The Article, Part II

Special Uses and
Non-Uses of the Article

Introduction

Here we will consider two constructions. One of these involves the non-use of the article and the other involves the use of the article: anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives and the article-noun-καί-noun construction. They deserve their own extended treatment both because of rich theological implications (especially related to explicit NT affirmations of the deity of Christ) and because of common abuse in NT circles. The material is not all equally important; some of it may be glossed over quickly and merely used for reference. The chapter can be outlined as above (with the more immediately relevant sections for intermediate students highlighted in bold letters).

A. Anarthrous Pre-Verbal Predicate Nominatives (Involving Colwell's Rule)

Introduction

1) Definition of Terms

First, it would be helpful to review some basic terminology.

· anarthrous = without the article

· pre-verbal = *before* the equative verb

· predicate nominative (PN) = the noun in the nominative case which is the same as the subject (more or less)

Therefore, an anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative is a predicate nominative that does not have the article and occurs before the equative verb. This is the kind of construction Ernest Cadman Colwell

investigated when he wrote his now well-known article in 1933. To economize on our verbiage, therefore, we will consider every anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative construction as a "Colwell's *construction*" (though not necessarily fitting Colwell's *rule*).

2) Predicate Nominatives in General

In general, a predicate nominative is anarthrous and it *follows* the copula. It is usually qualitative or indefinite.

1. Discovery of "Colwell's Rule"

E. C. Colwell completed his doctor's dissertation on "The Character of the Greek of John's Gospel" in 1931. His intensive research into the grammar of John's Gospel led to the discovery of his rule.

In 1933 he published an article entitled, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," in *JBL* 52 (1933) 12-21. Ever since, his rule has been known simply as "Colwell's rule."

⇨2. Statement of the Rule

Colwell's rule is as follows: "Definite predicate nouns which precede the verb usually lack the article . . . a predicate nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a 'qualitative' noun solely because of the absence of the article; if the context suggests that the predicate is definite, it should be translated as a definite noun. . . ."[1]

Colwell illustrated this principle with John 1:49: ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (Nathaneal answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel"). Colwell observed that the structural parallels between the two statements differed at two points: (a) in the second statement, the PN is anarthrous while in the first it is articular; (b) in the second statement, the PN is before the verb, while in the first it is after the verb. Yet the grammatical sense was the same for both statements: the PN in each should be regarded as definite. From this, Colwell assumed that definiteness of the PN could be achieved either by the article or by a shift in word order. His essay dealt with the latter.

In other words, a PN that precedes the copula, and which is apparently definite *from the context*, usually lacks the article.

3. Misunderstanding of the Rule

a. By Scholars Since Colwell

Almost immediately many scholars (especially of a more conservative stripe) misunderstood Colwell's rule. They saw the benefit of the rule for affirming the deity of Christ in John 1:1. But what they thought Colwell was articulating was actually the *converse* of the rule, not the rule itself. That is, they thought that the rule was: An anarthrous predicate nominative that precedes the verb is usually definite. This is not the rule, nor can it be implied from the rule.

For the most part, they either quote Colwell without much interaction or they read *into* the rule what is not there. For example, Nigel Turner argued: "[In John 1:1] there need be no doctrinal significance in the dropping of the article, for it is simply a matter of word-order."[2] This means that θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος meant the same thing as ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός.[3] Bruce Metzger summarizes: "As regards Jn 11,

Colwell's research casts the most serious doubts on the correctness of such translations as 'and the Logos was divine' (Moffatt, Strachan), 'and the Word was divine' (Goodspeed), and (worst of all) 'and the Word was a god' (. . . *New World Translation*)."[4] Actually, Colwell's rule does not address this issue at all.[5] Walter Martin goes so far as to say: "Colwell's rule clearly states that a definite predicate nominative . . . *never* takes an article when it precedes the verb . . . as in John 1:1."[6] Although Martin states the rule rather than the converse (though too dogmatically, for Colwell did not say "never"), he assumes the converse of the rule in the very next breath!

Our point is that Colwell's rule has been misunderstood and abused by scholars. By applying Colwell's rule to John 1:1 they have jumped out of the frying pan of Arianism and into the fire of Sabellianism.

b. By Colwell Himself

In his article Colwell overstates his case: "Loosely speaking, this study may be said to have increased the definiteness of a predicate noun before the verb without the article. . . ."[7] Shortly, I will explain how this is not a very accurate statement.[8]

Further, he was inconsistent elsewhere when he said: "[The data presented here] show that a predicate

nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a 'qualitative' noun solely because of the absence of the article; *if the context suggests* that the predicate is definite, it should be translated as a definite noun in spite of the absence of the article."[9] This is an accurate statement in that he recognizes that contextual factors need to be brought in to argue for a definite PN. But this is followed on the next page with: "The absence of the article does *not* make the predicate [nominative] indefinite or qualitative when it precedes the verb; it is indefinite in

this position *only* when the context *demands* it."[10] In the first statement Colwell pointed out that the burden of proof rests with the definite PN view, but in the second statement he assumes the opposite: now the burden of proof rests with any view other than the definite PN! To make either statement, in reality, was to embrace a methodological error, for Colwell had stated at the outset of his study that he only examined definite predicate nominatives.

Even after his rule had become well-known and even abused by others, Colwell affirmed that the converse of the rule seemed to be as valid as the rule itself.[11] He stated that he felt his rule suggested that an anarthrous pre-verbal PN would *normally* be definite.

⇨**4. Clarification of Colwell's Rule**

a. By Harner

Forty years after Colwell's article appeared in *JBL*, Philip B. Harner's essay was published in the same journal. Harner pointed out that "Colwell was almost entirely concerned with the question whether anarthrous predicate nouns were definite or indefinite, and he did not discuss at any length the problem of their qualitative significance."[12] This was probably due to the fact that many older grammarians saw *no* distinction between qualitative nouns and indefinite nouns.[13]

Second, Harner produced evidence that an anarthrous pre-verbal PN is usually *qualitative*–not definite nor indefinite. His findings, in general, were that 80% of Colwell's constructions involved qualitative nouns and only 20% involved definite nouns.

b. By Dixon

Paul Stephen Dixon[14] begins the third chapter of his thesis by quoting Colwell's crucial statement of his rule: "A definite predicate nominative . . . does not have the article when it precedes the verb." Dixon goes on, however, to point out an invalid inference which has been made from this rule:

> The rule does not say: an anarthrous predicate nominative which precedes the verb is definite. This is the converse of Colwell's rule and as such is not a valid inference. (From the statement "A implies B," it is not valid to infer "B implies A.'" From the statement "Articular nouns are definite," it is not valid to infer "Definite nouns are articular." Likewise, from the statement "Definite predicate nominatives preceding the verb are anarthrous," it is not valid to infer "Anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb are definite.")[15]

Dixon, too, suggests that the anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative (in John's Gospel at least) is primarily qualitative in force.[16]

⇨**c. Summary**

1) Colwell stated that a definite PN that precedes the verb is usually anarthrous. He did *not* say the *converse*, namely, an anarthrous PN that precedes the verb is usually definite. However, this is how the rule has been misunderstood by most scholars (including Colwell) since the article in *JBL* was written.

2) Colwell restricted his study to anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives which were, as far as he could tell, determined as definite *by the context*. He did not deal with *any* other anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives. However, the misunderstanding has arisen because scholars have not recognized that Colwell only tested these constructions. In other words, Colwell started off with a *semantic* category rather than a *structural* category. He did *not* begin by asking the question, What does the anarthrous pre-verbal PN construction mean? Rather, he began by asking, Will a definite PN be articular or anarthrous? And will it follow or precede the verb? In his initial question, he *assumed* a particular meaning (i.e., definiteness) and sought the particular constructions involved.[17]

Colwell, therefore, did not do an exhaustive research on the construction under consideration. He assumed what many since have thought that he proved![18]

3) Colwell had a simplistic understanding of qualitative and indefinite nouns. He believed that the way we

can tell whether a noun is indefinite or "qualitative" or definite is by its *translation*. But as was pointed out in Part I of this chapter, translation does not always bring out whether a word is qualitative or indefinite or definite. Apparently, if it seemed unnatural to put in the article "a/an" before the noun, Colwell assumed that the noun was *definite*. Greek and English are dissimilar enough, however, that we must argue from *sense*, not translation.

4) We can illustrate the faulty assumptions in two ways. (a) Suppose a study were made of the divorce rate of people married by a justice of the peace. And suppose that the findings were that 90% of the people married by a justice of the peace got divorced within five years. The findings then might support a "rule": If you were married by a justice of the peace, you will probably (9 out of 10 chances) get divorced within five years. The *converse* of this rule, however, would *not* be true: If you are divorced, you probably got married by a justice of the peace. The reason the converse would not necessarily follow is that the study was made *only* of people who were married by a justice of the peace, *not* of all divorced people. Only when all divorcees are considered, can *any* statement be made about their probability of being married by a justice of the peace.

(b) A simpler illustration: Suppose a little boy were to examine as best he could the relationship of rain to clouds. Every time it rains, he runs outside and notices that there are clouds in the sky. He will conclude the following principle: *If it is raining, there must be clouds in the sky.* In such a statement the *only* time the sky is examined is when it is raining. The study is not exhaustive to include all occasions in which the sky is cloudy. If this boy were to formulate the *converse* of his rule, we could all see its logical fallacy: *If there are clouds in the sky, it must be raining.*

With reference to Colwell's rule, only anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives were studied which were previously determined by their contexts to be most probably definite. Not *all* anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives were studied. But the *converse* of the rule, commonly embraced in NT scholarship, assumes that all such constructions have been examined. In Harner's study, the net was cast wider. He examined all pre-verbal predicate nominatives. And his conclusion was that 80% were qualitative. Therefore, when one sees an anarthrous pre-verbal PN, he should consider its force to be *most likely* qualitative, and only to be definite if the context or other factors strongly suggest otherwise.

In sum, Colwell's rule proves nothing about definiteness. Its value is not for grammar per se, but for textual criticism: It proves something about articularity and word order.

The following chart displays the different databases that were examined by Colwell ("Colwell's rule") and Harner ("Colwell's construction").
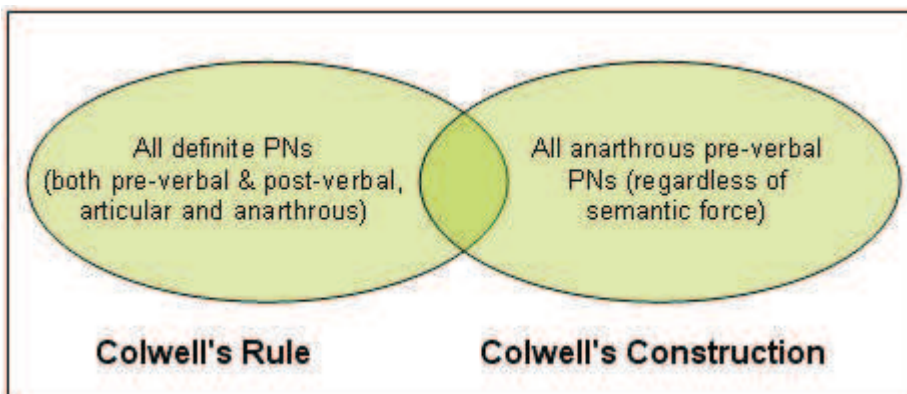
*Chart 26 - The Different Databases for Colwell's Rule Vs. Colwell's Construction*

As can be seen from the chart, the databases were not the same. The fact of some overlap is what has given rise to the confusion over the rule.

⇨**5. Significance of Colwell's Construction for Exegesis**

The studies by Dixon and especially Harner demonstrate that the anarthrous pre-verbal PN is still *closer* to definiteness than is the anarthrous *post*-copulative predicate nominative,[19] and that an anarthrous predicate nominative that *follows* the verb will usually be either qualitative or *in*definite.[20]

A general rule about the construction can now be stated: *An anarthrous pre-verbal PN is normally qualitative, sometimes definite, and only rarely indefinite.* In neither of the two studies were any indefinite PNs found. We believe there may be some in the NT, but this is nevertheless the most poorly attested semantic force for such a construction.
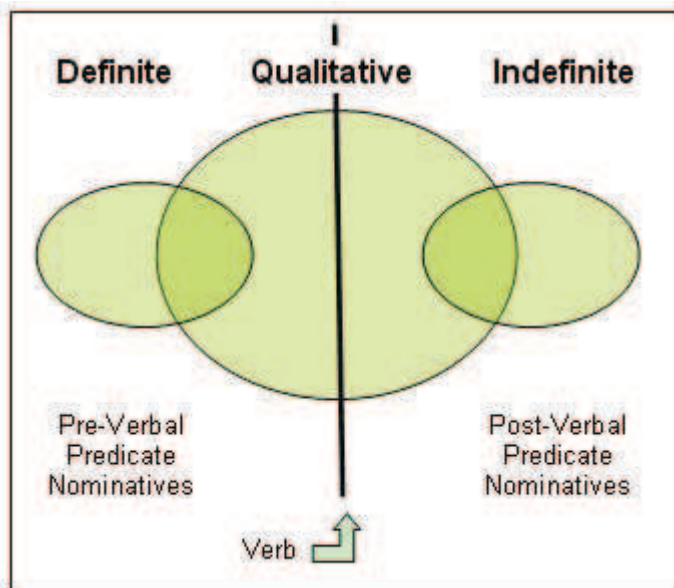
Chart 27 - The Semantic Range of Anarthrous Predicate Nominatives

The chart illustrates the fact that anarthrous *pre-verbal* predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*definite* range, while anarthrous *post*-verbal predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*indefinite* range. The presumption, therefore, when one faces an anarthrous pre-verbal PN is that it will be qualitative unless there are contextual or other considerations suggesting that it is definite or, less likely, indefinite.

a. Definite Predicate Nominatives

Matt 27:42   ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαἰ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραήλ ἐστιν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ

He saved others, [but] he cannot save himself. He is **the king** of Israel; let him come down now from the cross . . .

> It is plain that the PN cannot be anything but definite here, for there is only one king of Israel at a time.[21]

John 1:49   σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ[22]

you are the Son of God, you are **the king** of Israel

> Nathanael's response to Jesus is a twofold identification. In the first

> construction the PN follows the verb and has the article. In the second construction the PN precedes the verb and lacks the article. This text was Colwell's main illustration of his principle.[23]

1 Cor 1:18   ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς δὲ σῳζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστιν

the word of the cross to us who are being saved is **the power** of God

Heb 1:10   ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σού εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί

the heavens are **the works** of your hands

Cf. also Matt 4:3, 6; 5:34,35; 13:39; 14:33; John 3:29; 10:2; 11:51; Acts 13:33; Rom 1:16; 10:4; 1 Cor 4:4; 11:3; 2 Cor 6:16; Gal 3:25; Jas 2:23; 1 John 2:2.

b. Qualitative Predicate Nominatives[24]

John 1:14   ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο

the Word became **flesh**

> The idea is not that the Word became "the flesh," nor "a flesh," but simply "flesh." That is, the Word partook of humanity. Many pre-1933 exegetes (i.e., before Colwell's rule was published) saw a parallel between this verse and John 1:1, noting that both PNs were qualitative.

John 5:10   ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, σάββατόν ἐστιν

Then the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is **Sabbath**"

> Although this could be translated "it is **the Sabbath"** or, a bit less naturally, "**a Sabbath**," one must remember to argue from *sense* rather than from translation. The point the Pharisees were making had to with the *kind* of day on which this man was working—hence, a qualitative noun.

1 John 4:8 ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν

God is **love**

> The meaning is certainly not convertible: "love is God." The idea of a qualitative ἀγάπη is that God's essence or nature is love, or that he has the quality of love. Thus love is an attribute, not an identification, of God.

Phil 2:13 θεὸς ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν

the one working in you is **God**

> Although it is certainly possible that θεός is definite,[25] the force in this context seems to be a bit more on what God does in the believer rather than who it is that does it. In the previous verse, the apostle exhorts his audience to work out their own salvation. Lest they think they are alone in this endeavor, he hastens to remind them that the one working in them has the ability to bring about their complete sanctification.

c. Indefinite Predicate Nominatives

The following examples comprise potential indefinite predicate nominatives in Colwell's construction. None in the NT have been positively classified as belonging here either by Harner or Dixon (though a few predicate nouns almost certainly belong here). However, in other Hellenistic literature, this usage is established. An example outside the NT is given below.

1 Tim 6:10 ῥίζα πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστιν ἡ φιλαργυρία

> This is a difficult text to translate, having the following possibilities: (1) "the love of money is **a** root of all evils," (2) "the love of money is **the** root of all evils," (3) "the love of money motivates all evils," (4) "the love of money is **a** root of all kinds of evils," (5) "the love of money is **the** root of all kinds of evils," (6) "the love of money motivates all kinds of evils." The reason for these six possibilities is that first, it is difficult to tell whether ῥίζα is indefinite (options 1 & 4), definite (2 & 5), or qualitative (3 & 6), and secondly, πάντων may mean "all without exclusion" (1, 2, & 3) or "all without distinction" (4, 5, & 6).
>
> > Logically, it would be difficult to say that ῥίζα is definite, for then the text would be saying either (1) the *only* root of all evils is the love of money or that (2) the *greatest* root (*par excellence*) of all evils is the love of money. These are the options *if* πάντων means "all without exclusion." However, the definite idea would fit if πάντων means "all without distinction."
>
> > Grammatically, it would be difficult to take ῥίζα as indefinite, since this is the least attested meaning for the anarthrous pre-verbal PN in the NT. However, grammatically the most probable option is to see ῥίζα as qualitative. The idea would be either that all evils *can be* motivated or initiated by the love for money or that all kinds of evils *can be* motivated by the love for money. The qualitative idea makes no comment about anything else that might motivate or produce evil. It simply states that loving money does motivate/produce all (kinds of) evils.

John 6:70 ἐξ ὑμῶν εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν

one of you is **a/the devil**

> This text has been discussed above (in greater detail) under "Monadic Nouns." In sum, although the majority of translations treat διάβολος as indefinite (because of the English tradition of the KJV), there is only one devil. Hence, since it is a monadic noun, the meaning is "one of you is **the** devil."

John 4:19 λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ

The woman said to him, "Sir/Lord, I perceive that you are **a/the prophet**"

> This is the most likely candidate of an indefinite pre-verbal PN in the NT. Yet there is some doubt about it. First, it is slightly possible that the evangelist is representing the Samaritan woman as thinking about the great prophet of Deut 18. This, however, is doubtful because of the verb θεωρῶ. Her *perception* would be that he was *a* prophet, but Jesus' statement to her in v 18 is too insufficient a base to make her think of *the*

> prophet. Further, it is quite unnatural to "perceive" the identity of someone; perception belongs to class characteristics, not exact identity. In other words, we would expect her to say, "You're the prophet!" or, perhaps, "Are you the prophet?" if indeed she was thinking of Deut 18. However, this is not to say that the PN must be indefinite. The woman seems to be focusing on the attributes of a prophet, rather than merely listing Jesus as a member of that class. Again, θεωρῶ contributes to this. Although the translation is most

naturally "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet," the sense may be better characterized as indefinite-qualitative. It could almost be translated, "I perceive that you are prophetic," or "I perceive that you have the prophetic gift." The focus of an indefinite noun is on a *member* of class, while the focus of a qualitative noun is on the *attributes* that the class members share.

Didache 11.8 οὐ πᾶς ὁ λαλῶν ἐν πνεύματι προφήτης ἐστίν

Not everyone who speaks in/by the Spirit is **a prophet**.

In Didache 11.3-12 προφήτης or ψευδοπροφήτης is an anarthrous PN five times. The focus on the passage is on anyone who claims to have membership in that elite group known as prophets. If a particular individual acts unbecoming of that group, he is called a false prophet (ψευδοπροφήτης). The focus of the pericope, then, is on any individual member without specifying which member is in view (apart from his own actions pointing him out). This is an indefinite PN.[26]

For other potential indefinite predicate nominatives (many of which might better be classified as indefinite-qualitative or qualitative-indefinite), cf. Matt 14:26; Luke 5:8; John 8:34; Acts 28:4; Rom 13:6; 1 Cor 6:19.

⇨ 6. Application of Colwell's Construction to John 1:1[27]

John 1:1 states: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. In the last part of the verse, the clause καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (John 1:1c), θεός is the PN. It is anarthrous and comes before the verb. Therefore, it fits Colwell's *construction*, though it might not fit the rule (for the rule states that definiteness is determined or indicated by the context, not by the grammar). Whether it is indefinite, qualitative, or definite is the issue at hand.

a. Is Θεός in John 1:1c Indefinite?

If θεός were indefinite, we would translate it "*a* god" (as is done in the *New World Translation* [NWT]). If so, the theological implication would be some form of polytheism, perhaps suggesting that the Word was merely a secondary god in a pantheon of deities.

The grammatical argument that the PN here is indefinite is weak. Often, those who argue for such a view (in particular, the translators

of the NWT) do so on the sole basis that the term is anarthrous. Yet they are inconsistent, as R. H. Countess pointed out:

> In the New Testament there are 282 occurrences of the anarthrous θεός. At sixteen places NWT has either a god, god, gods, or godly. Sixteen out of 282 means that the translators were faithful to *their* translation principle only six percent of the time. . . .

> The first section of John–1:1-18–furnishes a lucid example of NWT arbitrary dogmatism. Θεός occurs eight times–verses 1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 18–and has the article only twice–verses 1, 2. Yet NWT six times translated "God," once "a god," and once "the god."[28]

If we expand the discussion to other anarthrous terms in the Johannine Prologue, we notice other inconsistencies in the NWT: It is interesting that the *New World Translation* renders θεός as "a god" on the simplistic grounds that it lacks the article. This is surely an insufficient basis. Following the "anarthrous = indefinite" principle would mean that ἀρχῇ should be "a beginning" (1:1, 2), ζωή should be "a life" (1:4), παρὰ θεοῦ should be "from a god" (1:6), Ἰωάννης should be "a John" (1:6), θεόν should be "a god" (1:18), etc. Yet none of these other anarthrous nouns is rendered with an indefinite article. One can only suspect strong theological bias in such a translation.

According to Dixon's study, if θεός were *indefinite* in John 1:1, it would be the only anarthrous pre-verbal PN in John's Gospel to be so. Although we have argued that this is somewhat overstated, the general point is valid: The indefinite notion is the most poorly attested for anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives. Thus, grammatically such a meaning is improbable. Also, the context suggests that such is not likely, for the Word already existed in the beginning. Thus, contextually and grammatically, it is highly improbable that the Logos could be "a god" according to John. Finally, the evangelist's own theology militates against this view, for there is an exalted Christology in the Fourth Gospel, to the point that Jesus Christ is identified as God (cf. 5:23; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28, etc.).

b. Is Θεός in John 1:1c Definite?

Grammarians and exegetes since Colwell have taken θεός as definite in John 1:1c. However, their basis

has *usually* been a misunderstanding of Colwell's rule. They have understood the rule to say that an anarthrous pre-verbal PN will usually be definite (rather than the converse). But Colwell's rule states that a PN which is probably definite as determined from the *context* which precedes a verb will

usually be anarthrous. If we check the rule to see if it applies here, we would say that the previous mention of θεός (in 1:1b) is articular. Therefore, if the same person being referred to there is called θεός in 1:1c, then in both places it is definite. Although certainly possible grammatically (though not nearly as likely as qualitative), the evidence is not very compelling. The vast majority of *definite* anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives are monadic, in genitive constructions, or are proper names, none of which is true here, diminishing the likelihood of a definite θεός in John 1:1\c.

Further, calling θεός in 1:1c definite is the same as saying that if it had followed the verb it would have had the article. Thus it would be a convertible proposition with λόγος (i.e., "the Word" = "God" *and* "God" = "the Word"). The problem of this argument is that the θεός in 1:1b is the Father. Thus to say that the θεός in 1:1c is the same person is to say that "the Word was the *Father.*"[29] This, as the older grammarians and exegetes pointed out, is embryonic Sabellianism or modalism.[30] The Fourth Gospel is about the least likely place to find modalism in the NT.

c. Is Θεός in John 1:1c Qualitative?

The most likely candidate for θεός is qualitative. This is true both grammatically (for the largest proportion of pre-verbal anarthrous predicate nominatives fall into this category) and theologically (both the theology of the Fourth Gospel and of the NT as a whole). There is a balance between the Word's deity, which was already present in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ . . . θεὸς ἦν [1:1], and his humanity, which was added later (σὰρξ ἐγένετο [1:14]). The grammatical structure of these two statements mirrors each other; both emphasize the nature of the Word, rather than his identity. But θεός was his nature from eternity (hence, εἰμί is used), while σάρξ was added at the incarnation (hence, γίνομαι is used).

Such an option does not at all impugn the deity of Christ. Rather, it stresses that, although the person of Christ is not the person of the Father, their *essence* is identical. Possible translations are as follows: "What God was, the Word was" (NEB), or "the Word was divine" (a modified Moffatt). In this second translation, "divine" is acceptable only if it is a term that can be applied *only* to true deity. However, in modern English, we use it with reference to angels, theologians, even a meal! Thus "divine" could be misleading in an English translation. The *idea* of a qualitative θεός here is that the Word had all the attributes and qualities that "the God" (of 1:1b) had. In other words, he shared the *essence* of the Father, though they differed in person. *The construction the evangelist chose to express this idea was the most **concise** way he could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father.*[31]

7. Appendix to Colwell's "Construction": When the Verb is Absent

When there is no verb, a PN, of course, cannot properly be called *pre*-verbal. However, there is one construction in which an *a*-copulative (that is, no verb) PN will have the same semantic value as the pre-verbal PN, viz., when the PN precedes the *subject*. Thus, although there are several passages in which the copula is lacking, the force of such texts can be determined by the word order of the PN and the subject.[32]

When the anarthrous PN stands before the subject, it will either be qualitative or definite. This is due to the fact that (1) had the verb been present, it more than likely would have come after the PN, and (2) by

placing the PN before the subject, an author is making the PN emphatic and if emphatic, then either qualitative or definite (since it is not normal to conceive of an *in*definite PN being emphasized, though not entirely impossible).

In John 4:24 Jesus says to the woman at the well, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. The anarthrous PN comes before the subject and there is no verb. Here, πνεῦμα is qualitative–stressing the nature or essence of God (the KJV incorrectly renders this, "God is *a* spirit").

In Phil 2:11 Paul proclaims that κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός ("Jesus Christ is Lord"). Here, as in John 4:24, there is no copula and the anarthrous PN comes before the subject. The PN in this instance is apparently definite; Jesus Christ is *the* Lord. Cf. also Phil 1:8 (with Rom 1:9).

In summary, when an anarthrous PN precedes a verbless subject, it will either be qualitative or definite just as would a pre-verbal anarthrous PN.