

Translation of John 1:1-2

1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν
 In¹ the² beginning³ was⁴ the⁵ Word⁶ and⁷ the⁸ Word⁹ was¹⁰

πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. ² οὗτος ἦν ἐν
 with¹¹ God¹² and¹³ God¹⁷ was¹⁶ the¹⁴ Word¹⁵ He¹ was² in³

ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
 the⁴ beginning⁵ with⁶ God⁷

Let:

“in the beginning” = A

“the Word” = B

“this One/He” = b

“God” = C

The following pattern emerges:

A was B

and B was with C

and C was B

B was A with C

Note the parallels and the following chiasmus:

A B B C – C B B A -- C

Now to fit this pattern the third clause has to have “God” before “the Word.” But there is a rule in Greek that says, “If the predicate nominative precedes the subject, it loses its article.” I suggest that θεός “God” here does not have an article because of the above rule and the fact that John is beginning his book in a poetic way with patterned speech. Thus it should not be translated “the Word was divine” or “the Word was a god” but simply “the Word was God.”

To put it in linguistic terms, the article before “God” which was present in the deep structure disappeared in the surface structure because of the Greek surface structure rule listed above.