The Article
Part I: Origin, Function, Regular Uses, and Absence of the Article[1]
Overview

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[1] See *ExSyn* 206–54. The following uses of the article are rare, which the average intermediate Greek student may ignore: article as alternative personal pronoun (212–13) and the kataphoric use of the article (220–21).

──────── **INTRODUCTION** ──────── *ExSyn* 207–9

The article was originally derived from the demonstrative pronoun. That is, its original force was to *point out* something. It has largely kept the force of drawing attention to something. The article is one of the most fascinating areas of study in NT Greek grammar. It is used far more frequently than any other word in the Greek NT (almost 20,000 times, or one out of seven words). As Robertson pointed out, "The article is never meaningless in Greek, though it often fails to correspond with the English idiom. . . . Its free use leads to exactness and finesse."[2]

Function   *ExSyn* 209–10

1. What it IS NOT

The function of the article is *not* primarily to make something definite that would otherwise be indefinite. It does *not* primarily "definitize."[3] There are at least ten ways in which a noun in Greek can be definite without the article. Further, its use with words other than nouns is not to make something definite that would otherwise be indefinite, but to *nominalize* something that would otherwise not be considered as a concept.

One further note: There is no need to speak of the article in Greek as the *definite* article because there is no corresponding indefinite article.

2. What it IS

a. At bottom, the article intrinsically has the ability to *conceptualize*. In other words, the article is able to turn just about any part of speech into a noun and, therefore, a concept. For example, "poor" expresses a quality, but the addition of an article turns it into an entity, "the poor." It is this ability to conceptualize that seems to be the basic force of the article.

b. Does it ever do more than conceptualize? Of course. A distinction needs to be made between the *essential* force of the article and what it is most *frequently* used for. In terms of basic force, the article conceptualizes. In terms of predominant *function*, it is normally used to *identify* an object. That is to say, it is used predominantly to stress the identity of an individual or class or quality.

c. The Greek article also serves a determining function at times—i.e., it definitizes. On the one hand, although it would be incorrect to say that the article's

Chart 17
The Basic Forces
of the Article

Conceptualize
Identify
Definitize

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[2] Robertson, *Grammar*, 756.
[3] *Contra* Brooks-Winbery, 67; Young, *Intermediate Greek*, 55.

basic function is to make something definite, on the other hand, whenever it is used, the term it modifies must of necessity be definite.

These three relationships (conceptualize, identify, definitize) can be envisioned as concentric circles: all articles that make definite also identify; all articles that identify also conceptualize.

─────── SPECIFIC USES ───────

Regular Uses of the Article   *ExSyn* 210–54

The major categories of this section (e.g., as a pronoun, with substantives, etc.) look at the article in certain constructions. But one caveat is in order: to label the use of the article in one *structural* category is not necessarily to bar it from membership in one of the *semantic* categories.

The major semantic categories normally occur with nouns, but such semantics are not infrequently found in other constructions. A good rule of thumb to follow is this: Plug the article into its appropriate structural category, then examine it to see whether it also follows one of the semantic categories as well.

1. As a Pronoun ([partially] Independent Use)   *ExSyn* 211–16

The article is not a true pronoun in Koine Greek, even though it derived from the demonstrative. But in many instances it can function semantically in the place of a pronoun.

➡   ### *a. Personal Pronoun [he, she, it]*   *ExSyn* 211–12

(1) DEFINITION. The article is often used in the place of a *third* person personal pronoun in the *nominative* case. It is only used this way with the μὲν... δέ construction or with δέ alone. (Thus, ὁ μὲν... ὁ δέ or simply ὁ δέ.) Typically, the ὁ δέ (or ὁ μέν) construction is immediately followed by a finite verb or circumstantial participle.[4]

(2) ILLUSTRATIONS

Matt 15:26–27 **ὁ** δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων ... **ἡ** δὲ εἶπεν ...
But **he**, answering, said, "It is not good to take the bread from the children...." But **she** said ...

Luke 5:33   **οἱ** δὲ εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν· οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου νηστεύουσιν..., **οἱ** δὲ σοὶ ἐσθίουσιν καὶ πίνουσιν
But **they** said to him, "John's disciples fast ..., but your [**disciples**] eat and drink."

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[4] By definition, a circumstantial participle is *never* articular, but in such constructions the beginning student might see the article and assume that the following participle is substantival. However, if you remember that the article as a pronoun is independent and therefore *not* modifying the participle, you can see that the force of the participle is circumstantial.

➡ **b. Relative Pronoun [who, which]** *ExSyn* 213–15

(1) DEFINITION. Sometimes the article is equivalent to a relative pronoun in *force*. This is especially true when it is repeated after a noun before a phrase (e.g., a gen. phrase). For example, in 1 Cor 1:18 ὁ λόγος **ὁ** τοῦ σταυροῦ means "the word **which is** of the cross."

(2) AMPLIFICATION AND SEMANTICS. Specifically, this is the use of the article with second and third attributive positions in which the modifier is *not* an adjective. (The second attributive position is article-noun-article-modifier; the third attributive position is noun-article-modifier.) Thus when the modifier is (a) a *genitive*, (b) a *prepositional phrase*, or (c) a *participle*, the article is translated as a relative.

To say that the article is functioning like a relative pronoun is only an *English* way of looking at the matter. Thus it is not truly the semantic force of the article. The article is still dependent on a noun or other substantive.

When a genitive or prepositional phrase follows the substantive, the article could be omitted without altering the basic sense. Why then is the article sometimes added before genitives and prepositional phrases? It is used primarily for emphasis and secondarily for clarification.

(3) ILLUSTRATIONS. The following illustrations include as modifiers a prepositional phrase, a genitive, and a participle.

Matt 6:9   Πάτερ ἡμῶν **ὁ** ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
               our Father **who is** in heaven

Luke 7:32   ὅμοιοί εἰσιν παιδίοις **τοῖς** ἐν ἀγορᾷ καθημένοις
               they are like children **who** [are] sitting in the marketplace

Acts 15:1   ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει **τῷ** Μωϋσέως
               unless you are circumcised according to the custom **which** [is]
               of Moses

c. Possessive Pronoun [his, her] *ExSyn* 215–16

(1) DEFINITION AND AMPLIFICATION. The article is sometimes used in contexts in which possession is implied. The article itself does not involve possession, but this notion can be inferred from the presence of the article alone in certain contexts.

The article is used this way in contexts in which the idea of possession is obvious, especially when human anatomy is involved. Conversely, it is important to note that unless a noun is modified by a possessive pronoun or at least an article, possession is almost surely not implied. Thus, in Eph 5:18, πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι most probably does not mean "be filled in *your own* spirit" but "be filled in/with/by the Spirit."[5]

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[5] Some appeal to the parallel in 1 Cor 14:15, but there the article is used.

(2) Illustrations

Rom 7:25   ἐγὼ **τῷ** μὲν νοῒ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ, **τῇ** δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας.
I serve the law of God with **my** mind, but with **my** flesh, the law of sin.

Eph 5:25   οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε **τὰς** γυναῖκας   husbands, love **your** wives
The article is also generic in a distributive sense: each husband is to love his own wife.

2. With Substantives (Dependent or Modifying Use)   *ExSyn* 216–31

The article with substantives is the most fruitful area, exegetically speaking, to study within the realm of the article. The two broadest categories are *individualizing* and *generic*. The individualizing article particularizes, distinguishing otherwise similar objects; the generic (or categorical) article is used to distinguish one category of individuals from another.

a. Individualizing Article   *ExSyn* 216–27

"Nearest to the real genius of [the article's] function is the use of the article to *point out* a particular object" (italics mine).[6] But this category is not specific enough and can be broken down into at least eight subgroups.

➥   (1) Simple Identification   *ExSyn* 216–17

(a) Definition. The article is frequently used to distinguish one individual from another. This is our "drip-pan" category and should be used only as a last resort. Pragmatically, unless the article fits under one of the other six categories of the individualizing article or under the generic use (or one of the special uses), it is acceptable to list it as "the article of simple identification."

(b) Illustrations

Luke 4:20   πτύξας τὸ βιβλίον ἀποδοὺς **τῷ** ὑπηρέτῃ ἐκάθισεν
he closed the book and gave it back to **the** attendant and sat down
The book was the book of Isaiah, referred to previously in v. 17 (thus, anaphoric). But the attendant has not been mentioned. He is not apparently a well-known attendant, but simply a typical attendant at the synagogue. The article identifies him as such.

Acts 10:9   ἀνέβη Πέτρος ἐπὶ **τὸ** δῶμα προσεύξασθαι
Peter went up to **the** housetop to pray
There is no previous reference to any house, but in the background is the custom of praying on a housetop. Luke is simply specifying this location as opposed to some other.

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[6] Dana-Mantey, 141.

➡   (2) ANAPHORIC (PREVIOUS REFERENCE)   *ExSyn* 217–20

(a) Definition. The anaphoric article is the article denoting previous reference. (It derives its name from the Greek verb ἀναφέρειν, "to bring back, to bring up.") The first mention of the substantive is usually anarthrous because it is merely being introduced. But subsequent mentions of it use the article, for the article is now pointing back to *the* substantive previously mentioned. It is the most common use of the article and the easiest usage to identify.

(b) Amplification. Most individualizing articles will be anaphoric *in a broad sense.* That is, they will be used to point out something that had been introduced earlier—perhaps even much earlier. For example, in John 1:21 the Jews ask John the Baptist, "Are you **the** prophet?" (ὁ προφήτης εἶ σύ;). They are thinking of the prophet mentioned in Deut 18:15 ("a prophet like me"). Technically, this instance belongs under the *par excellence* article (best/extreme of a class), but again, broadly, it is anaphoric. Practically speaking, labeling an article as anaphoric requires that it have been introduced at most in the same book, preferably in a context not too far removed.

The anaphoric article may also be used with a noun whose *synonym* was mentioned previously. That is to say, although the terms used to describe may differ, the article is anaphoric if the reference is the same.

(c) Illustrations[7]

John 4:40, 43	ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ δύο ἡμέρας . . . μετὰ δὲ **τὰς** δύο ἡμέρας he stayed there two days . . . after **the** two days . . .
John 4:50	λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· πορεύου, ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ. ἐπίστευσεν **ὁ ἄνθρωπος** τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπορεύετο Jesus said to him, "Go, your son lives." **The** man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.

> In v. 46 this man is introduced as τις βασιλικός ("a certain royal official"). This subsequent mention uses a rather plain synonym, ὁ ἄνθρωπος, with the article reminding us which man is in view.

| Jas 2:14 | Τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγῃ τις ἔχειν, ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχῃ; μὴ δύναται **ἡ** πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;
What is the benefit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? **This** [kind of] faith is not able to save him, is it? |

> The author introduces his topic: faith without works. He then follows it with a question, asking whether this kind of faith is able to save. The use of the article both points back to a certain kind of faith as defined by the author and is used to particularize an abstract noun.[8]

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[7] See *ExSyn* 220 for a discussion of Phil 2:6.

[8] See *ExSyn* 219 for more discussion.

(3) Deictic ("Pointing" Article)   *ExSyn* 221

(a) Definition. The article is occasionally used to point out an object or person which/who is *present* at the moment of speaking. It typically has a demonstrative force.

(b) Illustrations

Matt 14:15   προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες· ἔρημός ἐστιν **ὁ** τόπος
               the disciples came to him, saying, "**This** place is deserted"

John 19:5   ἰδοὺ **ὁ** ἄνθρωπος   Behold, **the** man!
               Here we can envision Pilate putting Jesus on display and gesturing toward him to show the crowd precisely *which* man is on trial.

➥   (4) *Par Excellence*   *ExSyn* 222

(a) Definition. The article is frequently used to point out a substantive that is, in a sense, "in a class by itself." It is used by the speaker to point out an object as the only one worthy of the name, even though there are many other such objects by the same name.

(b) Amplification. The *par excellence* article is not necessarily used just for the *best* of a class. It could be used for the *worst* of a class—if the lexical nuance (or contextual connotation) of that particular class suggests it. In essence, *par excellence* indicates the *extreme* of a particular class. "I am **the** chief of sinners" does not mean the best of sinners, but the worst of sinners.[9]

Often "**the** gospel" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) and "**the** Lord" (ὁ κύριος) employ articles *par excellence*. In other words, there was only *one* gospel and *one* Lord worth mentioning as far as the early Christians were concerned.

(c) Illustrations

John 1:21   **ὁ** προφήτης εἶ σύ;   Are you **the** prophet?
               Here the interrogators are asking John if he is *the* prophet mentioned in Deut 18:15. Of course, there were many prophets, but only one who deserved to be singled out in this way.

1 Cor 3:13   **ἡ** ἡμέρα δηλώσει   **the** day will reveal it
               That is, the day of judgment—the *great* day.

Luke 18:13   ὁ θεός, ἱλάσθητί μοι **τῷ** ἁμαρτωλῷ[10]
               O God, be merciful to me, **the** sinner

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[9] The article *par excellence* and the well-known article are often difficult to distinguish. Technically, this is due to the fact that the article *par excellence* is a subset of the well-known article. A rule of thumb here is that if the article points out an object that is not conceived as the *best* (or worst) of its category, but is nevertheless well known, it is a well-known article. The question one must always ask is, *Why* is it well known?

[10] For discussion of this text, see *ExSyn* 223.

➡ (5) MONADIC ("ONE OF A KIND" OR "UNIQUE" ARTICLE)   *ExSyn* 223–24

(a) Definition and amplification. The article is frequently used to identify mona-dic or one-of-a-kind nouns, such as "*the* devil," "*the* sun," "*the* Christ."

The difference between the monadic article and the article *par excellence* is that the monadic article points out a *unique* object, while the article *par excellence* points out the *extreme* of a certain category, thus, the one deserving the name more than any other. The article *par excellence*, therefore, has a superlative idea.

When the articular substantive has an adjunct (such as an adjective or gen. phrase), the entire expression often suggests a monadic notion. If no modifier is used, the article is typically *par excellence*. Thus, "**the** kingdom of God" is monadic, while "**the** kingdom" is *par excellence*.

(b) Illustrations[11]

Mark 13:24 ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς
         the sun will be darkened and **the** moon will not shed its light

John 1:29 ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.
         Behold **the** lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
           John's description of Jesus may be regarded as monadic as long as the gen. "of God" is considered part of the formula, for it is used alone of Jesus in the Bible.

➡ (6) WELL-KNOWN ("CELEBRITY" ARTICLE)   *ExSyn* 225

(a) Definition. The article points out an object that is well known, but for rea-sons *other* than the above categories (i.e., not anaphoric, deictic, *par excellence*, or monadic). Thus, it refers to a well-known object that has not been mentioned in the preceding context (anaphoric), nor is considered to be the best of its class (*par excellence*), nor is one of a kind (monadic).

(b) Illustrations

Gal 4:22 τῆς παιδίσκης . . . τῆς ἐλευθέρας
         the bond-woman . . . **the** free woman
           These women were not the best of their respective categories, but were well known because of the biblical account.

Jas 1:1 ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ
         to the twelve tribes that are in **the** dispersion

➡ (7) ABSTRACT (I.E., THE ARTICLE WITH ABSTRACT NOUNS)   *ExSyn* 226–27

(a) Definition. Abstract nouns by their very nature focus on a quality. However, when such a noun is articular, that quality is "tightened up," as it were, defined more closely and distinguished from other notions. This usage is frequent.

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[11] For discussion of Matt 4:1, see *ExSyn* 224–25.

(b) Amplification. In translating such nouns into English, the article should rarely be used (typically, only when the article also fits under some other individualizing category, such as anaphoric). But in exposition, the force of the article should be brought out. Usually, the article with an abstract noun fits under the *par excellence* and well-known categories but in even a more technical way. As well, frequently it particularizes a general quality.[12]

(c) Illustrations

John 4:22   **ἡ** σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν
              salvation is from the Jews

Rom 12:9   **ἡ** ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστυγοῦντες **τὸ** πονηρόν, κολλώ-
              μενοι **τῷ** ἀγαθῷ
              Let love be without hypocrisy. Hate **the** evil; hold fast to **the** good.

> English more naturally translates the article with the last two terms because they are adjectives and, with the article, they are somewhat "concretized." Thus, τὸ πονηρόν means "that which is evil."

➡ **b. Generic Article (Categorical Article) [as a class]**   *ExSyn 227–31*

(1) DEFINITION AND KEY TO IDENTIFICATION. While the *individualizing* article distinguishes or identifies a particular object belonging to a larger class, the *generic* article distinguishes one class from another. This is somewhat less frequent than the individualizing article (though it still occurs hundreds of times in the NT). The key to determining whether or not the article might be generic is the insertion of the phrase "as a class" after the noun that the article is modifying.

(2) AMPLIFICATION. If ὁ ἄνθρωπος is understood as a generic article, the sense would be: "humankind" (i.e., human beings as a class). The use of the article here distinguishes this *class* from among other classes (such as "the animal kingdom" or "the realm of angels").
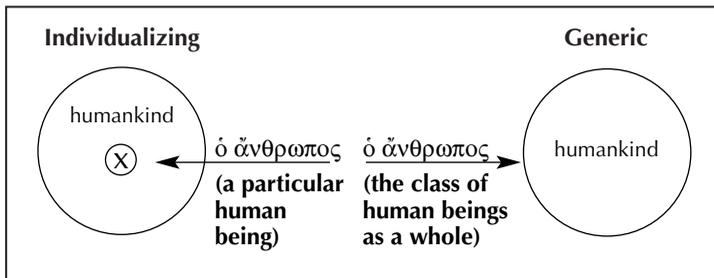

Chart 18
Individualizing Vs. Generic Article

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[12] The article with abstract nouns often has a certain affinity with articular *generic* nouns in that both focus on traits and qualities. But there are differences: one focuses on a quality via its lexeme (abstract), while the other focuses on a category grammatically (generic).

At times, the most natural translation is to replace the article with an indefinite article. This is because both indefinite nouns and generic nouns share certain properties: while one categorizes or stresses the characteristics of a given class (generic), the other points to an individual within a class, without addressing any traits that would distinguish it from other members (indefinite).

(3) Illustrations[13]

Matt 18:17   ἔστω σοι ὥσπερ **ὁ** ἐθνικὸς καὶ **ὁ** τελώνης
he shall be [with reference] to you as **the** Gentile [as a class] and **the** tax-collector [as a class]

> In translation we would probably say, "**a** Gentile and **a** tax-collector." However, this is due to the fact that the *force* of the generic article is qualitative, since it indicates the class to which one belongs (thus, *kind*), rather than identifying him as a particular individual. Sometimes the English indefinite article brings out this force better.

Luke 10:7   ἄξιος **ὁ** ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ
the laborer is worthy of his wages

Eph 5:25   **οἱ** ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκες
Husbands [as a class], love your wives

> The command is not meant to distinguish some of the Ephesian/Asia Minor husbands as opposed to others, but to distinguish the husbands in the church as opposed to the wives or children. They are viewed collectively, as a whole.
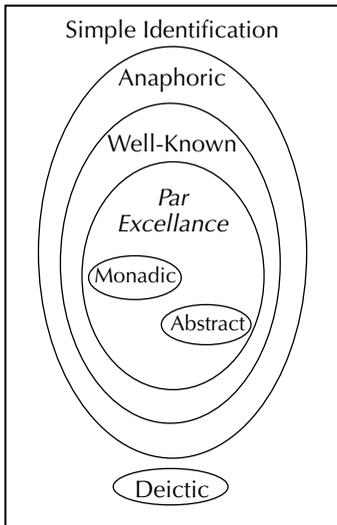

Chart 19
The Semantic Relations of
the Individualizing Article

Chart 19 depicts the semantic relationships of the individualizing article. The chart is designed to show the student in pictorial form that the seven categories of the individualizing article are not entirely distinct. Rather, they are related, for the most part, in a general-to-specific manner. That is, every monadic article is, in a sense, a specific kind of *par excellence* article (in the sense that the only one of a class is, *ipso facto*, the best of a class). And every *par excellence* article is well known (but it is more specific, for it is well known *because* it is the best of a class). And every well-known article is anaphoric (in the broadest sense possible). But it is more specific than a simple anaphoric article would be.

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[13] For discussion of 1 Tim 3:2, see *ExSyn* 229.

START

GENERIC ARTICLE = ← YES ← Does it distinguish *class from class?* → NO → Does it distinguish *individual from individual?* = SIMPLE IDENTIFICATION

NO

Not used with substantives Cf. rest of chapter for other uses

YES

Does it refer to a noun mentioned previously in the context or elsewhere? = ANAPHORIC

NO

YES

DEICTIC ARTICLE = ← YES ← Is the noun present at the time of speaking?

NO

Is the person or thing well known? = WELL KNOWN

YES   NO

LEGEND

[ ] = Decision

◯ = Category Name

◇ = Statement of Information

Is the person or thing the best (or worst) of a class? = *PAR EXCELLENCE*

YES   NO

Is the person or thing the the only one of a class?

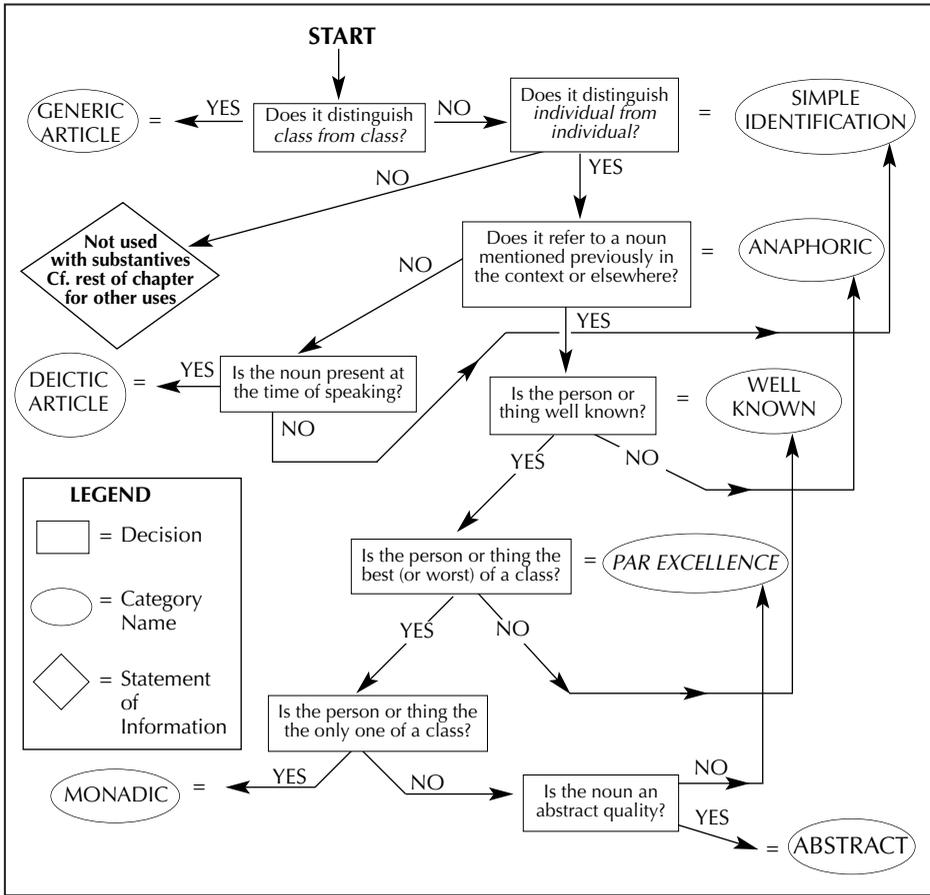MONADIC = ← YES ← ... → NO → Is the noun an abstract quality? — NO

YES

= ABSTRACT

Chart 20
Flow Chart on the Article with Substantives

Chart 20 presupposes that the student understands Chart 19. In order to use the flow chart, you should attempt to find the *narrowest* category to which a particular article can belong. As long as you can say "yes" to a particular semantic force, you should continue on until you get to the narrowest category for a particular article.

➡**3. As a Substantiver (With Certain Parts of Speech)**   *ExSyn* 231–38

a. Definition. The article can turn almost any part of speech into a noun: adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, particles, infinitives, participles, and even finite verbs. As well, the article can turn a phrase into a nominal entity. This incredible flexibility is part of the genius of the Greek article. Such usage is very common overall, more so with the adjective and participle than with other parts of speech.

b. Amplification. The substantiving use of the article can only minimally be considered a *semantic* category, in the sense that its essential semantic role is to conceptualize. Beyond this, the article also functions in one of the above-mentioned semantic roles; that is, it either individualizes or categorizes, just as it does with nouns. The usage with participles and adjectives is routine and unremarkable, so much so that many of these examples were discussed in the preceding sections.

c. Illustrations

(1) With Adverbs   *ExSyn* 232–33

The usage with adverbs occurs frequently. Some of the more commonly used adverbs include αὔριον, ἐπαύριον, νῦν, πέραν, and πλησίον.

Acts 18:6   ἀπὸ **τοῦ** νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι
             from now [this point] on, I will go to the Gentiles

Col 3:2   **τὰ** ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ **τὰ** ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
             Set [your] mind on **the** [things] above, not on the [things] on earth

(2) With Adjectives   *ExSyn* 233

Adjectives often stand in the place of nouns, especially when the qualities of a particular group are stressed. Instances in the plural are especially frequently generic.

Matt 5:5   μακάριοι **οἱ** πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν
             blessed are **the** meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Matt 6:13   μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ **τοῦ** πονηροῦ
             do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from **the** evil [one]
                Although the KJV renders this "deliver us from evil," the presence of the article indicates not evil in general, but the evil one himself.

(3) With Participles   *ExSyn* 233–34

The usage with participles is commonplace. As with adjectives, the article with participles can be individualizing or generic.

Matt 2:23   ὅπως πληρωθῇ **τὸ** ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν
             in order that **that** which was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled

1 John 3:6   πᾶς **ὁ** ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτόν
             everyone who sins has not seen him

(4) With Infinitives[14]   *ExSyn* 234–35

Although infinitives frequently take an article, the article is usually not used to nominalize the infinitive. This usage is relatively rare, though more common

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[14] Cf. *ExSyn* 234–35 for a nearly exhaustive list of references in which an articular substantival infinitive is found.

in the NT letters than in narrative literature. (The infinitive can also function substantivally without the article.) The article is always neuter singular.

Acts 27:20   περιηρεῖτο ἐλπὶς πᾶσα **τοῦ** σῴζεσθαι ἡμᾶς
all hope **of** our being saved was abandoned

> The gen. articular infinitive is an objective gen. with an acc. subject of the infinitive. A woodenly literal rendering would be "all hope of the being saved with reference to us."

Rom 7:18   **τὸ** θέλειν παράκειταί μοι, **τὸ** δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὔ.
the willing is present with me, but **the** doing [of] the good is not.

(5) WITH A GENITIVE WORD OR PHRASE   *ExSyn* 235–36

A non-genitive article is often followed by a genitive word or phrase. Although there is no concord, the article may be viewed as "bracketing" the word or phrase that follows. Two of the more frequent idioms are (1) the masculine singular article followed by a proper name in the genitive, where the article implies "son" (and the gen. that follows is a gen. of relationship), and (2) the neuter plural article with a genitive, where the neuter article implies "things."

Matt 10:3   Ἰάκωβος **ὁ** τοῦ Ἁλφαίου   James, **the** [son] of Alphaeus

Matt 16:23   οὐ φρονεῖς **τὰ** τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ **τὰ** τῶν ἀνθρώπων
you are not thinking **the** [things] of God, but **the** [things] of men

(6) WITH A PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE[15]   *ExSyn* 236

Similar to the use with genitive words and phrases is the use of the article to nominalize a prepositional phrase. This is a fairly common use of the article.[16]

Acts 11:2   **οἱ** ἐκ περιτομῆς
those of the circumcision [party]

1 Cor 13:9–10   ἐκ μέρους γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, **τὸ** ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται
[now] we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, **the** partial will be done away

> The article in v. 10 is anaphoric, referring back to the twofold ἐκ μέρους of v. 9. It is as if Paul said, "when the perfect comes, the 'in part' will be done away."

Phil 1:27   **τὰ** περὶ ὑμῶν
the things concerning you [= your circumstances]

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[15] There are two more usages of the article as substantiver: with particles and with finite verbs (see *ExSyn* 237); these are sufficiently rare that the average intermediate Greek student may ignore them. For a discussion of Rev 1:4, see *ExSyn* 237.

[16] For a discussion of Phil 1:29, see *ExSyn* 236.

(7) WITH CLAUSES, STATEMENTS, AND QUOTATIONS   *ExSyn* 237–38

The neuter singular article is sometimes used before a statement, quotation, or clause. For some clauses, the article needs to be translated in various ways; only the context will help. For direct statements and quotations, it is usually best to supply the phrase "statement" after the article followed by quotation marks.

Rom 13:9   **τὸ** οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐκ ἐπιθυμή-
σεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακε-
φαλαιοῦται ἐν τῷ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.
The [list of commandments], "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet"— and if there is any other commandment—is summed up in this word, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

> The neuter article at the beginning of the verse introduces the second table of the Ten Commandments; ἐν τῷ toward the end of the verse is most likely resumptive, referring back to the masculine λόγῳ.

Eph 4:9   **τὸ** δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστιν . . . ;
Now **the** [statement], "he ascended . . . ," what does it mean . . . ?

> Although only one word from the preceding quotation of Ps 68:18 is repeated, the idiom suggests that the whole verse is under examination. In other words, the author is not asking "What does 'he ascended' mean?" but "What does the quotation from Ps 68:18 mean?"

➡**4. As a Function Marker**   *ExSyn* 238–43

When the article is used as a grammatical function marker, it may or may not also bear a semantic force. But even when it does bear such a force, the grammatical (structural) use is usually prominent.

a. To Denote Adjectival Positions   *ExSyn* 239

Especially when the article is used to denote the second attributive position would we say that it has almost no semantic meaning.[17]

b. With Possessive Pronouns   *ExSyn* 239

Almost invariably the article is used when a possessive pronoun is attached to the noun. (On the other hand, the article alone can be used, in certain contexts, to imply possession [see "The Article as a Possessive Pronoun," above].)

Mark 1:41   ἐκτείνας **τὴν** χεῖρα αὐτοῦ   stretching out his hand

c. In Genitive Phrases   *ExSyn* 239–40

In genitive phrases both the head noun and the genitive noun normally have or lack the article.

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[17] See the chapter on adjectives for examples.

This construction, known as *Apollonius' Canon*, means that both the head noun and genitive noun mimic each other with regard to articularity. Thus, we would expect either ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ or λόγος θεοῦ, but not λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ or ὁ λόγος θεοῦ. The canon, however, has many exceptions in classical Greek as well as the NT. Nevertheless, for the most part, when the article is present in the construction, it is expected with both head noun and genitive noun. In such cases, the article often carries little semantic weight,[18] because even when both nouns lack the article, they are normally definite.

Matt 3:16   εἶδεν **τὸ** πνεῦμα **τοῦ** θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν
he saw **the** Spirit of God coming down like a dove

> The MSS vacillate over the presence of the articles before πνεῦμα and θεοῦ. What is important to note is that the MSS *uniformly* either have both articles or lack both articles. With or without the articles, the translation and sense are the same.

Acts 26:13   **τὴν** λαμπρότητα **τοῦ** ἡλίου
the brightness of **the** sun

d. With Indeclinable Nouns   *ExSyn* 240–41

The article is used with indeclinable nouns to show the case of the noun.

Luke 1:68   εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς **τοῦ** Ἰσραήλ
blessed is the Lord God of Israel

e. With Participles   *ExSyn* 241

The article before participles functions both as a substantiver and as a function marker. The presence of the article indicates a substantival (or adjectival) function for the participle. Of course, the participle can also often be substantival or adjectival without the article, though there is the greater possibility of ambiguity in such instances.

Luke 6:21   μακάριοι **οἱ** κλαίοντες νῦν
blessed are **those** who weep now

John 4:11   πόθεν οὖν ἔχεις τὸ ὕδωρ **τὸ** ζῶν;
Where then do you keep **this** living water?

f. With Demonstratives   *ExSyn* 241–42

The article is used with the demonstratives in predicate position to indicate attributive function. Demonstratives cannot stand in attributive position (e.g., between the article and noun). If they are related to an anarthrous noun, they function independently, as pronouns. Only when they are in predicate position to an *articular* noun can demonstratives be considered dependent and attributive.[19]

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[18] One exception to this is ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. See *ExSyn* 240, n. 61, for discussion.

[19] Occasionally translations miss this basic rule of Greek grammar. For a discussion of John 2:11 and 4:54, see *ExSyn* 242, n. 66.

Matt 16:18   ἐπὶ ταύτῃ **τῇ** πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
              on this rock I will build my church

Luke 7:44   βλέπεις ταύτην **τὴν** γυναῖκα;
              Do you see this woman?

g. With Nominative Nouns (to denote subject)   *ExSyn* 242

Normally a subject will have the article (unless it is a pronoun or proper name).

Luke 11:7   **ἡ** θύρα κέκλεισται   **the** door is shut

h. To Distinguish Subject from Predicate Nominative
and Object from Complement   *ExSyn* 242–43

Generally speaking, the subject will be distinguished from the predicate nominative by having the article. This rule of thumb also applies to objects in the object-complement double accusative construction.[20]

Matt 12:8   κύριος ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου **ὁ** υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
              the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath

John 5:18   πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν **τὸν** θεὸν
              he was claiming God [to be] his own Father

Absence of the Article   *ExSyn* 243–54

It is not necessary for a noun to have the article in order for it to be definite. But conversely, a noun *cannot* be *in*definite when it has the article. Thus it *may* be definite without the article, and it *must* be definite with the article.

When a substantive is anarthrous, it may have one of three forces: indefinite, qualitative, or definite. There are not clear-cut distinctions between these three forces, however. If we were to place them on a continuum graph, we would see that the *qualitative* aspect is sometimes close to being definite, sometimes close to being indefinite:

Figure 21
The Semantics of Anarthrous Nouns

➡1. Indefinite   *ExSyn* 244

An indefinite noun refers to one member of a class, without specifying which member. For example, in John 4:7 we have "**A** woman from Samaria . . . " The

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[20] Cf. discussions in the chapters on "The Nominative Case" (under predicate nominative) and "The Accusative Case" (under both object-complement and subject of infinitive).

anarthrous γυνή is indefinite, telling us nothing about this particular woman. Thus an indefinite noun is unmarked in that (next to) nothing is revealed about it apart from its membership in a class of others that share the same designation.
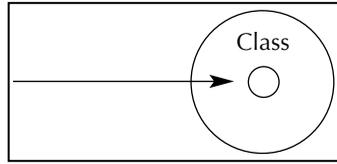

Figure 22
The Semantics of Indefinite Nouns

➥ **2. Qualitative**   *ExSyn* 244–45

   a. Definition. A qualitative noun places the stress on quality, nature, or essence. It does not merely indicate membership in a class of which there are other members (such as an indefinite noun), nor does it stress individual identity (such as a definite noun).

   It is akin to a generic noun in that it focuses on the *kind*. Further, like a generic, *it emphasizes class traits*. Yet, unlike generic nouns, a qualitative noun often has in view one individual rather than the class as a whole.[21]
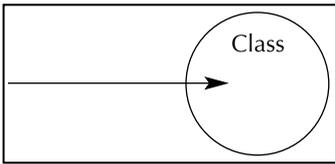

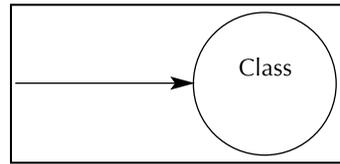Figure 23
The Semantics of Qualitative Nouns

Figure 24
The Semantics of Generic Nouns

b. Illustrations

1 John 4:8   ὁ θεὸς **ἀγάπη** ἐστίν   God is **love**

Heb 1:2   ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν **υἱῷ**
              In these last days, [God] has spoken to us in **Son**
                   Although this should probably be translated "a Son" (there is no decent way to express this compactly in English), the force is clearly qualitative (though, of course, on the continuum it would be closer to the indefinite than the definite category).

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   [21] Abstract nouns deserve special treatment. For the most part, they are not normally conceived of in terms of membership in a class. For example, ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστιν cannot naturally be translated, "God is **a** love" or "God is **the** love." The lexical nature of the word ἀγάπη is abstract rather than particular. Hence, on the one hand, most abstract nouns will be qualitative; on the other hand, abstract nouns will *not* normally be generic because no *class* is in view, just a certain quality.

The point is that God, in his final revelation, has spoken to us in one who has the characteristics of a son. His credentials are vastly different from the credentials of the prophets (or from the angels, as the following context indicates).

3. Definite   *ExSyn* 245–54

A definite noun lays the stress on individual identity. It has in view membership in a class, but this particular member is already marked out by the author. Definite nouns have unique referential identity.
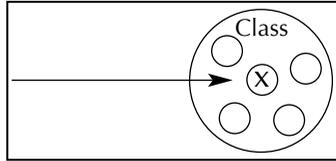
Figure 25
The Semantics of Definite Nouns

Though by definition an articular noun is definite, an anarthrous noun may also be definite under certain conditions. As was noted earlier, there are at least ten constructions in which a noun may be definite though anarthrous. The following is a brief look at these constructions.

➡   *a. Proper Names*   *ExSyn* 245–47

By the nature of the case, a proper name is definite without the article.

John 1:45   εὑρίσκει **Φίλιππος** τὸν Ναθαναήλ
               Philip found Nathanael
                  The article is used with Ναθαναήλ, an indeclinable name, to identify him as the direct object.

Acts 19:13   ὁρκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν **Παῦλος** κηρύσσει
               I adjure you by the Jesus whom **Paul** preaches
                  In this instance the article with Ἰησοῦν is kataphoric.

➡   *b. Object of a Preposition*   *ExSyn* 247

There is no need for the article to be used to make the object of a preposition definite. However, this is not to say that all prepositional objects are definite. An anarthrous noun as object of a preposition is not *necessarily* definite. It is often qualitative (e.g., υἱῷ in Heb 1:2, mentioned above),[22] or even occasionally indefinite (cf. μετὰ γυναικὸς ἐλάλει—"he was speaking with **a** woman" [John 4:27]). Thus, when a noun is the object of a preposition, it does not *require* the article to be definite: if it has the article, it *must* be definite; if it *lacks* the article, it *may* be definite.

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[22] It is our impression that most anarthrous nouns after prepositions seem to be qualitative unless they are monadic, proper names, in a gen. construction, or have a qualifying adjective.

John 1:1	Ἐν **ἀρχῇ** ἦν ὁ λόγος

In **the beginning** was the Word

> Here the noun is also monadic, giving it additional reason to be definite.

Rom 1:4	τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ **πνεῦμα** ἁγιωσύ-νης ἐξ **ἀναστάσεως** νεκρῶν

who was designated the Son of God in power according to **the Spirit** of holiness by **the resurrection** from the dead

> Two of the three prepositional phrases include definite objects; ἐν δυνάμει is qualitative.

➡ *c. With Ordinal Numbers*   *ExSyn* 248

The number identifies the "amount" of the substantive, making it definite.

Mark 15:25	ἦν **ὥρα** τρίτη καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν

it was [about] **the** third **hour** when they crucified him

➡ *d. Predicate Nominative*   *ExSyn* 248

If the predicate nominative *precedes* the copula, it *may* be definite though anarthrous. For more information, see "Colwell's rule" in the chapter "Article Part II: Special Uses (and Non-Uses) of the Article."

➡ *e. Complement in Object-Complement Construction*   *ExSyn* 248

If the complement precedes the object, it may be definite though anarthrous. For more information, see "Object Complement" in the chapter on the "Accusative Case."

John 5:18	**πατέρα** ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεόν

he was calling God his own **father**

➡ *f. Monadic Nouns*   *ExSyn* 248–49

A one-of-a-kind noun does not, of course, require the article to be definite (e.g., "sun," "earth," "devil,"[23] etc.). One might consider πνεῦμα as monadic when it is modified by the adjective ἅγιον. If so, then the expression πνεῦμα ἅγιον is monadic and refers only to *the* Holy Spirit. In the least this illustrates the fact that we need to think of the entire *noun phrase*, not just a single word, when identifying it as monadic. The expression "Son of God," for example, is monadic, while "son" is not.

Luke 1:35	κληθήσεται **υἱὸς** θεοῦ

he shall be called **the Son** of God

Luke 21:25	ἔσονται σημεῖα ἐν **ἡλίῳ** καὶ **σελήνῃ**

there will be signs in **the sun** and **moon**

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[23] For a discussion of John 6:70, see *ExSyn* 249.

➡   **g. *Abstract Nouns***   *ExSyn* 249–50

Words such as love, joy, peace, faith, etc. are commonly anarthrous though they are not *in*definite. They could be classified as qualitative-definite, however, and consequently occur with and without the article.

Luke 19:9   σήμερον **σωτηρία** τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο
today **salvation** has come to this house

Eph 2:5, 8   **χάριτί** ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι . . . τῇ χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι
by **grace** you are saved . . . by grace you are saved

> The first reference to χάρις is anarthrous (v. 5), followed by a resumption of the point in v. 8 with the anaphoric article. Although the force of the article is not naturally brought out in translation, its presence should not go unobserved in exegesis.

➡   **h. *A Genitive Construction (Apollonius' Corollary)***   *ExSyn* 250–52

(1) Definition of rule and corollary. A general rule (discussed earlier in this chapter) is that *both* the head noun and the genitive noun either have the article or lack the article (known as Apollonius' Canon). It makes little semantic difference whether the construction is articular or anarthrous. Thus ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is identical to λόγος θεοῦ.

The corollary to this rule (Apollonius' Corollary) is that *when both nouns are anarthrous, both will usually have the same semantic force*. That is, both will be, for example, definite (D-D), the most commonly shared semantic force. Somewhat less common is qualitative-qualitative (Q-Q). The least likely semantic force is indefinite-indefinite (I-I). Further, although not infrequently is there a one-step difference between the two substantives (e.g., D-Q), only rarely do the two nouns differ by two steps (either I-D or D-I).

In addition, it should be noted that (1) just as rare as I-D is I-I; (2) only rarely is the genitive noun less definite than the head noun; hence, (3) the genitive noun seems to be the "driving force" behind the construction: it tends to be definite and to make the head noun definite as well.

(2) Illustrations[24]

Matt 3:16   πνεῦμα θεοῦ[25]   the Spirit of God

> A nonsensical translation would be "**a** spirit of **a** god." The point of Apollonius' Corollary is that when both nouns are anarthrous and it can be determined that one is definite, then the other is also definite. Thus in the above example, if θεοῦ is definite, so is πνεῦμα.

Rom 1:18   ἀποκαλύπτεται **ὀργὴ θεοῦ**   **the wrath of God** is revealed

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[24] For a discussion of exegetically significant texts and especially the construction ἄγγελος κυρίου, see *ExSyn* 252.

[25] This is the reading of ℵ B; most other MSS have τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ.

➡   *i. With a Pronominal Adjective*   *ExSyn* 253

Nouns with πᾶς, ὅλος, etc. do not need the article to be definite, for either the class as a whole ("all") or distributively ("every") is being specified. Either way, a generic force is given to such constructions.

| Matt 3:15 | πρέπον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν **δικαιοσύνην** |
| | it is fitting for us to fulfill all **righteousness** |

| Luke 3:5 | πᾶν **ὄρος** καὶ **βουνὸς** ταπεινωθήσεται |
| | every **mountain** and **hill** will be brought low |

| Luke 5:5 | ἐπιστάτα, δι᾽ ὅλης **νυκτὸς** κοπιάσαντες |
| | Master, we labored all **night** |

➡   *j. Generic Nouns*   *ExSyn* 253

The generic article is not always necessary in order for a noun to have a generic idea. There is little semantic difference between articular generics and anarthrous generics, though it is true that some nouns usually take the article and others do not. Just as with articular generics, sometimes it is more appropriate to translate the anarthrous generic noun with an indefinite article (with the understanding that the whole class is still in view).

(1) Clear Illustrations

| Luke 18:2 | κριτής τις ἦν . . . **ἄνθρωπον** μὴ ἐντρεπόμενος |
| | there was a certain judge . . . who did not respect **people** |

1 Cor 11:7	ἡ γυνὴ δόξα **ἀνδρός** ἐστιν
	the wife is the glory of **the husband**
	Here the article is used with γυνή, but it is not used with ἀνδρός. Yet both terms are generic.

| 1 Tim 2:11 | **γυνὴ** ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω |
| | let **a woman** learn in silence |

(2) Possible Example

Rev 13:18	ἀριθμὸς **ἀνθρώπου** ἐστιν
	it is the number of **humankind**
	If ἀνθρώπου is generic, then the sense is, "It is [the] number of **humankind**." It is significant that this construction fits Apollonius' Canon (i.e., both the head noun and the genitive are anarthrous), suggesting that if one of these nouns is definite, then the other is too.[26]

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[26] For a discussion of this text, see *ExSyn* 254.

The Article
Part II: Special Uses and
Non-Uses of the Article[1]
Overview

In this chapter we will consider two constructions. One of these involves the nonuse of the article and the other involves the use of the article: anarthrous preverbal 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 arrows point to the most important sections.

Anarthrous Preverbal Predicate Nominatives
(Involving Colwell's Rule)   *ExSyn* 256–70

1. Introduction   *ExSyn* 256

a. Definition of terms. First, it would be helpful to review some basic terminology.

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[1] See *ExSyn* 255–90.

- anarthrous = without the article
- preverbal = *before* the equative verb
- predicate nominative (PN) = the noun in the nominative case that is the same as the subject (more or less)

Therefore, an anarthrous preverbal 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.[2] To economize on our verbiage, therefore, we will consider every anarthrous preverbal predicate nominative construction as a "Colwell's *construction*" (though not necessarily fitting Colwell's *rule*).

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

➡**2. Statement of the Rule**   *ExSyn* 257

Colwell's rule is as follows: "Definite predicate nouns which precede the verb usually lack the article. . ."[3]

He illustrated this principle with John 1:49: ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ ("Nathanael 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: (1) in the second statement, the PN is anarthrous while in the first it is articular; (2) 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 the 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   *ExSyn* 257–59

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.

➡**4. Clarification of Colwell's Rule**   *ExSyn* 259–62

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

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[2] "A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 52 (1933): 12–21.

[3] Colwell, "A Definite Rule," 20.

usually definite. However, this is how the rule has been misunderstood by most scholars (including Colwell) since the article in *JBL* was written.

We can illustrate the fallacy of the converse of Colwell's rule this way. 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 see its logical fallacy: *if there are clouds in the sky, it must be raining.*

With reference to Colwell's rule, only anarthrous preverbal predicate nominatives were studied that were previously determined by their contexts to be most probably definite. Not *all* anarthrous preverbal predicate nominatives were studied. But the *converse* of the rule, commonly embraced in NT scholarship, assumes that all such constructions have been examined. Other, more comprehensive studies have suggested that 80 percent of anarthrous preverbal PNs are qualitative. Therefore, when one sees an anarthrous preverbal 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.

The following chart displays the different databases that were examined by Colwell ("Colwell's rule") and later researchers ("Colwell's construction").
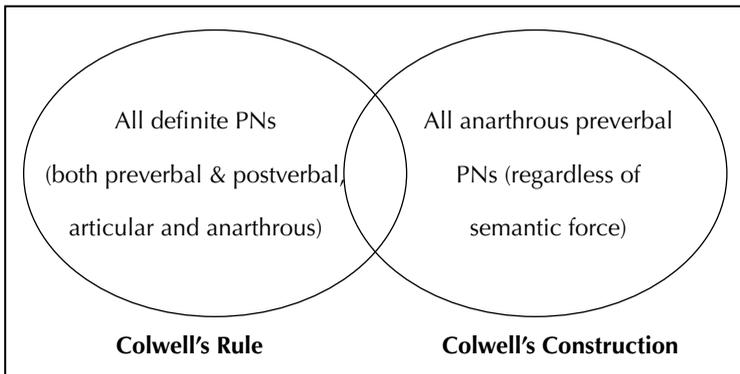

Chart 26
The Different Databases for Colwell's Rule Vs. Colwell's Construction

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   *ExSyn* 262–66

Later studies on this construction demonstrate that the anarthrous preverbal PN is still *closer* to definiteness than is the anarthrous *post*-copulative predicate

nominative, and that an anarthrous predicate nominative that *follows* the verb will usually be either qualitative or *in*definite.[4]

A general rule about the construction can now be stated: *An anarthrous preverbal PN is normally qualitative, sometimes definite, and only rarely indefinite.* Two subsequent studies[5] on Colwell's construction concluded that they could not find any *indefinite* anarthrous preverbal PNs in the NT. It is entirely possible that there are some in the NT, but this is obviously the most poorly attested semantic force for such a construction.
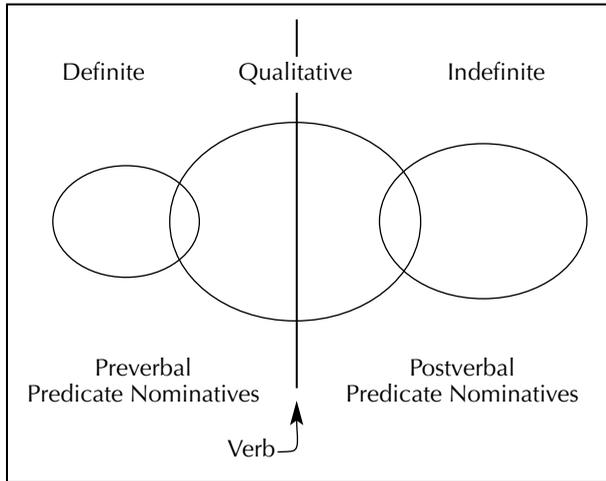

Chart 27
The Semantic Range of Anarthrous Predicate Nominatives

The chart illustrates the fact that anarthrous *preverbal* predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*definite* range, while anarthrous *postverbal* predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*indefinite* range. The presumption, therefore, when one faces an anarthrous preverbal 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 σῶσαι· **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.

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[4] That is, of course, unless there is some other ground for considering it to be definite (such as a monadic noun).

[5] See *ExSyn* 259–66 for the data on the studies.

John 1:49   σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ **βασιλεὺς** εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ[6]
               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.[7]

b. Qualitative Predicate Nominatives[8]

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.

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.

c. Indefinite Predicate Nominatives[9]

The following examples are potential indefinite predicate nominatives in Colwell's construction.

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."[10]

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[6] Several MSS place the βασιλεύς after the verb and add an article before it. Colwell noted such variants as evidence for the validity of his rule.

[7] "It was a study of these passages, especially John 1[:]49, that suggested the rule which is advocated in this study. . . . When the passage is scrutinized, it appears at once that the variable quantum is not definiteness but word-order" (Colwell, "A Definite Rule," 13).

[8] One of the ways to test whether a PN is qualitative or definite is to swap the S with the PN. If the sentence makes the same sense, then the PN is definite since the construction involves a convertible proposition. For a more detailed discussion, see the chapter on the Nominative Case under Predicate Nominative.

[9] For a discussion of other possible texts, see *ExSyn* 265–66.

[10] For a discussion of these possibilities, see *ExSyn* 265.

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**"

> 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.

➡**6. Application of Colwell's Construction to John 1:1**   *ExSyn* 266–69

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." 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 do so on the sole basis that the term is anarthrous. The indefinite notion is the most poorly attested for anarthrous preverbal predicate nominatives. Thus grammatically such a meaning is improbable.

As well, the context suggests that such is not likely, for the Word already existed in the beginning. Further, 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?

Although it is certainly possible grammatically to take θεός as a definite noun, the evidence is not very compelling. The vast majority of *definite* anarthrous preverbal 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 1:1c.

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 with 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.*" This, as the older grammarians and exegetes pointed out, is embryonic Sabellianism or modalism.[11]

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[11] For references and quotations, see *ExSyn* 268.

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 preverbal 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 mirror 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. 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*.[12]

The Article with Multiple Substantives Connected by Καί (Granville Sharp Rule and Related Constructions)   *ExSyn* 270–91

1. Introduction

In Greek, when two nouns are connected by καί and the article precedes only the first noun, there is a close connection between the two. That connection always indicates at least some sort of *unity*. At a higher level, it may connote *equality*. At the highest level it may indicate *identity*. When the construction meets three specific demands, then the two nouns *always* refer to the same person. When the construction does not meet these requirements, the nouns may or may not refer to the same person(s)/object(s).

➡2. Statement of the Rule   *ExSyn* 271–72

Granville Sharp (1735–1813) was an English philanthropist and abolitionist as well as a prolific writer on various topics. As he studied the scriptures in the original Greek, he noticed a certain pattern, viz., when the construction article-substantive-καί-substantive (TSKS) involved personal nouns that were singular and not proper names, they always referred to the same person. He noticed further that such a rule applied, in several texts, to the deity of Jesus Christ. In 1798 he published a short volume entitled, *Remarks on the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament, Containing Many New Proofs of the Divinity of Christ, from Passages Which Are Wrongly Translated in the Common English Version* [KJV].

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[12] See *ExSyn* 269–70 for an "Appendix to Colwell's 'Construction': When the Verb is Absent."

Sharp's rule, briefly stated, is as follows: In the TSKS construction, the second substantive refers to the *same* person mentioned with the first substantive when:

- neither is *impersonal*;
- neither is *plural*;
- neither is a *proper* name.[13]

Therefore, according to Sharp, the rule applied absolutely *only* with personal, singular, and nonproper nouns. The significance of these requirements can hardly be overestimated, for those who have misunderstood Sharp's principle have done so almost without exception because they were unaware of the restrictions that Sharp set forth.[14]

➡ **3.   Validity of the Rule Within the New Testament**   *ExSyn* 273–77

➡   *a. In General*

Not counting the christologically significant passages, there are 80 constructions in the NT that fit the *requirements* for Sharp's rule. But do they all fit the *semantics* of the rule—that is, do the substantives always refer to one and the same person? In a word, yes. Even Sharp's opponents could not find any exceptions; all had to admit that the rule was valid in the NT.

Below are listed several representative passages of Sharp's rule, including nouns, participles, and adjectives.

Mark 6:3	οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τέκτων, **ὁ υἱὸς** τῆς Μαρίας **καὶ ἀδελφὸς** Ἰακώβου
	this is the carpenter, **the son** of Mary **and brother** of James
John 20:17	**τὸν πατέρα** μου **καὶ πατέρα** ὑμῶν **καὶ θεόν** μου **καὶ θεὸν** ὑμῶν
	my **Father and** your **Father and** my **God and** your **God**

The construction here is unusual in that it involves four nouns. The possessive pronouns are used to show the differences in how Jesus and his disciples relate to God, but they do not imply that a different person is in view: the first person of the Trinity is the referent for all four nouns.

It is also significant that one of the substantives is θεός. This is a good illustration of the fact that θεός is not a proper noun (from the Greek perspective), for whenever a proper name occurs in Sharp's construction two persons are in view. Yet, whenever θεός is in this construction, one person is in view.

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[13] A *proper* noun is defined as a noun which *cannot* be "pluralized"—thus it does *not* include titles. A person's name, therefore, is proper and consequently does not fit the rule. But θεός is not proper because it can be pluralized (cf. John 10:34)—thus, when θεός is in a TSKS construction in which both nouns are singular and personal, it fits Sharp's rule.

[14] For a brief discussion of this history, see *ExSyn* 272–73.

Acts 3:14   ὑμεῖς δὲ **τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον** ἠρνήσασθε
you have denied **the holy and righteous one**

Eph 2:14   **ὁ ποιήσας** τὰ ἀμφότερα ἓν **καὶ** τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ **λύσας**
the one who made both into one **and who destroyed** the middle wall of partition

> This text well illustrates that even when there are several intervening words, the construction is not thereby invalidated.

Phil 2:25   Ἐπαφρόδιτον **τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην** μου
Epaphroditus, my **brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier**

> This passage illustrates the fact that a possessive pronoun added to one of the nouns does not invalidate the rule.

Heb 3:1   **τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα** τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν
Jesus, **the apostle and high priest** of our confession

1 Pet 1:3   **ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Rev 22:8   κἀγὼ Ἰωάννης **ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων** ταῦτα
And I, John, **the one who hears and sees** these things

➡   ## b. For Christologically Significant Texts

Titus 2:13   **τοῦ** μεγάλου **θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος** ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
our great **God and Savior**, Jesus Christ

> It has frequently been alleged that θεός is a proper name and, hence, that Sharp's rule cannot apply to constructions in which it is employed. We have already pointed out that θεός is not a proper name in Greek. We simply wish to note here that in the TSKS construction θεός is used over a dozen times in the NT and always (if we exclude the christologically significant texts) in reference to one person. This phenomenon is not true of any other proper name in said construction (every instance involving true proper names always points to two individuals). Since that argument carries no weight, there is no good reason to reject Titus 2:13 as an explicit affirmation of the deity of Christ.

2 Pet 1:1   **τοῦ θεοῦ** ἡμῶν **καὶ σωτῆρος**, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
our **God and Savior**, Jesus Christ

> Some grammarians have objected that since ἡμῶν is connected with θεοῦ, two persons are in view. The pronoun seems to "bracket" the noun, effectively isolating the trailing noun. However in v. 11 of this same chapter (as well as in 2:20 and 3:18), the author writes τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος, Ἰησοῦ

Χριστοῦ, an expression that refers to one person, Jesus Christ: "Why refuse to apply the same rule to 2 Peter i. 1, that all admit . . . to be true of 2 Peter i. 11 [not to mention 2:20 and 3:18]?"[15]

4. Constructions Involving Impersonal, Plural, and Proper Nouns   *ExSyn 277–90*

a. Proper Names   *ExSyn 277–78*

Always in the NT, whenever proper names are in the equation, distinct individuals are in view. For example, we read of "Peter and James and John" (τὸν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην) in Matt 17:1; "Barnabas and Saul" (τὸν Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον) in Acts 13:2. Yet at the same time they are united under one article for the purposes at hand. There is a reason for the lone article in every instance, viz., to conceptualize a contextually-defined coherent group. But because the nouns are proper, the article does not identify one with the other.

➡ ### b. Plural Personal Constructions   *ExSyn 278–86*

(1) SEMANTICS AND THE NT DATA. Since the plural construction deals with *groups*, there may be other possibilities besides absolute distinction and absolute identity. Theoretically, in fact, there are five semantic possibilities for the plural TSKS construction: (1) distinct groups, though united; (2) overlapping groups; (3) first group subset of second; (4) second group subset of first; and (5) both groups identical. In the NT all groups are represented, though they are not evenly distributed.

(2) UNAMBIGUOUS ILLUSTRATIONS

(a) Distinct Groups, Though United

At all times the lone article in the TSKS construction suggests some sort of unity. A large number of instances in the NT imply nothing more. We can readily see this in English. In the sentence "the Democrats and Republicans approved the bill unanimously," the two political parties, though distinct, are united on a particular issue.
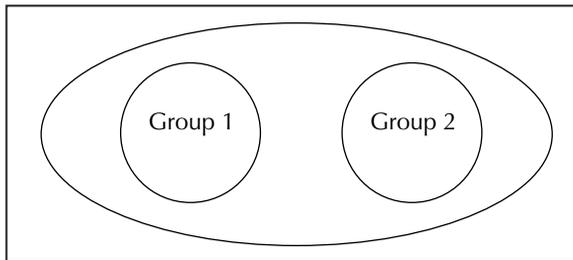

Figure 28
Distinct Groups, though United[16]

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[15] A. T. Robertson, "The Greek Article and the Deity of Christ," *The Expositor*, 8th Series, 21 (1921): 185. For more discussion of this text, see *ExSyn 276–77*.

[16] In this and the following figures, the article before the first substantive and the καί between the substantives are omitted because the figures are intended to depict the *semantics*, not the structure, of the TSKS construction.

Matt 3:7   **τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων**
the Pharisees and Sadducees

> Although these two parties were distinct, the article unites them for the purposes at hand. The Pharisees and the Sadducees are listed together only four other times in Matthew; in each instance the structure is TSKS and the two groups are set in opposition to Jesus.

Matt 16:21   **τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων**
the elders and chief priests and scribes

> These were the three distinct parties that comprised the San-hedrin. (Some have erroneously insisted that this construction fits Sharp's rule because these three groups all refer to the Sanhedrin. However, to say that A + B + C = D is not the same as saying A = B = C, the latter equation being what Sharp's rule asserts.[17])

(b) Overlapping Groups

There are three kinds of overlap: simple (e.g., "the poor and sick"), first sub-set of second (e.g., "the angels and [other] created beings"), and second subset of first ("the created beings and [especially] angels").
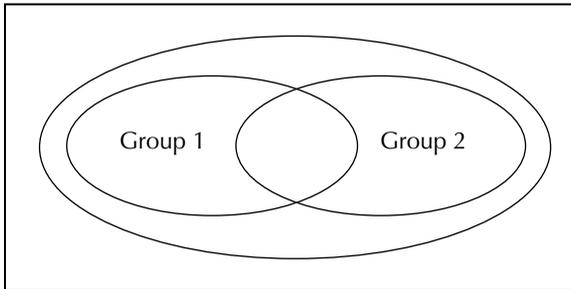

Figure 29
(Simple) Overlapping Groups

Rev 21:8   **τοῖς** δὲ **δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις** . . . τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ
now as for **the cowardly and unfaithful and abominable and murderers and fornicators and sorcerers and idolaters** . . . their portion shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur

> It is obvious here that the Lake of Fire is not reserved *only* for those who meet *all* of the "qualifications," nor for those meeting only one requirement. Overlapping groups is the intended meaning.

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[17] The difference between the two formulae is the difference between equality of status and identity of referent. Only if the scribes referred to the same group as the elders could Sharp's principle be invoked.
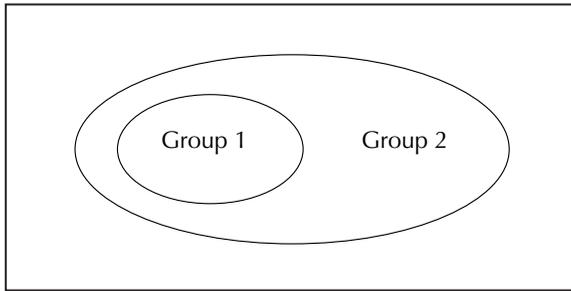
Figure 30
First Group Subset of Second

Matt 9:11   τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν
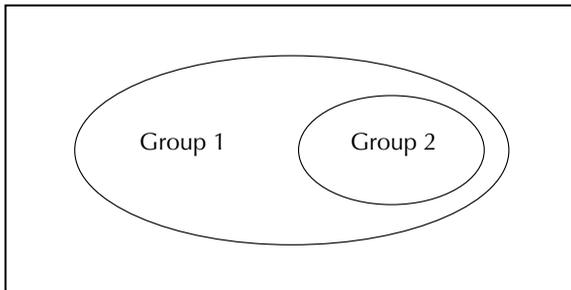**the tax collectors and [other] sinners**

Figure 31
Second Group Subset of First

Mark 2:16   ἰδόντες ὅτι ἐσθίει μετὰ **τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ τελωνῶν** ἔλεγον
τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ὅτι μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν
ἐσθίει. . .
when they saw that he was eating with **the sinners and tax col-
lectors**, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with the
tax collectors and sinners?"

There are two plural TSKS constructions in this verse, both
using the same wording but in different order. The first instance
is that of second group subset of first; the second instance is first
subset of second.

1 Cor 5:10   τοῖς πλεονέκταις καὶ ἅρπαξιν
the greedy and swindlers

Although one could be greedy without being branded a
swindler, it is doubtful that the reverse could be true. The idea,
then, is "the greedy and [especially] swindlers."

(c) Both Groups Identical[18]

The idea of identical groups is "the X who are Y." The second substantive functions either in a descriptive or restrictive manner. For example, "the Saint Louis Rams and world champions of football," "those eating well and exercising will get strong." This category has greater attestation than any of the others in the NT, though it is not at all found among noun+noun TSKS plural constructions.
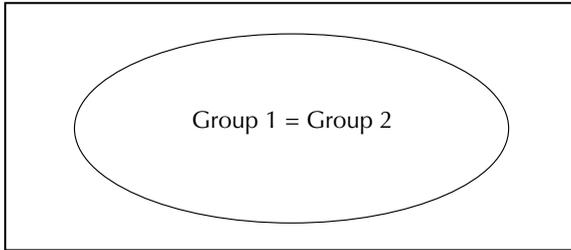

Figure 32
Both Groups Identical

John 20:29   μακάριοι **οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες**
              blessed are **those who have** not **seen and** [yet] **believe**

> The negative stipulation of not seeing the risen Lord is inadequate to procure a blessing. And, in this context, the Lord is pronouncing a blessing on those who believe apart from seeing him, in contrast to Thomas.

Rev 1:3   μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ **οἱ ἀκούοντες** τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας **καὶ τηροῦντες** τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα
              blessed is the one who reads and **those who hear** the words of this prophecy **and keep** the things written in it

> It is evident that the one who only hears the prophecy and does not obey it falls short of the blessing. The twofold response of hearing and keeping is necessary if one is to be counted among the μακάριοι.

(3) Exegetically and theologically significant texts. There are several ambiguous plural TSKS constructions, two of which have particular exegetical value.

Eph 4:11   αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, **τοὺς** δὲ **ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους**
              he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, **some** [as] **pastors and teachers**

> This text seems to affirm, both grammatically and exegetically, that all pastors were to be teachers, though not all teachers were to be pastors.[19]

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[18] For a discussion of Eph 1:1, see *ExSyn* 282–83.
[19] See *ExSyn* 284 for a discussion.

Eph 2:20   ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ **τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν**

having been built upon the foundation **of the apostles and prophets**

> The strongest possibilities are either that two distinct groups are in view or the apostles are seen as a subset of the prophets. If the OT prophets are in view, then obviously two distinct groups are meant. But if NT prophets are in view, this would favor the apostles as being a subset of the prophets.[20]

➡ ***c. Impersonal Constructions***   *ExSyn* 286–90

There are about 50 impersonal TSKS constructions in the NT. Theoretically, such constructions can have the same semantic range as plural personal constructions (i.e., distinct, overlapping, first subset of second, second subset of first, and identical [see figures above]). However, the "identical" category is rare, with only one clear example. Far more common is the distinct category and the overlapping groups (especially first subset of second).

(1) Unambiguous examples

(a) Distinct Entities, Though United

Luke 21:12   διώξουσιν, παραδιδόντες εἰς **τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς**

they will persecute [you], handing [you] over to **the synagogues and prisons**

> The reason for the single article is that both groups are hostile to the disciples.

Eph 3:18   **τὸ πλάτος καὶ μῆκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος**

the breadth and length and height and depth

> The author is speaking about God's love in figurative language, as if he were using a spiritual plumb-line. Although each term refers to God's love, each refers to a different aspect of it and thus the terms are *not* identical.[21]

(b) Overlapping Entities[22]

Luke 6:17   **πάσης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ**
all Judea and Jerusalem

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[20] For a discussion of this text and its theological implications, see *ExSyn* 284–86.

[21] Some have been confused over this text, assuming that it fits Sharp's rule. Generally this confusion is exacerbated because (1) all of the terms do apparently refer to God's love, yet even here it would not be appropriate to say that the length is identical with the height; (2) the figurative language compounds the problem because the imagery and its referent are both somewhat elusive; and (3) there is a widespread confusion about what Sharp's rule actually addresses: it is not mere equality, but identity that is in view.

[22] See similar section on plural personal constructions for the three different kinds of overlap possible.

2 Cor 12:21	τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ **τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ**
	those who have previously sinned and not repented over **the impurity and immorality and licentiousness**
Rev 9:15	ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς **τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτόν**
	the four angels who had been prepared for **the hour and day and month and year** were released

(c) Both Entities Identical

There is only one clear example of this in the NT: Acts 1:25.

(2) EXEGETICALLY AND THEOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT TEXTS. There are several ambiguous impersonal TSKS constructions, some of which are exegetically significant. One of them is taken up here.[23]

| Acts 2:23 | τοῦτον **τῇ** ὡρισμένῃ **βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει** τοῦ θεοῦ |
| | this [Jesus, having been delivered up] by **the** predetermined **plan and foreknowledge** of God |

> If "foreknowledge" defines "predetermination," this opens the door for the explanation that (according to one definition of πρόγνωσις) God's decree is dependent on his omniscience. But if the terms are distinguishable, the relationship may be reversed, viz., omniscience is dependent on the eternal decree. Without attempting to resolve this theological issue entirely, it can nevertheless be argued that the "identical" view is unlikely: the least attested meaning of impersonal constructions is referential identity.[24]

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[23] For discussions of Acts 20:21 and 2 Thess 2:1, see *ExSyn* 289–90.

[24] For a more detailed discussion, see *ExSyn* 288–89.