TO DISTRIBUTE AND TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION:
GENERICITY AND UNIVERSAL QUANTIFICATION IN GREEK

OVERVIEW. This paper investigates genericity in Greek addressing the correlation of tolerance to exceptions with the property of partial/total distributivity. Generics expressed with the universal distributive quantifier *kathe* 'every/each' are scrutinized and a proposal is put forward, according to which *kathe*-phrases can be generic, while *kathe*-phrases with the definite article (*o kathe*-phrases henceforth) cannot be generic. *Kathe*-phrases are linked to partial distribution and can tolerate exceptions, while *o kathe*-phrases are linked to total distribution and leave no room for exceptions.

INTRODUCTION. Recent literature (Leslie 2008) stresses the fact that generic meaning is not encoded in a unique and unambiguous way by the use of exclusively generic forms. Kind-referring nouns are typically expressed with bare nouns in English (Carlson 1977), while they are typically expressed with definite plurals in Greek (e.g. Marmaridou-Protopapa 1984). Genericity is not linked to one type of expression neither cross-linguistically nor within a language. Focusing on Greek, other types of nominals can also receive generic interpretation, such as universal quantifiers, which will be the focus of the present paper, free choice items like *opjosdhipote* 'any' and indefinite singulars like *enas* 'a'.

DATA AND DISCUSSION. Generics in Greek are typically definite, but they can also be expressed via the universal quantifier *olos* 'all' or the universal distributive quantifier *kathe*:

(1) I elefantes exun provoskida.
   the elephants have trunk
(2) Oli i elefantes exun provoskida.
   all the elephants have trunk
(3) Kathe elefantas exi provoskida.
   kathe elephant has trunk

The link between genericity and universal quantification dates back to early discussions in the literature (see Krifka et. al 1995). One striking difference between (1) and (2) is that (1) can be true even in the face of exceptions, such as the existence of trunk-less elephants, while (2) is not true when exceptions are attested. Turning to (3), we see that *kathe* can also be generic. A possible depicted difference between contexts like (1) and (3) is the possibility for contextual restriction of the domain of quantification. The traditional view (e.g. Dahl 1975, Krifka et al. 1995) is that generics cannot be contextually restricted, when they occur with individual-level predicates (Carlson 1977), unlike what happens with quantifiers like *kathe*:

(4) (Context: There are lions and tigers in the cage.)
   a. Ta liontaria ine epikindhina. (*cannot* mean: 'Lions in this cage are dangerous')
      the lions are dangerous
   b. Kathe liontari ine epikindhino. (*can* mean: 'Every lion in this cage is dangerous')
      kathe lion is dangerous

A crucial related fact is that *kathe* is able to co-occur with the definite article, a fact that has an impact in its semantic interpretation, since *o kathe*-phrases cannot be generic (see Tsili 2001, Giannakidou 2004, Lazaridou-Chatzigoga 2011):

(5) *O kathe elefantas exi provoskida. (here * indicates no generic interpretation)
   the kathe elephant has trunk

Going back to (3), it seems that the predicate 'have a trunk' is distributed to every member of the set '*kathe elefantas*'. The distribution nevertheless needs not to be total and this phenomenon has been dubbed as 'partial distribution', a fact that has been noted in the literature, but has not been linked to exceptions (Tunstall 1998, Tsili 2001). In the case of *kathe*, the relevant condition would be that the property must be at least partially distributed. Were we to give a truth-value to (3) it could be also true of a situation, where, for instance,

1% of the elephants do not have a trunk. Partial distribution of the property in question and the possibility for exceptions seem thus to be two sides of the same coin. On the other hand, sentence (5) is true only if we totally distribute the property in question to each and every one of the members of the set and, thus, no exceptions are allowed. Additionally, (5) can only be true of some particular set of elephants previously introduced in the discourse, a fact underscored if we consider an accidental property such as 'have a pink ribbon' and not a typical one for elephants like 'have a trunk':

(6) O kathe elefantas exi mia roz kordela. (*ok* for a contextually restricted set)
　　　the kathe elephant has a pink ribbon

Furthermore, when reference is made to kinds, of which there are no instances in the actual world, we observe that *kathe* can refer both to the actual and possible worlds, while *o kathe* can only refer to the actual world (see Etxeberria&Giannakidou 2008:14), thus contextual restriction is obligatory for *o kathe* (Giannakidou 2004):

(7) Kathe monokeros exi ena kerato/ #O kathe monokeros exi ena kerato.
　　　'Every unicorn has one horn.'　　/ 'Each unicorn has one horn.'

The claim with *o kathe* can be only made about a specific set of unicorns, e.g. only if we imagine an illustration in a book that is present physically at the time of conversation.

PROPOSAL. I argue that *kathe*-phrases can be generic, involve partial distribution and tolerate exceptions, while *o kathe*-phrases cannot be generic and, thus, the question of exceptions does not arise. Nevertheless, we may also derive this fact from the property of total distribution that characterizes *o kathe*-phrases. *O kathe-phrases* are totally distributive, presuppositional and contextually restricted (Heim & Kratzer 1998, Giannakidou 2004). Furthermore, I contend that *o kathe*-phrases cannot make reference to a kind, while bare *kathe*-phrases can, and I draw additional support from the following contexts: First, *there*-insertion contexts, which disallow strong quantifiers like *every* (Milsark 1974), may favor a kind interpretation under certain conditions (McNally&VanGeenhoven 1997). Here *kathe* is licensed, while *o kathe* is ungrammatical:

(8) Ipirxe [kathe/* i kathe] diathesi ja sinergasia, ala...
　　　'There was every disposition for collaboration, but…'

Second, in downward-entailing contexts (Ladusaw 1979) that seem to reinforce a kind interpretation, *kathe* is grammatical, while *o kathe* is not:

(9) I steni organotiki ke politiki sxesi me komatikus orghanismus afidhatoni kathe
　　　protovulia/*tin kathe protovulia.
　　　'The close organizational and political relationship with institutions and parties
　　　desiccates kathe/the kathe initiative.'

Third, in intensional contexts with verbs like *psaxno* 'look for' we see that *kathe*-phrases give rise both to opaque and transparent readings, while *o kathe*-phrases only to transparent ones:

(10)　　Epsaksa kathe simathiti mu sto facebook, ala den vrika kanena/ ton kathe simathiti
　　　　　mu sto facebook, # ala den vrika kanena.
　　　'I looked for kathe/ ton kathe classmate of mine in facebook, but I did not find anyone.'

On the basis of the above distribution, the differences in tolerance to exceptions and partial/total distribution are highlighted for the constructions in question.

SELECTED REFERENCES Carlson (1977). *Reference to kinds.* New York: Garland. **Etxeberria & Giannakidou (2008).** Contextual domain restriction across languages: Definiteness, indefiniteness and the structure of QP, ms. **Giannakidou (2004)**. Domain restriction and the Arguments of Quantificational Determiners, SALT 14, 110-128. **Krifka et al. (1995).** "Genericity: An Introduction". In The Generic Book, edited by G. Carlson and F. J. Pelletier, 1–125. Chicago: Chicago University Press. **Lazaridou-Chatzigoga (2011).** *Distributiviry and Genericity in Greek: the case of* kathe *with the definite article.* Talk at the 20th International Symposium on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Thessaloniki, 1-3 April 2011. **Leslie (2008).** Generics: Cognition and acquisition. *The Philosophical Review*, 117(1), 1–49. **Marmaridou-Protopapa (1984)**. The study of reference, attribution and genericness in the context of English and their grammaticalization in M. Greek noun phrases. Unpublished PhD thesis. Darwin College. Cambridge. **Tsili (2001)**. The quantificational phrases *(o) kathe NP, (o) kathenas* > universality and distributivity (In Greek). Studies in Greek Linguistics 21. p.783-794.