When Did the Biblical Hebrew Noun *ʾîš* Become Lexically Gendered?

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Definitions

Let me begin with a definition of key terms. First, regarding the common noun אִישׁ: In this paper, when I say אִישׁ, I am referring only to its grammatically *masculine* form, both singular and plural—which amounts to a total of 2198 instances.[1]

Second, in order to explain what I mean by "lexical gender," I first need to define three other kinds of gender: see #1 in your handout.[2] To underscore or supplement what's shown there, let me say some brief words about each kind:

Handout is appended to this file.

Social gender: is a cultural construct. It's important to distinguish between *conceptual categories* and the *labels* used in a language to express them.[3] As is well known, the pairing of a particular word to point to a given concept is not necessarily stable over time. The word's meaning potential can shift, along with its corresponding usage constraints.[4]

And I don't mean to claim that in Ancient Israelite society, adults were either men or women according to a gender binary. Rather, I assume that any and all social genders were projected onto the language's system of two *grammatical* genders in some kind of conventional way.[5] Here I will simply take for granted that there were *at least two* social genders.

Syntactic gender: (Also known as grammatical gender) This is a matter of morphology in linguistic expression. In this paper, I will take the Hebrew system of grammatical gender for granted.

Referential gender: This is about how the word is actually used to make reference—and how it prompts information about the social gender of the referent—in context.[6]

Lexical gender: This is particular to the word in question.It is the speaker's claim about the social gender of the referent according to *the label itself*—as distinct from the preceding three types of gender. It is said to be a *property* of the word in question.

Given these definitions, I can already say that the query that forms the title of this talk is *helpful* in that it opens up the space for us to wonder: under which conditions is gender a part of the lexical contribution of אִישׁ? Yet as I shall explain, this question is *misleading* in its implication that "lexical gender" is a binary "yes-or-no" matter.[7]

The Gradient of Lexical Gender

Before exploring diachronic issues, let me review the semantics of contrastable noun pairs, such as those shown at #2 on your handout, in the first two columns of that table. The first column, labeled *Term A*, shows the more generic of the two terms; it is usually

the one that is the more socially salient of the two, within that particular language community. For example, in English the term *lion* is generally taken to be a label for the animal species; yet it would be acceptable if, when someone asked, "Look, is that a lioness?" the answer came back, "No, it's a lion." Such a response presupposes a contrast and thus evokes a more restricted, male sense of *lion*. In other words, as is well known, certain nouns can in some usages function as a cover term that *includes* the denotation of a more specific term, whereas in other usages that first term serves in *opposition* to that more specific term.

Now let me introduce a concept that may be less familiar, regarding *a gradient in the behavioral criteria* for such a word's usage. This gradient can be depicted by the four types of conventional constraint that are highlighted in the gray boxes in that table on your handout. I've numbered them for convenient reference.

Type I: Can Term *A* be used to denote what Term *B* normally denotes, in making reference to a *specific* entity?

Type II: Are we dealing with true hyponymy? (That is, is there a relation of inclusion between the terms as they are construed in a given usage?)

Type III: Can Term *A* be used to denote what Term *B* normally denotes, in making reference to a *nonspecific* entity?[8]

Type IV: Can the plural of Term *A* refer to a group that includes members who are normally described by Term *B*?

For the pair *lion/lioness*, let's look at the column labeled Type I; I've answered *Yes* because I consider it to be grammatical English for someone to point and say "Look! That lion has just brought down a gazelle!" when the predator in question is clearly a female. Moving to the next column, an acceptable usage that fits Type II would be the statement "A lioness is a female lion," which is normal English, so: another *Yes*.

I'm going to skip to the second row. The language typologist Martin Haspelmath, who is a native speaker of German, notes that the "generic" German term for a medical doctor is more restricted in its application.[9] Due to referential gender rules, it would be ungrammatical to apply the term *ein Arzt* to a specific doctor who happened to be a woman; she should be labeled as *eine Ärztin*. Hence the answer for the Type I column is *No*. Nonetheless, one could make a statement with nonspecific reference such as *Ich suche einen neuen Arzt* 'I'm looking for a new doctor', and, absent further specification on my part, it would be understood that I do not care whether that physician be a man or a woman. This exemplifies Type III—the nonspecific use of Term *A* for Term *B*.

In short, the more columns (or types of usage) for which the answer is *No*, the more lexically gendered the noun in question is. Thus it is fair to say that in German, *Arzt* is more lexically gendered than *lion* is in English.

Haspelmath emphasizes that every such pair of terms—even within the same language—has *its own peculiar profile of behaviors* among these usage types. The gender demarcation line between what *is* grammatically acceptable and what *isn't* varies from one contrasting word pair to another. Consequently, Haspelmath cautioned his fellow linguists: "Linguistic descriptions cannot content themselves with a simple bifurcation."[10] In other words, it is an oversimplification to state categorically that the more extensive term is gendered, or conversely, that it is unspecified for gender. Rather, it is a matter of degree.

To put this *gradient* notion of lexical gender in perspective, I have added a third row for the limiting case, which is exemplified by the contrasting Hebrew pair *zākār–nəqēbâ*. With this pair, even a Type-IV usage of the plural of the ostensibly more socially salient term, *zəkārim*, cannot be used in a way that includes women in its scope. Thus for the noun *zākār* it can truly be said that it is *fully* lexically gendered.[11]

The Gradient of Lexical Gender for אִישׁ in the Bible

Now let's apply this way of looking at noun pairs to אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה, according to how אִישׁ is deployed in the Hebrew Bible. Actually, since there are so many distinct labels for women in Hebrew, the following will apply to אִישׁ in relation to any womanly term. I've left the row for אִישׁ blank, so that you can fill it in yourself, as I review my notes at #3 on your handout. First of all, for Type I, I note that like German, Hebrew requires that with *specific* reference, the form אִישׁ normally cannot be used to refer to a woman—nor for any other personal noun that has a distinct "feminine" form.[12] So my answer is *No*.

Type II (hyponymy): I note that there are hundreds of pronoun-like usages of אִישׁ in Biblical Hebrew, and these can be deemed as gender-inclusive by default. Likewise, women are clearly included among the participants who are labeled as אִישׁ in *certain broadly inclusive communal events*. (The banner examples are listed on the handout.[13]) So my answer is *Yes*.

Type III (nonspecific use): I note that women can be included among the parties who are labeled as אִישׁ in certain depictions of *ritual and legal procedures*. (Again, the banner examples are listed on the handout.) So my answer is *Yes*.

Type IV (inclusive plurals): Women can be included among the *occupants of a household* and among the *inhabitants of a place*, when either of those entities is labeled by the plural construct אַנְשֵׁי.[14] So once again, my answer is *Yes*.

Confounding factors in ascertaining lexical gender

How do we square all of this with the widespread conviction among students of the Bible that "אִישׁ means 'man' (adult male)"? We do so by noticing that many of this noun's usages correlate with *independent* evidence that the referent is indeed an adult male. That evidence consists of the factors listed at #4 on your handout. I won't dwell on them except to say that they *confound* our assessment of lexical gender. True, the repeated co-incidence of this word's *use* and *reference to males* makes the noun *seem* lexically gendered; but that local and temporary *pragmatic* association is only indirectly related to lexical gender, which is a *semantic* characteristic—regarding the word's meaning on the level of the language as a whole.[15]

No proof of greater lexical gendering in Bible

Earlier this year, I conducted an experiment. I examined 40 articles on אִישׁ in biblical dictionaries that had been composed in six languages and spanned a thousand years of lexicographic tradition.[16] Of those 40 articles, 20 (that is, half of them) lead off with indications that this noun's most distinctive or abiding semantic feature is the *quality of maleness/manliness*.[17] I collated all of the biblical citations that were listed in support of that initial claim, for I figured that—given the *thousands* of instances of אִישׁ to choose from—these lexicographers would cite the most telling, diagnostic cases. That gave me a list of 26 juicy verses [#5]. Yet when I assessed them, I found that at least one of those three confounding factors [listed in #4] was present in every case [as reflected in the coding at #5].[18] In other words—contrary to conventional wisdom—although these cases show clearly that אִישׁ was regularly used to indicate and to distinguish a MANLY *referent*, they fail to demonstrate that any biblical narrator or character has used אִישׁ in a manner that treats this word as any MORE *lexically gendered* than the partial status that I have just claimed in the table at #2.

Shifts in the Degree of Lexical Gender Over Time

The Case of* Man *in English

With that finding as a baseline, let's now apply the idea of lexical-gender-as-a-*gradient* to diachronic investigation. How has the degree of a given word's lexical gender changed over time? At #6 in your handout, I have analyzed the English noun *man*, for each of three historical stages of that language. I chose this term not only because it is quite similar to אִישׁ in its patterns of use and its meaning potential, and not only because it is the standard single-word equivalent for אִישׁ in Bible translations into English, but also because—unlike most languages—the extant records for English enable this word's shifts in usage to be traced with a relatively high degree of confidence.

From OLD ENGLISH (that is, the recorded language from the oldest extant records around 650 CE to around 1100), today's scholars are sorting through roughly ten thousand known tokens of the use of *mann* and its oblique forms.[19] Because I assume that few of you are conversant with Old English literature, I give one exemplar for each column [#7]—which I commend to you, to peruse on your own. In all of these cases, the usages differ from either Modern English or Present-Day English.

(For simplicity, my table skips over Middle English.)

As for the next row in the table, in MODERN ENGLISH, the word *man* has a more gendered connotation, so it's no longer considered grammatical to label a *specifically indicated* woman with this word; the other usages are diminishing in frequency (changes that are not registered in this kind of table), yet they are still considered grammatically acceptable.

And in CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH (at least of the variety that I am familiar with), even the use of an inclusive plural is no longer considered to be proper English. If it is used at all, it is intentionally archaic or a literary allusion.[20]

A Similar Shift in Lexical Gender for אִישׁ

Before we proceed further in the handout,I would like to set up for you a similar comparison that can be drawnin the usage of אִישׁ in Biblical Hebrew with that found in Mishnaic Hebrew (Land of Israel, early 3rd century CE).[21] First I selected a representative corpus from each stage of the language. For Mishnaic Hebrew, I used the entire Mishnah (which is available as a morphologically and lexically tagged electronic version of the Kaufmann manuscript). I subtracted out its biblical quotations. For the Bible, I used the combined books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. These two corpuses seem comparable in terms of subject matter. After all, the Mishnah's norms are cast as elaborations of the Bible's norms—with numerous topics in common.[22] And in these corpuses, the number of instances of אִישׁ is substantial and nearly identical: Biblical Hebrew is represented by 321 instances, and Mishnaic Hebrew by 322.

The Bible versus the Mishnah

I have drawn up four comparison charts that not only enable us to fill in an entry in our table for the Mishnah, but also reveal more nuances than the table's simple *yes-or-no* format can display.

Type II: [Begin with the chart labeled #8] This chart compares the singular form אִשָּׁה with the singular form אִישׁ. It shows that the Mishnah employs אִשָּׁה more than *twice* as often as it does אִישׁ—and it employs אִשָּׁה more than *six times* as often as אִשָּׁה in the comparable biblical sample.[23] The Mishnah's evidently high level of interest in woman-

kind seems to be a consequence of its keen interest in social-gender issues overall.[24] More to the point, the frequent use of אִשָּׁה impacts the perceived lexical gender of אִישׁ. For when אִשָּׁה is such a salient term on its own, audiences lose the habit of construing אִישׁ as its inclusive superordinate.[25] In contrast, in the Bible, the category of women had been more in the background of the discourse; and so women could be readily subsumed under the more frequent references to generic persons made via the word אִישׁ.

A decrease in that use of אִישׁ for inclusive references is indeed evident from the chart at #9. In the Mishnah, pronoun-like usages have almost disappeared—dropping from a total of 87 in the biblical sample to 5. Thus when the Mishnah talks about people *in broad strokes* via the noun אִישׁ, it can still be construed as including women—but such construals will come into play only rarely.

Type III: For a measurable comparison here, I tallied the instances of nonspecific reference to participants in what I call "prototypical situations" (a situation that is constituted by its two human parties and some third element of mutual concern—as in a lawsuit). [#10] I found that in the Mishnah, the frequency of gender-INCLUSIVE usage is *one-third* of that found in the biblical sample, while the frequency of gender-EXCLUSIVE usage is *triple* that of the biblical sample. In Mishnaic Hebrew, one can still make nonspecific reference to women using the noun אִישׁ, but it is a relatively uncommon way to speak.

Type IV: [#11] Whereas in the biblical sample, 98% of all instances of אֲנָשִׁים can be construed as gender-inclusive, in the Mishnah such cases make up only about 60% of all plurals. This suggests that in Mishnaic Hebrew, it was no longer an automatic expectation for listeners that the plural form אֲנָשִׁים made reference to both men and women.

On the Larger Linguistic, Pragmatic, and Social Contexts

So far, I have discussed only the *what* and the *when* of the lexical gendering of אִישׁ. Yet I've also given some thought as to the *how* and the *why* [see #12]. For example, how might this noun have behaved in proto-Hebrew, prior to the biblical compositions? Can we extrapolate backward from the Mishnaic and the biblical usage data, and assume unidirectional change in the gendering trend?[26] I won't attempt to fill in that first row, because there's no real data that I know of; but the question is interesting to ponder.

Likewise, there's more that I can say about the cognitive and communicative motivations for the observed changes in usage, and about the competing considerations involved.[27] There's also more that I can say about concomitant changes in the Hebrew language as a system,[28] and to the social context that might have prompted dramatic shifts in the gendering of personal nouns.[29] Feel free to ask me about those things later.

Conclusions

At this point, I will restate my findings as follows [#13]. To the question "When did the Biblical Hebrew noun אִישׁ become lexically gendered?" I reply:

1. This noun's lexical gender is a matter of degree. (Rather than a binary quality.) In the Bible, it is far from being fully lexically gendered.
2. For a given stage of the Hebrew language, it helps to distinguish among several types of conventional usage constraints, so as to ascertain which types of the usage of אִישׁ include women in their denotational scope, and which types do not.
3. A significant shift toward a more-gendered connotation of אִישׁ appears to have taken place postbiblically. (That is, the evidence of more restricted behavioral constraints and of a reduced frequency of inclusive usage suggest that this noun has become more lexically gendered over time.)

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Excursus 1: Meaning Shifts as More Than a Matter of Gender

Scholarly literature on the English language depicts the noun *man* as having shifted its meaning over time, from labeling someone as a 'human being' to labeling him as an 'adult male'.[30] By analogy, the history of אִישׁ might likewise be depicted as one of progressive semantic narrowing from gender-inclusive 'human being' toward gendered 'man'. However, for both of those nouns, I believe that this is a misleading way to look at the situation. In actual language use, both words have long been used to carry out significant discourse functions, including pronoun-like usages, which have faded as these nouns have—over time—come to be seen as more lexically gendered. It's not simply a matter of less gender and then more gender. (What meanings both *man* and אִישׁ have classically contributed is discussed in my doctoral dissertation; see Stein, submitted.)

The lexical-gender profile of אִישׁ may have evolved in the following way: This noun originally (prior to Ancient Hebrew) described a concept that did not involve gender per se; its meaning shifted after being regularly associated with the attribute of masculine social gender, via this word's frequent application to human beings—and in particular to specific men, and to men in contrast with women. Thus it came to be reanalyzed as a lexically gendered term, to a degree that has increased over time.

According to this suggestion, the lexical gendering of אִישׁ did come about not via the obvious mechanism of narrowing from a more generic meaning to a more specific one, but rather via a more subtle shift—a metonymically based redeployment of this word, with a trade-off of one meaning (not directly related to social gender) for another.

Excursus 2: Confounding Factors in Ascertaining Lexical Gender

The following criteria have been developed by reflecting upon how ancient Israelites must have learned Hebrew in the first place, as children. Presumably they inferred the meaning of words from how they heard them used in communicative interactions. They had to sort out when a given noun *included* women in its referential scope, and when it *excluded* women. Nowadays, as a proxy for interactions by native speakers of Biblical Hebrew, we must rely upon carefully chosen biblical examples. In doing so, I am assuming that society as depicted in the Bible accurately reflects the lived experience of the Israelite audience, with respect to not only language usage but also social gender roles. See further the preface to Stein 2006.

First confounding factor. In order to enable ourselves to hear whether our noun itself is speaking about gender, we must first silence the voice of its accompanying referential-gender conventions. The referential conditions under which social-gender

information is conveyed (or confirmed) by grammatical-gender features (whenever an utterance refers to a person) have been characterized in Stein 2008c; 2013. In brief, they are a function of both the type of determination and the *specificity* of that reference. (This linguistic fact follows from the nature of Hebrew as a two-gender language in which grammatical agreement—also known as concord—for personal references is normally supposed to match that referent's social gender. As noted in Stein 2013, an asymmetry in gender ascriptions derives from the reference problems that are created when either a specific referent's gender is *unknown*, or when the referent is *non-specific*, or when it consists of a *mixed-gender* group. In these cases, the normal rules for directly matching syntactic gender to the referent's social gender do not work. Biblical Hebrew speakers dealt with these problems via a convention: as their default, they used the simplest forms—grammatically masculine agreement. [See the general discussion in Corbett 1991:218–220.] This situation requires that in a categorizing reference to a non-specific person, the use in Hebrew of masculine language cannot specify the referent's gender beyond a vague "not womanly only." In short, so-called masculine language is actually underspecified for gender—what some linguists have called "unmarked"—under certain conditions.) The relevant features include the speaker's choice of one of two noun forms within a gendered-counterpart pair (such as אִישׁ versus אִשָּׁה), when employing such a label in specific reference. Therefore an *identifying* or *specifying* reference is a confounding factor if our goal is to isolate the lexical contribution of אִישׁ itself. We must restrict our data set to *references that are nonspecific*. <u>The only type of usage that can serve as a diagnostic for full lexical gender is an *indefinite, categorizing, plural reference*</u>. Conversely, if that nonspecific reference is *definite* and if a co-reference (or world knowledge or situational context) establishes that the referent is indeed *gender-inclusive*, that provides us with robust evidence that our noun is *not* fully lexically gendered.

Second confounding factor. Another factor whose presence is problematic is any limitation imposed on the referential scope of our noun due to the noun אִשָּׁה functioning as its logical complement. When the co-text employs our noun in complementary constructions such as אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה (e.g., Exod 21:29), the scope of אִישׁ becomes *restricted due to the presence of its complementary term*. If the semantic situation is what the linguist Laurence Horn calls *autohyponymy* (where the same term is taxonomically both superordinate and subordinate—the latter being on the same level as a counterpart term), then usages that involve contrast will activate the more specific, subordinate level of meaning, rather than the superordinate level that is gender-inclusive. The result is *ambiguity* with respect to possible lexical gender in אִישׁ itself. (In linguistics literature, this phenomenon has sometimes been discussed under the heading of *semantic neutral-*

ization, a term coined by Eugenio Coseriu [Cruse 1986:255–257; idem 2011:161–62; Decraene 2012:20–27]; in biblical studies it was adduced by Eng 2011:82–83.)

Third confounding factor. The audience reliably ascribes manly gender to a referent whenever the text predicates an action (or activity) that, according to the audience's world knowledge, applies only to adult males. In the social world of ancient Israel, such activities include: marrying a woman, having sexual intercourse with a woman, siring children, and fighting in battle. The same thing happens when the text attributes biologically male sex characteristics to the referent. The audience's ascription of manly social gender occurs *regardless of the label* (substantive) that is used to make the reference. Therefore such cases can offer no proof that the label employed is lexically gendered.

Fourth confounding factor. Another pitfall is *abnormal* language use. This occurs when speakers exploit linguistic norms—both syntactic and lexical—in order to make their point more forcefully or memorably (Hanks 2013, especially chapters 4, 5, and 8). Speakers who are being *expressive* (that is, expressing an emotional state, or an attitude, or are attempting to influence somebody else) are likely to clip their speech, and to use colorful and condensed expressions that stretch or disregard the normal meanings of words. Such talk is replete with metaphor, hyperbole, irony, idioms, composites, etc. Consequently, when a biblical character is exclaiming, exhorting, or remonstrating, their reported speech is fairly *unreliable* as a guide to normal lexical use. Likewise, the usage of אִישׁ in *poetry* and *proverbs* ought to be discounted for the same reason.

A similar likelihood of abnormal usage exists when Hebrew is placed in the mouths of *foreigners*. There is ample evidence that the biblical composers tended to exploit Hebrew norms by styling such speech in an unusual manner, apparently in order to make it sound appropriately foreign. (This phenomenon is known as *style switching*. See, e.g., Rendsburg 2015; Bompiani 2016. Rendsburg holds that when the locale is foreign, even the wording of the narration can be affected.) For example, the speech of Aramean characters is peppered with a disproportionate amount of Aramaisms. Did the Bible's audience expect to hear proper Hebrew usage from Arameans or Philistines? Probably not. Utterances by foreigners are therefore *unreliable* by default as guides.

Fifth confounding factor. The last confounding factor is an unreliable text. This was hardly an issue for Israelite children who were acquiring their native tongue (unless we include situations where they could not clearly hear what was being said). In any case, we face it nowadays due to the risk of textual distortion during transmission across a vast remove of time and space. Although the *absence* of significant variants (whether outside or inside the Masoretic Text) is no guarantee that the present textual reading was

somehow "original," the attested *presence* of an extant variant must be considered a disqualifying factor for the usage in question. The same is true of a text that seems to be garbled. It makes that passage *unreliable* as a guide to normal Hebrew usage.

Excursus 3: Dictionaries Consulted

The table below lists 40 dictionary entries consulted for this study.[31] They sample from across a thousand-year time period and an array of scholarly languages: Judeo-Arabic,[32] Hebrew, Latin, German,[33] English, and Spanish. Occasionally more than one edition of a given work has been examined.

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Ibn Caspi, Joseph. Circa 1340. *Sharshot Kesef*. Unpublished ms.; see also Kahan 2014 for excerpt.

Ibn Danān, Se'adyah. 1468. *Sefer ha-šorašim* (*Libro de las raíces*). Jiménez Sánchez edn., 2004.

Ibn Janaḥ, Jonah. Circa 1030. *Kitab al-Uṣul* (*The Book of Hebrew Roots*). Neubauer edn., 1875.

Ibn Parḥon, Solomon ben Abraham. 1160. *Maḥberet he-'Arukh*. Stern edn., 1844.

Ibn Saruq, Menaḥem ben Jacob (second half of the 10th century). *Maḥberet*. Sáenz-Badillos edn., 1986.

Kimḥi, David (Radak). Circa 1200. ספר השרשים. Biesenthal & Lebrecht edn., 1847.

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Loewenstamm, S., and Y. Blau. 1957. Incorporated into Menahem Kaddari, מילון העברית המקראית: אוצר לשון המקרא מאל״ף עד תי״ו, 2006.

Luzzatto, Samuel David. (c. 1860) 1888. בית האוצר.

McComiskey, Thomas E. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT).

Münster, Sebastian. 1524. *Maqre Dardeqe*.

Pagnini, Santes. 1529. *Otsar Leshon ha-Kodesh*. *Thesaurus linguae sanctae*.

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Excursus 4: Background: Social-Gender Analysis of Passages Cited in #5 in Handout

Passage	Expression	Evidence for Non-Gendered Semantics
Exod 35:21	כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נָשָׂאוֹ לִבּוֹ	Gender is at issue, in that the narrator spells out afterward that *women participated* (35:22, 25, 26; 36:6). Thus אִישׁ labels the group in question without regard to gender.
1 Chr 16:3	לְכָל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל	Gender is at issue, in that the narrator spells out afterward (in the same verse) that *women participated*. Thus אִישׁ labels the group in question without regard to gender.
Lev 14:11	הָאִישׁ הַמִּטַהֵר	Gender scope is already known to be *inclusive of women*, given the class under discussion (13:2, 9, 29, 38).
Lev 17:4 [1st instance]	לָאִישׁ הַהוּא	Gender-neutral reference by implication, given the situation (see especially the previous verse). Logically, the ordinance applies regardless of gender, as does the penalty. It would make no sense to discuss a serious infraction with a severe penalty only for men. Thus Milgrom renders: "bloodguilt shall be imputed to that person" (2000b:1447; cf. 1465); so too CJPS.
Lev 17:9	הָאִישׁ הַהוּא	(See previous entry.) Thus Milgrom renders: "that person shall be cut off" (2000:1447); so too NJPS and CJPS.
Deut 29:19	בָּאִישׁ הַהוּא	Gender scope is already known to be *inclusive of women*, given the class under discussion (29:17).
Gen 17:23	כָּל־זָכָר בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם	Gender scope logically must be wider than *males* alone, given the distinction that is being made in this phrase. Thus אַנְשֵׁי labels a group that includes women.
Judg 9:49	כָּל־אַנְשֵׁי מִגְדַּל־שְׁכֶם	Gender is at issue, in that the narrator spells out afterward (in the same verse) that women were involved. Thus אַנְשֵׁי labels the group in question without regard to gender.

Excursus 5: Additional Notes on Gender-Related Usages of *Man* in English

Old English

Mann/man commonly "occurs in collocations with indefinite adjectives like *ænig*, *nænig*, *ælc*, *hwilc*, leading to translations of 'anybody', 'nobody', 'everybody', 'whosoever': *Forþam nat nænig man*, 'therefore nobody knows'" (Rauer 2017:148; see also p. 153).

The source of "Hwæt eom ic manna þæt ic mihte god forbeodan?" 'What manner of man am I, that I could forbid God?' is Ælfric, *Lives of Saints* (ed. Skeat, London: Early English Text Society, 1881) I. 232–33, line 191 (URL, cited also in OED, I.1.b)

A heterosexual couple engaged in sexual relations is labeled as *twegen men*, 'two men' (Rauer 2017:144, citing *OEM*, ed. Rauer 2013b, §116). Likewise, when Adam and Eve are created on the sixth day, they are introduced into the discourse as *þa twegen men* 'the two men' (ibid., 150, citing the late 10th century abbot Ælfric, *De temporibus anni*, ed. Blake 2009:76). The source for *God gesceop ða æt fruman twegen men, wer and wif*, 'God created then, at the beginning, two men—man and woman' is Rauer 2017:151, citing Ælfric, CHom II, 12.1, ed. Godden 1979:118).

Modern English

"the former dwellers in Kentucky—the *white mound-builders*—were exterminated to a man" (Flagg, Edmund. 1838. *The Far West, Or, A Tour Beyond the Mountains*, Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Bros., 20. URL)

"By the Harshness of the Expressions, a Man wou'd think that this Petition were an Address to a King, or a *Remonstrance* that charg'd him with a *felonious Conspiracy*…." (Anonymous. 1701. *Jura Populi Anglicani: Or, the Subjects Right of Petitioning Set Forth. Occasioned by the Case of the Kentish Petitioners.*... London, pp. 67–68. URL)

"There is at least one natural right, the equal right of all men to be free." OED I.1.b., citing *Philos. Rev*. 64 (1955): 175.

Contemporary English

"This approach runs the risk of trying to be all things to all men." (an allusion to the KJV rendering of 1 Corinthians 9:22 = NRSV: "all things to all people"); in "Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Macro-regional cooperation 'Rolling out the Baltic Sea Strategy to other macro-regions in Europe' (Exploratory opinion)", *Official Journal of the European Union* (23.12.2009), C 318/8, §3.8.

Excursus 6. Tabulation of Results of the Comparison of Bible with Mishnah

Characteristic	**Exod–Lev–Num**	**Mishnah (nonbib)**
אִישׁ Instances (masc sing + masc pl)	321	322
Singular	274	215
Plural	47	105
Nonspecific reference (personal)	220	182
Specific reference (personal)	72	125
Nondeictic (including predication)	6	15
Nonspecific nonhuman (tribes/households)	23	0
(Totals)	321	322
Pronoun-like usage (human referents only)	64	5
Nonspecific participants in prototypical situations		
Inclusive	91	32
Exclusive	53	142
Nondeictic:	1	15
Nonspecific: Priesthood	13	17
Contrast with women	28	140
Singular אִישׁ	274	250* *Incl bibl quotes
Singular אִשָּׁה	96	589*
Ratio of אִישׁ to אִשָּׁה (singular)	2.9	0.42*
Women in view (maximally)	139	70
Women in view (minimally)	109	29
Men-only in view (minimally)	150	252 (+60%)
Men-only in view (maximally)	180	293
Heterogeneous (inclusive) plurals	45	65
Homogeneous (exclusive) plurals	1	40

Excursus 7: Systemic Shifts (Paradigmatic Changes)

The prominent Israeli semanticist Gad Sarfatti has noted that the distribution of functions within the semantic field of personal nouns differs between the Bible and the Mishnah (1965:36–37). He described one aspect of this shift as "immediately recognizable": in Mishnaic Hebrew, אָדָם is used instead of אִישׁ to designate nonspecific individuals,[34] or in the meaning of *someone* or *anyone*.[35]

In support of Sarfatti's assertion, I have compiled some contrasting examples, which are arranged below as minimal pairs.

	Sample Passage	**Excerpt**	**Rendering**
Bible	Zech 4:1	כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יֵעוֹר מִשְּׁנָתוֹ	'like someone (*'îš*) who is awakened from sleep'
Mishnah	Ber 1:2	כְּאָדָם שֶׁהוּא קוֹרֵא בַּתּוֹרָה	'like someone (*'ādām*) who is reciting from the Torah'
Bible	Judg 4:20	הֲיֵשׁ־פֹּה אִישׁ	'Is anybody (*'îš*) here?'
Mishnah	Tamid 1:1	יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם אָדָם	'he knows that somebody (*'ādām*) is there'
Bible	Judg 4:20	וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לָאִישׁ יִתֵּן בְּעַד נַפְשׁוֹ	'all that [belongs] to a person (*'îš*) will be given up to save their skin'
Mishnah	Ber 5:5	שְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁלְּאָדָם כְּמוֹתוֹ	'the agent of a person (*'ādām*) is like them [in legal effect]'
Bible	Ezek 9:6	וְעַל־כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו הַתָּו אַל־תִּגַּשׁוּ	'do not touch anyone (*kol 'îš*) who bears the mark'
Mishnah	Peah 8:1	מֵאֵמָתַי כָּל אָדָם מוּתָּרִין בַּלֶּקֶט	'After what time is anyone (*kol 'ādām*) permitted to glean [in a harvested field]?'

Not surprisingly, given the reallocation of functions between the two synonyms, their *relative distribution* also shifted between Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew: the noun אָדָם gained frequency at the expense of אִישׁ. Sarfatti presented a rough measurement of the extent of this shift by counting the number of columns on a page that were devoted to the two words in each of three relevant concordances, and then comparing those tallies. He reported the following ratios of entries for אִישׁ relative to אָדָם.

Bible	4:1
Mishnah	2:3
Tosefta	1:2

This dramatic decrease in the relative frequency of אִישׁ did not occur because Hebrew speakers were suddenly more interested in talking about generic human beings, but rather because אָדָם took on some of the discourse-modulating functions that used to be performed by אִישׁ in the Bible—when it was less gendered.

Excursus 8: The Treatment of Gender in 40 Dictionary Entries for אִישׁ

Readers of the Hebrew Bible who consult the article on masculine אִישׁ in multiple dictionaries will eventually encounter three markedly different depictions of its semantic content and structure. One of them leads with the *quality of maleness/manliness*, implying that this is a core semantic feature. For example, social gender is explicitly mentioned

in an opening definition; or the article simply starts with our noun's semantic opposition to אִשָּׁה.[36] Another depiction presents that attribute of maleness/manliness—if at all—only *after* indicating the noun's application to *human beings in general*.[37] This view is older than the aforementioned one by several centuries; and it is found almost entirely among works composed in a Semitic language (Judeo-Arabic or Hebrew). The most recent such article, which provides a good example, was prepared by the Israeli lexicographer Abraham Even-Shoshan. It opens with a four-part gloss of its first enumerated sense:

אָדָם, אֱנוֹשׁ, גֶּבֶר, הַזָּכָר בִּבְנֵי־אָדָם

(1969:42).[38] And the third type of depiction of אִישׁ in dictionaries is *vague* on the place of social gender; in their initial characterization, they mix together their gendered and non-gendered glosses or senses.

The Place of Social Gender in Dictionary Articles about אִישׁ, by Treatment Type and Date

Primary	Secondary or Irrelevant	Intermixed (Ambiguous)
Ibn Danān 1468	Ibn Saruq (c. 975)	Al-Fāsī (10th c.)
Münster 1524	Ibn Janaḥ (c. 1030)	Reuchlin 1506
Forster 1557	Ibn Parḥon 1160	Pagnini 1529
Simonis 1756	Kimḥi (c. 1200)	Buxtorf 1600
Simonis/Winer 1828	Bedersi (13th c.)	Simonis/Eichhorn 1793
Gesenius 1829	Ben Ṣaʿīr (c. 1300)	Luzzatto (c. 1860) 1888
Tedeschi 1879	Ibn Caspi (c. 1340)	Sukenik 1950
Fuenn 1887	Ben-Yehuda 1908	McComiskey 1980
Brown-Driver-Briggs 1906	Canaani 1960	Clines 2018[39]
Harkavy 1918	Even-Shoshan 1969	
Zorell 1940	Sigrist 2014	
Loewenstamm & Blau 1957		
Koehler & Baumgartner 1967		
Bratsiotis 1970		
Kühlewein 1971		
Gesenius/Meyer & Donner 1987		
Hamilton 1997		
Schökel 1993		
Hernandez 2014		

Not shown: Gur 1947 (treatment type not recorded); Sokoloff 1998 (not applicable)

The figure above categorizes dictionaries according to each of the three types just mentioned. Its collation[40] suggests that *lexicographers lack a consensus* on whether אִישׁ is lexically gendered.[41] Differing representations continue even into the 21st century. This

finding seems surprising—at least to me.[42] Dictionaries are not very precise about the nature of אִישׁ, with regard to gender.

Elsewhere I have shown that the traditional dictionary format is poorly designed to account for how referential gender functions in Biblical Hebrew: it conflates *referential* gender with *lexical* gender (Stein 2011). That design flaw helps to explain the discrepancy just noted.

Excursus 9: When gender is a topic of concern, which "male" nouns are used?

{To come}

Excursus 10: Pragmatic settings for the semantic shift

{This section is incomplete and not yet coherent.} Presumably the gradation results from speakers' differing balancing of competing interests of clarity and efficiency in communication: to say as little as possible but enough to avoid being misunderstood; for each type of use, the referential gender implications are slightly different.

What at first glance is a single semantic change, upon closer inspection is multiple, graded changes among a variety of behavioral criteria (cf. Wilkins 1996 on semantic change)—and at each stage a community finds that a particular pattern of expression is no longer clear enough, and avoids using it, so that it fades away and thus sounds odd.

Occasionally, אִישׁ was used in contexts that set it up to be imagined in postbiblical generations (especially in a world without native speakers) as an intrinsically gendered term. One vehicle was exploitations: The florid or emphatic use of phrases such as כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה (Est 4:11)—where, strictly speaking, כָּל־אִישׁ alone would have sufficed, probably provided the pragmatic strengthening (contextual implication) that enabled an audience to reanalyze אִישׁ as being more lexically gendered (unable to include women in its referential scope).[43] Reanalysis. You'll start mentioning women explicitly, just to avoid doubts as to your intended scope.

Excursus 11: An information-theoretic perspective

{Discussion of the conservation of uncertainty in communication (Dye et al. 2017)—to come. Gendered labeling from an information-theoretic perspective: Assuming that communicators aim to keep uncertainty constant, and that the noun's gender marking offers an effective means of selectively modulating uncertainty, then speakers *mean less (lexically speaking) by their use of a gender-marked label* than they do by their use of a non-marked label from the same class. It seems that over time, אִישׁ loses some of its discourse meanings as it gains gendered meaning.}

[1] This figure is the outcome from Accordance Bible Software's lexically tagged Hebrew Bible module. Other reference works report slightly different totals.

[2] It's best if we take care to distinguish which type of gender we are referring to. For example, when David Clines stated that אִישׁ is "self-evidently a gendered term" (2003:305), he meant merely that it participates in the system of *syntactic gender* (by virtue of its having a feminine form), in contrast to *'ādām*, which does not (pers. comm.).

[3] Some distinguished linguists have asserted that the category of 'adult male' is universal—found across all human societies (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2013:50–53). I am not taking a position on that question.

[4] For a panchronic view of semantic changes in various words for 'man' in English, see Grygiel 2012.

[5] This is much like the way that a variety of states of a referent's identifiability to the audience are mapped onto a language's binary system of marking that referent as either definite or indefinite (see Bekins 2013:227; Lambrecht 1994:79–80).

[6] Referential gender is called *notional gender* in English historical linguistics (McConnell-Ginet 2013).

[7] Sometimes the firm answers are not reliable. Cf. Mangum et al. (2014, s.v. "Men: Concept Summary"): "The second term, אִישׁ (*'îš*), typically denotes a male person or 'man' in contrast with a female (Gen 2:23)." Actually, relatively few biblical instances of אִישׁ involve a "contrast with a female" (e.g., less than 10% of the 321 instances of אִישׁ in Exodus through Numbers). Again, under "Men: Lexical Information": "Primarily, the word refers to specifically adult male human beings." Yet a noun's referential scope is only indirectly a matter of "lexical" information per se, as is demonstrated by the examples cited (Gen 4:1, Ruth 1:11, 1 Sam 4:9), for the word in question is clearly being used to say something about its referents other than they are 'adult male human beings'.

[8] Languages can differ in their behavior with specific versus nonspecific reference because in the latter case, a given referent exists only in the discourse—not in reality (Frajzyngier 1991:244; Haspelmath 1997:109). The linguist Zygmunt Frajzyngier has shown that many languages make fewer coding distinctions in their system of reference for the discourse level of meaning than for the informational level (1991; in Frajzyngier's terms: the "domain of speech" versus the "domain of reality"). Evidence that Hebrew is one of those languages includes the following fact: its distinctions in referential gender include a default-masculine encoding for singular-addressee, interrogative, and indefinite pronouns in an *irrealis* setting (i.e., referring only within the discourse); in contrast, in a *realis* setting their referential gender must reflect their referent's social gender (cf. ibid., 247–48).

[9] For Haspelmath's discussion, see 2006:49–54.

[10] 2006:53.

[11] (Here I rely upon a presumed large overlap between sex and gender in the Biblical world.) This noun is regularly applied as a label for other creatures, thus transcending human considerations; it thus describes its referent in terms of an attribute that is relatively biological. Meanwhile, certain contexts position the plural form as a *limitation* regarding involvement—e.g., the military plural in Josh 5:4—as if it cannot be heterogeneous in its scope. See also Ex 13:12, 15 for animals—a usage that logically must be gender-exclusive; cf. the application to distinctions among animals (Exod 12:5; Deut 15:19) and newborns (Jer 20:15), and in the arenas of sex (Num 31:17–18, 35; Judg 21:11–12) and reproduction (Gen 7:3; Jer 30:6), and military census (Num 1:20, 22); and counterposition with "female" (Lev 27:5–7); and priestly lineages.

Similarly for *geber*, it is the apparent impossibility of an inclusive plural that would make it a lexically gendered noun. To my mind, Jer 41:16 and 1 Chr 23:3 are the clearest proof texts in this regard. Yet even when a noun is lexically gendered, it is still possible to use it in gender-inclusive reference. On occasion, the Bible makes a point that is meant to apply "even" to a *gever*—a scalar (comparative) usage that includes women by implication, such as Psalms 88:5; 89:49; 94:12. Such "inclusive" usages are not exceptions to the noun's gendered meaning but rather rely upon it. (For similar "scalar" implicatures with other personal nouns, compare Isa 33:23; 47:6; Jer 9:3; Joel 4:10; Amos 2:16.)

[12] This rule is occasionally broken for expressive effect, but here I am talking only about the linguistic norms, not their exploitations. On this distinction, see Hanks 2013.

[13] At first glance, Gen 2:23 might seem like an exemplar (with woman being depicted literally as a subset of man), but it may be implying that the first human was not actually an אִישׁ until the first אִשָּׁה was created.

[14] Gen 17:23; 39:11 and Judg 9:49, respectively.

[15] After all, the more extensive noun's meaning contribution can be temporarily shifted to a more restricted meaning. And depending upon what I as a speaker want to call attention to, my use of a *generic* term may be the best choice to label a *more specific* member of the denoted set—such as in English when I use the generic label *neighbor*. If I use that referring expression in a situation where it's otherwise obvious that the referent is a man, my utterance will activate the concept "male dweller next door" by pragmatic enrichment. Nonetheless, the noun phrase itself remains general (vague or unspecified) with respect to gender. As Dirk Geeraerts has noted: "the systemic meaning [i.e., for the English language overall] would just be 'person who lives next door': the systemic meaning belongs to the level of semantics, the utterance meaning to the level of pragmatics" (2016:235).

[16] For the list, see Excursus 3.

[17] For example, the article would mention social gender explicitly in an opening gloss; or the article would start with the semantic opposition of אִישׁ to אִשָּׁה. On the dictionary investigation and its results, see Excursus 8.

[18] For details, see the relevant excursus to this paper.

[19] Rauer 2017:143.

[20] E.g., *man* may be used in a speaker's recourse to an expression made familiar by the KJV, such as when someone mentions the idea of "trying to be all things to all men" (an idiom based on 1 Corinthians 9:22).

[21] On the relationship between the two: "There is now … general agreement that Mishnaic Hebrew is, or is derived from, a spoken dialect of the Second Temple period, and that for a time, it co-existed with Biblical Hebrew" (Cook 2018:11); see also Bar-Asher 2016.

[22] Shared topics include: torts; slaves; sacrificial offerings; priesthood; ritual purity; how to handle a jealous husband and/or straying wife; agricultural tithes; observance of the sabbath and of holidays; and making vows. I cannot think of a comparably sized slice of the Hebrew Bible that is more Mishnah-like, except perhaps some parts of Deuteronomy. Yet if part of my chosen biblical corpus were exchanged for a piece of Deuteronomy, I don't think the results would be significantly different.

[23] To arrive at the tallies for the Mishnah, I have included biblical quotations. At the same time, I have subtracted out all instances of אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה in the section titled *Arayot* that appears in the Kaufmann manuscript yet is not properly a part of the Mishnah.

One might imagine that the relative frequency of אִשָּׁה is a result of the Mishnah's containing a major section ("Order") that is nominally devoted to the topic of women, namely *Seder Nashim*. However, in that Order the ratio of instances of אִשָּׁה to אִישׁ is only 1.56, which is actually lower than in the Mishnah as a whole (2.36).

[24] A case in point is how the Mishnah handles the regulation in Lev 13:45, which refers to the party in question via a passive participle (a relatively nongendered expression):

וְהַצָּרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרֻמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָרוּעַ . . .

'As for the person with a leprous affection: the clothes shall be torn, the head shall be left bare…'

In Sotah 3:8, two of the same verbal roots appear—but in a much more strongly gendered formulation:

מַה בֵּין אִישׁ לְאִשָּׁה. הָאִישׁ פּוֹרֵעַ וּפוֹרֵם, וְאֵין הָאִשָּׁה פּוֹרַעַת וּפוֹרֶמֶת.

'What is the difference between a man and a woman? A man goes around bare-headed and with torn garments; but a woman does not go around bare-headed and with torn garments'.

[25] Cf. Haspelmath (2006:53): "To really explain what is going on, we need to refer to a variety of factors, among them clearly frequency of use: in the pair *dog/bitch*, *bitch* has a much lower proportional frequency than *queen* has in the pair *king/queen*, so it is not surprising that it behaves more like a hyponym of dog."

[26] In proto-Semitic, the concept 'adult female' must have been expressed by a precursor of אִשָּׁה. For according to the BH dictionaries, that word form has cognates even in languages that lack אִישׁ: Ugaritic, Akkadian, Arabic, Ethiopic. Meanwhile, however, the concept 'adult male' must have been expressed in proto-Semitic by *something other* than אִישׁ—because that word form is *not* found in most Semitic languages. It does not appear that אִישׁ (what we think of today as the masculine form) is an "old" word. At some point, this word אִישׁ was drafted to be paired with *inshah/ishshah*. When that happened, prior to the biblical period, when אִישׁ was employed in personal reference, was it already a gendered term? It appears that אִישׁ was originally less gendered (not evoking information about the referent's gender, but rather something else about its referent), and got drafted to fill the slot opposite the precursor of *ishah*.

Scholars of Phoenician and Aramaic have in some cases found it difficult to tell apart the noun אש (corresponding to the biblical אִישׁ but spelled defectively, as was the norm in inscriptions) from the relative marker אש (believed to have been pronounced with roughly the same vowel as biblical אִישׁ). In some settings, their behavior is indistinguishable. Thus scholars have debated whether אש in the Azitiwada and Deir Allah inscriptions is a relative marker or a noun; and איש on the Zacur Stele in Syria is equally ambiguous. This similarity in the two words' pronunciation, spelling, and (occasionally) function can perhaps be explained as a *genetic* relationship: what was originally one word split into two; and those two words went in opposite directions on the grammatical-lexical cline. In one direction it became more grammaticalized (leading to the Phoenician relative marker), whereas in the other direction it remained or became more lexicalized (leading to the Hebrew and Phoenician nouns). (On the properly subsidiary role of comparative philology in lexical analysis, see Groom 2003:162.)

[27] What prompted the shift from אִישׁ as a label that was relatively un(der)specified for gender to one that whose very utterance prompts strong social-gender implications? Increased need for specificity with regard to the referential gender implications of one's utterances. This can come as much from attempts to be clear about inclusiveness as about clarity that the speaker's utterance is excluding women from view. Either way, the old way of underspecifying referential gender no longer suffices.

[28] This includes shifts in the meaning and usage of other terms in the semantic field (see Excursus 7), and in how reciprocal relations are expressed (see Bar-Asher Siegal, forthcoming).

[29] Social context: New societal conditions (transitions) motivate the need to be more explicit. For English *man* and Latin *homo*, their increase in lexical gender coincided with several factors: conquests and occupation by invaders; a shift toward most of that language's users learning it as a second language; and dramatic adjustments in societal gender roles. Gender roles become a constant topic of conversation, because they are at issue. Apparently that's what it takes for a shift in the lexical gendering of a workhorse noun (and it comes at the expense of its other functions). For Hebrew, we find those conditions, too, but only in the Hellenistic era; that is, only at the *end* of the biblical era.

[30] *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (accessed 8 July 2006), "man," s.v. "Usage." Some historical linguists point to evidence that the sense of *mann* as 'adult male' was already an occasional usage in Old English (Baron 1986:139; Curzan 2003:64–70, 156–172; Grygiel 2012; Rauer 2017:151–52). In my view, that evidence may be more ambiguous than it is usually taken to be.

The same is said to be true for the cognates of *man* in related languages: the German *Mann* and the Dutch *man* have become strongly gendered, while a derivative term—*Mensch* and *mens*, respectively—has taken on a life of its own and largely replaced their originally gender-neutral senses (*OED*).

Likewise it is commonly stated that in post-classical Latin, the non-gendered noun *homo* ("human being") developed the gendered sense "adult male human being" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed 31 January 2018, s.v. "man, n.1 (and int.)," etymological note.); indeed, the reflexes of *homo* in the Romance languages became even more associated with manliness—witness the modern French *homme* or Spanish *hombre*, "man" (as opposed to "woman").

[31] For our purposes—to identify *significant discrepancies and patterns* among dictionaries—little would be gained by consulting additional dictionaries beyond this number. The data already suffice to robustly support the conclusions that will be offered.

[32] For Ibn Janaḥ, see the classical translation into Hebrew by Ibn Tibbon in 1171 (1893)—finishing an endeavor begun by Isaac al-Barceloni and Isaac ha-Levi; for Ben Ṣa'īr, see the translation into Spanish by Martínez Delgado 2010; and for Ibn Danān, see the translation into Spanish by Jiménez Sánchez 2004.

[33] See the Robinson (1836) and Tregelles (1847) translations into English of Gesenius's work.

[34] Aside from the primordial human being, אָדָם in the Bible never designates a particular individual. (The tally by Grant did proffer one other such instance, namely Josh 14:15 [1977:2, 5]; but there it more likely means 'progenitor' than 'man', given that according to that verse, the settlement under discussion was *named* after the referent in question.) In contrast, אִישׁ refers to a particular individual 429 times (ibid., 2).

[35] My research supports Sarfatti's assertion that in Mishnaic Hebrew, in order to indicate a non-specific human figure ('someone'), the Mishnah does not use אִישׁ at all, unlike in the Bible.

[36] Nearly all such dictionaries point out *later* in the article that when our noun is used in the plural, and in certain contexts, אִישׁ can be used in reference to persons without regard to gender. (Exactly how its gender ascription can somehow be neutralized is not discussed.)

[37] One dictionary offers solely *non*-gendered glosses in its article on אִישׁ—namely, that of the Egyptian (reputed to have been a Karaite) named Solomon ben Mobarak ben Ṣa'īr (c. 1300), which he designed to be

una gran colección antológica de los grandes diccionarios andalusíes "a large anthological collection of the great Andalusian dictionaries" (Martínez Delgado 2010:14).

[38] I consider this dictionary to be treating gender as secondary because in this list of synonyms, the first two glosses are *not* lexically gendered.

[39] Under its first enumerated sense, *DCHR* does not attempt to distinguish between "man" and "person" in the 34 instances that it adduces. That vagueness in the presentation is what is noted here. *DCHR*'s combined gloss as "man, person" seems intended to convey the editor's earlier observation that many instances lack a "contextual emphasis on gender" (Clines 1993:221).

[40] A disadvantage of this approach is that it understates the internal influences that exist within lexicographic tradition. (To give an ornate example of those influences, Ibn Janaḥ drew heavily upon both Al-Fāsī and Ibn Saruq; he then was a main source for Kimḥi, who in turn provided the basis for the works by Bedersi, Ben Ṣa'īr, Ibn Danān, Reuchlin, Pagnini, and Münster—and who was also later cited occasionally by Gesenius, not only directly but also indirectly via his epitomizer, Ibn Melekh.) However, the tracing of influence across dictionaries is beyond the scope of the present study.

[41] Not reflected here is the fact that many dictionaries have treated the plural form אֲנָשִׁים not in their article on אִישׁ, but rather under אֱנוֹשׁ (out of a commitment to organize the dictionary according to verbal roots, and/or in the belief that this plural is not semantically related to אִישׁ). The authors of such dictionaries therefore construe אֲנָשִׁים as lexically non-gendered, given that אֱנוֹשׁ is seen as a gender-inclusive term.

[42] Although lexical gender is presumably of a basic nature for lexicographers, seldom do dictionaries allude to the persistent controversy in how it should be handled in their article's presentation. Most articles simply adopt a stance without comment. Consequently, the issue may well remain unnoticed by a typical student of the Bible, who innocently consults only the dictionary at hand.

[43] The alliteration created by those occasional pairings presumably helped to keep them cognitively available—giving them an outsized prominence in readers' minds.

When Did the Biblical Hebrew Noun *ʾîš* Become Lexically Gendered?

David E. S. Stein • 24 Nov. 2019 • purl.org/stein/lex-gender

> Our comforting conviction that the world makes sense rests on a secure foundation: our almost unlimited ability to ignore our ignorance.
>
> —Daniel Kahneman (2011:201)

1 Four Kinds of Gender

Gender	***Description***
Social	The culture's continual construction of womanliness/manliness. *Example*: Men wield swords; women wield spindles.
Syntactic	Formal concord that connects related words. *Example*: Pronouns that co-refer with the label אָדָם are grammatically masculine.
Referential	A linguistic expression's characterization of its referent as socially gendered (or not). *Example*: In specific reference with most masc. plural nouns, ≥1 referent is manly.
Lexical	A noun's semantic gender specificity.

Source: Adapted from Stein 2013:20.

2 Types of Inclusive/Exclusive Usage with "Contrasting" Paired Terms

		Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Term *A*	**Term *B***	**Specific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Hyponymy: *A* includes *B*?**	**Nonspecific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Use of plural '*A*s' for '*A*s and *B*s'?**
lion	*lioness*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arzt	*Ärztin*	No	No	Yes	Yes
זָכָר	נְקֵבָה	No	No	No	No
אִישׁ	אִשָּׁה				

Source: Adapted from Haspelmath 2006:53; see also Cruse 2011.

3 Hebrew Bible: Attestations for Each Usage Type in the Table (Above)

Type I: None.

Type II: Pronoun-like usages are common. Also, women are included among the participants in broadly inclusive communal events (Exod 35:21; 1 Chr 16:3).

Type III: Women are included among the parties in certain ritual and legal procedures (Lev 14:11; 17:4, 9; Deut 29:19).

Type IV: Women are included among the occupants of a household (Gen 17:23; 39:11), and among the inhabitants of a place (Judg 9:49).

4 Three Confounding Factors in Ascertaining Lexical Gender

1. Gender scope restrictions that are imposed via contrast with another term in the utterance
2. Referential-gender rules (e.g., specific deixis requires gender-matching of the word form)
3. Coincides with predicated actions or attributed characteristics that apply only to adult males

5 Confounding Factors in 26 Citations in 18 Dictionaries to Show אִישׁ as Gendered

Gen 2:23; ***2:24***; 4:23; **7:2**; *12:20*; 24:58; 24:65; 25:27; 33:1; Exod *2:1*; **21:28**; **35:29**; Lev **13:29**; *15:2*; ***15:18***; Num 1:5; Deut 3:11*; 31:12; 1 Sam 1:11*; *4:9**; 26:15*; 1 Kgs 2:2*; Zech 2:5; Ruth *1:11**; Eccl *6:3*

KEY: Single underline = The reference's specificity means that the speaker, in choosing to use אִישׁ (and not אִשָּׁה), ascribes non-womanly gender to the referent. (And then prototype effects—namely, the fact that nearly all non-womanly persons are men—then imply that this referent is a man.)

Double underline = The noun label is used with definite deixis to achieve a particular or unique reference, thus identifying (rather than classifying) the referent.

* = The usage is nonpersonal; it refers to a role or status, or is nonreferential altogether.

Boldface type = Scope limit imposed via contrast

Italic type = Characteristically masculine activity or attribute

6 Types of Gender Representation with *Mann/Man* in English, by Language Phase

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Language Phase	**Specific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Hyponymy: *A* includes *B*?**	**Nonspecific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Use of plural '*A*s' for '*A*s and *B*s'?**
Old English (650–1100 CE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Modern English (1500–1960)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary English (*nonevangelical, college-educated urbanites*)	No	No	No	?

7 Old English: A Sample Attestation for Each Usage Type in the Table (Above)

Type I: *hali femne & wundorlic man*
'a holy virgin and remarkable MAN' (a characterization of the saintly princess Eorcengota)

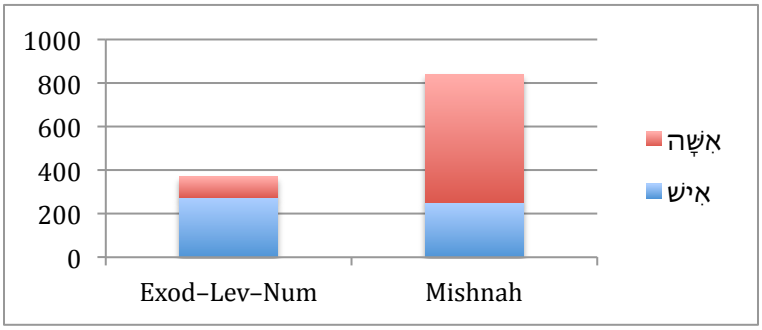
Type II: *nænig man*
'nobody'

Type III: *Hwæt eom ic manna þæt ic mihte god forbeodan?*
'What manner of MAN am I, that I could forbid God?' (attributed to St. Peter)

Type IV: *God gesceop ða æt fruman twegen men, wer and wif….*
'God then created, at the beginning, two MEN: man and woman.'

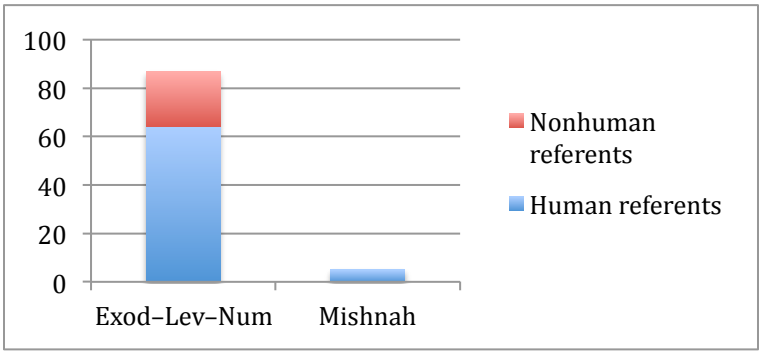
Sources: Rauer 2017; *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *man*

8 Relative Frequency of Terms: Incidence of Singular Nouns אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה (*Type II*)

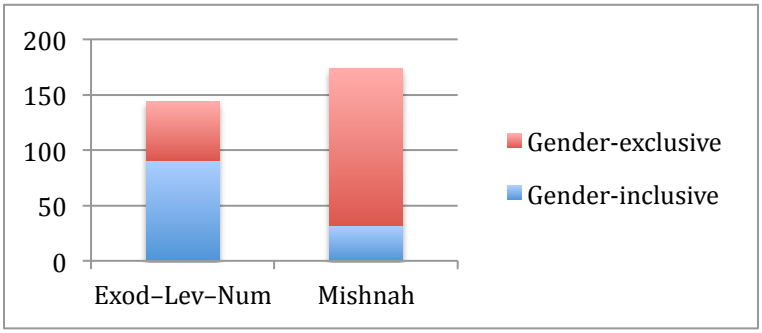


Note: In this chart, the tallies for the Mishnah include biblical quotations.

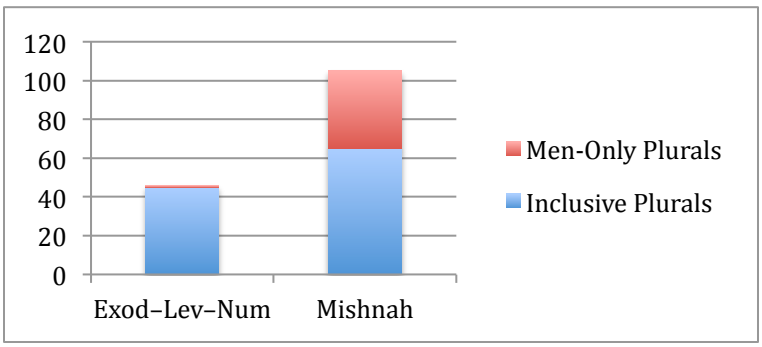
9 Pronoun-Like Usages of אִישׁ (*Type II*)



10 Nonspecific References via אִישׁ to Participants in Prototypical Situations (*Type III*)



11 Gender-Inclusiveness of the Plural Form אֲנָשִׁים (*Type IV*)



12 Types of Gender Representation with אִישׁ in Hebrew, by Language Phase

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Language Phase	**Specific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Hyponymy: *A* includes *B*?**	**Nonspecific use of *A* for *B*?**	**Use of plural '*A*s' for '*A*s and *B*s'?**
Proto-Hebrew				
Biblical Hebrew	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mishnaic Hebrew	No	No	??	?

13 Conclusions

1. For אִישׁ as the cover term in a contrasting noun pair, its lexical gender is a matter of degree. In the Bible, this noun is far from being fully lexically gendered.
2. For a given stage of the Hebrew language, it helps to distinguish among several types of conventional usage constraint, so as to ascertain which types of the usage of אִישׁ include women in their denotational scope, and which types do not.
3. A significant shift toward a more-gendered connotation of אִישׁ appears to have taken place postbiblically, as reflected in Rabbinic literature.

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