

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANARTHROUS
PREDICATE NOMINATIVE IN JOHN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for this Thesis

There has been much confusion and disagreement over the significance of the anarthrous predicate nominative, especially as it occurs in the Gospel of John. In the appendix of the New World Translation the editors argue that θεός in John 1:1c is indefinite on the basis that "our English translators insert the indefinite article "a" before the predicate noun at John 4:19; 4:24; 6:70; 9:24, 25; 10:33; 12:6."¹ Others, claiming Colwell's rule as their basis, have contended that when the anarthrous predicate nominative precedes the verb it is usually just as definite as the articular predicate nominative following the verb and that "the dropping of the article . . . is simply a matter of word-order."² Others, yet, contend that the significance is qualitiveness. Zerwick writes:

The omission of the article shows that the speaker regards the person or thing not so much as this or that person

¹New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1950), p. 776.

²Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights Into The New Testament, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1965), p. 17.

or thing, but rather as such a person or thing, i. e. regards not the individual but rather its nature or quality."¹

The prime example of this controversy is John 1:1c, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Is θεός indefinite and to be translated "a god," as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim? Is it definite, as followers of Colwell claim? Or, is it qualitative, and stressing neither definiteness nor indefiniteness, but the quality or nature of ὁ λόγος? The importance of this thesis is clearly seen in the above example (John 1:1) where the doctrines of the deity of Christ and the Trinity are at stake. For, if the Word was "a god," then by implication there are other gods of which Jesus is one. On the other hand, if θεός is just as definite as the articular construction following the verb because, "the dropping of the article . . . is simply a matter of word-order,"² then the doctrine of the Trinity is denied. "It would be pure Sabellianism to say "the Word was ὁ θεός."³

Purpose

It is the purpose of this thesis to ascertain the significance of the anarthrous predicate nominative in the Gospel of John, and so to provide the student of the Greek text with valuable working knowledge for the understanding of Scripture.

¹Maximilian Zerwick, Biblical Greek, (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), p. 55.

²Turner, Grammatical Insights Into the New Testament, p. 17.

³B. F. Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 3.

Scope

The thesis will be divided into two parts: after defining the critical terminology, the first part will involve an analysis of Colwell's rule as it relates to the resolution of the problem, the second part will involve an inductive exegetical analysis of the construction in the Gospel of John.

CHAPTER II

TERMINOLOGY

Predicate Nominative

A predicate nominative may be defined as a noun in the nominative case, in the predicate of a sentence, and directly related to the subject by either a stated or unstated form of either εἶναι or γενέσθαι. For our purposes a word is a noun when defined so by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich in their Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.

Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

An anarthrous predicate nominative is a predicate nominative without the definite article.

Pre-copulative Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

A pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative is an anarthrous predicate nominative which stands before the copula εἶναι or γενέσθαι in the sentence.

Post-copulative Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

A post-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative is an anarthrous predicate nominative which stands after the copula εἶναι or γενέσθαι in the sentence.

A-copulative Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

An a-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative is an anarthrous predicate nominative in a sentence lacking the copulative verb.

Definite Noun

A noun is definite when it takes the definite article. Without the article, however, it may or may not be definite. Robertson points out, "The word may be definite or indefinite when the article is absent. The context and history of the phrase in question must decide."¹ He elaborates on this elsewhere:

Many words are definite from the nature of the case. The word itself may be definite, like γῆ, οὐρανός, Ἰησοῦς. The use of a preposition with definite anarthrous nouns is old, as ἐν οἴκῳ. Possessive pronouns also make definite, as do genitives. The context itself often is clear enough. The demonstrative may be used besides the article.²

It is obvious, then, that anarthrous nouns may be definite. Two questions naturally arise. What is definiteness, and what, if any, is the difference between an articular noun and a definite anarthrous noun?

Winer apparently sees no distinction between the articular noun and the definite anarthrous noun. He sees the definite

¹A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), p. 790.

²Ibid., p. 756.

article as marking the object "as one definitely conceived."¹
 Later, he says that the definite anarthrous noun should have the article. He comments:

Appellatives, which as expressing definite objects should have the Article, are, not merely in the N. T. but in the best Greek authors, employed in certain cases without it . . . This omission, however, only takes place in the mind of the reader whether the object is to be understood as definite or indefinite.²

Dana and Mantey, on the other hand, recognize a clear distinction between the two. They maintain that the articular noun stresses individual identity and that the definite anarthrous noun stresses quality or character. They comment:

The basal function of the Greek article is to point out individual identity. It does more than mark "the object as one definitely conceived" (W. 105), for a substantive in Greek is definite without the article . . . Gildersleeve goes on to show that the Greek noun has an intrinsic definiteness, an "implicit article." Therefore, the explicit article does more than merely ascribe definiteness . . . When identity is prominent, we find the article; and when quality or character is stressed, the construction is anarthrous.³

Notice, however, their two fallacious arguments. To argue that the article does more than mark the object as definitely conceived because a substantive in Greek is definite without the article, is simply begging the question. The question is, "Is there any difference between the articular noun and the anar-

¹George Benedict Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1877), p. 105.

²Ibid., p. 119.

³H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, (The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 137.

throus definite noun? To assume a difference because, otherwise, they would be the same, is begging the question. Why can't they be the same? That is the question that must be answered. Secondly, the question is begged in asserting that the explicit article ascribes more than definiteness because the implicit article does that. They are merely assuming to be true what they need to demonstrate to be true, namely, that the articular noun does ascribe more than that ascribed by the definite anarthrous noun.

Not only do they beg the question twice, but they fail to give any textual support for their assertion. Blum, however, does attempt to demonstrate the distinction from the text:

. . . by saying that a construction without the article is just as definite as a construction with the article, the impression should not be taken that the article means nothing in these constructions. By a quick look at some of uses of the phrase "Son of God" in the Gospel of Matthew with and without the article, that notion ought to be dispelled.

In Matthew chapter four, Christ is being tested by Satan. The tempter prefaces his first two temptations with the phrase εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ. In both the noun υἱός is before the verb. This is a first class conditional sentence which assumes the condition to be a reality. Satan accepts the fact as a working hypothesis and he is anxious to have Christ prove it. In this passage the identity of Christ as the Son of God is not stressed. But in Matthew chapter sixteen, Christ asks his disciples concerning the ideas among the people as to his identity and then asks them what they believe. Peter answers οὐ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος. The stress is on the identity and so the article is used. Definiteness in a noun and identity are not the same thing and the primary function of the article is to stress the identity.¹

¹Edwin A. Blum, "Studies in Problem Areas of the Greek Article," (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Seminary, 1961), pp. 15-16.

Blum, too, has failed to demonstrate his point. In order to do so, he must show that υἱός in Matthew chapter four does not stress identity, while ὁ υἱός in Matthew chapter sixteen does. He merely states that the identity of Christ as the Son of God in Matthew four is not stressed. He fails to give any reason why he feels identity is not stressed, and does not even tell us what it does stress. He, too, is guilty of begging the question.

Our final argument against this view is that in examples of anarthrous nouns that are unambiguously definite, the stress is individual identity. Thus, even though a proper name lacks the article, it still stresses individual identity. John 18:36-37, ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς . . . ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς, and John 20:31, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, illustrate this point. Secondly, a unique object, by definition, stresses individual identity. Thus, anarthrous nouns ascribing unique objects such as "earth," "heaven," and "sun," stress individual identity. Revelation 21:23 and 22:5, καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρείαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης . . . καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρείαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φῶς ἡλίου, and John 1:32 and 6:33, Τεθεάμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ . . . ὁ καταβαῖνον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, illustrate this point.

We agree with Dana and Mantey that an articular noun points out individual identity. We also conclude, however, that definite anarthrous nouns, like articular nouns, stress individual identity. Hence, we may define a definite noun,

whether articular or anarthrous, as a noun which stresses individual identity. We have not yet answered the second question above (What is the difference, if any, between an articular noun and an anarthrous definite noun?), except to say stress in individual identity is not a difference. The answer to the question will be part of the results of this thesis. Thus, a definite noun is a noun which stresses individual identity.

Qualitative Noun

A qualitative noun is a noun which does not stress definiteness, that is, individual identity, but stresses a quality, nature or essence. A qualitative predicate nominative is a predicate noun which stresses a quality, nature or essence of the subject. In I John 4:8, ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶν, ἀγάπη is qualitative because it stresses a quality of ὁ θεὸς . It is important to note the word "stress" in our definition. All nouns are lexically definite, in that they refer to particular objects. In usage, however, nouns may be adjectival. The stress then is on a quality or essence, and not definiteness.

Indefinite Noun

An indefinite noun is a noun which stresses neither definiteness, nor qualitiveness, but membership in a class of which there are other members. Technically, any noun which is not definite is indefinite. For expediency, however, we exclude qualitative nouns from the class of indefinite nouns.

Thus, an anarthrous predicate nominative is definite if

it stresses definiteness, that is, individual identity. It is qualitative if it stresses a quality, nature or essence of the subject. It is indefinite if it stresses neither definiteness, nor qualitiveness, but membership in a class of which there are other members.

CHAPTER III

A CLARIFICATION OF COLWELL

A great deal of the confusion concerning the anarthrous predicate nominative may be attributed to a misunderstanding of, or a misapplication of Colwell's rule.

What It Says

Colwell's rule, as it relates to our discussion, says, "A definite predicate nominative . . . does not have the article when it precedes the verb."¹ According to Colwell, the probability that a definite predicate nominative preceding the verb is anarthrous, is 87% (99 of 114, or 86.8%. If relative clauses are subtracted, then 97 of 112 occurrences in the New Testament, or 86.6%).²

An Invalid Inference

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

¹E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature 52 (1933):13.

²Ibid., pp. 16-17.

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.")

Colwell's Blunder

In order to establish his rule Colwell must start with definite predicate nominatives preceding the verb. He then must determine the percentage of those lacking the article. This Colwell attempts (although he begs the question, as we shall see). Assuming the validity of his efforts, his work is properly signified by the title of his article, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament." That is, the conclusion of his work is the establishment of a rule for the use of the article in the Greek Testament. But, in the conclusion of his work Colwell turns it around and concludes something about definiteness. He draws the converse. He states in his article:

Loosely speaking, this study may be said to have increased the definiteness of a predicate noun before the verb without the article, and to have decreased the definiteness of a predicate noun after the verb without the article.¹

Apparently what Colwell means is that his study has increased the probability of definiteness of a given anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb. But, in his study he did not start with anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding

¹Ibid., p. 21.

the verb. He started with and considered only definite predicate nominatives. He writes:

There are bound to be mistakes in the list of definite predicate nouns without the article; but an attempt has been made to exclude all nouns as to whose definiteness there could be any doubt. This means, of course, that "qualitative" nouns have been omitted, since such nouns . . . are not definite.¹

Thus, what is to be asserted is not definiteness, but articularity. What Colwell has done might best be seen in a simple analogy. Suppose a study were made of all the black male college graduates in the United States and it were found that 89% of them made \$10,000 per year. It would be an absurdity to conclude from this study: if given a male college graduate in the United States whose salary is \$10,000 per year, then we have increased the probability that he is black. To make such a conclusion the entire field of male college graduates making \$10,000 per year in the United States would have to be considered, and percentage of blacks ascertained. Likewise, in order to make such a conclusion Colwell would have to consider the entire field, or at least a random sampling, of anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb, and ascertain the percentage of definite predicate nominatives. This is the process by which this thesis is being carried out.

It is no wonder Colwell's rule has been so misunderstood. Biblical scholars ever since have drawn the same conclusion as

¹Ibid., p. 17.

Colwell. Bruce Metzger in response to the New World Translation of John 1:1 as "a god" writes:

As a matter of solid fact, however, such a rendering is a frightful mistranslation. It overlooks entirely an established rule of Greek grammar which necessitates the rendering, ". . . and the Word was God." Some years ago Dr. Ernest Cadman Colwell of the University of Chicago pointed out in a study of the Greek definite article . . .¹

The only way in which Colwell's rule could be erroneously taken to necessitate the above reading is by understanding the rule to assert definiteness, rather than articularity. Indeed, Colwell's rule when properly understood necessitates nothing about definiteness. Rather, only when definiteness has already been ascertained does his rule apply, and that only to assert the probability of articularity. Thus, the only valid application to John 1:1 is after definiteness has been established, then the probability of articularity (11% according to Colwell's statistics) may be deduced. But, that is not much help, for we can determine from the text that θεός is anarthrous. Obviously, this rule has very little exegetical value.

Leon Morris in his commentary on John continually cites Colwell's rule as the basis for taking pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives definitely (1:1, 9:5, 10:2, 10:36, etc.). Commenting on 10:2, Morris says, "This is surely another example of the definite predicate preceding the copula and

¹Bruce Metzger, "The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ," Theology Today 10 (April 1953-January 1954): 117.

therefore being without the article."¹ It seems that Morris also thinks Colwell's rule asserts anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the copula are definite.

The only value of Colwell's rule, if indeed the rule is valid, is in textual criticism. The rule applies only when definiteness has already been determined. The assertion, then, is the probability of articularity. Since articularity can be ascertained by looking at the text, then this rule is totally valueless in the exegesis of the text. That Blum thinks otherwise is an indication that he too thinks Colwell's rule asserts definiteness. He writes:

Dodson's statistics have the same ratio and show that the rule is ninety per cent effective. Colwell claims the same as his figures above point out. For a rule to be ninety per cent effective is a great help in exegesis. Exegesis is a process of considering all the grammatical possibilities to determine what is the exegetical probability in a particular case. If a construction ninety times out of a hundred means the same thing, when an unknown example or an undetermined one is considered, there is a strong possibility that it will conform to the primary use. This is the principle upon which all grammar is founded and also all lexicography.²

Later, he adds concerning Colwell's rule:

. . . its major contribution is in the area of translation and interpretation. In exegesis the interpreter seeks to examine all the grammatical possibilities to find the probable interpretation for a given text. Colwell's rule supplies the interpreter with another possibility.³

¹Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 527.

²Edwin A. Blum, "Studies in Problem Areas of the Greek Article" (Th.m. thesis, Dallas Seminary, 1961), pp. 19-20.

³Ibid., pp. 21-22.

But, this is a possibility only when the predicate nominative is known to be definite and if it is known to be definite, then what is the value of the rule?

Perhaps the clearest picture of the confusion and illogic initiated by Colwell's article may be seen in Nelson's work. In his attempt to validate the same claims as propounded by Colwell he sets out with the intent of establishing the definiteness of anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb. He says, "If this definiteness of anarthrous noun before the expressed copula εἰμί can be substantiated, we must trace it through all its usage in the New Testament."¹ Later, however, he turns it around and rather than considering all types of anarthrous predicate nominatives that precede the verb, he considers only those that are unquestionably definite. He writes:

With these limitations of material we are left with 1) the predicate nominatives with εἰμί expressed as a copula which have the article and 2) those predicate nominatives with εἰμί expressed as a copula which do not have the article, but which are considered indubitably definite. From these examples our deductions and inferences must be drawn.²

Clearly, if Nelson is to establish the definiteness of anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the copula, then he must consider all the occurrences of anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the copula in the New Testament, and then

¹Dotson M. Nelson, "The Articular and Anarthrous Predicate Nominative in the Greek New Testament" (Th.d. thesis, Southern Baptist Seminary, 1944), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 13.

determine the percentage of these that are definite. Rather, he has turned it around by considering only definite predicate nominatives preceding the verb. His only valid conclusion, then, is a probability of articularity.

The Value of Colwell's Rule

E. C. Colwell started with and considered only definite predicate nominatives (He determined definiteness from the context). Disregarding completely "all nouns as to whose definiteness there could be any doubt,"¹ that is, qualitative and indefinite nouns, he then made observation concerning the articularity of definite predicate nominatives. If his rule holds up, then its chief value is in textual criticism. He writes:

In the field of textual criticism the rule here advocated has an equally definite contribution to make. It shows in certain specific cases what the probabilities are as to the use or non-use of the article. A fine example of this is in II Peter 1:17, cited as an exception to the rule since Westcott and Hort follow Codex Vaticanus in reading the predicate with the article before the verb: ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτος ἐστίν. The evidence given in this study as to the extreme rarity of this construction in the New Testament reinforces Tischendorf's judgement that the variant read by practically all the rest of the MSS is to be preferred. They read the predicate after the verb with the article, οὗτος ἐστίν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου, the usual Greek construction.²

This decision would be made on the basis of Colwell's probability figures: only 11% probability that a definite predicate

¹Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 20.

nominative preceding the verb would be articular versus 90% probability that a definite predicate nominative following the verb would be articular. One could argue, however, that the less probable reading should be preferred since it is the harder reading and best explains the origin of the other. Thus, Colwell's rule, if valid, may be significant in textual criticism, in the determination of the variant reading most likely to be altered by a scribe.

The only other conceivable value of Colwell's rule is to say it is possible to have an anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb that is definite (but, did we not already know that?), and that because Colwell apparently found some. Yet, it is most important to see that the rule says nothing about the probability of definiteness (contrary to what Colwell and Blum would have us believe), nor can it, as Colwell has not considered both definite and nondefinite nouns. Because Colwell considered only definite predicate nominatives then his rule applies only when definiteness has already been determined, then, the probability of articularity may be ascertained. Indeed, Colwell admits that it is the context that determines definiteness, "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."¹ Thus, his rule asserts nothing about definiteness, nor the probability of

¹Ibid., p. 20.

definiteness. Rather, it applies only to nouns that are already known to be definite, and that definiteness is determined from the context, not from his rule.

An Untenable Assumption

The above discussion is dependent upon the validity of Colwell's assumption in the establishment of his rule. He admits that "the significance of these figures rests upon the accuracy with which definite predicate nouns without the article have been identified,"¹ and that there "are bound to be mistakes in the list of definite predicate nouns without the article."² It is to this, the determination of definiteness, that we now turn our attention, for herein lies an assumption made by Colwell which may not be tenable.

One wonders whether Colwell classifies a title in the same category as a proper name. Apparently not, for in his study "Proper names . . . have been excluded because they regularly lack the article whether they appear before or after the verb,"³ but in the proof of his rule he cites John 1:49, 19:21, and 5:27 where the titles Son of God, King of the Jews, and Son of Man, are examined. Now, if he treats these titles basically the same as proper names, then he is violating his own rules. If, however, he does not regard proper names and

¹Ibid., p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., p. 17.

titles as the same, then he cannot attribute definiteness to a title, or an apparent title, on the basis of individual identity as denoted by a proper name. Definiteness must be determined from the context, for ". . . 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."¹

Here then is Colwell's assumption. He assumes that an articular noun makes 1) an anarthrous occurrence of that noun elsewhere, even in nonparallel constructions, automatically definite, 2) an anarthrous noun in a parallel passage (but, not necessarily parallel construction) automatically definite.

His analysis of 1:49 illustrates number 2 above. He writes:

It was a study of these passages, especially John 1:49, that suggested the rule which is advocated in this study. In this verse Nathanael ascribes to Jesus two titles; in one of them he uses the article, in the other he does not: οὐ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. What reason is there for this difference? When the passage is scrutinized, it appears at once that the variable quantum is not definiteness but word-order. "King of Israel" in this context is as definite as "Son of God." It seems probable that the article is used with "Son of God" because it follows the verb, and is not used with "King of Israel" because it precedes the verb.²

Apparently, Colwell assumes either the articular ὁ υἱὸς makes the anarthrous βασιλεὺς definite (even though the constructions are not parallel), or that βασιλεὺς is definite because βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ is a title. But, there is another possible interpretation

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 13.

for the significance of the occurrence of the article in the first phrase, and the absence of the article in the second. That significance is the thesis of this paper.

As an illustration of the first part of the assumption stated above we turn to Colwell's explanation of the difference between John 8:12 and 9:5. Speaking first on the variation in the use of the article with the title "Son of Man," he then proceeds to the variation with the phrase "Light of the world." He writes:

The title "Son of Man" appears twice in the New Testament as a predicate nominative: once with the article (Matt. 13:37) and once without the article (John 5:27). In the Matthean passage, where it has the article, it follows the verb. In the Johannine passage, where it lacks the article, it precedes the verb.

This variation in the use of the article frequently occurs with the same phrase in the same gospel. In John 8:12 Jesus says, 'Εγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου; in John 9:5 he says φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου.¹

He is trying to demonstrate that the nouns are definite in these passage, even though anarthrous in one occurrence and articular in another. He merely assumes both constructions are equally definite, and attributes the change in articularity to word-order. The problem with this assumption, however, is that countless examples exist where a particular noun occurs twice in a particular context, once with the article and once without, and the anarthrous noun is clearly not definite. Compare I John 1:5 (ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν) with 1:7 (ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν), and I John 4:8 (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν) with 4:10 (ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη).

¹Ibid., p. 14.

Thus, for Colwell to automatically assume that an anarthrous noun is definite because of the occurrence of that noun with the article elsewhere is indeed untenable. He needs to determine definiteness exegetically which he does only once, John 19:21. All other times he begs the question by saying either "while in the last two clauses equally definite predicate nouns precede the verb,"¹ ". . . in neither of these Matthean passages can it be claimed that the predicates which close the series are less definite or concrete than those which precede,"² or "'King of Israel' in this context is as definite as 'Son of God.'"³

Colwell's assumption may be correct, but that needs to be determined exegetically. Or, he may be in error in which case the predicate nouns are either indefinite or qualitative. But, that too needs to be determined exegetically.

What, then, is the significance of the anarthrous predicate nominative in John?

Summary

Colwell's rule says that a definite predicate nominative preceding the verb usually lacks the article. It does not say that an anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 13.

verb usually is definite. Many, including Colwell himself, have drawn this invalid inference. Assuming the rule is valid, its value is almost exclusively for textual criticism. The rule may not be valid, however, as its underlying assumptions are highly questionable. We shall come back to this in the conclusion of our following discussion.

CHAPTER IV

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Interpreting the Statistics

In the Gospel of John the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative occurs 53 times and the post-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative 19 times. In contrast, the articular predicate nominative occurs 66 times after the verb, and three times before. Thus, normally the anarthrous predicate nominative precedes the verb (74% of occurrences), and the articular predicate nominative follows it (96% of occurrences). What, if any, is the significance of this?

Colwell's thesis would suggest that the significance is not one of definiteness, but of word-order only, the predicate nouns in both constructions being equally definite. He writes:

It was a study of these passages, especially Jn. 1:49, that suggested the rule which is advocated in this study. In this verse Nathaniel ascribes to Jesus two titles; in one of them he uses the article, in the other he does not: οὐ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ. What reason is there for this difference? When the passage is scrutinized, it appears at once that the variable quantum is not definiteness but word-order. "King of Israel" in this context is as definite as "Son of God." It seems probable that the article is used with "Son of God" because it follows the verb, and is not used with "King of Israel" because it precedes the verb.¹

¹E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature 52 (1933):13.

While Colwell considered only definite predicate nominatives and thus we could not automatically infer that he felt this significance applied to anarthrous predicate nominatives in general, he did seem to make this jump in his conclusion, for he says:

. . . this study may be said to have increased the definiteness of a predicate noun before the verb without the article, and to have decreased the definiteness of a predicate noun after the verb without the article.¹

Thus, Colwell sees very little, if any, difference in definiteness between the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative and the post-copulative articular predicate nominative.

In his misleading doctoral thesis (he titled his thesis "The Articular and Anarthrous Predicate Nominative in the Greek New Testament," but considered only the articular and definite anarthrous predicate nominative in the New Testament. He omitted entirely indefinite and qualitative predicate nominatives.), Nelson attempts to validate Colwell's rule. Ignoring altogether nondefinite anarthrous predicate nominatives, he cites 19 occurrences of the definite pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative in John² in his attempt to substantiate the "definiteness of anarthrous noun before the expressed copula εἶπε." ³ He claims his list to be exhaustive, and herein lies

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²Dotson M. Nelson, "The Articular and Anarthrous Predicate Nominative in the Greek New Testament" (Th.d. thesis, Southern Baptist Seminary, 1944), p. 72.

³Ibid., p. 12.

the problem. According to the concordance¹ there are 53 occurrences of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative in John, and even if Nelson's exegesis is correct, 19 of 53, or 37.7% probability of definiteness is not very persuasive, to say the least.

Indeed, in a later study P. Harner found that "John has 53 examples of an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb."² Concerning this total he writes:

I would judge that in 40 of these cases the qualitative force of the predicate is more prominent than its definiteness or indefiniteness. In 26 of the 53, the predicate is clearly not definite, and in 11 it could be definite but there is no clear indication that it is.³

Harner's statistics yield a 24.5% probability that a pre-copulative is definite, and a 74.5% probability that it is qualitative in force.

Thus, on the basis of these two previous studies, it seems that while there may not be a difference in a certain minority of cases between the definiteness of the post-copulative articular predicate nominative and the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative, there does seem to be a distinction in a good majority of the cases (contrary to what Colwell and Nelson would have us believe). A second interpre-

¹W. F. Moulton, and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), pp. 271-238.

²Philip Harner, "Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1" Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973):82.

³Ibid., p. 83.

tation of the statistics, as suggested by Harner, is that the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative stresses a quality or nature, and that when John wanted to express a definite predicate nominative he normally did so by placing it after the verb with the article. The remainder of this thesis will be a substantiation of this contention.

Determining and Checking Definiteness

According to our definition of definiteness, a noun is definite if and only if it stresses identity. It follows from this that in order to determine definiteness we must ascertain whether or not identity is being stressed. This is determined, of course, from the context and from exegesis. This is the basis upon which the work of this thesis was carried out.

There is a device, however, which the author feels may be used in the determination of definiteness. This device is suggested by a rule stated by Robertson, "As a rule the predicate is without the article, even when the subject uses it."¹ He adds further:

In a word, then, when the article occurs with subject . . . and predicate, both are definite, treated as identical, one and the same, and interchangeable.²

Now it follows that if there is no difference between the articular predicate nominative and the definite anarthrous

¹A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 767.

²Ibid., p. 768.

predicate nominative (and there is none as we have so defined definiteness), then the rule would seem to be valid for definite anarthrous predicate nominatives also.

Indeed, it can be demonstrated that as there are no exceptions to this rule for articular predicate nominatives, so neither can there be found exceptions for clearly definite anarthrous predicate nominatives. Keeping in mind that the rule holds only for the sentences containing the copula εἶμι, we cite the following examples in the Gospel of John:

4:18, He whom you have is not your husband.

(reversed), Your husband is not he whom you have.

8:39, Our father is Abraham.

(reversed), Abraham is our father.

8:42, If God were your father . . .

(reversed), If your father were God . . .

Clearly, the subject and predicate when interchanged do not change the meaning of the sentence. Thus, on the bases both of our definition of definiteness (which makes the articular predicate nominative and the definite anarthrous predicate nominative synonymous in meaning) and by demonstration of validity through usage, we conclude that this rule may be used as a device in the determination of definiteness in anarthrous predicate nominatives with the stated copula εἶμι. The utilization of this device should be along the following lines: assume definiteness, interchange the subject and predicate, determine whether the meaning is changed. If the meaning does

change then it may be safely concluded that the subject and predicate are not synonymous and thus the predicate does not stress identity and is not definite. A quick glance at several examples will demonstrate how this rule can be used to point nondefinite anarthrous predicate nominatives.

I John 1:5, God is light.

(reversed), Light is God.

I John 4:8, God is love.

(reversed), Love is God.

Clearly, the meanings are changed, and we may conclude the subject and predicate are not synonymous, and not interchangeable.

The inverse (that if the meaning does not change, then the predicate is definite), however, may not necessarily be inferred, for the stress may yet be qualitative. Besides, an inverse is never necessarily a valid inference. The context must determine ultimately whether or not the noun is definite or qualitative in such cases. Thus, this device can only rule out definiteness, as the predicate and subject must be synonymous in order for the predicate to stress identity and so to be definite.

Should any find it difficult to accept the validity of this device for the determination of definiteness, let it be known that the device was not used for the determination of definiteness in this thesis. Only after the research was completed and definiteness already determined was the device employed, and that only to check the results. There were no

changes made. Thus, the acceptance or rejection of this thesis is not determined by acceptance or rejection of this device for the determination of definiteness and nondefiniteness. The author feels, however, that it is a valid means of determining definiteness given an anarthrous predicate nominative with the copula εἶμι, inasmuch as it is demonstrated both by our definition coupled with Robertson's stated rule, and by usage. The author challenges the reader to first convince himself of the validity of this rule by testing it, then to apply it on the results of this thesis. But, remember, the device asserts only nondefiniteness, not necessarily definiteness.

Determining Indefiniteness

According to our definition of indefiniteness, a noun is definite if and only if it stresses membership in a class of which there are other members. Thus, to determine indefiniteness we must ascertain whether the noun in question is stressing membership in a class of which there are other members.

Determining Qualitativeness

According to our definition, a qualitative predicate nominative is a predicate noun which stresses a quality, nature or essence of the subject. Thus, to determine qualitativeness we must ascertain whether the predicate nominative in question is stressing a quality, nature or essence of the subject.

CHAPTER V

QUALITATIVENESS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANARTHROUS PREDICATE NOMINATIVE IN JOHN

Introduction and Statistics

That the absence of the article on a noun is usually not insignificant is the consensus of the grammars. Moulton comments:

For exegesis, there are few of the finer points of Greek which need more constant attention than this omission of the article when the writer would lay stress on the quality or character of the object.¹

As Moulton points out above, the article may be omitted by the author in order to stress the quality or character of the object. Zerwick flatly contends that this is universally the significance of the anarthrous noun. He writes:

The omission of the article shows that the speaker regards the person or thing not so much as this or that person or thing, but rather as such a person or thing, i. e. regards not the individual but rather its nature or quality.²

It is the contention of this thesis that the significance of the anarthrous predicate nominative is qualitiveness. The

¹James H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), 1:83.

²Maximilian Zerwick, Biblical Greek, (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Institutii Biblici, 1963), p. 55.

omission¹ of the article, therefore, on the predicate nominative is consistent with its usage generally. In an intensive study of the 74 occurrences (53 pre-copulative, 19 post-copulative, and 2 a-copulative)² of the construction in John it was found that 58 were qualitative and could not be definite, 8 were clearly definite, 7 were qualitative but could be definite, and 1 was indefinite. Breaking this down, of 53 occurrences of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative 45 were qualitative, 3 were clearly definite, and 5 probably qualitative but possible (compare Harner's study in which he found 53 pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives and concluded 40 were qualitative³). In the post-copulative construction 11 were qualitative, 5 were definite, and 2 were probably qualitative but possibly definite. One was indefinite. Both of the a-copulative constructions were qualitative. A run-down of the figures:

Construction	No.	Qualit.	Prob. Qual.	Def.	Indef.
pre-copul.	53	45	5	3	0
post-cop.	19	11	2	5	1
a-copul.	2	2	0	0	0

¹We do not imply from the use of this word that the article should be present, contrary to the criticism of Robertson (see A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 790.).

²See Appendix.

³See footnote 3, p. 26.

It is interesting to note that every occurrence of the definite anarthrous predicate nominative was either a proper name (8:39, 1:41, 4:25, 1:38, 1:42), or was accompanied by a genitive (8:42, 8:54, 4:18). As seen earlier, this readily accounts for definiteness as both proper names (which are always definite) and definite nouns accompanied by a genitive regularly lack the article. Of the 7 anarthrous predicate nominatives which are probably qualitative, but could be definite (1:49, 5:27, 9:5, 17:17, 18:21, 18:13a, 18:13b) 6 are accompanied by genitives. The evidence is overwhelming. The statistical probability of an anarthrous predicate nominative in John being definite is 11-20% (depending on the definiteness of the above mentioned doubtfuls). Even lower is the probability that a pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative is definite, 6-15%. If the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative were known not to be a proper name, and not to be accompanied by a genitive, then the probability of definiteness lowers to 0-2%. This is very significant in light of John 1:1. The point is simply that our study supports Zerwick's contention that the significance of the absence of the article generally is qualitativity. This seems to be the normal force of the anarthrous predicate nominative in John, especially in the pre-copulative construction.

All that remains in our thesis is the demonstration of qualitativity as the significance of the anarthrous predicate nominative in John.

The Qualitative Pre-copulative
Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

Of the 53 occurrences of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative 45 cannot be definite and are qualitative. Five more probably are qualitative. It is interesting to note that of these 53 occurrences the New English Bible and the New American Standard Bible translate 34 and 30 respectively without the article (either definite or indefinite article), 16 and 18 respectively with the indefinite article, and 3 and 6 respectively with the definite article. That they translated the anarthrous predicate nominative with the indefinite article 16 and 18 times respectively is not necessarily indicative that they regarded these as indefinite, for many times the only way to translate a Greek qualitative noun meaningly into English is by use of the indefinite article. It might be significant that in the five passages where definiteness was uncertain (1:49, 5:27, 9:5, 17:17, 19:21) the New English Bible translates no article, no article, definite article, no article, no article respectively, while the New American Standard Bible translates definite article, definite article, definite article, no article, no article respectively. Additionally, on 10:36 the New English Bible translates "God's Son," and the New American Standard translates "the Son of God." Colwell's influence on the American scene may be reflected in these figures. We turn now to demonstrate the qualitativensness of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative in the Gospel of John. Due to

the limitations of this paper, and to the necessity for discussion of John 1:1, only occurrences of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives in the first six chapters will be discussed. This appears to be as valid a representation of the entire usage as any random sampling would be. It even includes 2 of the 5 doubtful (qualitative but possibly definite) passages. The total number of occurrences to be considered is 14.

John 1:1 and John 1:14

Perhaps no other verse in John has witnessed more grammatical and theological debate than the first verse of this Gospel. The problem centers around the phrase καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, and the force of the anarthrous θεός. It has been translated "a god" (New World Translation), "divine" (Moffatt), and "God" (NASB).

In response to the Jehovah's Witnesses and to the Unitarians' translation of "a god" some have attempted to demonstrate that θεός is definite because of Colwell's rule. Nigel Turner writes:

The claim of Unitarians to be logical should of course be respected, but the grammarian will resist their attempts to impress grammatical principles in the service of their cause in a way which is not legitimate. The fact that theos has no article does not transform the word into an adjective. It is a predicate noun of which the subject is Logos, and it is a fairly universal rule in the New Testament Greek that when a predicate noun precedes a verb it lacks the definite article; grammatical considerations therefore require that "there need be no doctrinal signifi-

cance in the dropping of the article, for it is simply a matter of word-order.¹

The "fairly universal rule" is footnoted as Colwell's rule. But, Colwell's rule does not say that a predicate nominative preceding the verb lack the article (as though it should have it). It says that definite predicate nominatives preceding the verb usually are anarthrous. Turner's statement is a modified version of the converse of Colwell's rule: anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb usually are definite. Besides, Colwell's rule, as we have shown, is of no value to us in the determination of definiteness. To attempt to use his rule to establish definiteness is a misuse of the rule.

If, on the other hand, it be argued "Since . . . the expression πρὸς τὸν θεόν has occurred immediately before this clause, the natural inference is that θεός now bears the same meaning and reference,"² then Sabellianism results, for the person of the Son becomes the person of the Father (If τὸν θεόν refers to the person of God the Father, as it does in 57 of 58 other occurrences of the articular θεός in John, and if θεός in 1:1c bears the same meaning and reference, then "the Word was the person of God the Father," and Sabellianism is the result.). But, this denies the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), p. 17.

²J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Contributions and Comments: A Note on the Anarthrous Predicate in Hellenistic Greek," Expository Times 62 (Oct. 1950-Sept. 1951): 315.

Others have argued for definiteness from John 20:28.

Colwell writes:

The absence of the article does not make the predicate indefinite or qualitative when it precedes the verb; it is indefinite in this position only when the context demands it. The context makes no such demand in the Gospel of John, for this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas.¹

Two arguments, however, militate against this procedure.

First, Moule on 20:28 says:

. . . it is to be noted that a substantive in the nominative case used in a vocative sense and followed by a possessive could not be anarthrous . . . the article before θεός may, therefore, not be significant.²

Second, even if the article in 20:28 is significant, it is certainly begging the question to conclude that θεός in 1:1c is also definite. As we have shown earlier, the definiteness of an anarthrous noun cannot necessarily be deduced from the articular construction elsewhere. Numerous examples to the contrary can be demonstrated. In I John 4:8 ἀγάπη is qualitative in the anarthrous construction and definite in the articular construction in the following verses. The flesh of Christ is clearly qualitative (as we shall see) in 1:14, and yet definite in 6:51 and 55 where it occurs with the article. Therefore, that Christ is addressed as ὁ θεός in 20:28 certainly does not

¹E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature 52 (1933): 21.

²C. F. Moule, An Idiom-book of New Testament Greek, (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 116.

necessitate the rendering of θεός in 1:1c as definite, for as Christ had both a human nature (1:14) and a particular human body (6:51), so there is no problem in seeing Christ both as God the Son (20:28), and as having the nature of deity (1:1c).

That θεός is qualitative in 1:1c can be demonstrated on two counts. First, in the first two clauses of 1:1 John describes two qualities or aspects of the eternal nature of the Logos: his preexistence and his personality. The 3-fold occurrence of ἦν ὁ λόγος in each of the clauses would suggest a close affinity within this triad. Thus, we should expect a continuation of a description of the nature of the Logos in 1:1c, and so, the third clause "asserts uncomprisingly the Divinity of the Logos, His pre-existence and personaltiy having been first stated."¹

Second, the parallel between 1:1c and 1:14 demonstrates that θεός in 1:1c is qualitative. Note the similarities and differences. ὁ λόγος occurs in both, and the absence of the title in between suggests a resumption in thought. Both θεός and σάρξ are anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb. The differences may be seen in the contrast between the words θεός and σάρξ, and the change from the imperfect ἦν to the aorist ἐγένετο. The imperfect in 1:1c lays stress on what

¹J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), p. 2.

the Logos was in eternity past while the aorist in 1:14 stresses what He became at a point in time. Now, if it can be established that $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ in 1:14 is qualitative it would follow that $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, its antithetical parallel, would also be qualitative. The contrast then would be between the deity of Christ in eternity past and His humanity acquired at a point in time. That $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ in 1:14 is qualitative is clear for two reasons. First, it seems probable that John would be concerned about establishing the humanity of Christ in light of the current Docetic opposition. Thus, John "answers the Docetic Gnostics who denied his humanity,"¹ by asserting His real humanity in the strongest language. Second, in John's literature the only other parallel construction using $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ is 3:6 where the force is clearly qualitative and refers to human nature. That John does not conceive of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ as definite in 1:14 can be argued from his use of the only other occurrence of the definite predicate preceding the verb. This occurs in 6:51 and it is significant there that the article precedes the noun. We conclude, therefore, that $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ must be taken qualitatively as stressing the human nature of Christ. The implication, therefore, is that the contrasting parallel in 1:1c, $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, also is qualitative and stresses the divine nature, the deity of Christ. Alford expresses the thought succinctly:

¹A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 5:13.

. . . as in σὰρξ ἐγένετο, σὰρξ expresses that state (*italics*) into which the Divine Word entered by a definite act, so in θεὸς ἦν, θεός expresses that essence (*italics*) which was His ἐν ἀρχῇ : - that He was very (*italics*) God. So that this first verse might be connected thus: the Logos was from eternity, - was with God (the Father), - and was Himself God.¹

It seems much too difficult to take θεός in 1:1c and σὰρξ in 1:14 as anything but stressing the two contrasting natures of Christ. We conclude, therefore, that the two occurrences of the anarthrous predicate nominative in 1:1c and 1:14 are both qualitative.

John 1:12

Those who are God's children τέκνα θεοῦ are those who have been begotten by Him, 1:13. Thus, they have God's nature in them. Morris writes:

John refers to them as "children" rather than as "sons" of God. The term he uses is one which draws attention to community of nature (cf. II Peter 1:4 "that . . . you may become partakers of the divine nature."), rather than one which would stress the rights and priveleges of sonship.²

In the only other occurrences in John's literature of the anarthrous τέκνα θεοῦ, I John 3:1 and 2, the qualitative force on τέκνα is clearly brought out. The world does not know us because it knew not Him, and it recognizes we are His by our God-nature. In verse 2 "now we are children of God"

¹Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, 4 vols. (Nashville: Moody Press, 1958), 1:681.

²Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 98.

stresses what we are, our imperfect God-nature, in contrast to what we shall be in glory, perfected God-nature, for we shall be like Him. Thus, the only two occurrences elsewhere of τέκνα θεοῦ (both pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives) argue for a qualitative meaning. Indeed, I John 3:10 indicates the children of God are manifest by their actions. They love and do righteousness. This is because they have been begotten of God and have his nature in them, I John 3:9. This parallels perfectly the thought in John 1:12-13, where the force of τέκνα is also qualitative, stressing the God-nature of those who are begotten by Him. Hendriksen comments:

. . . the noun which John uses . . . comes from τίκτω, to beget. To him salvation is the impartation of life, the being begotten of God, so that one becomes his child (I John 2:29; 3:9). By means of being thus begotten of God one is transformed into the likeness of God. And inasmuch as God is love, hence being begotten of God is manifested in loving the brethren.¹

Thus, 1:12 may be listed as another example of the qualitative pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative.

John 1:49

In this verse we have one of the five pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives classified as "qualitative but possibly definite." In the phrase οὐ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ the term βασιλεὺς could very easily be definite inasmuch as it is followed by a modifying genitive. Or, "king of Israel" could

¹William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to John, (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1953), p. 81.

be a title and take the force of a proper name, thus not requiring the definite article. In favor of this are the occurrences of the phrase with the article (12:13,15; 18:33; 19:3, 19,21). But, to conclude that βασιλεύς in 1:49 is definite because of these verses is not valid. We have already shown that the occurrence of an articular noun in one location does not necessarily imply the anarthrous occurrence is definite elsewhere, especially when the constructions are different (Compare John 1:14 where "flesh" is qualitative, and 6:51 where "flesh" is definite, as indicated by the definite article.). In every occurrence of the definite article with βασιλεύς Ἰσραήλ, the phrase follows the verb. Here it does not. That βασιλεύς is definite in 1:49 because of the parallel with ὁ υἱὸς as Colwell surmised, also is not valid. Again, the constructions are not valid. The argument would find strength only if other parallel constructions were definite. But, there are none.

On the contrary, the three parallel constructions (in John 18:37a,37b, and 19:21) suggest that βασιλεύς in 1:49 should be taken qualitatively. In response to Pilate's question in 18:37, it is interesting that Jesus answers not, ὁ βασιλεύς εἰμι, nor εἰμι ὁ βασιλεύς, but rather with the same force, that is, with the anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb. It is Christ's kingship, His royalty, that is under question. Barrett writes:

Jesus himself will neither affirm nor deny his kingship. If it is to be spoken of it must be on the lips of others.

Pilate is clearly pressing . . . for an answer in terms of kingship in "this world". Such an answer Jesus refuses to give (he cannot give an outright "no" since; though his kingship is not "of this world" he has been sent "into this world".¹

In 19:21 the Jews wanted Pilate to change the inscription from "the king of the Jews" in accord with Christ's own claim. The significance is not so much that He claimed to be something, as it is what He claimed to be. The emphasis would probably be on His claim, not that He claimed. According to John's literature the Jews were correct that Christ never claimed to be δ βασιλεὺς, but He apparently did acknowledge to them that He was royalty (5:18; 10:30,36; 19:7,12; 18:37). Westcott suggests a slightly different, yet similar interpretation:

Perhaps we may see in the difference of form between the title assigned by Pilate, "the king of the Jews" . . . and that suggested by the priests as claimed by Jesus, "King of the Jews" an instinctive unwillingness on their part to connect in any way the Messianic dignity - "the kingship" - with Him whom they had condemned. They wished to make Him a mere ordinary usurper (comp. v. 12). Or it may have been that they would not acknowledge even by implication that such a title was possible, keeping, as pure secularists, to their former assertion, "we have no king but Caesar."²

contrast
Jn
10:30

It may also be significant that in John's Gospel anarthrous proper names occurring as predicate nominatives almost always follow the verb. Out of 53 pre-copulative predicates only one proper name occurs (John 8:39), while four proper names out of 19 post-copulative constructions follow the verb. There are

¹Charles Kingsley Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 470.

²Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 274.

also three articular pre-copulative predicate nominatives in John (1:21, 6:51, 15:1), two of which are proper names or titles. Thus, had John intended for βασιλεύς to be definite (both in 1:49 and 19:21) he had a handy device which was certainly part of his style.

In light of 1) the three parallel constructions (18:37a, 18:37b, 19:21), 2) the predominance of anarthrous proper names in the predicate nominative following the verb, and 3) the available device for indicating definiteness or title (1:21, 6:51, 15:1) which was part of John's style, it might be better to consider this phrase not as a proper title, but rather as expressing Nathaniel's acknowledgement of Christ's royalty or kingship, as though he had discovered one who had all the qualities and attributes required of the one who was to be the King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture. Indeed, had not the Lord demonstrated these qualities to Nathaniel by means of His supernatural perception of Him?

Thus, βασιλεύς in 1:49 probably is qualitative. We can not be dogmatic on this, however, as "king of Israel" in this context may be a title for the Messiah. It might best be rendered: You are the Son of God; you are king of Israel (NEB).

John 2:9

The stress on οἶνον in το ὕδωρ οἶνον γεγενυμένον is not on the identity of the wine, nor is it on indefiniteness, for John is not concerned about communicating that this water had

become a member of the class of wines. Rather, the stress is on the change in nature or quality, from water to wine. That which had been water has now become wine at its best. There has been a metaphysical change, and that change in substance or nature is the point of the passage. He who has control over the inherent nature of creation, who can transform the elements and the nature of things, He alone is God and is able to transform a sinner into a saint.

John 3:4

This passage needs little discussion, for γέρον is practically an adjective and clearly describes a particular quality or state of being which at least in the mind of Nicodemus renders a second birth an impossibility. The qualitative force is brought out by the Revised Standard Version: How can a man be born when he is old?

John 3:6

Nicodemus has been thinking of physical birth. Christ has been speaking of spiritual birth. In our passage, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," Christ teaches that the nature of life is determined by that which begets it. Flesh begets flesh, but spirit begets spirit. If Nicodemus is to receive this new birth of which Christ is speaking, it is not generated by his own will (1:3), but by the Holy Spirit who begets whom he wills (3:8). Thus, both σάρξ and πνεῦμα are qualitative, and contrast

two natures, flesh and spirit.

John 3:29

John denies he is the Christ and demonstrates on the contrary that the one possessing the character and qualities of a bridegroom is the one who has the bride. John was not the groom because his character and functions did not demonstrate it. The groom is known by his character; he is bridegroomish. So, the Christ shall be known by His nature and by His actions. What He does will reflect what and who He is. It will be unmistakable. His miracles and teachings will reveal Him for who He is. The friend of the bridegroom, however, is also known by what he does. He is the one who rejoices greatly over the bridegroom's voice. So, this was John's answer to their uncertainty over identification. One could tell he was not the Christ, because he did not possess the characteristics of the Christ. His relationship to Christ could be determined by observing his characteristics and behavior. Thus, $\nu\upsilon\mu\phi\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ is qualitative in force.

John 4:19

Christ's knowledge of the woman's life (4:18, 29) convinces her that He is inspired. The function of a prophet in Scripture was usually to speak forth a message from God, but, Morris says:

. . . there is evidence that among the people of this time a prophet was sometimes held to have special insight into men's condition (cf. Luke 7:39 "This man if he were a pro-

phet, would have perceived who and what manner of this is that touched Him.").¹

That she did not envision Him as "the Prophet" is clear from verse 25 ("I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ; when He comes He will declare all things to us."). This woman has not yet come to complete knowledge and reception of Him as the Messiah, but it is the first step. It is His supernatural insight of her past that attracts her to Him. Thus, the force of προφήτης is that Jesus convinces the woman that He is inspired. It might best be rendered: I perceive that you are a prophet. Note, however, that by "a prophet" we do not regard this noun as indefinite. Often, the only way to effectively communicate a qualitative noun in the English idiom is by prefacing the noun with "a."

John 5:27

The tendency of scholars to attribute definiteness to υἱός in the phrase υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου on the basis of the presence of the article in every other of the phrase and/or on the basis that "official titles have a tendency to lose the article,"² is simply a begging of the question. Wherever the phrase follows the verb it has the article; wherever it precedes the verb it lacks the article. Our thesis contends that when John wanted to stress quality he omitted the article and usually placed it

¹Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 266.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to John, p. 203.

before the verb. Indeed, in the vast majority of occurrences of the pre-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative in John the stress is qualitative. We have already shown that an anarthrous noun is not automatically definite simply because it occurs elsewhere with the article. The only way one could argue for definiteness in υἱός in 5:27 is to illustrate that in a majority of similar constructions υἱός is definite. But, no parallel constructions can be found that are clearly definite. Rather, the contrary, qualitiveness, seems to be the predominant force. Bernard explains the absence of the article by the fact that, while ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is a designation of Jesus used by Himself in all the Gospels, it "is not employed by the evangelists when referring to Him."¹ But, this begs the question too, for the significance may still be qualitiveness, rather than definiteness. Besides, his argument presumes that 5:22-29 is a "commentary by the evangelist,"² rather than words spoken by Jesus.

The fact that John almost always expressed the anarthrous proper name in the predicate nominative after the verb (post-copulative construction: 4 out of 19, versus pre-copulative construction: 1 out of 53), and that he had a ready device for designating a title in the pre-copulative construction (note the article in 1:21, 15:1) militates against taking υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου

¹Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, p. 244.

²Ibid., p. 244.

here as a title. Westcott explains the qualitative force of *υλος* in 5:27. He writes:

The prerogative of judgment is connected with the true humanity of Christ (Son of Man) and not with the fact that He is the representative of humanity (the Son of Man). The Judge, even as the Advocate (Heb. 2:18), must share the nature of those who are brought before Him. The omission of the article concentrates attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of Christ.¹

John 6:63

In the phrase τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν. the terms πνεῦμα and ζωὴ cannot be definite for that would say that the words are the Spirit, and the life. While it is possible to conceive of life as a metonymy for that which produces life, it is too difficult an interpretation to understand πνεῦμα figuratively. It is clear from the parallelism that both should be taken in the same sphere, either both literally or both figuratively. Nor, is it possible to take them indefinitely for then the words become "a spirit and a life." The qualitative force is best understood and the meaning becomes: his words "belong essentially to the region of eternal being, and so are capable of conveying that which they essentially are."²

John 6:70

F. F. Bruce argues against taking διαβολος in 6:70 ἐξ ὑμῶν εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν as being definite, referring to the

¹Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 87.

²Ibid., p. 110.

Devil, and sees rather a qualitative force behind. He writes:

Our Lord was not identifying Judas with the personal devil, any more than He so identified Peter in Mark 8:33; but He discerned in Judas's character the qualities of an adversary which later (Jn. 13:2,27) gave Satan an opportunity for using Judas as His instrument.¹

Hendriksen gives the best interpretation. He writes:

The term διάβολος means slanderer, false accuser. This one man is the servant, the instrument of the devil. His devilish character appears especially from this fact that others ever so many of them, had deserted the Lord when they felt that they could not agree with him and when they rebelled against the spiritual character of his teaching, this one individual remained with him.²

It is best, therefore, to take διάβολος qualitatively.

A good rendering might be: one of you is a devil (NIV).

The Qualitative Post-copulative

Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

Of the 19 post-copulative anarthrous predicate nominatives 11 are qualitative, 5 are clearly definite, 2 are probably qualitative but possibly definite, and one is indefinite. In the first six chapters the construction occurs 8 times (1:38, 41,42; 4:14,18,25; 6:55a,55b). In four of these (1:38,41,42; 4:25) the predicate is a proper name and is certainly definite. In 4:18, ὃν ἔχεις οὐκ ἔστιν σου ἀνὴρ the emphatic σου seems to point to the identity of the woman's true husband. The reader can easily convince himself of the qualitiveness of the

¹F. F. Bruce, Answers to Questions, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 63.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to John, 1:248-249.

remaining three occurrences, for in all three Christ teaches a quality or characteristic of the life which He gives: leaping well, true meat, and true drink.

The Qualitative A-copulative

Anarthrous Predicate Nominative

Only two occurrences of the a-copulative anarthrous predicate nominative were found in John's Gospel, 1:23 and 4:24. In both of these the qualitative force predominated. In 1:23 in answer to the question, "Who are you?," John's answer ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ is a description of what he is. φωνή graphically describes the quality or characteristic of John the Baptist's ministry. His ministry, function and purpose was the calling forth of Israel in preparation for the one who was Lord (note the contrast with the anarthrous κύριου: φωνὴ . . . κυρίου). In 4:24, the anarthrous πνεῦμα should be compared to the anarthrous ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ . Since God's essential nature is spirit, it follows that the true worship of God must be in spirit and truth.

Statistical Significance

As a result of our study we may state the following conclusions. When a predicate nominative in John is anarthrous it usually is qualitative, 65 out of 74, or 88% probability. When an anarthrous predicate nominative precedes the verb in John, it usually is qualitative, 50 out of 53, or 94% probability. When the anarthrous predicate nominative follows the verb,

the probability of qualitiveness is less, but still probable, 13 out of 19, or 68%.

When these figures are contrasted with the figures for the predicate adjective in John (32 out of 46 precede the verb)¹ we find that 70% of the occurrences of the predicate adjective are pre-copulative, while 73% of the occurrences of the anarthrous predicate nominative are pre-copulative. The significance of this seems to be that when John wanted to stress a quality, characteristic or nature of the subject he usually did it by placing the anarthrous predicate nominative or the predicate adjective before the verb, 70-73% probability.

We return now to the question raised in the preceding chapter. What is the significance of the preponderance of articular predicate nominatives following the verb (66 out of 69) in contrast to the preponderance of anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb (53 out of 72)? Rather than beg the question by contending the articular post-copulative predicate nominative is basically the same as the anarthrous pre-copulative predicate nominative, the variable quantam being "not definiteness but word-order,"² we contend on the basis of this thesis that the variable quantam is definiteness. When John wished to express a definite predicate nominative he usually wrote it after the verb with the definite article, 36%

¹See Appendix.

²Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," p. 13.

probability.¹ When he wished to express a qualitative predicate nominative with the verb (only twice did he not state the verb), he usually wrote it before the verb without the article, 80% probability.² Since the anarthrous predicate nominative normally precedes the verb and the articular construction normally follows it, and since the placing of a word at the beginning of a sentence normally makes the word more emphatic, then we may conclude that the qualitative predicate nominative in John normally carries more emphasis than the articular predicate nominative.

¹Definiteness is expressed in John in the following ways: articular predicate nominative before the verb, 3 times; articular predicate nominative after the verb, 66 times; definite anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb, 3 times; definite anarthrous predicate nominative following the verb, 5 times. Total = 77. 66 of 77 = 86%.

²Qualitativeness is expressed in John with the verb in the following ways: anarthrous pre-copulative predicate nominative, 50 times; anarthrous post-copulative predicate nominative, 13 times; Total = 63. 50 of 63 = 80%.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The use of the anarthrous predicate nominative in John is significant. It is qualitative in 65 out of 74 occurrences, or 88% probability. When the anarthrous predicate nominative precedes the verb it is qualitative in 50 of 53 occurrences, or 94% probability. When it follows the verb the anarthrous predicate nominative is qualitative 13 of 19 occurrences, or 68%.

The implications of this are equally significant. No longer should Colwell's rule mislead us into thinking that an anarthrous predicate nominative preceding the verb is just as definite as the articular predicate nominative following the verb and that "there need be no doctrinal significance in the dropping of the article, for it is simply a matter of word-order."¹ Our conclusions show that when John wished to express a definite predicate nominative, he usually wrote it after the verb with the article, 66 of 77 occurrences or 86% probability. When he wished to express a qualitative predicate nominative with the verb, he usually wrote it before the verb without the article, 50 of 63 occurrences or 80% probability.

¹E. C. Colwell, "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature 52 (1933):13.

Finally, we may conclude three things about John 1:1. First, Colwell's rule cannot be applied to the verse as an argument for definiteness. Colwell's rule says that definite predicate nominatives preceding the verb usually are anarthrous. The rule asserts nothing about definiteness. It does not say that anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb usually are definite. This is the converse of the rule, and as such is not necessarily valid. Indeed, our thesis demonstrates just the opposite, that anarthrous predicate nominatives preceding the verb usually are qualitative, 94% of occurrences. Second, on the basis of the contrast with 1:14 (where the humanity of Christ is stressed), and on the basis of the comparison with the first two clauses in 1:1 (where two eternal qualities of the Logos are laid out), we conclude that θεός in 1:1c stresses quality. Third, this thesis demonstrates that the statistical probability of θεός being qualitative, rather than definite or indefinite, is quite high, 94%.

CHAPTER VII

APPENDIX

Listing of Qualitative Pre-copulative

Anarthrous Predicate Nominatives

1:1	10:1
1:12	10:2
1:14	10:8
2:9	10:13
3:4	10:33
3:6 (2)	10:34
3:29	10:36
4:19	11:51
6:33 (2)	12:6
6:70	12:29
8:31	12:36
8:33	12:50
8:34	13:35
8:37	15:14
8:39	18:26
8:44 (2)	18:35 (2)
8:48	18:37 (2)
9:8	
9:17	
9:24	
9:25	
9:27	
9:28	

Probably Qualitative,

But, Possibly Definite

1:49	7:17
5:27	19:21
9:5	

QualitativePost-copulative AnarthrousPredicate Nominatives

6:55 (2)	10:12
9:28	15:8
4:14	18:38
8:55	19:12
	19:38
	18:40

Probably Qualitative,But, Possibly Definite

18:13 (2)

Definite Post-copulativeAnarthrous Predicate Nominatives

1:41
 4:18
 4:25
 1:38
 1:42

Indefinite Post-copulativePredicate Nominative

11:38

QualitativeA-copulative Predicate Nominatives

1:23
 4:24

Predicate AdjectivesBefore the Verb

1:15	8:16 (2)
1:30	8:17
3:33	8:26
4:12	8:36
4:37	8:53
5:32 (2)	8:54
6:55 (2)	9:25
6:60	10:30
7:7	13:17
7:12	14:28
7:18 (2)	15:3
7:36	17:21
7:49	17:11b
8:14	21:24

Predicate AdjectivesAfter the Verb

1:27	13:16
3:19	15:20
4:6	17:11
5:31	19:14
6:45	21:18
7:28	18:15
8:13	
9:24	

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