John 1:1c, List of Alternative Readings

(By: Lesriv Spencer, March 9, 2011. Last updated July, 2020)

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The purpose of these lists is to help Bible readers determine how translators normally deal with these grammatical structures. I believe illustrated examples, when analyzed, can be more illuminating, and less slanted, than a ton of "theological" persuasion, since they virtually explain themselves.

But first, a few grammar terms are explained briefly before we discuss John 1:1 and other Scriptures. A <u>verb</u> expresses *action.* An <u>adjective</u> *describes* a noun, like a quality about a person (a *happy* person: hence, *qualitative*). "Noun" is a name, a word or group of words that refers to a person, place, or thing. The <u>*subject*</u> is simply the word or group of words in a sentence about which something is said in the sentence. The <u>*predicate*</u> is the word or words that say something about the subject of a sentence or clause. In John 1:1c, the subject is the *Logos* or "the Word" (presumably, Jesus Christ), indicated by the article "the" before "Word." When a noun has the article (*the* in English) before it, it is called *arthrous*, or *articular* noun. When the noun lacks the article, it is referred to as *anarthrous*, or *inarticular*. When a noun is preceded by the article *the*, it is called <u>*definite*</u> = *the* woman, refers to a particular female. When the noun has no article *the* before it, it often becomes qualitative, or <u>*indefinite*</u> = non specific, *a* woman. <u>Prepositions</u> are words that *precede* other words like nouns such as *in*, *of*, *to*, *for*, *with*, *by*, and so on. A *prepositional phrase* is a phrase that begins with a preposition and ends in a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase.

Greek is known to have five clearly defined cases: nominative (31%), accusative (29%), genitive 25%, dative 15%, and vocative (<1%). In the discussion of John 1:1, the *nominative* stands out. The <u>nominative</u> is the *naming* case - used as the subject of a sentence and as the predicate nominative

with linking verbs like 'am,' and when one wishes to state the name of a thing. In "The men are carpenters," *carpenters* is a predicate noun or predicate nominative. The *accusative* case, also displayed in the text, is the "completing" case, since it often completes the meaning of a sentence by supplying the direct object.

A word of caution: There is no hard rule on the Greek article that can be applied in translation at all times. What is described above apply in most cases, but not always. The *context* is then the determining factor. Most Bible versions say that the Word was "God," the *predicate*. However, other Bible translations interpret the Word as "divine," "godlike," or "a god." At John 1:1c, the Greek says, word-for-word: "and god was the word." We know this because the predicate "god" does not have the article *the* before it, but the subject (*the* word) does. Biblical Greek does *not* have an indefinite article (*a*, or *an*), but in the English translation one is normally supplied as needed. Again, when a Greek predicate noun does *not* have the article (*ho*, equivalent to the English *the*), the translator can point to the *qualitative* or *indefinite* nuance of the noun in various contexts by adding the indefinite article (*a* or *an*) to the predicate noun. The use or non-use of such small element can have *theological* repercussions in the translated product.

A case in point, a Trinitarian, Dr. E. C. Colwell (Chicago University), developed a "rule" in 1933 to suggest that *theós* (the Greek word for "god" without the article) in John 1:1c, should be interpreted as *definite*. This would signal that the second instance of *theós* in the last clause has the meaning, t*he Word* (Christ)*, was "God,"* not merely "divine," or "a god." Although religious mainstream loved Colwell's argument quoting it time and again to their heart's content, other scholars have independently published their own studies, such as Philip B. Harner's, in 1973 (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Philadelphia), which have either nullified Colwell's rule, or, seriously questioned its stated premises within the scholarly community. Colwell's rule has lost some steam in the last few decades, but some refuse to let it die. What are we to do in a case like this? A lot of information, or rather misinformation is widely available. Who is right, and who is wrong? Well, you can grab information from various sources which best suits your own beliefs, or, better yet, consider the various biblical examples provided in this article, that can help and guide one to the right understanding of the controversial passage.

For comparison purposes we will also consider various Scriptures which differ from John 1:1. These have Greek nouns *with* the article *ho,* preceding the verb, and are translated literally shown in bold letters as "the." Keep in mind, as you analyze these texts in Section 1, that they are structurally similar to John 1:1c, but with one notable difference: The structure of John 1:1c *lacks* the article (*the*) before the predicate noun and verb, while the samples of this group do have the nouns *with* the article before the verb, making them definite, stressing specificity (particularity), and/or identity. Predicate nouns *without* the article preceding a verb are normally *descriptive* in nature, serving the role of *adjectives*. A Catholic Bible explains at John 1:1: "*With God*: the Greek preposition here connotes communication with another. *Was God*: lack of a definite article with 'God' in Greek signifies predication rather than identification." (NABRE, Italics theirs) Since, the second instance of theós (*God*) is *descriptive* in nature, some translators have chosen to render it, "divine," "god," "godlike," or "a god."

1. Scriptures containing Greek nouns *with* the article (*arthrous*) before the verb: John 1:21; 6:51; 15:1; 20:15; John 21:12, and 2 John 1:6.

John 1:21,

Greek: καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτόν... Ὁ προφήτης εἶ σύ;
        And they questioned him [John], **The** **prophet** *are* you?

"Art thou **the** prophet?" (*American Standard Version*)
"**The** prophet art thou?" (*Young's Literal Translation*)
"Are you **the** prophet?" (H. T. Anderson's New Testament)
"Are you **the** Prophet?" (*New American Bible*)
"Are you '**the** prophet', the one we're expecting?" (*Jewish New Testament*)
"Are you **the** Prophet we are expecting?" (*New Living Translation*)
"Are you **the** prophet?" (*Revised Standard Version*)
"Are you **the** Prophet?" (*Jerusalem Bible*)
"Are you **the** prophet?" (*The Amplified Bible*)
"Are you **the** prophet?" (*Riverside New Testament*)
"Are you **the** prophet we await?" (*New English Bible*)

The question by Jewish religious leaders was not if John the Baptist was *a* prophet, or *some* prophet. Rather, the use of the article *the* before "prophet" makes the issue clear as to what they wanted to know. So the use of the indefinite article (*a*) here before *prophet* in some versions seems improper. There was a lot of talk going on as result of John's preaching. Could he be "the" prophet the Jewish people have been expecting? Or, was it someone else? John cleared any lingering doubts when he honestly told them: 'I am not the Christ. It is he who comes after me.' (John 1:20-21, 27)

John 6:51,

Greek: καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σάρξ μού ἐστιν
      and the bread but which I shall give **the** **flesh** of me *is*

"And the bread that I will give is <u>my flesh</u>, which I will give for the life of the world." (KJV)
"And the bread I will give for the life of the world is <u>my flesh</u>." (*International Standard Version*)
"Moreover the bread which I will give is <u>my flesh</u> given for the life of the world." (Weymouth NT)
"The bread which I will give is <u>my flesh</u> which I will give for the life of the world." (*Bible in Basic English*)
"And the bread that I will give for the world's life is <u>my own flesh</u>!" (Goodspeed's New Testament)
"the bread, moreover, which, I, will give, is, <u>my flesh</u>—for the world's life." (*Rotherham's Translation*)
"And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is <u>my flesh</u>." (*English Standard Version*)
"And the bread that I will give is <u>my flesh</u> for the life of the world." (NABRE)

"My flesh" is the logical way of expressing in English the Greek idiom, "the flesh of me." "Flesh" in Greek is preceded by the article "the" which makes it definite. "My flesh" is definite, unlike saying, "a flesh."

John 15:1, Greek: καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργός ἐστιν
              and the father of me, **the** **farmer** *is*

"and my Father is **the** husbandman" (*Douay-Rheims*)
"and my Father is **the** vinedresser [und mein Vater **der** Weingärtner]" (M. Luther 1545)
"and my Father is **the** farmer [y mi Padre es el labrador]" (*Reina-Valera Antigua*)
"and my Father is **the** cultivator" (James Murdock's Translation)
"and my Father is **the** Vine-grower" (*Twentieth Century New Testament*)
"and my Father is **the** cultivator" (Williams' New Testament)
"My Father is **the** farmer" (*Simple English Bible*)
"and my Father is **the** vine-dresser" (New Testament, Kevin Condon)
"and my Father is **the** farmer" (*The Bible in Living English*)
"and my Father is **the** gardener" (*Bible in Basic English*)
"and my Father is **the** vinedresser" (*Jerusalem Bible*)
"and my Father is **the** vinedresser" (*English Standard Version*)
"and my Father is **the** farmer" (*The Unvarnished New Testament*)
"and my Father is **the** gardener" (*New English Bible*)

Without the article ὁ in the text before "farmer," it would likely be translated: "And my Father is *a* farmer." But as we have it, the Greek article is appropriately carried over into English, clearly shown above. The full text of John 15:1 has the article 4 times, only two of them are shown above. Thus, the repetition of the article within the verse for a *fourth* time when the author had the option not to employ it that many times must be significant. English translators above understand its importance within the context.

John 20:15,

Greek: ἐκείνη   δοκοῦσα ὅτι   ὁ   κηπουρός ἐστιν
         That (one)   thinking   that   **the**   **gardener**   it *is*

Mary Magdalene who was standing weeping next to the tomb where Jesus was buried did not realize that the person speaking to her was Jesus resurrected (Mary mistook Jesus for the gardener).

"She, supposing him to be **the** gardener" (*King James Version*)
"Thinking he was **the** gardener" (NIV)
"Mary thought he was **the** gardener" (*The Source New Testament*)
"She thought he was **the** gardener" (*English Standard Version*)
"She, thinking it was **the** gardener" (*Douay-Rheims Bible*)
"She, supposing that it was **the** gardener" (Darby Bible Translation)
"She, supposing that **the** gardener it is" (*The Emphatic Diaglott*)
"Because she supposed it was **the** gardener" (C. B. Williams New Testament)
"She, supposing that He was **the** gardener" (Weymouth New Testament)
"Thinking he was **the** gardener" (*International Standard Version*)

The presence of the article in Greek (in **bold**) is made manifest in these English versions.

John 21:12:

Greek: εἰδότες   ὅτι   ὁ   κύριός ἐστιν
         having known   that   **the**   **lord**   it *is*

"they knewe that he was **the** Lord" (*Geneva Bible*)
"knowing that it was **the** Lord" (*King James Version*)

"knowing that he was **the** Lord [sapendo ch'egli era **il** Signore]", (*Giovanni Diodati Bibbia,* 1649)
"knowing that it was **the** Lord" (*Confraternity Version*)
"They knew it was **the** Lord" (*New International Version*)
"Having known that **the** Master it is" (Paul McReynolds' Interlinear)
"because they knew it was **the** Lord" (*New Century Version*)
"knowing that it was **the** Master" (*Living Oracles New Testament*)
"for they knew it was **the** Master" (Goodspeed New Testament)
"because they knew it was **the** Lord" (*New Revised Standard Version*)
"They knew it was **the** Lord" (*Jewish New Testament*)
"for they knew that it was **the** Lord" (*The New Testament*, William Barclay)

Again, these translations reflect the fact that "lord" has the Greek article before it. In this case, "the Master," or "the Lord" refers specifically to Jesus.

2 John 1:6,

Greek: αὕτη ἡ   ἐντολή   ἐστιν, καθὼς   ἠκούσατε
         this **the** **commandment** *is*   according as you heard [plural]

"this is **the** commandment, just as you have heard" (*English Standard Version*)
"This is **the** commandment, just as you have heard" (*New American Standard Version*)
"This is **the** commandment, even as you heard" (*World English Bible*)
"This is **the** commandment, just as you heard" (*The New Testament*, Kenneth S. West)
"This is **the** command that you heard from the beginning" (*Common English Bible*)
"this is **the** commandment which you have heard" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
"this is **the** commandment, as you heard from the beginning" (*New American Bible*)
"**The** commandment as you have heard it" (*The Holy Bible*, William S. Beck)
"This is **the** commandment, even as you heard" (*The NT in Modern English*, Montgomery)

These versions accurately reflect the Greek above: "*the* commandment," with the article.
_____

Now, compare the previous Scriptures with the contrast of the second and last part of John 1:1:

 καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν   πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
 and the logos was toward **the god,** and **god** *was* the logos

Notice that in John 1:1, one instance of the word *god* has the article *the* before it and the second instance does not. In the original, all letters were *uncials*, or *capital* letters. "Lowercase" letters are shown above to encourage readers to use their own criteria for selecting where to place capital letters. To make a distinction of articular and inarticular nouns in practice, some translators use corresponding capital or lowercase letters. Hence, some translators use this convention at John 1:1 for "God" with the article and without the article like this: "The Word was with **G**od, and the Word was **g**od." However, as most versions do today, the Catholic Version above (NABRE) opted to use a capital "G" for both instances of *θεὸς*, but explained the difference in a footnote.

Where mainstream theology is involved, the practice of using a small "g" in reference to Christ will

likely be discouraged by Trinitarians, which comprise the majority of church-goers in some countries. Normally, Bible students stick to the version which best suits their theology.

2. Predicate nouns without the article (anarthrous) before the verb that *may* be definite.

This group of nouns *differ* from John 1:1. There are cases where an article-less noun *may* be rendered definite. These include phrasal constructions with genitives (the "of" case) = *children of God*; *out of God*; *of world*; *of Israel*; *of God*; *beside God*, etc., with datives (the "to" case: *God to him*; *to him God*; *in God*, etc.), and prepositional phrases (consisting of a preposition and the noun or noun substitute that is its object). Participles, demonstratives and possessive pronouns may also modify phrases and its parts.

There is no fixed rule that can be applied with these clauses, and Bible translators are not consistent rendering them. In other words, this group of inarticular predicate nouns can be rendered - context allowing - either with definite or indefinite forms. On the other hand, the anarthrous predicate noun in John 1:1c is a proper, non-prepositional construction. When Gospel writers used the article with *theós*, they normally referred to the Supreme God, and translators overwhelmingly reflect a definite reading. When the nominative *theós* is used *without* the article it is usually rendered with an indefinite article. The exceptions to this practice occurs when they used *theós* with a prepositional construction or some other modifier mentioned above. Thus, it is odd for translators to make an exception at John 1:1 to the norm above, due to their insistence in making the predicate noun definite.

John 9:5,   φῶς   εἰμι   τοῦ   κόσμου
              light   *I am* of the world

"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (*New International Version*)
"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (*King James Version*)
"While in the world I may be, light I am of the world" (*Emphatic Diaglott*)
"I am light for the world" (James Moffatt's New Testament)
"I am the world's light " (*Phillips Modern English New Testament*)
"I illumine the world" (*The Original New Testament*, Hugh J. Schonfield)
"I am **a** light of the world" (*Young's Literal Translation*)
"I am [the] light of the world" (Darby Bible Translation. Brackets his.)
"I am the light of the world" (*Revised Standard Version*)
"I am the world's light " (*New World Translation*)
"I'm light for the world " (*GOD'S WORD Translation*)
"I am **a** light for the world" (Goodspeed's New Testament)
"I am light for the people of the world" (*The New Testament in Plain English*)

It is possible to translate the *inarticular* predicate noun *light* occurring before the verb in this text as a definite noun. When a Greek writer wanted to call attention to a certain aspect of the noun, he would place the noun before the verb, a concept hard to grasp for English speakers. One notable factor distinguishing this text from John 1:1c, is that in John 9:5 a prepositional phrase is present in its syntax, but not in John 1:1c. The *genitive* presence, the "of" before "the world" combined with the verb "[I] am" virtually begs for the article in the English translation. Clauses which have a prepositional phrase in its construction are not translated consistently in English versions. Still, it is possible to accentuate the anarthrous noun (*light*) by translating it like *The New Testament in Plain English* did: "I am light for the people of the world."

Notwithstanding, all the readings above are supported by various translation teams, and perhaps all are acceptable when viewed from various angles. In fact, John 8:12 has virtually the same statement as here, but unlike John 9:5, "light" has the article following the verb like this: "I am the light of the world." And there, the biblical versions are unanimous. John 9:5 shows, that in contrast with the common darkness prevailing in the world, Jesus, God's Sent One, is *light* for people all over. In John 8:12, Jesus stands out as "*the* light" of the world. Any other light purported to illuminate is unable to liberate people from the blindness and darkness characterizing this world like only Jesus can. Either way, the greatness of Christ's *light* is not diminished by omitting the article in this text.

John 1:49, Ῥαββί... σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ
            Rabbi... you   **king**   are of the Israel

The reading above is from the WH, Nestle-Aland/UBS Greek texts. However, the *Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine* Greek Text includes the article, shown here underlined: σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ("you are the king").

"Thou art the King of Israel" (*Douay-Rheims Bible*; KJV; NIV, etc.)
"thou art king of Israel" (John Wycliffe Bible)
"You are king of Israel!" (*New English Bible*; Goodspeed's New Testament*)
"You are Israel's King!" (William F. Beck; J. E. Adams NT; Weymouth New Testament; The VOICE NT)
"thou art King of Israel" (*American Standard Version; Confraternity Version*)
"You are King of Israel" (*The Comprehensive New Testament;* NWT; Montgomery's NT; *The Bible in
                Basic English*; *The Translator's New Testament*)

There are a couple of reasons why *king* here may have a definite sense. First, the RP Greek Text, has suggestively, the article with "basileus ['king']." Secondly, the full statement of the verse reads in the New English Bible: "'Rabbi,' said Nathanael, 'you are the Son of God; you are king of Israel!'" In the first part of the statement, "Son of God" has the article *the*, so it is not at all incongruous to understand the second part, "king of Israel" about the Christ, to be definite as well, in agreement with the Byzantine text. (Note: Unlike John 1:1, in this text the speaker refers to *one* individual, not *two*.) Furthermore, John 1:49, like John 9:5, has a prepositional phrase as well in its construction (*Rabbi, you are king of the Israel*) which indicates determination. Translators do not adhere to a rigid pattern of renderings with these clauses. Thus, an English translation can get away by using the article here, like these versions did: Douay-Rheims Bible; KJV; NIV, etc.

E. C. Colwell chose this text to illustrate the principle of *definiteness* in his article in reference to clauses *like* John 1:1, however the clause of John 1:49 is not an exact parallel of John 1:1. Some believe the context of John 1:49 supports a definite rendering too. It bears mentioning, that in Greek, the author had the option to repeat the article with this construction, or to use a different word order. By not doing so, the author may have Nathanael in this clause directing his attention to Jesus' role as "king" of Israel, and less so on his identity. In a case like this, the risk of error for the translator decreases by conveying the original paradigm as closely as possible, "You are *king* of Israel!" John 1:49 is wrongly used to support the idea that John 1:1c is definite because the two texts do not share the same construct. One has a *genitive* in its phrase, suggesting a definite nuance, and the other a *nominative* expression describing the subject.

John 10:36,   ὅτι   εἶπον· Υἱὸς   τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι;
because I said,   **Son** of the God I am?

"I am the Son of God?" (KJV; *New American Standard Bible, International Standard Version*; etc.)
"I am God's Son?" (*The Simple English Bible*; NIV; NWT; Jay E. Adams NT; Julian G. Anderson NT;
                Schonfield; *Bible in Basic English; New Berkeley Version*; William F. Beck's NT;
                Weymouth NT; Moffatt's NT; Goodspeed's NT; *Common English Bible*; NRSV)
"I am God's son?" (*New English Bible*)
"I am Son of God?" (*New Jerusalem Bible*; Darby Bible Translation)
"Son of God I am?" (*Young's Literal Translation*)
"I am **a** son of God?" (*The Four Gospels*, by E. V. Rieu)
"I am **a** Son of God?" (James L. Tomanek's New Testament)
"I am **a** son of *Elohim'?*" (*Jewish New Testament*)

Again, as in the previous two examples, translator's choices here reflect the difficulty which exists in trying to transmit the right message across two languages. All these readings may be acceptable depending on one's interpretation. Notwithstanding, the fact that *Son* here appears originally without the article may suggest a *qualitative* nuance. That said, saying "Son of God I am" in English sounds odd, since it is more of a *Greek* idiom. Although the rendering "I am **a** Son of God?" is good English grammar, and fair translation of the Greek, the focus in John's account is not so much on Jesus being the *only* Son of God, or *one of many* sons of God, but on the *character* of his *sonship* to God. As Brooke F. Wescott keenly observed: "*Son of God*. The absence of the article (see xix7) fixes attention on the character and not on the person." (*The Gospel according to John*)

The account of John shows that the Jewish leaders misunderstood Jesus' words, "I and the Father are one" at John 10:30, just as people today often misinterpret these very words. They accused Jesus of making himself "God [Or, 'a god,' a possible translation]," which they interpreted as blasphemy. (John 10:33) Would Jesus accept or deny the charges? Let's read John 10:33-36 from the *New Century Version*:

They [the Jewish leaders] answered, "We are not killing you because of any good work you did, but because you speak against God. You are only a human, but you say you are the same as God!" Jesus answered, "It is written in your law that God said, 'I said, you are gods.' [Psalm 82:6] This Scripture called those people gods who received God's message, and Scripture is always true. So why do you say that I speak against God because I said, 'I am God's Son'? I am the one God chose and sent into the world.

Christ himself appealed to Psalm 82:6, where the term "gods" was applied to *human* judges. Jesus was refuting the charge of blasphemy that he was making himself "God" as invalid, because he was only claiming to be *not God*, but "God's Son," which is totally different. Interestingly, traditionalists sometimes claim that "God" and "God's Son" are equivalent terms in meaning. John 10:33-36 disputes such claim.

The translation "I am the Son of God?" may not be the best match for the Greek clause at John 10:36. But who is going to argue that Jesus is "the Son of God"? That said, the renderings, "Son of God I am?" or "I am Son of God?" are closer to the Greek. Again, translators are not unanimous in dealing with clauses having anarthrous nouns in a genitive construction. They often render these nouns with a definite meaning. Nonetheless, the translation choice of "God's Son" of various

versions listed above is a clever compromise, not only because it hints at both *definiteness* and *qualitativeness* to some degree, but it is also good idiomatic English.

3. Comparison of the Latin *Vulgate* and the Greek text of John 1:1, showing the *absence* and *presence* of the definite article (*the*), which may help shape our understanding of this controversial scripture. The Latin *Vulgate's* reading of John 1:1 evidently influenced Bible translators more than is acknowledged. Notice how "God" appears twice in Latin without any article, and where the Greek finely differentiates between the first and second instance of "god" by using the Greek article as a pointer, or identifier. Pay close attention to words in **bold** letters and *analyze* them, if you will.

- **LATIN** (John 1:1):

In principio   erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud   *Deum*   et   *Deus* erat Verbum.
In beginning was   Verb   and   Verb   was   beside **God**   and   **God** was   Verb

- **GREEK** (John 1:1):

Ἐν   ἀρχῇ   ἦν   ὁ λόγος, καὶ   ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς   τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
In beginning was   the logos and   the logos was toward   **the god,** and   **god** *was* the logos
Which of these two readings have obviously influenced Bible translators the most?

4. Passages where translators have to deal with grammatical structures similar to John 1:1c
     (Predicate nouns *without* the article occurring before the verb):

There are numerous cases in the Greek text, similar to John 1:1c, where singular anarthrous nouns in the predicate *precede* the verb, and translators regularly insert the indefinite article (*a*) within the translated text, to bring out the *indefinite* status, or, to emphasize a *quality* or *characteristic* of the subject in discussion. Regarding the use of the indefinite article when translating qualitative nouns from Greek to English, Professor Arthur W. Slaten wrote: "It should be observed, however, that prefixing of the indefinite article in English does not always result in making the noun indefinite. <u>That qualitative character which is in Greek denoted by the absence of the article is in English frequently expressed by employment of the indefinite article</u>. (*Qualitative Nouns in the Pauline Epistles and Their Translation in the Revised Version*, p. 5. ©1918 by The University of Chicago) Even some scholars today, blinded by particular theological agendas, miss the acuity of this statement.

Here is a list of instances in the gospels of Mark and John: See Mark 6:49, 11:32; John 4:19, 4:24, 6:70, 8:44 twice, 8:48, 9:17, 9:24, 10:1, 10:13, 10:33, 12:6, 18:35, 18:37 twice. The selections were chosen mainly from documentation on the subject by Dr. Philip B. Harner. (*Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1, Journal of Biblical Literature,* Vol. 92, Philadelphia, 1973, 75-87)

Below you will find sixteen (16) examples which show similar syntax to John 1:1c - having predicate nouns without the article (*inarticular*) before the verb, twelve from the New Testament, one from *Xenophon*, two from the *Martyrdom of Policarp*, and one from the *Septuagint*, an important Greek translation from the Hebrew Bible, which incidentally was used by New Testament Christian authors, to see how Bible scholars deal with this structure. These samples lack certain structures such as, prepositional phrases, genitive constructions, possessive pronouns, or some other modifier that can alter the meaning of a phrase. This is important to acknowledge, since some

people erroneously use biblical samples having such constructions (*beside God*, *God of me*, *king of Israel*, etc.) in comparison to John 1:1c, which is a proper nominative declaration.

1ˢᵗ Example (**Acts 28:4**):

Greek: Πάντως   φονεύς   ἐστιν   ὁ   ἄνθρωπος
          By all means   **murderer**   *is*   the   man

This text deals with the apostle Paul and his companions being shipwrecked near Malta during a rainy and cold day, a small island 58 miles south of Sicily. When they made it to shore, the islanders were very kind to them and built a bonfire to warm them up. Paul had gathered some dry sticks to help keep the flames going, and as he placed them on the fire, a poisonous snake fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw what struck him, they uttered the words above. And how do Bible versions translate this clause which is identical to John 1:1 in construction?

  "No doubt this man is **a** murtherer" (*Bishops Bible*, 1568)
  "This man must be **a** murderer [Dieser Mensch muß <u>ein</u> Mörder sein]" (Martin Luther Bible, 1545)
  "This man is certainly **a** murderer" (John Worsley New Testament)
  "Certainly **a** murderer is the man this" (*Emphatic Diaglott*)
  "Surely, this man is **a** murderer [Assurément cet homme est <u>un</u> meurtrier,]" (Louis Segond, 1910)
  "That man must be **a** murderer" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
  "There is no doubt that this man is **a** murderer" (*The Eastern/Greek Orthodox Bible*, N.T.)
  "This must be **some** murderer" (Ronald A. Knox)
  "This man must be **a** murderer!" (James Moffatt's New Testament)
  "Certainly this man is **a** murderer" (Greek and English Interlinear N.T., Mounce)
  "No doubt this man is **a** murderer" (Kenneth S. Wuest)
  "Beyond a doubt this man is **a** murderer" (Charles B. Williams New Testament)
  "This man is probably **a** murderer" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*)
  "This man must be **a** murderer!" (*Common English Bible* New Testament)
  "The man must be **a** murderer" (*New English Bible*)
  "This man is certainly **a** murderer" (*Living Oracles New Testament*)
  "This man must certainly be **a** murderer" (*New American Bible*)

Notice how translators above *avoid* capitalizing "murderer," and using the definite article *the* before it. They opted for the *indefinite* expression. This clause is an exact parallel to John 1:1c = inarticular predicate noun before the verb and subject, shown below:

Literal reading at <u>Acts 28:4,</u>   **murderer**   *is*   the man
                              Predicate <u>noun</u>   <u>Verb</u>   <u>Subject</u>
Literal reading at <u>John 1:1,</u>   **god**   *was*   the logos

2ⁿᵈ Example (John 4:19):

Greek: θεωρῶ   ὅτι   προφήτης   εἶ   σύ
          I am beholding   that   **prophet**   *are*   you

  "I perceive that thou art **a** prophet" (William Tyndale´s New Testament, 1534. Daniell edition.)
  "I perceive that thou art **a** prophet" (*Douay–Rheims Bible*)
  "I perceive that thou art **a** prophet" (*King James Version*)

"I view that **a** prophet you are" (*The Apostolic Bible Polyglot,* Charles Van der Pool, 2006)
"I perceive that **a** prophet art thou" (Alfred Marshall, D. Litt., The Interlinear Greek-English N.T.)
"I see that thou art **a** prophet" (*Confraternity Version*)
"I see that you are **a** prophet" (*New Revised Standard Version*)
"Oh, so you're **a** prophet!" (*The Message*)
"I perceive that **a** prophet are You" (Interlinear, Farstad, Hodges, Moss, Picirilli, Pickering)
"Are You **a** prophet?" (*The Clear Word*)
"I can see that you are **a** prophet" (NIV)
"I see you are **a** prophet" (*Christian Community Bible*)
"I perceive that You are **a** prophet" (NASB)
"I see you are **a** prophet" (*The Authentic New Testament*, Hugh J. Schonfield)
"I can see that you are **a** prophet" (*Jewish New Testament*, David H. Stern)

This clause is an exact parallel to John 1:1c = *anarthrous* predicate noun before verb and subject. These words were pronounced by a Samaritan woman after hearing Jesus divinely perceive personal things about her life, just a moment after they met. This Samaritan woman from another religion (they only relied on the Pentateuch), and not knowing enough about the stranger before her at that point, would not likely call Jesus *"the* prophet," but could describe him as *"a* prophet," as someone having the qualities of one, or as a member of a class. Jesus was able to have this prophetic ability, because God had empowered him with his spirit. (Acts 10:38) Says Daniel B. Wallace: "Although the translation is most naturally 'Sir, I perceive that you are **a** prophet,' the sense may be better characterized as indefinite-qualitative." (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* p. 266) Scholars have decided that using an *indefinite* article is proper when translating this kind of clause, which has the *same* construction as John 1:1.

A comparison between John 1:1c and John 4:19 showing a parallel construction:

Literal reading at John4:19,	**prophet**	*are*	you
	Predicate noun	Verb	Subject
Literal reading at John 1:1,	**god**	*was*	the logos

3ʳᵈ Example (John 8:48):

Greek: ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ
         that **Samaritan** *are* you

Again, this clause is an exact parallel of John 1:1c = *anarthrous* predicate noun before verb and subject. Jewish leaders wrongly accuse Jesus of having a demon and for being *"a* Samaritan." "Samaritan" here is used, perhaps, to suggest that Jesus was a *heretic* or one with faulty worship.

"that thou art **a** Samaritan" (*King James Version*)
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (*New Revised Standard Version*)
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (*Today's English Version)*
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (*New International Version*)
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (Laicester Ambrose Sawyer)
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (*Jerusalem Bible*)
"that you are **a** Samaritan" (*New English Bible*)
"that You are **a** Samaritan" (James L. Tomanek)
"you are **a** Samaritan" (*New Century Version*)

Would it make sense to render this: "You are *the* Samaritan," as if he were *the* particular Samaritan in town being identified? Jesus was not even "Samaritan," but of Jewish lineage. Translators do not hesitate to use the *indefinite* article with this type of clause which parallels John 1:1. Both John 1:1 and John 8:48 are shown below displaying similar syntax:

Literal reading at <u>John8:48,</u>   **Samaritan**   *ar e*   you
                                    Predicate <u>noun</u>   <u>Verb</u>   <u>Subject</u>
Literal reading at <u>John 1:1,</u>   **god**   *was*   the logos

4th Example (**Xenophon's *Anabasis***, 1:4:6):

Greek: εμπόριον   δ'   ην   το   χωρίον
         market   and   *was*   the   place

      " and   the   place   was   **a**   market "   (Translation by Dana & Mantey)

A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, by Dana and Mantey has this to say, (under the heading: "With the Subject in a Copulative Sentence"): "The article sometimes distinguishes the subject from the predicate in a copulative sentence. In Xenophon's *Anabasis*, 1:4:6, *εμπόριον δ' ην το χωρίον*, *and the place was a market*, <u>we have a parallel case to what we have in John 1:1,</u> *καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* [kai theós en ho lógos], *and the word was deity*. The article points out the subject in these examples. Neither was *the place* the only market, nor was *the word* all of God, as it would mean if the article were also used with *θεός*. As it stands, the other persons of the Trinity may be implied in *θεός*." (Italics theirs)

Compare the literal Greek reading of Xenophon's statement with that of John 1:1c, and the suggested translation by Dana & Mantey, which they confirm is "a parallel case":

"and the place was *market*" (Literal reading in English order, *Anabasis*, 1:4:6)
"and the word was   *god*" (Literal reading in English order, John 1:1c)

"and the place was **a** market" (Suggested translation by Dana & Mantey)
"and the Word was **a** god" (Controversial translation criticized by Julius Mantey)

It is evident that Dana & Mantey thought it proper to render *a parallel* construct to John 1:1 with an <u>indefinite</u> article. "Neither was *the place* the only market [it was **a** market], nor was *the word* all of God." (Dana and Mantey, pp. 148-149) Years ago, someone decided to make a public scandal (involving Mantey & the Watchtower Corporation) out of this incident. Was it prudent to do so?

5th Example (**John 18:37**, 1st instance):

Greek: (Pilate):   Οὐκοῦν   βασιλεὺς   εἶ   σύ;
                Not-therefore   **king**   *are*   you?

This clause is an exact parallel to John 1:1c = *anarthrous* predicate noun before verb and subject.

6th Example (**John 18:37**, 2nd instance):

Greek: (Jesus): Σὺ   λέγεις   ὅτι βασιλεύς εἰμι [ἐγώ]*
                You are saying that **king**   *am* I

(* The Westcott-Hort, and Nestle-Aland/UBS Greek texts read without the bracketed word. But the Received/ Majority Text, and the Robinson/Pierpont/Byzantine Greek texts add ἐγώ shown in brackets.)

One instance of βασιλεὺς ("king") appears before the verb "are", and the subject, "you." The second instance of "king" comes prior to the verb, as in the previous, but in some Greek texts the subject "I" is not directly mentioned, but is implied. However, the Robinson/Pierpont/Byzantine Greek texts eliminate the ambiguity by adding the subject ἐγώ ("I") to the statement. Either way, the omission of the article before "king" brings out the *indefinite-qualitative* status of the predicate noun, as shown by the following Bible versions.

"Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are **a** king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am **a** king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.' " (*English Standard Version*, full text)

"Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou **a** king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am **a** king." (*Douay-Rheims Bible*, part of the text)

"Pilate said to him, 'You are **a** king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am **a** king.' " (*The Comprehensive New Testament*, partial text)

" 'You are **a** king, then!' said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You say that I am **a** king.' " (NIV, partial text)

Other Bible versions read similarly.

7ᵗʰ Example (John 6:70):

Greek: καὶ   ἐξ   ὑμῶν   εἷς διάβολός ἐστιν
       and out of you [plural] one **devil**   *is*

In this scripture, Jesus is addressing his twelve closest disciples, where he anticipates that Judas Iscariot would later betray Christ. Jesus referred to Judas as "diábolos" (devil), or *slanderer*. Like other verses in consideration, the word *diábolos* lacks the Greek article (*the*, in English) and precedes the verb, "estin" (*is*). Jesus here is *not* identifying Judas as *the* Satan, the arch-opposer of God, but, is instead,expressing a leaning spirit of defection on Judas part. He could discern an inclination of devilish qualities, such as envy, and malice, and hence, could rightly call him, *a devil*, *a betrayer*, *a slanderer*. Hence, the absence of the Greek article.

"And yet, from among you, one, is, **an** adversary" (*Rotherham*)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil" (*Common English Bible*)
"and one of you is **a** devil?" (*Douay-Rheims Bible*)
"Yet one of you is **an** adversary" (*The Gospel of John*, F.F. Bruce)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil" (*International Standard Version*)
"and one of you is **a** devil" (*American Standard Version*)
"Yet one of you is **a** slanderer" (*New World Translation*)
"And even of you, one is **an** informer" (N.T., Edgar G. Goodspeed)
"and of you -- one is **a** devil" (*Young's Literal Translation*)
"and of you one **an** accuser is" (*Diaglott*)

"Yet is not one of you **a** devil?" (*New American Bible*)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil!" (*New International Version*)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil" (Greek-English Interlinear NT, William and Robert Mounce)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
"Yet one of you is **an** adversary" (*Jewish New Testament*, David H. Stern)
"but out of you one is **a** slanderer" (*21st Century New Testament,* Left column)
"Yet one of you is **a** betrayer" (*21st Century New Testament*, Right column)
"and of you one **a** devil is" (Alfred Marshall Greek-English Interlinear)
"And of you, one is **a** devil" (Kenneth S. Wuest New Testament)
"Yet one of you is **a** devil" (*The Translator's New Testament*)

Scholars P. B. Harner and P. S. Dixon argue that the qualitative force of *diábolos* (devil) is more prominent than its definiteness. Dixon says: "It is best, therefore, to take διάβολος <u>qualitatively.</u> A good rendering might be: 'one of you is <u>a</u> devil.'" (*The Significance of the Anarthrous Predicate Nominative in John*, 50. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975) (Harner: *Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1, JBL* 92, 1973, 75-87.)

8th Example (John 10:1):

Greek: ἐκεῖνος   κλέπτης ἐστὶν καὶ λῃστής
              that (one) **thief**   *is*   and **robber**

Here, Jesus initiates dissertation about how he as a fine shepherd protects his sheep from dangerous individuals who resemble wolves. Jesus declares that the man who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs in by some other way...

  "the same is **a** thief and **a** robber" (William Tyndale's NT, 1534. Daniell edition)
  "the same is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*Douay–Rheims Bible*)
  "the same is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*New King James Version*)
  "is **a** thief and ***a*** bandit" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
  "is **a** thief and **an** outlaw" (*Common English Bible, New Testament*)
  "that one is **a** thief and robber" (*The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*)
  "that man is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*English Standard Version*)
  "is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*New American Bible*)
  "that one is **a** thief and robber" (Greek and English Interlinear NT, Mounce)
  "that man is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*Revised Standard Bible*)
  "is ***a*** thief and ***a*** rogue" (*Phillips Modern English*)
  "he is **a** thief and **a** brigand" (*A New Translation* by William Barclay)
  "is nothing but **a** thief or **a** robber" (*New English Bible*)
  "he is either **a** robber or **a** bandit" (*The New Testament in Plain English*)
  "is **a** thief and **a** robber" (William F. Beck - N.T.)
  "that one is **a** thief and **a** robber" (*Literal Translation Version*)

Should we remove the indefinite article (*a*) from the anarthrous predicates in these versions to match John 1:1c as it appears in most English versions? The warning here is not for Christians to

be on the lookout for one particular thief and robber (i.e., *the* thief and *the* robber), who would cause great harm to "the sheep," but to be alert of *anyone* lurking about with wolf-like intentions after sheep-like Christians. Smooth English requires the use of the indefinite article (*a*) before either *thief* and *robber*, or both. Most English translations do this.

9ᵗʰ Example (**1 Kings 18:27, *Septuagint,* LXX**):

In this account, we read of Elijah mocking Baal, a false god. The Greek construction is similar to that of John 1:1c.

<u>Greek</u>: ὅτι θεός ἐστιν   <u>Hebrew</u>: הוּא   אֱלֹהִים   כִּי־ (Right-to-Left)
        for **god** *is* (he)   he   god   for

  "For he is **a** god" (Sir Lancelot C. L. *Brenton's* translation from LXX)
  "for he is **a** god" (*Septuagint*, LXX, Charles Thomson)
  "for he is **a** god" (*The Apostles' Bible: A Modern English Translation of the Greek Septuagint,* by
                Paul W. Esposito, 2004. LXX)
  "For he is **a** god" (*New English Translation of the Septuagint*, [NETS], 2007. LXX)
  "for he is **a** god" (*The Orthodox Study Bible,* St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint, 2008. LXX)
  "for he is **a** god" (*Orthodox England*, Michael Asser, 2001-2010, based on the Greek text (LXX) of
                the version published by the Greek Orthodox Church, Apostoliki Diakonia)
   "because he is **a** god" (*The Lexham English Septuagint*, ©2019, Lexham Press. LXX)

  "for he is **a** god" (*The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts* (tr. <u>Syriac</u>), George M. Lamsa)
  "for **a** god; he" (Interlinear <u>Hebrew</u> Old Testament)
  "for he is **a** god" (Leeser Old Testament, 1853)
  "for he is **a** god" (*Jewish Publication Society,* 1917)
  "After all, he is **a** god" (*Tanakh* - The Holy Scriptures, 1985)
  "for; he (is) **a** god" (*The Interlinear Bible,* Jay P. Green. English order. Parenthesis his.)

  "because **g**od (he) is [porque **d**ios es]" (*La Sagrada Biblia*, G. *Jünemann* B., 1992. Greek <u>LXX</u>)
  "for he is **g**od" [pues él es **d**ios!]" (*La Biblia Peshitta en Español*, from the <u>Aramaic</u>)
  "for **g**od he" (*The <u>Hebrew</u>-English Interlinear ESV Old Testament*)

  "for Baal is youre **g**od" [for Baal is your <u>g</u>od] (John Wycliffe's Translation, transl. f. <u>Latin</u>, c. 1384)
  "for he is (a) god" (*Douay-Rheims Bible* translated from the <u>Latin</u> *Vulgate*: *deus enim est*)

Just as in other instances of *theós* without the article (*the*) and preceding the verb, translators find it prudent in English to add the indefinite article (*a*) to complete the sense in our language. Had the speaker used the article before *theós,* it it could be taken then as a reference to Baal being "God," not *"a* god"? Would it not? The two Spanish translations above show the translators avoided using the definite article (*the*) before "god," or, capitalizing the word "<u>dios</u> [god]," thus suggesting the term is used as a descriptive adjective instead of a noun. In Spanish it is not required to use the indefinite article (*a*) in this construction to obtain nearly the same effect as the English statement, "for he is <u>a</u> god." In Hebrew, we find the reading (*kî- ʾĕ·lō·hîm hū* – Literally: *because god* [*is*] *he*) without the article, likewise translated in our English versions as: "For he is *a god*." Thus, Bible translations from various ancient texts here, all reflect<u> indefinite</u> or <u>qualitative</u> renderings - valid pointers indicating how John 1:1c, with similar syntax is to be translated. Colwell's theory, if applied, would mistakingly lead one to

believe that the reference of *theós* be definite.

10ᵗʰ Example (**Mark 6:49**):

Greek: οἱ   ἔδοξαν   ὅτι   φάντασμά   ἐστιν
         the (ones) ...   thought   that   **apparition**   it *is*

These words describe the cry of Jesus' disciples when they encountered a storm while moving about in a boat. The disciples were terrified to see what they imagined was *a phantom*, or *an apparition* of some sort walking beside them on the lake ... they had no clue it was Jesus they had seen. At once, Jesus identified himself, calmed their fears, climbed into the boat and the wind stopped miraculously. How do translators handle this inarticular construction?

"thought it was **an** apparition" (*Douay-Rheims*)
"thought it was **an** apparition" (John Worsley New Testament - 1770)
"supposed that it was **a** ghost" (*American Standard Version*)
"they thought it was **an** apparition" (Daniel Mace New Testament)
"they thought **a** phantom to be" (*Emphatic Diaglott*, Interlinear reading.)
"they supposed it had been **a** spirit" (*King James Version*)
"they supposed that it was **an** apparition" (Kenneth Wuest)
"they thought it was **a** ghost" (*Common English Bible-NT*)
"they thought it was **a** ghost" (*New American Bible*)
"took him for **a** spirit" (*Bible in Basic English)*
"thought [it] **an** apparition to be" (Interlinear, George Ricker Berrry. Brackets his.)
"thought that **a** phantasm it is (was)" (Interlinear, Alfred Marshall. Parenthesis his.)
"they imagined that it was **an** apparition" (*The Translator's New Testament*)
"they thought he was **a** phantom" (Richmond Lattimore)

The lack of the Greek article (*ho*, "the") in this clause is best translated in English by using the indefinite article (*a, an*) as done by Bible versions above. Would it be reasonable to translate this scripture without the indefinite article as most English Bibles have done at John 1:1?

11ᵗʰ Example (**John 9:17**):

Greek: ὁ   δὲ   εἶπεν   ὅτι   Προφήτης   ἐστίν
         The (one) but   said   that   **prophet**   he *is*

"And he said: He is **a** prophet." (*Douay-Rheims Bible*)
"He said, He is **a** prophet." (KJV)
"And he said, He is **a** prophet." (*American Standard Bible*)
"The man replied, 'He is **a** prophet.'" (NIV)
"But He said, He is **a** prophet." (William Whiston New Testament)
"And he said, He is **a** prophet." (Darby Bible Translation)
" 'He is **a** prophet,' the man replied." (*NET Bible*)
"I say he is **a** prophet." (*The Four Gospels, A New Translation*, E. V. Rieu)

This account is about a man, a beggar, who was born blind, but healed by Jesus on Sabbath Day. The religious leaders asked the blind man repeatedly: 'How are you able to see now when you were born blind?' He answered: 'Jesus was the one who opened my eyes so I could see!' At one point of the interrogation, the Pharisees asked him: "'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he

opened.' The man replied, 'He is a prophet.'" (NIV) This account obviously was not written to communicate that the blind man perceived at once that Jesus was *the* promised Messiah. But the evidence of his miraculous power led the man to believe that Jesus was no mere man, so that he was able to describe him as *a* prophet. (Acts 10:38)

12th Example (**John 9:24**):

Greek: οὗτος   ὁ   ἄνθρωπος   ἁμαρτωλός   ἐστιν
         this   the   man   **sinner**   *is*

This scripture makes reference to the Pharisees calling Jesus *hamartōlós* ("sinner") for healing, on a Sabbath, a man born blind.

"this man is **a** sinner" (*Douay-Rheims Version*)
"this Man is **a** sinner" (*New King James Version*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*New American Standard Version*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*New International Version*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*New American Bible*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*Revised Standard Version*)
"this man is **a** sinner" (*Jewish New Testament*)

If the Pharisees' intention was to expose Jesus for being *the* sinner, the Bible writer would not have hesitated to employ the Greek article before "sinner" to indicate so, just as he did in John 15:1 with the word "farmer." Right?

13th Example (**John 18:35**):

Greek: Μήτι   ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός εἰμι;
        Not what   I   **Jew**   *am?*

Jesus stands trial before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate questions Jesus of charges brought up by Jewish leaders who wanted him killed. In the interrogatory, Pilate asks Jesus if 'he is the king of the Jews,' and Jesus responds back asking Pilate 'if he came up with the idea for the question, or if it was someone else's idea.' Pilate then, asks Jesus, "I am not *a* Jew, am I?

"Am I **a** Jew?" (*King James Version*)
"I am not **a** Jew, am I?" (*New American Standard Version*)
"Am I **a** Jew?" (*Jerusalem Bible*)
"Not I **a** Jew am?" (*Emphatic Diaglott*)
"You know I'm not **a** Jew!" (*Contemporary English Version*)
"Am I **a** Jew?" (*New International Version*)
"I am not **a** Jew, am I? (*New Revised Standard Version*)
"I am not **a** Jew, am I? (*New American Bible*)
"Am I **a** Jew?" (*English Standard Version*)
"not I **a** Jew am?" (Alfred Marshall's Interlinear)
"Much less I **a** Jew am" (*The Apostolic Bible Poliglot,* Interlinear)
"Do you take me for **a** Jew? (*Twentieth Century NT*)

Would it make sense within this context to render Pilate's words as: "I am not *the* Jew, am I?"

14th Example (**Luke 5:8**):

Greek: ὅτι   ἀνὴρ   ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι
        because male   **sinful**   *I am*

In this narrative, Jesus proceeded to call the first disciples by the lakeside. At that point, the fishers were discouraged by their lack of catch through the night. Jesus got into one of their boats with them and asked them to pull away until it was deep enough. Then he encouraged them to let down their nets for a catch, when, lo and behold, the nets miraculously caught such a large number of fish that they had to call for help from a nearby boat. It was then when Simon Peter kneeled before Jesus, and said to him: "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (NIV) Would it make sense in this case to render Peter's words *with* the article before the predicate noun: "Master, I am *the* sinful man!"?

"for I am **a** sinful man" (KJV)

"I am **a** sinner" (*Contemporary English Version*)

"I am **a** sinful man" (*Jerusalem Bible*)

"because I am **a** sinful man" (Steven T. Byington)

"for I am **a** sinful man" (NASB)

"for I am **a** sinful man" (Douay-Rheims)

"because I'm a sinner!" (*Complete Jewish Bible*)

"for I am **a** sinful man" (NABRE)

"because I am **a** sinful man" (*Young's Literal Translation*)

"for I am **a** sinful man" (*New American Bible*)

"for I am **a** sinful man" (John Nelson Darby)

15th Example (*The Martyrdom of Polycarp,* **10:1**). (Irenaeus tells us that Polycarp was a disciple of John and the Bishop of Smyrna). In reply to the magistrate attempting to persuade him to revile Christ, Polycarp says:

Greek: μετὰ παρρησίας   ἄκουε·   Χριστιανός εἰμι
        with   boldness   be hearing **Christian**   *I am*

"Hear distinctly, I am **a** Christian." (Translated by Charles H. Hoole, 1885)

"Hear thou plainly, I am **a** Christian." (Translated by J. B. Lightfoot)

"Listen plainly: I am **a** Christian." (Translated by Kirsopp Lake, 1912, Loeb Classical Library)

"Listen carefully: I am **a** Christian." (Translated by Michael W. Holmes)

"Hear me declare with boldness, I am **a** Christian." (Translated by Roberts-Donaldson)

16th Example (*The Martyrdom of Polycarp,* **12:1**):

The proconsul proclaimed this herald:

Greek: Πολύκαρπος   ὡμολόγησεν   ἑαυτὸν Χριστιανὸν εἶναι
        Polycarp   has confessed himself **Christian**   *to be*

"Polycarp has confessed himself to be **a** Christian." (Translated by Charles H. Hoole, 1885)

"Polycarp hath confessed himself to be **a** Christian." (Translated by J. B. Lightfoot)

"Polycarp has confessed that he is **a** Christian." (Translated by Kirsopp Lake)
"Polycarp has confessed that he is **a** Christian." (Translated by Michael W. Holmes)
"Polycarp has confessed that he is **a** Christian." (Translated by Roberts-Donaldson)

What do these two translation samples from *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* and others before it have in common? The translators employed the *indefinite* article. This is significant because trinitarian grammarians have largely claimed in regards to John 1:1c mainly (Not so much with other Scriptures having similar constructions), that using an indefinite article is uncalled for, and even misleading. However, enough samples have been provided in this article to suggest that their reluctance to concede so in regards to John 1:1 has to do with a reason other than grammar.

In the following group, only one translation uses the indefinite article (*a*). All the renderings however, serve the function of an *adjective* (god = divine), emphasizing a *quality*, instead of an identity. To denote this difference in predicate nouns *without* the article, the translators use an initial lower-case letter where the subject is clearly not being identified or made definite. They may base their translation choice on biblical support similar to the one shown in this collection of alternative readings.

"and the Word was **god**" (Professor Charles C. *Torrey,* Yale University, 1947)
"and the Logos was **god** [était d̲ieu]" (Herbert Pernot, 1925, Paris)
"and the Word was **divine**" (E. J. Goodspeed)
"and the Word was **god** [était **d**ieu]" (*Traduction du monde nouveau*, 1987)
"The Word was **god** [était **d**ieu]" (Marc J. H. Oltramare, 1872, University Professor, Geneva)
"So the Word was **divine***"* (Hugh J. Schonfield)
"and the Word was **a god**" (Reijnier Rooleeuw, M.D.)
"and **god** was the Word [y d̲ios era la Palabra]" (J. J. Bartolomé, Madrid, 2002)
"and the Word was **god** " (David Bentley Hart)

5. Scriptures having something in common with John 1:1 (Matthew 21:26; John 1:14; 4:24; 6:60; Acts 28:6):

Matthew 21:26:

Greek: πάντες   γὰρ ὡς προφήτην   ἔχουσιν   τὸν Ἰωάννην
        all (they) for   as **prophet**   *are having* the   John

"for all hold John as **a** prophet" (KJV)
"for all hold John as **a** prophet" (*Young's Literal Translation*)
"for all hold John was **a** prophet" (*Revised Standard Version*)
"for they all hold that John was **a** prophet" (*English Standard Version*)
"for they all hold that John was **a** prophet" (*Jerusalem Bible*)
"because they all regard John as **a** prophet" (*The New Testament*, William Barclay)
"for all hold up John as *a* prophet" (*Tree of Life Bible*)
"for they all hold that John was **a** prophet" (*New International Version*)
"for they all take John for **a** prophet" (*New English Bible)*
"because the people think he was **a** prophet" (*New Living Translation*)
"for all held John as **a** prophet" (*Douay-Rheims Bible*)

"for they all regard John as *a* prophet. (*New American Standard Version*)
"for they all regard John as **a** prophet" (New American Bible)

One difference in this text from John 1:1 is that the predicate noun *prophet* here is in the accusative case, instead of the nominative for *theós*. This scripture, however, resembles John 1:1c, insofar as the predicate noun without the article (in **bold** letters) precedes the verb and the subject. As shown above, translators find it necessary to *add* the indefinite article (*a*) to *prophet*, in order to convey the proper sense in the clause. This means that the translators understood the Jewish leader's reference of John the Baptist as one of being regarded as *a* prophet, not *the* prophet. Could the same grammar principle be applied to the predicate nominative "god" at John 1:1 to make it indefinite?

John 1:14,

Greek: Καὶ   ὁ   λόγος   σὰρξ   ἐγένετο
        And the word   **flesh** *became*

"And the Word was made <u>flesh</u>" (KJV; NIV; Douay-Rheims Bible; *Jerusalem Bible*, etc.)

"The word was maad ['made'] <u>man</u>" (John Wycliffe's Translation)
"So the Word became <u>human</u>" (*New Living Translation*)
"The Message became <u>human</u>" (*The Simple English Bible*)
"The Word became man" (*Worldwide English New Testament*)
"Christ became <u>human</u> flesh" (*New Life Version*)
"The Voice took on flesh *and became <u>human</u>*" (*The VOICE Bible*, Italics theirs.)
"So the Word became <u>human</u>" (C. B. Williams New Testament)
"The Word became <u>human</u>" (*GOD'S WORD Translation*)
"The Word became <u>man</u>" (*Modern Language Bible, New Berkeley Version*)
"And the Word took human form" (*The Source New Testament*)

"The Word became **a** human being" (*New International Reader's Version*)
"The Word became **a** human being" (*The Translator's New Testament*)
"And the Word became **a** human" (*New Century Version*)
"The Word became **a** human being" (*Contemporary English Version*)
"And Christ became **a** human being" (*The Living Bible*)
"So the Word became **a** creature of flesh and blood" (*God's New Covenant*, H. W. Cassirer)
"And so the word of God became **a** human being" (Julian G. Anderson's New Testament)
"This Word became **a** human being" (*An Understandable Version*)
"The Word became **a** human being" (*Complete Jewish Bible*)
"The Word became **a** man" (*Easy-to-Read Version*)
"So Jesus, the Word of God, became **a** man" (*The Clear Word*)
"The Word became **a** human being" (*Good News Translation*)
"So the word of God became **a** human being" (J. B. Phillips New Testament)

One difference between John 1:1c and John 1:14, is that in the later, the subject precedes the predicate noun, whereas in the former, it follows it. More importantly, however, is that just like John 1:1c, John 1:14 has an anarthrous predicate noun preceding the verb. The idea, then, is not that the Word became the-one-and-only-Human on earth, but that he became *human,* or <u>*a human being*</u>, a description of his new role.

John 4:24, (Greek): πνεῦμα   ὁ   θεός
                         spirit   the   God [*is*]

The verb "is," shown after the subject ("God") in this text, is lacking in the Greek, but clearly implied. It is not unusual for Bible writers to skip the implied verb, for reason of succinctness. Just like John 1:1c, the anarthrous predicate noun (*spirit*) comes before the subject, in here, "the God."

Commentators explain Jesus' words (*God* [is] *a spirit*) in various ways, but one way to take it is as a declaration of his invisible nature as *a* spiritual being who cannot be confined to one location.

"God is spirit [spiritus est Deus]" (Latin *Vulgate*)
"God is Spirit [Dios es Espíritu]" (*Reina-Valera*)
"God is Spirit [Dieu est Esprit]" (Louis *Segond,* 1910)
"God is, spirit" (Joseph B. Rotherham Translation)
"God is spirit" (*New International Version*)
"God is spirit" (*New American Standard Version*)
"God is spirit" (*Christian Community Version*)
"God is spirit" (*International Standard Version*)

"God is **a** spirit" (John Wycliffe *New Testament,* 1385)
"God is **a** spirit" (William Tyndale's New Testament*,* David Daniell edition)
"God is **a** sprete [spirit]" (Myles Coverdale's Translation)
"God is **a** Spirit [Gott ist <u>ein</u> Geist]," (*Martin Luther Bible,* 1545)
"God is **a** Spirit" (*King James Version*)
"God is **a** Spirit [God is <u>een</u> Geest]" (*Dutch Statenvertaling,* 1637)
"God is **a** spirit" (*Douay-Rheims Version*)
"God is **a** spirit" (John Wesley New Testament)
"God **a** Spirit" (Julia Smith's Translation)
"God [is] **a** spirit" (J. N. Darby Translation, brackets his.)
"God *is* **a** Spirit" (*Young's Literal Translation.* Italics his.)
"**A** spirit God [is]" (*The Englishman's Greek* N.T., Thomas Newberry. Brackets his.)
"God is **a** Spirit" (*New World Translation*; *"Ο Θεός είναι Πνεύμα* [The God is Spirit]", NWT, Greek Edition.
"**A** spirit God [is]" (Interlinear Greek-English N.T., George Ricker Berry. Brackets his.)
"God is **a** spiritual Being" (Williams New Testament)
"God is **a** spirit" (Ronald A. Knox New Testament)
"**A** Spirit - God (is)" (Jay P. Green Sr., Interlinear. Parenthesis his.)
"God is **a** spirit" (*God's Word Translation*)
"God is **a** spiritual Being" (*The New Testament*, *William Barclay*)

As seen above, some translators do not use the indefinite article (*a*) in this text. In fact some scholars (Daniel Wallace & Daniel Steffen, to name two) argue that using the indefinite article here is incorrect. In contrast, Dr. Jason D. BeDuhn argues that John 4:24 has an *indefinite* sense. (*Truth in Translation*, p. 123. ©2003, University Press of American, Inc.) BeDuhn may be right. The list above of versions employing the (*a*) is evidence that not everyone has the same understanding. One thing though, all the scholars above agree that it would be wrong to render it *with* the article which is missing in the Greek text: "God is *the* Spirit." Incidentally, "God" in this text *does* have the article before it, making the reference definite. On the other hand, "<u>spirit" does no</u>t, making the noun descriptive or indefinite.

John 6:60:

Greek: Σκληρός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος οὗτος
        hard   *is*   the   word   this

Jesus said many things which some listeners found shocking. In this scripture even many of Jesus' disciples found his sayings about his followers having to *eat* (munch) *his flesh* and *drink his blood* in order to have life, *hard* or difficult to bear.

"This saying is hard" (*Douay–Rheims Bible*)
"This message is harsh" (*Common English Bible)*
"This saying is hard" (*New American Bible*)
"This teaching is too hard" (*Good News Translation*)
"This word is harsh" (*Analytical Literal Translation*)
"This speech is shocking" (*New World Translation*)

"This is *a* hard saying" (N.T., James L. Tomanek)
"This is *a* hard saying" (*The Bible in Basic English*)
"This is *a* hard word" (Julia Smith Translation)
"This is *a* hard saying!" (*The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible*, NT)
"This is *a* hard teaching" (*The Simple English Bible*)
"This is *a* harsh teaching!" (Edgar J. Goodspeed New Testament)
"This is *a* hard teaching" (*New International Version*)
"It is *a* hard teaching" (*The Voice New Testament*)
"This is *a* hard saying" (*New King James Version*)
"This is *a* hard speech" (James Murdock, Translation from the Syriac Peshitta NT)
"This is *a* hard saying" (*Revised Standard Version*)
"This is *a* difficult statement" (*New American Standard Bible*)
"This is *a* hard doctrine" (*Riverside New Testament*)
"This is *a* hard saying" (*English Standard Version*)
"This is *a* hard saying!" (*World English Bible*)
"This is *a* difficult statement" (*International Standard Version*)

This scripture is similar to John 1:1, with one notable exception. The word *theós* without the article at John 1:1 is a noun used as an adjective, so to speak. On the other hand, at John 6:60, "hard", is clearly a predicate adjective. Both Scriptures have the article-less predicate ahead of the verb accentuating the *descriptive* nature of the predicate. Let's see how they compare one below the other:

     Σκληρός ἐστιν   ὁ   λόγος (John 6:60)
      hard   *is*   the   word

   καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (John 1:1c)
   and **god** *was* the word

The rendering "*a* god," in an indefinite sense, makes the distinction clear at John 1:1. (That is, of *theós,* without the article in contrast with the occurrence of the articular *theós* in the same verse.) Another difference between the two Scriptures is that in the context of John 6:60, the focus is on *one* speech of Christ, while in John 1:1, the writer is speaking of *two* entities: The Logos, and *the* God the Logos was *with*. In John 1:1, the author differentiates between the two entities by placing the article before the first instance of *theós*, and deliberately dropping it in the second.

Acts 28:6:

Following the statement above at Acts 28:4 (See No. 4) by the islanders of Malta, and after seeing that Paul did not swell up and die as expected, they changed their minds and began saying (per last clause of verse 6), that "he was _a_ god [_theón_]."

Acts 28:6 reads literally:

ἔλεγον   αὐτὸν εἶναι   θεόν – (Wescott-Hort; Nestle-Aland; UBS; SBLGNT, Greek Texts.)
they were saying   him   **to be**   **god**

ἔλεγον   θεὸν αὐτὸν   εἶναι – (Received / Majority / Robinson-Pierpont, Greek Texts)
they were saying   **god**   him   **to be**

Notice that in the sample above, _theón_ (god) without the article, in the first reading follows the verb _to be_, whereas in the bottom reading, _theón_ (god) precedes the verb. Note that this sample has one notable grammatical difference, and some relevance with John 1:1c. The word _theón_ is the accusative form of _theós_ (a nominative form), the latter form found in John 1:1c. Thus, because of this case difference, Acts 28:6 is not an exact syntactical parallel to John 1:1c. However, the ending difference has no theological import. Furthermore, the Received Text / Majority Text (the base Greek text used by the _King James Version_, _New King James Version_, _Young's Literal Translation_, the German _Elberfelder_, the Dutch _Statenvertaling_, the Spanish _Reina-Valera_, and the Portuguese _Almeida_ among others) shows a sentence structure at Acts 28:6 similar to John 1:1, where an anarthrous predicate noun _precedes_ the verb. Now consider this: How do translators render these Greek readings into the other languages? See below:

  "and said, That he was **a God**." (_Geneva Bible_, 1560)
  "they were saying he was **a god** [_un_ dios]." (_Sagradas Escrituras_, 1569)
  "said that he was **a god**." (_King James Version_, 1602)
  "and said, that he was **a god**." (John Wesley New Testament, 1755)
  "they were saying he was **a** god [_un_ dios]" (_New Testament_, Pablo Besson)
  "and said that he was **a god** " (_The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible_, NT)
  "were saying **a god** him _to be_." (_The Complete BIBLICAL LIBRARY_)
  "and said that he **a god** was [en zeiden, dat hij _een_ god was]" (_Statenvertaling)_
  "they said he was **a god** [y dijeron que era _un_ dios]_"_ (_Reina-Valera Revisada_,1960)
  "they said **a god** him to be" (Jay P. Green, _Interlinear New Testament_)
  "they were saying that he was **a god** [e diziam que era _um_ deus]" (_Almeida Atualizada_)
  "they were saying he was **some god** [_algún_ dios]" (_Versión Moderna_)
  "said **a god** he was" (Interlinear NT, Thomas Newberry)
  "and said he was **a god** [und sagten, er sei _ein_ Gott]" (_Die Elberfelder Bibel_, 1905)
  "said he was **a god**" (_Young's Literal Translation_)

Now, let's place the Greek reading from the Received Text/Majority Text in Acts 28:6 right next to the Greek of John 1:1:

ἔλεγον   θεὸν αὐτὸν   εἶναι (Acts 28:6*) **||**   καὶ θεὸς ἦν   ὁ λόγος (John 1:1c)
they were saying   **god**   him   to be   **||**   and **god** _was_ the logos

This side by side comparison of John 1:1 and Acts 28:6 shows a common similarity where _theós_ / _theón_ precedes the verb _to be/was_. Grammarians explain that when a pre-verbal predicate noun lacking

the article (such as *god,* in John 1:1c and Acts 28:6 in the Received / Majority Text) in a sentence, it denotes either the *indefinite* status, or *a quality* of the subject in discussion, namely, of the Logos. It is standard practice in English to insert the indefinite article (*a*) in these type of clauses to complete the sense. (See Mark 6:49, 11:32; John 6:70, 8:44 twice, 8:48, 9:17, 10:13, 10:33, 12:6, 18:37 twice.) As usual, there is no difference in meaning at Acts 28:6 whether *theós* precedes or follows the verb. There is only a slight shift of emphasis between the two readings. Of course, using *emphasis* as an option does not make a noun definite. So John Wycliffe, who rendered "that he [Paul] was God," is misleading. Here is a comparison of Acts 28:6 and John 1:1c arranged side by side in standard English:

  Acts 28:6, and "they said he was **a god**." **||** John 1:1, "and the logos was **a god**."

(*Compare with the following Greek Texts / Interlinears: *THE EXPOSITOR'S GREEK TESTAMENT* (*Nicoll*); *THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT ACCORDING TO THE MAJORITY TEXT* (Hodges/Farstad); *The NKJV Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*; *THE ENGLISHMAN'S GREEK NEW TESTAMENT* (Newberry); *THE APOSTOLIC BIBLE POLYGLOT*; *INTERLINEAR GREEK-ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT* (G.R. Berry)

As noted, most translations *add* the indefinite article (*a*) at Acts 28:6, thus, they have the people of Malta saying of Paul, a human, that "he was *a* god." Most translators believe it does not make sense to have the islanders saying that Paul was *the* God. Would the reader leave out the indefinite article (*a*) in this scripture because the Greek text did not use one? (Greek had only one article, *the.*)

Thus, Bible translators who bring out the *indefinite/qualitative* force of anarthrous predicate nouns occurring before the verb, are really following a standard grammatical convention. This may surprise those who have been led to believe that *indefinite* renderings for anarthrous predicate nouns are rare or improper. The evidence above proves otherwise. Therefore, those suggesting that the noun is *definite* by capitalizing the noun in English, as some have done in John 1:1, should ask themselves if doing so comes in conflict with what Jesus and John themselves taught: 'that Christ is the *Son* of God,' not 'the one-and-only God.' (John 20:17,31) Which rendering of John 1:1 agrees with verse *two* of John chapter 1, which states that 'the Logos was in the beginning *with* God'? Should we then support a rendering that appears to make Jesus identical with God making verse two superfluous? Or a rendering that brings out a distinction between the two individuals in verse 2?

6. List of alternative readings on John 1:1, showing how other translators handle the grammatical structure of clause *c* in the verse - with a singular nominative *anarthrous* predicate noun (*theós*) occurring before the verb:

c. 250, "and **a god** was the Word" - *The Sahidic Coptic Version* (an early Egyptian text based on the Greek alphabet). Unlike common Greek, Coptic has both the definite article, and the *indefinite article* (*a*). The Coptic translators of the Greek text chose to employ the Coptic indefinite article in their translation of it. This interpretation of the Greek text represents a very early understanding of John 1:1 free from later ecclesiastical decrees of the 4th and 5th centuries CE which firmly established the Trinity doctrine. Hence, the *Sahidic Coptic* Version is a *significant* translation that cannot be ignored.

Note too, that this Coptic translation preceded the Latin *Vulgate* (c. 405) which was greatly influential in subsequent traditional renderings of John 1:1. As shown above Latin has no articles, either definite (*the*) or indefinite (*a*), and it was this version – the Latin *Vulgate* - with

which the King James translators were most familiar with.

1660: "and the Speech was **a god**" – Jeremias Felbinger, *DAS NEUE TESTAMENT.*
(und di Rede war <u>ein</u> Gott*)   [*Note: German nouns are commonly capitalized, but in translation capitals may be dropped.]

1682: "and the word was **a god**" – Frans Kuyper, *Verklaaring Over de Leer, het Leeven*...Door den Apostel
(en het woord was <u>een</u> God)   Johannes Geschreeveu (Dutch).

1687: "and the speech was **a god**" – Petrus Langedult, t'Amsteldam: Isaak Pietersz.
(und di rede war <u>ein</u> Gott)

1694: "and the Word was **a god**" – Reynier Rooleeuw, M.D., *The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ,*
(en het Woord was <u>een</u> God)   *translated from the Greek.* Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz.

1768: "and was himself **a divine person**" – Edward Harwood, *A Liberal Translation of the New Testament;*
being an Attempt to translate the Sacred Writings with the same Freedom,
Spirit, and Elegance, With which other English Translations from the Greek Classics
have lately been executed, with select Notes, Critical and Explanatory, London.

1800: "and **A GOD** was THE ORACLE" – "New Translation of First Chapter of St. John", Sylvanus Urban, London.

1807: "and the word was [**a**] **God**" – Rev. Timothy Kenrick, *An Exposition of the Historical Writings* of the New
Testament, London. (Italics his.)

1809: "and the word was **a god**" – Thomas Belsham, *The New Testament, in an Improved Version, Upon the*
Basis of Archbishop Newcome's, New Translation: With a Corrected Text, London.

1823: "the Word was **a God**" – Abner Kneeland, *The New Testament*, Philadelphia.

1828: "and the Logos was **a god**" – John Samuel Thompson, *The Monotessaron; or, The Gospel History,*
According to the Four Evangelists, Baltimore*.*

1828: "and **a g o d** was that Spokesman spirit" – Dr. Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, Heildelberg: C. F. Winter.
(und <u>e i n</u> G o t t war jener Sprechergeist)

1853: "as **a god** the Command was" – Frederick Parker, *A Literal Translation of the New Testament of*
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on definite rules of translation,
from the text of the Vatican Manuscript, 6th edit., London.

1864: "an **a god** was the Word" – Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott,* (Interlinear reading,
New York & London, Left column.)
"and the LOGOS was with G<small>OD</small>, and the LOGOS was <u>God</u>." - Right hand column reading. Take
note of size and full capitalization of "G<small>OD</small>" versus "God" in this rendering here.
Some websites are misleading here. Wilson *did* show a difference between the two.

1872: "The Word was **god**" – *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*, Hugues Oltramare,
(La Parole était <u>dieu</u>)   (Professor of NT Theology, University of Geneva; Paris).

1879: "the Word was **god**" – L. Segond* and H. Oltramare, *La Sainte Bible*, Geneva and Paris.
(la Parole était <u>dieu</u>)   (*Segond's own version of 1910: "Dieu.")

1885: "an **a God** (i.e. **a Divine Being** was the Word)" – Robert Young, *Young's Concise Critical Bible*
Commentary (In his *Young's Literal Translation of the Bible* of 1862, it read:
"and the Word was God." Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Book House)

1891: "and the word was **a god**" – *The Bible…New Testament*, Rev. Leicester A. Sawyer, Whitesboro, N.Y.

1896: "and **a god** being* was the Logos" – Anathon August Fredrik Aall, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Leipzig
        (und ein Gottwesen war der Logos)   (*Or, "the Logos was a divine being")

1896: "and the Word was itself **of divine being**" – *Das Neue Testament*, by Curt Stage, Leipzig, Germany.
        (und das Wort war selbst göttlichen Wesens)

1901: "Now the utterance…was **a god**" – Antonius Nicholas Jannaris, Ph. D. (Classical Greek), *St John's Gospel
                            and the Logos,* pp 13-25. Lecturer of Post-Classical – Modern Greek –
                            University of St. Andrews, Scotland. London: MacMillan. Giessen.
1901: "and the Word was **a God**" – *The Testament of Jesus*, Edward Vaughan Kenealy, Watford: C. W. Hillyear.

1905: "and **divine being** was the Word" – *Das Neue Testament*, Heinrich Wiese, Berlin.
          (und göttlichen Wesens war das Wort)

1908: "the Word was **of divine essence**" – Hugues Oltramare, *Le Nouveau Testament*, Paris: Agency of
        [et la Parole était d'essence divine]   the Protestant Biblical Society.

1908: "and is himself **essentially divine**" – Professor James Stevenson Riggs, D.D., Auburn Theological
                Seminary, *The Messages of Jesus according to the Gospel of John*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

1908: "and **God (of a sort)** was the Logos" – Wilhelm Heitmüller, Otto Baumgarten, *The Scriptures of the
         (und Gott (von Art) war der Logos)   New Testament*.

1908: "and **divine being** was the Logos" – Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, *Hand Commentary on the New
          (und göttlichen Wesens war der Logos)   Testament*, Tübingen.

1908: "and **a god** was the Logos" – Gustav Pfannmüller, *Jesus im Urteil der Jahrhunderte*, Leipzig-Berlin.
           (und ein Gott war der Logos)

1909: "and the Thought was **a God**" – James M. Pryse, *The Magical Message according to Iôannês*. N.Y.

1910: "it was…itself **of divine being**" – Rudolf Böhmer, *Das Neue Testament verdeutscht*, Stuttgart, Ger.
          (es war…selbst göttlichen Wesens)

1911: "and **[a] God** was the word" – George W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern
                            Dialect*, Vol 3 (Oxford, The Clarendon Press. Brackets his.)

1919: "and **god of a sort** was the Word" – Ludwig Thimme, *Das Neue Testament*, Stuttgart, Germany.
           (und Gott von Art war das Wort)

1922: "And the Logos was **god**" – Alfred F. Loisy, *Les livres du Nouveau Testament*, Paris: Émile Nourry.
           (Et le Logos était dieu)

1922/1934: "the Logos was **divine**" – James Moffatt, D.D.; D.Litt; *New Translation of the Bible*, New York,
                                              Evanston and London.
1924: "and **of divine being** was the Word" – Heinrich Wiese, *Das Neue Testament*, Stuttgart, Germany.
        (und göttlichen Wesens war das Wort)

1925: "and the Logos was **god**" – Hubert Pernot, *Pages choisies des Évangiles* — Paris.
           (et le Logos était dieu)

1925: "and **god (of a sort)** was the Logos" – Walter Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Möhr .
        [und <u>Gott (von Art)</u> war der Logos]

1926: "and **a god** was the Thought" – Oskar Holtzmann, *Das Neue Testament*, Giessen, Germany.
        (und <u>ein Gott</u> war der Gedanke)

1928, "the Word was **a divine being**" – *La Bible du Centenaire*, Société Biblique de Paris.
        (la Parole était <u>un être divin</u>)

1929: "and the Word was **a divine being**" – Maurice Goguel, *Le Nouveau Testament: traduction nouvelle,*
        (et le Verbe était <u>un être divin</u>)   Payot, Paris. (Protestant)

1931: "and the Logos was **divine** (**a divine being**)" – Robert Harvey, D. D., Professor of New Testament
                                    Language and Literature, Westminster College, Cambridge,
                                    in The Historic Jesus in the New Testament, London.

1933: "and **a divine being** was the Word" – Emil Bock, *Das Neue Testament: Übersetzung in der*
        (und <u>ein göttliches Wesen</u> war das Wort)   *Originalfassung*, Giessen.

1935: "and the Word was **divine**" – J.M.P. Smith and E. J. Goodspeed, *The Bible - An American Translation*,
                                                                    Chicago.
1937: "and the Word was **a god**" – Johannes Greber, *The New Testament - A New Translation and Explanation*
                        Based on the Oldest Manuscripts, Germany and New York. ("Translated from
                        the German into English by a Professional and corrected by a committee
                        of American clergymen...." – *The English Bible in America* by M. T. Hills, p. 383)

1938: "itself **a god** was the Word" – Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, *Briefe über das Johannes evangelium*, Stuttgart
        (selbst <u>ein Gott</u> war das Word)   Publishing House, Germany.

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                                    St. John's Gospel, London, Macmillan & Co.

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                        (Translated into German by Martin Dibelius) New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

1943: "And the Word was **Divine**" – Ervin Edward Stringfellow, A. M. Professor of NT Language and Literature,
                                                                    – Drake University.
1945, "the Word was **of divine kind**" – Johan Lyder Brun, *Det nye testamente i ny oversettelse*, by Professor of
        (Ordet var av guddomsart)   New Testament Theology, Oslo, Norway.
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                                    (2nd edit., 1st edit. 1933, Yale Univ., New York and London)
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        (en <u>een goddelijk wezen</u> was het Woord)

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        (und war <u>von göttlicher Wucht</u>)

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                                    New York - Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co.
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                                                              Anointed,, Pocatello, Idaho, USA.
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        (und göttlicher Art war der Logos)

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         (Was Gott war, das war das Wort auch)

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                                                          Testament - A New Translation, London.
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                                                              reading), Brooklyn.
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        (ja göttliches Wesens hatte das Wort)   Germany & Basel, Switzerland. Publishing house of the
                                                          protestant bookshop of P. Ott.
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                                                              (London: B&FBS)
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        'und ein Gott (oder: Gott von Art) war das Wort'   *Das Neue Testament Deutsch*, Göttingen, Germany.

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        (und göttlicher Art war der Logos)

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        (und ein Gott war der Logos)   Germany.

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        (und Gott von Art war das Wort)   Baden: Bibelheim Bethanien.

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        [und Gott (von Art) war der Logos]

1981: "The Message was **deity**" – *The Simple English Bible,* New York, N.Y.

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            (Y un Dios era el proyecto)   Alternate reading by Juan Mateos and Juan Barreto,
                                                          Cristiandad, Madrid, page 54. Brackets mine.
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                                                  6A reading, page 1579. Parenthesis theirs. Brooklyn.

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A Commentary on the Gospel of John, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

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1985: "So the Word was **divine**" – *The Original New Testament*, by Hugh J. Schonfield, Aberdeen,
                                                                                                     Scotland.

1986: "and the Word was with **the** God, and the Word was **a** god)" – *Tradução do Novo Mundo das Escrituras*
(e a Palavra estava com o Deus, e a Palavra era [um] deus)   *Sagradas*. Bracket theirs. Sao Paulo.

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                                                                                       Luke John. Knoxville: Proguides Publishers, TN, USA.

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       (et la Parole était dieu**)**   Selters/Taunus, R.F.A., Germany.
       (et la Parole était un dieu, ©1995 Edition)

1989: "The Logos was **in the sphere of God**" – *Lectura del evangelio de Juan*, 1 (alternate reading), Xavier
          (El Logos estaba *en la esfera de Dios*)   León-Dufour, ediciones *Sígueme*, 59, Salamanca, Spain.

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1989: "and the Word was the very same as God" – *God's New Covenant - A New Testament Translation,* by Heinz
                                                                                              W. Cassirer, Grand Rapids, MI.

1991: "and **God was what the Word was**" – *The Unvarnished New Testament*, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids.

1991: "and the Word **represented God**" – *The Christian Bible*, New Testament Christian Bible Society.

1992, 2017: "and the Word was **a divine Being**" (Jon Madsen, *The New Testament,* Edinburgh: Floris Books)

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       Translation (The Five Gospels), Robert W. Funk – Roy W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar. Macmillan Publishers.

1993: "και ο Λόγος ήταν μαξί με **τον Θεό**, και ο Λόγος ήταν **θεός** "* (NW, Appendix 3)
       (kai ho Lógos étan mazí me ton Theó, kai   ho Lógos étan theós)[1] (θεϊκού είδους· θείος)"**
       (and the Logos was together with **the** God, and the Logos was [**a**] **god**)[2]   [godlike; divine][2]

       **Parenthesis theirs in Appendix) – [1]Transliteration, [2]translation mine-
        * ΟΙ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΕΣ ΓΡΑΦΕΣ Απόδοση από τη Μειάφράση Νέου Κόσμου
         (*New World Translation of the Christian Scriptures*, Modern Greek)

1995: "and **like God** was the Word" – *Konkordantes Neues Testament.* Birkenfeld, Germany.
        (und wie Gott war das Wort)

1997: "the Word was **divine**" – *Los escritos originales de la comunidad del discípulo "amigo" de* Jesús,
        (la Palabra era divina)   *El evangelio y las cartas de Juan*., 1997, by Senén Vidal García,
                                                        (University Professor of New Testament, Valladolid, Spain).

1998: "and the [Marshal] [Word] was **a god**" (Right hand column, "**a mighty spirit**.") – Vivian Capel, *21st*
                                              Century New Testament, The Literal/Free Dual Translation
                                                  (Brackets of Author - Insight Press, Bristol, England.)

2000: "and the Word was **divine**" – *21st Century Version of the Christian Scriptures,* Mark Heber Miller.

2000: "the Word also was **a god**" – *The Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, James B. Parkinson.

2000: "and the word was **god**" – Bernard Pautrat, *Jean. Évangile: Traduit du grec, préfacé et annoté*.
(et la parole était <u>dieu</u>)   NOTE (his): "du dieu=God / dieu=<u>a god or divine.</u>"

2001: "and the Word was **a powerful one** (gr. *theos* or *god-like*)**"** – *2001 Translation - An American English Version*.
(James Wheeler, Ch. Ed.)

2001: "and the Logos was **a divine being**" – Walter J. Schenck, Jr., *Jesus of the Four Gospels*. Lincoln, NE.

2002: "and **god** was the Word" – *Cuarto Evangelio. Cartas de Juan*, Juan José Bartolomé, Filología Griega,
(y <u>dios</u> era la Palabra)   Madrid: CCS, D.L.

2002: "and the Word is the essence of God" – Thomas L. Hacket, *The Holy New Covenant: Galilee
Translation Project.*

2003, "and the Word was **like God** (**God-like**)" – *New Simplified Bible,* James R. Madsen, Canon City,
USA.

2003, "and the Word was **a God**" – Lance Jenott , translated from the Coptic text of G. Horner, 2003.

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(Zuerst war das Wort da, Gott nahe <u>und von Gottes Art</u>)   *Das Neue Testament*, Leipzig.

2003: "and the Christ was **a god**" – Franz Eberhard Eckard Strohm, *Evangelium nach Johannes*, Erfurt.
(und der Christus war <u>ein Gott</u>)

2004: "and **powerful** was the word" – John Wahl, *Word and Testimony: ...Post-Messianic Scriptures*. Maart.
(<u>en magtig</u> was die woord)   (*Afrikaans*)
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2004: "**what God was, the Word also was**" – Francis J. Moloney, *El evangelio de Jua*n, Edit. Verbo Divino.
(lo que Dios era tambien lo era la Palabra)   Estella, Navarra.

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(Seattle: Impact Publications, USA. V.3)

2005: "and **what God was, the Word was**" – Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St John*, London,
(*Black's New Testament Commentaries*; N.Y., Hendrickson Publishers)

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Corrected Edition. Bracket his.

2005: "and the Logos was **a god**" – William R. Harwood, *The Compact Fully Translated Bible* (vol. 2)
(Bloomington: AuthorHouse. He obtained his B.Ed and M. A. from the
University of Calgary in 1972 and 1974, M.Litt. from the University of
Cambridge in 1979, and Ph.D. from Columbia Pacific University in 1983).

2006: "and the Verb was **powerful**" – *Versión Israelita Nazarena* (Holman Publishers, Nasville, TN.)
(y el Verbo era <u>poderoso</u>)

2006: "**a god** is the word" – *Interlinear* Translation copyright 2006 by Solomon Landers.

2006: "the Word was **a divine being**" – *Contemporary* English translation, ©2006 by S. Landers.

2006: "and **a superior one** was that Expression" – Clifford R. Besson, *The Holy New Covenant* (NT)
Victory Version Translation. Ethelbert, Manitoba, Canada.

2006: "and the Word was **a God**" – Robert M. Price, *The Pre-Nicene New Testament*, Salt Lake City, USA.

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               http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outlines-Prologue.htm   Los Angeles, CA.

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2007: "and **of divine nature** was the Logos" – *Zürcher Bibel* (Rev. Ed.; Michael Weinrich; Rainer Albertz,
      (und <u>von Gottes Wesen</u> war der Logos)   Georg Plasger; Jochen Denker; Magdalene L Fretlöh; Klaus
                              Haacker; Holger Domas; Ilka Werner; Karl Friedrich Ulrichs.)

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                              (e-Sword)
2008: "and **he has God's nature**" – Ellis W. Deibler, Jr., *A Translator's Translation of the New Testament*,
                              (Ann Harbor, Michigan: Cummins Works)
2008, "and **divine** was the Logos" – Folker Siegert, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Göttingen: Vandenhoek
      (und <u>göttlich</u> war der Logos)   & Ruprecht.

2010: "and the Word was **god-like**" – Mark H. Miller, *The Nazarene Commentary*, 21st Century Version,
                              Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, Australia.

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          (y [el que es] la Palabra era <u>poderoso</u>)   El Candelero de Luz, Inc., Puerto Rico.

2011: "and the Word was **a mighty one**" – Yosef Aharoni, *Las Sagradas Escrituras – Versión Reina Valera*
          (y el Verbo era <u>poderoso</u>)   *Restaurada*; Isabella: Editorial Hebraica, Puerto Rico.

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                              Menai Central, NSW, Australia – South Croydon, Surrey,
                              England – Sumner WA, USA: Carelinks Publishing.
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                              Bloomington, Indiana, USA: Trafford Publishing.
2012: "and the Logos was **Divine**" – Stephen Pope, *Patterns of Creation: Logos and the Tree of Life in the
                              Gospel of John*, Alresford, Hants, UK: Axis Mundi Books.
2012: "the word was **an exalted one**" – Thomas G. McElwain, *The Beloved and I ~ The Gospels*. Kuopio:
                              Adams & McElwain Publishers, Finland.
2012: "and the Word became **god** (**mighty**)" – Arne Jordly, *The Covenant - The Word of God.* Norwegian.
          [og Ordet ble gud (mektig)]   – *The Greatest Man Alive* – English Version (2015).
2013: "and **what God was, the Word also was**" – Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of John*, S.J., Collegeville, MN.

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      (la Palabra era <u>divina</u>)   (Mensajero Editorial Jesuita)

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                              Martinsville: Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc., USA.
2013: "and **god** was the Logos" – Didier Fontaine, *Évangile de Jean: Texte grec, traduction et notes*.
          (et <u>dieu</u> était le Logos)

2013: "and **the Word was {what} God {was}**" – *The Eastern Greek / Orthodox Bible, NT*, parenthesis theirs.
                              Editor, Rev. Laurent Cleenewerck. Revised Edition.
2013: "The Word was **one of the gods**" – *The Scriptures of Yahweh*, John Sherman.

2013: "and **a God** was the Word" – *Scripturile Creştine* – Traducerea Calea Creştină, Romanian.
          (şi <u>un Dumnezeu</u> era Cuvântul)

2014: "Yet Wisdom was **divine**" – John H. Reid, *The 4 Gospels*, Lulu Publishing, Australia.

2014: "and **what God was, the message was**" – Raymond C. Faircloth, *The New Testament: The Kingdom of God Version*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

2015: "and the Logos had **divine nature**" – Daniel Harder, *Fusion English Version Bible*: *The Gospel of John*. Amazon Ltd.

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(und das Wort war göttlich)   Ebozon Publishing.

2015: "and the word was **divine**" – Ernest S. Johnson III, *The Light. The Life of Jesus Revisited: A New Gospel*. Lulu Publishing Service, Australia.

2015: "y la memrah [expresión] era **poderosa**" – *Biblia del Hebreo al Español: Brit Hajadash-N.T.* (Panama)

2016: "and the Word was **divine**" – *Bíblia Livre*, Creative Commons Atribuição 3.0, Diego Santos – Mario
(E O Verbo ERA DIVINO)   Sérgio – Marco Teles, Brasil.

2016: "and the word was **divine**" – *Bíblia Israelita*, Eliyahu Pinho. Comunidade Judaica Familia Israelita, Brasil.
(e a palavra era divina)

2017: "the Logos was present with GOD, and the Logos was **god**." – David Bentley Hart (*New Testament: A Translation*, Yale University Press)

2017: "and the Word was *Divine**" – Daniel John, *The Synoptic Gospel: The Story of The Life of Jesus*, Surrey, British Columbia: Smart Publishing Ltd., Canada. (*Italics* his.)
(*Footnote: "*Greek* Theos **θεὸς** = *Divine, a god, Godly, God-like*.")

2018: "and the Word was **powerful**" – Yhemaelh Zeev – *Sagrada Escritura*: *Kitbé – HaKodesh*.
(y la Davar era poderosa)

2019: "and the Logos was **a god**" – *Ewangelia według Jochanana*, Grzegorz Kaszyński, Polish.
(I Logos był bogiem)

7. COMMENTS made by various scholars on John 1:1c:

1901, "The Logos was **divine**, not the divine Being himself." – J. Henry Thayer, author of *THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE N. T.* - Chairman of N.T. Committee, ASV.

1903, "**a God**" – Paul Wernle, *The Beginnings of Christianity, vol. 1, The Rise of Religion*, Professor of History, Univ. of Basel. Printed in London, Oxford and New York.

1932, "and the Word was **of divine nature**" – Ernest Findlay Scott, D.D., *The Literature of the New Testament*, Professor of Biblical Theology of the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

1938, Divinity professor John Martin Creed, D.D. – "The Prologue [John 1:1] is less explicit with the anarthrous [*theós* without the article *ho* (the)] than it appears to be in English." (*The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, p. 123. Cambridge)

1951, J. Gwyn Griffiths: "Taken by itself, the sentence *καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* [and god was the word] could admittedly bear either of two meanings: (1) 'And the Word was (the) God' or (2) 'and the Word was (**a**) **God**.' It is possible to argue that translation (2) brings the predicative noun nearer to the position of an adjective." ("A Note on the Anarthrous Predicate in Hellenistic Greek," *The Expository*

1962, Catholic theologian Karl Rahner: "In none of these instances [of *theós*, such as Romans 9:5; John 1:1,
1:18, 20:28; 1 John 5:20; and Titus 2:13] is 'theós' used in such a manner as to identify Jesus
with him who elsewhere in the New Testament figures as 'ho theós,' that is, the Supreme
God." - *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of England,* January 1962.

1962, Vincent Taylor: "We reach a more difficult issue in the Gospel of John. Here, in the Prologue, the
Word is said to be God, but, as often observed, in contrast with the clause, 'the Word was with
God,' the definite article is not used (in the final clause). For this reason it is generally translated
'and the Word was **divine**' (Moffatt) or is not regarded as God in the absolute sense of the name.
The New English Bible neatly paraphrases the phrase in the words 'and what God was, the Word was.'"
("Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?", *Expository Times*, 73, No.4 [Jan.1962], p. 118).

1965, Jesuit John L. Mackenzie, S.J.: "In 1:1 should rigorously be translated 'the word was with the God
[=the Father], and **the word was a divine being**.'" – *DICTIONARY of the BIBLE*, p. 317. Brackets his.

1969, "Here 'God' is used predicatively, without the article: the Word, whom he has just distinguished from the
Person of God, is nevertheless a divine being in his own right." — Bruce Vawter, C.M., *The Four Gospels an
Introduction*, p. 38, Doubleday Publishing.

1970, *New American Bible* – "In John 1:1 the Word is called 'God,' but the original Greek term used here,
theos, is not the usual word for God, *ho theos* [the God]." - "Biblical Terms Explained."

1970, *The New World Dictionary-Concordance to the New American Bible:* "In the New Testament, the Greek
Theos with the article (The God) means the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.... Without the article,
God designates the divinity, and so is applicable to the pre-existing Word (Jn. 1:3). The term God
is applied to Jesus in only a few texts, and even their interpretation is under dispute (Jn. 20:28;
Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1)." (Under "God," p. 213. World Publishing)

1977, C. H. Dodd: "If a translation were a matter of substituting words, a possible translation of *θεὸς
ἦν ὁ λόγος*; would be, 'The Word was **a god**.' As a word-for-word translation it cannot be faulted."
(Director of the *New English Bible* project. Note: Dodd believes such rendering, although valid
in translation, runs counter with Johannine and Christian thought as a whole. Thus his
preference for the ambiguous rendering: "and what God was, the Word was.")

1980, Fritz Rienecker/Cleon L. Rogers, Jr.: *"θεός* God. The word is without the article and is the
predicate emphasizing quality, '**the word had the same nature as God**' (s. Phillip B. Harner,
'Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns,' JBL [March 1973], 75-78)**."** (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*)

1982, "**[a] God**," Greek *theos,* without the article, in contrast with 1,1b.2: *ton theon* with the article."
(p. 41) On page 56 he explains: "The phrase can be translated, thus, this way also: 'and *a God*
was the Project [Logos].' – *"El Evangelio de Juan. Análisis lingüístico y comentario exegético"*,
of Juan Mateos & Juan Barreto, edited by Cristiandad, Madrid. (Brackets his. J. Mateos was co-
translator of *Nueva Biblia Española* [New Spanish Bible]).

1984, Max Zerwick, S.I., (revised by Mary Grosvenor): "θεός, 'the Word was **divine**', pred. wt art., insisting
on the nature of the Word...." (*An Analysis of the Greek New Testament,* based on the
1981 edition, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament,* Rome.)

1984, "and **divine** (of the category divinity) was the Logos" - "In order to avoid misunderstanding, it
may be inserted here that *θεός* and *ὁ θεός* ('god, divine' and 'the God') were not the same in this

period. Philo has therefore written: the λόγος means only θεός ('divine') and not ὁ θεός ('God') since the logos is not God in the strict sense. Philo was not thinking of giving up Jewish monotheism. In a similar fashion, Origen, too, interprets: the Evangelist does not say that the logos is 'God,' but only that the logos is 'divine.' In fact, **for the author of the hymn, as for the Evangelist, only the Father was 'God'** (ὁ θεός; cf 17:3); 'the Son' was subordinate to him (cf. 14:28). [...] It was quite possible in Jewish and Christian monotheism to speak of divine beings that existed alongside and under God but were not identical with him. Phil 2:6-10 proves that. In that passage Paul depicts just such **a divine being**, who later became man in Jesus Christ, and before whom every knee will one day bow. But it should be noted that the Son will eventually return all authority to the Father (1 Cor 15:28), so that his glory may be complete. Thus, in both Philippians and John 1:1 it is not a matter of a dialectical relationship between two-in-one, but of a personal union of two entities.... [...] θεός <u>is not the same thing as</u> ὁ θεός ('divine' is not the same thing as 'God'). [...] When Bultmann objects that one should then expect θειος ('divine') instead of θεός ('god') he overlooks the fact that θειος says less than what is here affirmed of the Logos and would either make use of a literary Greek entirely foreign to the Gospel of John, or express a different meaning. (Ernst Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Das Johannesevangelium. Ein Kommentar]. John 1, translated by Robert W. Funk, pp. 108-111.)

1984, J. W. Wenham: "Therefore as far as grammar alone is concerned, such a sentence could be printed: θεὸς εστιν ὁ λόγος, which would mean either, 'The Word is **a** god', or, 'The Word is the god'. The interpretation of John 1.1 will depend upon whether or not the writer is held to believe in only one God or in more than one god." (1st ed., 1965. Reprinted 1984, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, p. 35, n. 2).

1985, Dr. William Barclay (Letter to a Mr. Burnett of Australia):

Mr. David Burnett   *20 May 1974*
AUSTRALIA:

Dear Mr. Burnett,

    "Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 16th April. You have four questions and they must be answered, I am afraid, briefly in order to get on to one airmail and because I have a heavy correspondence.

    1. '*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*' **You could translate, so far as the Greek goes; '*the Word was a God*'**; but it seems obvious that this is so much against the whole of the rest of the New Testament that it is wrong. I am quite sure myself that the following is the correct translation.

    The Greek is *Theos ēn ho logos*. *Ho* is the Greek word for 'the' but normally prefaces all words. You note that in the Greek there is a definite article with *logos*, that is 'Word', but not with *Theos*, that is 'God'. <u>Had there been a definite article with both, Word and God would have been identified. When the definite article is removed from a noun in Greek, as in English, the noun becomes the equivalent of an adjective</u>. Take the following example in English. If I say 'John is *the* man', I identify John with some particular man; if I say 'John is man", omitting the definite article, I simply describe John as **a** man. <u>What that particular sentence of John says is that the Word was in the same class as God. God is an adjective rather than a noun,</u> and the perfect translation is the New English Bible translation: 'What God was, the Word was'. [...] Yours sincerely, *** "(Letter from Dr. William Barclay, dated "20 May 1974," - Book: "*Ever Yours*: *A Selection from the Letters of William Barclay*," edited by C. L. Rawlins, Dunbar 1985}, p. 205. Italics his. Emphasis mine.)

1989, Marvin R. Vincent, D.D.: "In the third proposition, *the Word was God,* the article was omitted because Θεὸς described the nature of the Word and did not identify his person." (*Word Studies in the*

New Testament, Vol. II, p. 35. Originally published in 1887. Reprinted in 1989.)

1992, Murray J. Harris: "Accordingly, from the point of view of grammar alone, *θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* could be rendered 'the Word was **a god**....'" - *Jesus As God*, p. 60. (Note: Harris prefers the traditional reading because he believes the *theological* context of John makes the rendering *a* god "impossible."

1992, William Loader: "Grammatically this ["the Word was God"] is a possible translation, but not the only one. The statement's meaning, and so its translation, must be determined by its context. It could also be translated: 'the Word was **a god**' or 'the Word was **divine**.'" (*Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structures and Issues*, 2 ed. New York: Peter Lang, p. 155)

1998, David Alan Black: "We might paraphrase the entirety of John 1:1 as follows: 'In the beginning the Word existed, and the Word was with *the Deity* [τὸν θεόν], and the Word was ***Deity*** [θεὸς].'" (*It's Still Greek to Me,* p. 79. Parenthesis and brackets his.)

2003, *The New Testament in Plain English* translates John 1:1c as: "the Word was God." However, a footnote says: "Or, **Deity**, **Divine** (which is actually a better translation, because the Greek definite article is *not* present before this Greek word)." (*Italics* his. Underline mine.)

2003, Jason David BeDuhn: "Grammatically, John 1:1 is not a difficult verse to translate. It follows familiar, ordinary structures of Greek expression. A lexical ('interlinear') translation of the controversial clause would read: 'And **a god** was the Word.' A minimal literal ('formal equivalence') translation would rearrange the word order to match proper English expression: 'And the Word was **a god.**' The preponderance of evidence, from Greek grammar, from literary context, and from cultural environment, supports this translation, of which 'the Word was divine' would be a slightly more polished variant carrying the same basic meaning." (*Truth in Translation*, *Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament,* p. 132, University Press of America.

2004, "θεος ἠν ὁ λογος   'θεος being without the article is **predicative** and describes the nature of the Word. **The absence of the article indicates that the Word is God but is not the only being of whom this is true**... John intends that the whole of his gospel shall be read in the light of this verse. The deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of God.' Barrett." (*Notes on the Greek New Testament,* Misselbrook's Musings, Peter Misselbrook)

2011, NABRE: "**With God**: the Greek preposition here connotes communication with another. **Was God**: lack of a definite article with 'God' in Greek signifies predication rather than identification. (***N**ew **A**merican **B**ible **R**evised **E**dition,* 2011, Catholic.)

2012, Dr. Thomas L. Constable: "Jehovah's Witnesses appeal to this verse to support their doctrine that Jesus was not fully God but the highest created being. They translate it 'the Word was a god.' Grammatically this is a possible translation since it is legitimate to supply the indefinite article ('a') when no article is present in the Greek text, as here. However, that translation here is definitely incorrect because it reduces Jesus to less than God. Other Scriptures affirm Jesus' full deity (e.g., vv. 2, 18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; et al.) ... Jesus was not a god. Jesus is God." (*Dr. Constable's Expository Bible Study Notes,* Notes on John, 2 0 1 2 E d i t i o n, Dr. Constable, Th.M; Th.D., Senior Professor Emeritus of Bible Exposition Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas)

2015, 'The New Testament': "The term *God* in Greek has no article, and is the predicate; the Word is not identified with the previous *God* (with article: the Father), but his divinity is affirmed (is equivalent to *was divine*)." (*Nuevo Testamento* por Senén Vidal García - Professor of the New Testament, Spain)

2017, "...Standard translations make it impossible for readers who know neither Greek nor the history of late antique metaphysics and theology to understand either what the original text says or what it

does not say. Not that there is any perfectly satisfactory way of representing the text's obscurities in English, since we do not distinguish between an uppercase or lowercase *g* to indicate the distinction between God an [a] god. This, hesitantly, is how I deal with the distinction in my translation of the Gospel's prologue, and I believe one must employ some such device:…" (*The New Testament, A New Translation*. ©2017 by David Bentley Hart, p. 536. Yale University Press, New Haven and London. Brackets his.)

The number of scholars who support a distinction between Christ and God (i.e., with Christ being *less* than God) are outnumbered by those who believe the full equality of Christ with God. One has to be careful though to fall for the popular argument that 'the majority are right, and the minority wrong.' This is not always the case. Food for thought! (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

8. The role of *context* in biblical interpretation:

It should be obvious by now that translators understand the grammatical issues surrounding John 1:1 differently. Some interweave grammar with context in their explanations, as expected. However, a problem arises when one tries to ascertain the correct translation of John 1:1. The Trinity dogma is widespread, and many swear that the doctrine is *in* the Bible, even though the word "trinity" is absent in Scripture, nor is there any explicit statement to back it up. A smaller number of individuals are just as committed, but in the opposite spectrum, rejecting the Trinity doctrine outright as *foreign* to Scripture. Who is right? Those issues have been dealt with extensively in other articles of mine. I will not repeat those here. Links to those are found below.

However, context is crucial to proper understanding of biblical statements. A prime example of this is the warning found at Philippians 3:2, which says literally (ESV): "Look out for the dogs." A person could easily, but wrongly, take this out of context as a basis to warn Christians to avoid dogs altogether as pets, and then quote a biblical text which indicates that dogs were unacceptable, ceremonially "unclean" animals in Bible times. But is that what this is about at Phil. 3:2? No. The dogs were considered "unclean" animals to Israelites, and perhaps Paul had this in mind as he issued his warning. Notwithstanding, the author used the word "dogs" here metaphorically, as a derogatory reference to Paul's opponents. Hence, the *Contemporary English Version* renders the expression simply: "Watch out for those people who behave like dogs!"

A flag of warning should be raised whenever someone distorts a simple Scriptural statement. A good example is found in 1 John 5:5, "Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." (1 John 5:5, *Good News Translation.* The interpretation of John 1:1 is often disputed, but not 1 John 5:5). It is clear that Scripture repeatedly presents Jesus Christ as "the *Son* of God." Nonetheless, anyone could elaborate this simple statement to a highly complex philosophical doctrine that would leave Greek ancients in the dust. Does the expression "Son of God" indicate *subordination* to God, or *equality* with him? The Scriptures provide the answer in a simple way. Bible readers are encouraged to let Scriptures speak for themselves. Comparing various Bible versions from different religious perspectives can stimulate the mental process. Even if we choose to stick to the traditional reading of John 1:1c, "the Word was God," we may discover a fresh new understanding of the intention of the biblical author by comparing various Bible translation readings in the list above. Hopefully, the information presented here can be of value to truth seekers everywhere.

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Other subjects by the same author (For *Spanish*, see below):

Exodus 2:25: http://www.scribd.com/doc/38676458/Exodus-2-25-And-God-took-notice-Does-God-care-about-us
Matthew 5:3, 'the poor in spirit': https://www.scribd.com/document/35085619/Matthew-5-3-Blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit
John 1:1, http://www.scribd.com/doc/34916458/The-correct-translation-of-John-1-1
John 1:1, Briefer text, with *additional* samples: http://www.scribd.com/doc/50330864/John-1-1-List-of-Alternate-Readings
John 1:14 ("grace"): http://www.scribd.com/doc/35002730/John-1-14-Jesus-full-of-grace
John 8:58: http://www.scribd.com/doc/35318309/The-correct-translation-of-John-8-58-List-of-alternate-readings-to-I-am
John 17:3: http://www.scribd.com/doc/57772552/John-17-3-%E2%80%98Taking-in-knowledge-of-%E2%80%99-God-and-Jesus
Acts 20:28, https://www.scribd.com/doc/231244155/Acts-20-28-Whose-blood-God-s-Or-Christ-s
Colossians 1:16, "all *other* things": http://www.scribd.com/doc/209607822/Colossians-1-16-Is-the-translation-all-other-things-appropriate
1 Timothy 3:16, http://www.scribd.com/doc/76927834/Was-God-manifested-in-the-flesh-1-Timothy-3-16
Hebrews 1:6,8, https://www.scribd.com/doc/252268649/Does-Hebrews-1-6-8-prove-Jesus-is-God
Do the NW translators know Greek? http://www.scribd.com/doc/48234022/Did-the-New-World-Translation-Committee-Know-Greek
Translation Differences in selected verses: http://www.scribd.com/doc/59484457/Translation-Differences-Questions-and-Answers
Was Jesus Created First? https://www.scribd.com/document/378080373/Was-Jesus-Created-First

Otros temas – en *español* – por el mismo autor:

Juan 1:1, ¿"un dios"?: http://www.scribd.com/doc/35899788/Traduccion-correcta-de-Juan-1-1-Lista-de-lecturas-alternativas
Juan 1:1, Listado de lecturas suplentes: https://www.scribd.com/document/358556923/Lista-de-lecturas-suplentes-a-la-tradicional-de-Juan-1-1
Juan 1:14, https://www.scribd.com/document/427084394/Juan-1-14-Jesus-lleno-de-gracia
Juan 8:58, "yo soy": http://www.scribd.com/doc/36126649/La-traduccion-correcta-de-Juan-8-58-Lista-de-lecturas-alternas-a-yo-soy
Juan 17:3, 'adquirir conocimiento': http://www.scribd.com/doc/74629981/Juan-17-3-%E2%80%98Adquiriendo-conocimiento%E2%80%99-de-Dios-y-Jesucristo
Colosenses 1:16, "todas las *otras* cosas": http://www.scribd.com/doc/209601066/Colosenses-1-16-%C2%BFEs-la-traduccion-%E2%80%9Ctodas-las-otras-cosas%E2%80%9D-apropiada
1 Timoteo 3:16: http://www.scribd.com/doc/77336247/%C2%BFFue-Dios-manifestado-en-carne-1-Timoteo-3-16
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