

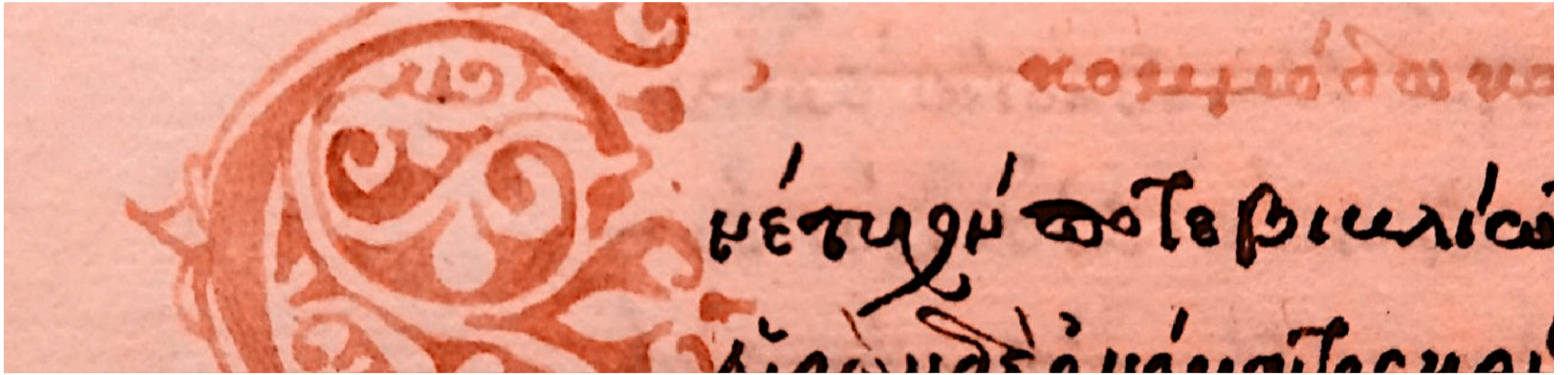


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3. to make the theories of these specialist and intricate texts more approachable and **accessible** outside the traditional format of critical editions.

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Contacts

For information about DEA, please email dea_editor@unive.it. For information about the PURA project, please contact the Principal Investigator: Prof. Olga Tribulato, Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università Ca' Foscari

Venezia, Dorsoduro 3484/D, 30123 Venezia, Italia. olga.tribulato@unive.it.



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

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PURA. *Purism In Antiquity: Theories Of Language in Greek Atticist Lexica and their Legacy*

Lexicographic entries

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ἀλεκτορίς

(Phryn. *Ecl.* 200)

A. Main sources

(1) Phryn. *Ecl.* 200: ἀλεκτορίς· εὕρισκεται καὶ ἐν τραγωδίᾳ καὶ ἐν κωμῳδίᾳ, λέγε δὲ ἀλεκτρυῶν καὶ ἐπὶ θήλειος καὶ ἐπὶ ἄρρενος ὡς οἱ παλαιοί.

ἀλεκτορίς: [This form] is found in both tragedy and comedy, but you should say ἀλεκτρυῶν for both the female and the male [bird], as the ancients [do].

(2) Poll. 6.52: ἀλεκτρυόνες ἀλεκτορίδες.

Cocks, hens.

(3) Thom.Mag. 4.13–5.2: ἀλεκτρυῶν καὶ ἐπὶ ἄρρενος καὶ ἐπὶ θήλειος, λογογράφοι· τὸ δὲ ἀλεκτορίς ποιητικόν, εἰ καὶ Συνέσιος χρῆται ἐν τῇ Λύσαντες ἐκ Βενδιδείου ἐπιστολῇ· λέγει γὰρ ‘ἀλεκτορίδας, ὡὰ ἀλεκτόρεια’. τὸ δὲ ἀλέκτωρ οὐχ Ἑλληνικὸν ὅλως.

Prose-writers [use] ἀλεκτρυῶν for both the female and the male [bird]. The [form] ἀλεκτορίς [is] poetic, although Synesius uses it in the epistle *Departure from Bendidion*. For he says (*Epist.* 5.255–6): ‘Hens, chicken eggs’. The [form] ἀλέκτωρ (‘cock’) [is] not entirely standard Greek.

B. Other erudite sources

(1) Moer. α 51: ἀλεκτρυῶν <Ἀττικοί>· ἀλέκτωρ <Ἑλληνες>.

<Users of Attic> [employ] ἀλεκτρύων, [while] <users of Greek> [employ] ἀλέκτωρ.

(2) Hsch. α 2859: ἀλεκτρυόνες· κοινῶς οἱ παλαιοὶ καὶ τὰς θηλείας ὄρνις οὕτως ἐκάλουν.

The ancients collectively referred to [male and] female birds in this way.

(3) Schol. rec. Ar. Nu. 4d: ἀλεκτρύων Ἀττικόν, ἀλέκτωρ παρὰ Ἀλεξανδρεῦσιν. ἀλεκτορίς δὲ ἀλεκτορίδος ἐπὶ τῆς θηλείας, ὄθεν καὶ ‘ὠὰ ἀλεκτόρεια’.

ἀλεκτρύων [is the] Attic [form], [while] ἀλέκτωρ [is the form used] by Alexandrians. [The form] ἀλεκτορίς, ἀλεκτορίδος [is used for] the female [bird], from which also [derives] ‘chicken eggs’ (Synes. *Epist.* 5.255–6).

C. *Loci classici*, other relevant texts

(1) Epich. fr. 278.3–5:

καὶ γὰρ τὸ θῆλυ τῶν ἀλεκτορίδων γένος,
αἱ λῆς καταμαθεῖν ἀτενές, οὐ τίκτει τέκνα
ζῶντ’, ἀλλ’ ἐπώζει καὶ ποιεῖ ψυχὰν ἔχειν.

For the female stock of chickens, if you should observe closely, does not bear living offspring, but she clucks [over the eggs] and makes them have a soul.

(2) Herod. 6.99–100:

κάξαμίθησαι
αἱ ἀλεκτο[ρί]δες εἰ [σ]όαι εἰσι.

And count if the hens are safe.

(3) Ael. NA 7.43: τὰ δὲ πρόσφατα ὀρνύφια νεοττοῦς καὶ ὀρταλίχους, ἀλεκτρυόνων τε ἀλεκτορίδας λέγουσι.

Hercher moved νεοττοῦς after ἀλεκτρυόνων τε and deleted καὶ | Valckenaer, followed by Hercher, emended ἀλεκτορίδας into ἀλεκτοριδεῖς.

They call newly hatched little birds nestlings and chicks, and [the young] of chickens [they call] *alektorides*.

D. General commentary

Phrynichus’ entry ([A.1](#)) aims to proscribe the use of the female form ἀλεκτορίς (‘hen’), in place of which it prescribes the use of ἀλεκτρύων for both genders, according to classical usage. This doctrine is followed and reinforced by Thomas Magister ([A.3](#)), who contaminates the discussion of ἀλεκτορίς with that concerning ἀλεκτρύων and the post-classical form ἀλέκτωρ, which he indicates is not standard ([B.1](#), [B.3](#)). Phrynichus is not explicitly concerned with this latter problem, although he may implicitly proscribe ἀλέκτωρ (I refer to the specific discussion at ἀλεκτρύων, ἀλέκτωρ (forthcoming) [↗](#)). As for the other Atticist sources, Pollux ([A.2](#)) records ἀλεκτορίς beside ἀλεκτρύων, without comment, in a list of bird species.

In Greek, ἀλεκτρούων indicates both the cock and the hen. This famously gave rise to comic situations such as the passage in Aristophanes' *Clouds* where Socrates recommends that, instead of the gender-neutral form ἀλεκτρούων, one should use ἀλεκτρούαινα for the hen and ἀλέκτωρ for the cock (*Nu.* 658–67). However, while Aristophanes' ἀλεκτρούαινα is only a comic neologism, the feminine ἀλεκτορίς is not. This form, which is indeed the feminine of ἀλέκτωρ, is attested as early as Epicharmus ([C.1](#), fr. 113.23 and 150; regarding the authenticity of [C.1](#), see Favi 2020, 255–65), and it is then well-documented in Hippocratic treatises dating to the 5th or the early 4th century (*Nat.Puer.* 29, *Vict.* 81, and *Int.* 27, 35, and 41; on the dating of these texts, see Craik 2015, 118, 140, 275). These instances probably indicate that ἀλεκτορίς developed earlier in dialects other than Attic, such as Doric and Ionic. Phrynichus comments that ἀλεκτορίς is attested in tragedy and comedy. As regards comedy, it is possible that he may in fact have Epicharmus in mind (see above), which would also explain why he does not approve of this form, since Epicharmus was clearly not a model of Attic Greek by Phrynichus' standards (see *Ecl.* 43 and 79). No occurrence of ἀλεκτορίς in tragedy is known to us. We may only speculate that a tragic poet used ἀλεκτορίς as the corresponding feminine to the poeticism ἀλέκτωρ, which is in fact decently paralleled in tragedy (see ἀλεκτρούων, ἀλέκτωρ, forthcoming[↗]). Aristophanes' use of ἀλεκτρούαινα rather than the already existing ἀλεκτορίς is explained as a more comic option, and it also makes sense in a parody of linguistic orthoepy: according to analogy, a noun ending in -αινα like ἀλεκτρούαινα is the expected feminine of a masculine noun like ἀλεκτρούων (as in the case of θεράπων and θεράπαινα), and this explanation is not weakened by the fact that the corresponding masculine form Socrates recommends is actually ἀλέκτωρ.

In later sources, ἀλεκτορίς is by and large a prose word. The sole other poetic occurrence of ἀλεκτορίς, beside those in Epicharmus, is in Herodas ([C.2](#)), where ἀλεκτορίς has a metrically guaranteed [i:], as is typical of Ionic (see K–B vol. 1, § 133.7.γ). The occurrences of ἀλεκτορίς in prose are predominantly in zoological writings. To give a general idea, ἀλεκτορίς occurs 8x and 22x respectively in Aristotle's *Generation of animals* and *History of animals*, 8x in Dioscorides, 42x in Galen and pseudo-Galen, 4x in Aretaeus, and 46x in Oribasius. The situation remains unchanged in the Byzantine period (see [E.](#)). Meanwhile, occurrences of ἀλεκτορίς in imperial literary prose are very rare. Two attestations come from Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (3.29.4, 4.12.2): in the latter case there is an explicit opposition between cocks and hens, whereas in the former the reference is more generical to fowl (similarly, Italian *dare da mangiare alle galline* 'feed the hens' does not mean specifically female birds, and the word *galline* may stand in for fowl as a whole). In Aelian's *Natura animalium*, ἀλεκτορίς occurs four times ([C.3](#), 13.25, 17.44 [2x]): the first passage poses some textual problems (see [F.1](#)); in the latter two, there is an explicit opposition between cocks and hens. Other instances in high prose include Alciphron (2.6.1, 4.13.5, 4.13.10) and Synesius (*Epist.* 5.255, cf. [B.3](#), and 129.36).

E. Byzantine and Modern Greek commentary

In the Byzantine era too, ἀλεκτορίς is attested predominantly in scientific writings (e.g. it occurs 36x in Aetius, 16x in John Philoponus, and 11x in Paulus' *Epitomae medicae libri septem*). It is occasionally attested also in other types of texts, in cases where it is necessary to refer to the female bird (e.g. Michael Psellus *Epistulae* 17.68.33). It does not continue in Modern Greek.

F. Commentary on individual texts and occurrences

- (1) Ael. *NA* 7.43 ([C.3](#))

The text printed above is that of García Valdés, Llera Fueyo, and Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén (2009). The difficulty is that ἀλεκτορίς is rarely found with the meaning of young fowl (at least, no secure parallel has been identified so far). In order to resolve this difficulty, Valckenaer (followed by Hercher) emended ἀλεκτορίδας into ἀλεκτοριδεῖς, thus restoring the text as τὰ δὲ πρόσφατα ὀρνύφια νεοττοὺς καὶ ὀρταλίχους, ἀλεκτρούνων τε ἀλεκτοριδεῖς λέγουσι ('They call newly hatched little birds nestling and chicks and [the young] of chickens *alektorideis*'). The form ἀλεκτοριδεύς is not very common, but it does occur in a passage of Athenaeus (9.373a–b), where it is identified, along with ἀλεκτρούων, as one of the words for a cock. However, it does not seem that Athenaeus uses ἀλεκτοριδεύς specifically to indicate young cocks. To summarise, both ἀλεκτορίδες and ἀλεκτοριδεῖς are ill-attested with the meaning of 'young chickens', and so the problem remains open.

Besides accepting Valckenaer's emendation of ἀλεκτορίδας to ἀλεκτοριδεῖς, Hercher also suggested changing the word order as follows: τὰ δὲ πρόσφατα ὀρνύφια ὀρταλίχους, ἀλεκτρούνων τε νεοττοὺς ἀλεκτοριδεῖς λέγουσι ('And people call newly hatched little birds ὀρτάλιχοι and the young of chickens ἀλεκτοριδεῖς', as translated by Scholfield 1959, 165, who accepts both emendations). This substantial change in word order is probably unnecessary, however, since ἀλεκτρούνων τε is already sufficient to indicate which subcategory of birds has young that are called ἀλεκτορίδες/ἀλεκτοριδεῖς.

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the form ἀλεκτορίς, discussed in the Atticist lexicon Phryn. Ecl. 200.

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