non-binary sense. Plato does something similar, to represent 'man' generally (see Pl. *Prt.* 322a; *R.* 619b), though there are also instances in the Platonic dialogues where it comes to mean 'fellow' (*Prt.* 314e; *Phd.*

117e). Not infrequently, as with the Latin *homo*, the term can be contemptuous, especially when used in the vocative singular (see *e.g.* Hdt. 3.63; 8.125; S. *Aj.* 791), often addressing itself to slaves or to others of humble social status. But unlike the Latin *homo*, which must include 'woman' only by implication, the prefacing of the feminine definite article permits the Greek *hê anthropos* to mean specifically 'woman', as opposed to 'man' (Pi. *P.* 4.98; Hdt. 1.60; Isoc. 18.52; Arist. *EN* 1148^{b}20). Only very rarely however in Classical Greek is *anthropos* ever set in opposition to 'woman', though even this is not totally unknown (see Aeschin. 3.137). If put against the backcloth of standard Greek usage, the application of *anthropos* in the Septuagint to the 'man' whom God created represents a key moment in its semantic development where, for theological reasons primarily, it ceases to mean 'man=human', which is the most common of its applications in standard Greek and starts to mean 'man=male'. This, will be seen shortly, had important evolutionary implications when Genesis was translated later into the Vulgate.

The Vulgate (or Latin) edition of the Old Testament, produced in AD 405 by the great theologian and scholar Jerome (whose name, in Greek, was Hieronymus), some two decades after the first Vulgate rendition of the New Testament, marked an effort to ensure that the Bible was accessible to the West. I quote the same passage from Genesis (2.4-23) in the Vulgate, with the necessary words for comment in bold, especially where a gender nuance is present:

[4]istae generationes caeli et terrae quando creatae sunt in die quo fecit Dominus Deus caelum et terram
[5]et omne virgultum agri antequam oreretur in terra omnemque herbam regionis priusquam germinaret. non enim pluerat Dominus Deus super terram et homo non erat qui operaretur terram
[6]sed fons ascendebat e terra inrigans universam superficiem terrae.
[7]formavit igitur Dominus Deus **hominem** de limo terrae et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae et **factus** est **homo** in animam viventem.
[8]plantaverat autem Dominus Deus paradisum voluptatis a principio in quo posuit **hominem quem** formaverat.
[9]produxitque Dominus Deus de humo omne lignum pulchrum visu et ad vescendum suave lignum etiam vitae in medio paradisi ignumque scientiae boni et mali.
[10]et fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad inrigandum paradisum qui inde dividitur in quattuor capita.
11]nomen uni Phison ipse est qui circuit omnem terram Evilat ubi nascitur aurum;
12]et aurum terrae illius optimum est ibique bdellium et lapis onychinus;
[13]et nomen fluvio secundo Geon ipse est qui circuit omnem terram Aethiopiae;
[14]nomen vero fluminis tertii Tigris ipse vadit contra Assyrios fluvius autem quartus ipse est Eufrates.
[15]tulit ergo Dominus Deus **hominem** et posuit **eum** in paradiso voluptatis ut operaretur et custodiret illum.
[16]praecepitque ei dicens, Ex omni ligno paradisi **comede**;
[17]de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne **comedas;** in quocumque enim die **comederis** ex eo morte **morieris.**
[18]dixit quoque Dominus Deus, Non est bonum esse **hominem** solum; faciamus ei adiutorium similem sui.
[19]formatis igitur Dominus Deus de humo cunctis animantibus terrae et universis volatilibus caeli, adduxit ea ad **Adam** ut videret quid vocaret ea. omne enim quod vocavit **Adam** animae viventis, ipsum est nomen eius.
[20] appellavitque **Adam** nominibus suis cuncta animantia et universa volatilia caeli et omnes bestias terrae. **Adam** vero non inveniebatur adiutor similis eius.
21]inmisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in **Adam.** cumque obdormisset tulit unam de costis eius et replevit carnem pro ea,
[22]et aedificavit Dominus Deus costam quam tulerat de **Adam** in **mulierem** et adduxit eam ad **Adam**.
[23]dixitque **Adam** hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea haec vocabitur **virago** quoniam **de viro** sumpta est;
[24]quam ob rem relinquet **homo** patrem suum et matrem et adherebit **uxori** suae et erunt duo in carne una.

There is no need to supply an interlinear translation here as, with one important exception, it is virtually identical in meaning to the Greek. That one exception appears at verses 16-17, where the Vulgate edition uses the second person singular when God addresses Adam, with the verbs *comedas* (eatest thou not), *comederis* ([If] thou eatest), and *morieris* ('thou shalt die'), whereas the Septuagint represents God's address to Adam in the second person plural (οὐ φάγεσθε ['eat ye not'], φάγητε ['may ye eat'], ἀποθανεῖσθε ['ye shall die']). To translate ὁ ἄνθρωπος, the Vulgate dutifully substitutes *homo*, and where the Septuagint switches to 'Adam', the Vulgate follows suit. Likewise, the one place (in verse 23) where the Septuagint slides to ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ('out of the man [=male]'), the Vulgate substitutes *de viro*, and not *de homine*. Like the Greek, the Latin version marks a turning point in the evolution of the meaning of *homo*. As we have already seen, in its standard Classical application, it means the same as ἄνθρωπος (*anthropos*) in Greek, which is 'man=human'. But when Latin is used to translate the Bible, it acquires the sense of 'man=male', in contradistinction to 'woman', who according to the story is 'taken out of' the man (which is the etymology of *virago* at verse 23, from *vir* (meaning man=male) and *agere* (meaning 'to lead' or 'to take'), which the Greek manages with αὐτῆς ἐλήμφθη αὕτη).

With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, Latin slowly turned into Romance, which in turn partitioned into the various dialects spoken in Italy, Gaul, Dacia, and the Iberian Peninsula, which in turn became Italian, French, Romanian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Through this gradual evolution, the Christianised peoples of Europe of the later Middle Ages gradually understood *homo* to mean 'man=male', perhaps even in its primary sense, and that must surely help to explain etymologically why its derivatives in the offshoot languages (*homme, hombre, uomo, homem,* and *om*) carry the double sense of man=male and man=human, with a priority perhaps even being placed on the first. It also helps explain why languages not directly derived from Latin, such as the Germanic, Celtic, Slavic, and Indic languages, although they all share a common Indo-European root, maintain a cleaner distinction between the two concepts. An additional warning should come from this, and that is that while very modern attempts to re-classify linguistic terminology in the light of contemporary political and ideological agendas are understandable, especially where science has conclusively disproven more ancient notions about the origin of humankind and the relationship between the sexes, language carries with it a rich and indispensable heritage of meaning and nuance. When the ideological scalpel is used to empty language of its inherited meaning by methods which resemble a surgical procedure, the effect is invariably disastrous, as was the lasting effect of the Maoist reforms on the Chinese language during the Cultural Revolution, which led to wholescale cultural impoverishment. The English language itself bears in every sentence the historical overlay of 1066, and though Cromwell in the seventeenth century showed a special preference for Anglo-Saxon words, it remains impossible to change the archaeology of any language or dialect without destroying it completely. A more scientific and rational approach is to recognise that language is not always scientific in its use of conceptual terminology. As speakers, we imagine like poets, as well as reason like scientists, and the surest antidote to the misuse of any language, with disastrous consequences at times, is to understand its roots and its origins, not only to appreciate where it has come from, but also to predict and perhaps influence responsibly its future direction.